The shopping experience in Istanbul
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İstanbul is a unique city being strategically located at the crossroads of East and West and embodies the ideal of unification perhaps more than any other city in the modern world. Throughout its history of thousands of years, İstanbul has stood as a symbol of greatness, a confluence of people, languages, religions and continents, together with strength deriving from its diverse structure.

Today, İstanbul is one of the world’s most exciting, exotic and attractive destinations with its modern infrastructure, state of the art venues, luxurious accommodation facilities, rich variety of social programs and nearby alternatives.

In the İstanbul Visitors Guide that we are proud to publish, you will have the chance to discover this city, blessed with natural beauty, rich cultural, historical and commercial heritage, offering exciting and unique experiences.

Wishing you a wonderful and unforgettable stay in İstanbul.

İBRAHİM ÇAĞLAR
PRESIDENT OF
İSTANBUL CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU & İSTANBUL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
A city that offers you tradition and modernism; authenticity and evolution; historical places and latest fashion... Wrapping and warming you up with the sun of the Eastern world, appealing with the intellect and technology of the West. Here we represent: Istanbul.
You can find everything about Istanbul by visiting www.howtoistanbul.com, the official website of Istanbul, updated frequently to provide the latest info about the city.
Galata Tower is where Hezârfen Ahmed Celebi flew from. He is the first man ever to fly using wings.
Lying across the two continents, İstanbul is by all means one of the most popular tourist attractions on Earth. The tiny strait between these two continents, Bosphorus is what makes this city unique. Besides, numerous historical places fascinate the ones interested in cultural tourism.

İstanbul has been populated by the humankind since the 6th century BC. Including Roman, Byzantine and the Ottoman Empires, this very old but fascinating city functioned as a home to many tribes, nomads and of course; civilizations. Not only hosting, İstanbul was also the administrative and religious center of these three empires mentioned. What this privilege brings about is an endless reserve of religious places, historical buildings, museums, palaces, structures carrying the characteristic features of a number of different human societies. Maybe this is the reason why İstanbul has always been a city full of tolerance towards any kind of diversities. In İstanbul, mosques, churches and synagogues stand side by side.

İstanbul has always been a major trade center of the world. Since the city is a main junction point where sea and land routes all intersect, İstanbul became a pivotal exchange point globally.

In terms of population, it is the biggest metropolis of Europe. İstanbul also offers lots of opportunities. Not to mention endless number of historical places, you can find modern art galleries, exhibitions, festivals, museums, special events in this city-alive each day. But even walking in the streets might be a pleasure, since each corner opens up to another fabulous structure dating back to hundreds of years before today.

**GALATA TOWER**

One of İstanbul’s the most fascinating monuments; Galata Tower was built in 1348 by the Genoese in İstanbul. However, this is the second tower nearby this area. The first Galata Tower was built closer to the sea. But it was demolished by the Latin Crusaders during the Sack of Constantinople. Anyway, at the top of the ‘new’ Galata Tower, you can enjoy a panoramic landscape that covers a great deal of İstanbul. It is open to the visitors each day, during the day time.

For more, visit the official website of İstanbul:

[howtoistanbul.com](http://howtoistanbul.com)
The History of Istanbul

“THE CITY SURROUNDED BY A WREATH OF WATER”

The city of Istanbul has changed a number of names: Augusta Antonina, Nova Roma, Byzantion, Byzantium, Constantinople and finally Istanbul.

Bosphorus view from the rooftops of Suleymaniye
Described by the historian Procopius as “the city surrounded by a wreath of water”, Istanbul boasts an exquisite geographical position and deep roots in history. With a history going back 8500 years, Istanbul is an ancient city that is simultaneously modern and fresh. Old-world and modern-world, Islamic and Mediterranean coexist in its captivating atmosphere. The distinctive characteristic skyline of the city, combining monumental minarets with modern skyscrapers, is perhaps the best proof. The outstanding universal value of Istanbul resides in its unique unification of diverse architectural styles of many eras and civilizations. Roman aqueducts, Byzantine churches, Venetian towers, Ottoman palaces, modern buildings and contemporary plazas give the city its matchless beauty.
THE BEGINNINGS

Throughout the centuries, it was believed that the first settlement in Istanbul was during the 5th century BC. However, in recent years it was found that the history of Istanbul is much older than we ever thought.

For many years, historians believed that the earliest settlement on the European shores of the Bosphorus dated back to 5th century BC. According to this story, Byzas from Megara came here upon the words of an oracle that advised him to “get across the land of the blind.” Byzas had founded Khalkedon (today’s Kadıköy) about 15 years ago as a colony, and the words of the oracle actually meant that he should start a new city across the Bosphorus. The city of Byzas, hence founded, stood at the meeting point of the Golden Horn and the Bosphorus. However, a recent excavation for a metro tunnel unearthed ground-breaking finds that changed the history of the city forever. Several urns and an unusual grave dating back to Neolithic Age discovered around Yenikapı carried the history of settlements in the Historic Peninsula about 8500 years back. These 8,000-year-old cremation urns prove that human tribes lived in Istanbul before the reigns of the Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman Empires.
The origins of Byzantium are shrouded in legend. The traditional legend has it around 660 BC, Greek settlers from Megara established Byzantium on the European side of the Bosphorus. The settlers proceeded to build an acropolis adjacent to the Golden Horn on the site of the early Thracian settlements, fueling the nascent city’s economy. The city experienced a brief period of Persian rule at the turn of the 5th century BC, but the Greeks recaptured it during the Greco-Persian Wars. Byzantium then continued as part of the Athenian League and its successor, the Second Athenian Empire, before ultimately gaining independence in 355 BC. Long allied with the Romans, Byzantium officially became a part of the Roman Empire in 73 AD.

Names of Istanbul

The first name of Byzantium was Lygos. Byzantion, latinized as Byzantium, was the name after 667 BC. Constantinople “City of Constantine”, was the name by which the city became soon more widely known, in honor of Constantine the Great. Kostantiniyye is the name by which the city came to be known in the Islamic world. İstanbul, is the modern Turkish name.
GOLDEN MOSAICS AND FRESCOES

The most iconic edifice dating from the Byzantine period, the Hagia Sophia stands out with the glittering mosaics exhibiting an unforgettably graceful style. A perfect example of the Byzantine renaissance, the Chora Church also includes some of the finest mosaics in the city. Once a monastery, Fethiye Mosque contains a lavishly decorated extension with beautiful frescoes. The dome mosaics, finest examples of late Byzantine art, depict the Pantocrator and the Virgin Mary. The Great Palace Mosaics Museum offers a glimpse of the splendor and daily life of Byzantines.
Byzantium was the name of the city founded by the Megaran commander Byzas. As the Roman Empire expanded towards the Asia Minor, the Emperor Constantine declared the city as the capital in 330 and gave it his name: Constantinople. Only about 65 years later, the Roman Empire collapsed and the Eastern Roman Empire came to be known as the Byzantine Empire. The city continued to be the heart of the Empire, until its fall to Ottomans in 1453.

The reign of Byzantium left Istanbul an immense cultural heritage. Declared as the official religion as early as the 4th century, Christian art flourished on these lands and lived through extraordinarily refined styles such as the High Middle Ages and Renaissance, burgeoning parallel to the history of the Empire. The iconic Hagia Sophia, the beautiful Chora Church, the Pantocrator Monastery, the Church of Sts Sergius and Bacchus are some of the masterpieces that can still be visited today. The Balat area is rich in Byzantine heritage. Studios Monastery stands out with its once glorious library. The Great Palace Mosaics Museum offers a glimpse of the elegant opulence of bygone days.

CISTERNS, AQUEDUCTS AND HOLY SPRINGS

Due to its water problem, Istanbul is rich in aqueducts, which carried water from the Thracian forests, and cisterns that were required to reserve water. Two such architectural highlights are the Aqueduct of Valens and the Basilica Cistern. Rising majestically over the Atatürk Boulevard, the Aqueduct of Valens was commissioned by Emperor Valens in AD 378. It carried water to the Basilica Cistern, the reservoir for the Great Palace. Today the Basilica Cistern offers one of Istanbul’s most atmospheric sights with ornamented columns reflected on water.
THE IMPERIAL CAPITAL

The day Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror seized the city from the Byzantines in May 1453, Istanbul became the heart of the Ottoman Empire. As the seat of the Sultan and the glorious capital of the opulent international emporium, the city was embellished with beautiful edifices such as mosques, palaces, fountains, and mansions. The distinctive and characteristic skyline of Istanbul mainly took shape under the rule of Ottomans, which lasted about 5 centuries. Garlanding the shores of the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn, the city’s bewitching skyline encompasses the Hagia Sophia, the most iconic structure embodying the architectural styles of all reigns that came to dominate the city, as well as the 15th-century Fatih complex, Süleymaniye Mosque, and Sehzade Mosque. The last two, being the works of Sinan, reflect the peak of Ottoman architecture in the 16th century. The 17th-century Blue Mosque and the slender minarets of the New Mosque are all elements of this enchanting skyline near the port. Home of the Sultan, Topkapi Palace is a grand complex that is continually extended until the 19th century with new quarters added reflecting the finest architectural style of the age.

SURNAMES-I HUMAYUN

This 16th-century picture book, the title of which literally translates as the Imperial Festivity Book, is a masterpiece for its delicate miniature paintings demonstrating some extraordinary details of daily life during imperial festivities in Istanbul. The book recounts a wedding ceremony with the correct order of all its phases such as the processions, the grand entrance of the Sultan, the feasts as well as the performances of entertainers, musicians, and dancers. The miniature paintings include every detail, sometimes very astonishing ones, about the habits of different profession groups, artisans, noble families as well as citizens.
Ottoman music has a large and varied system of modes or scales known as “makams”. There are more than 600 makams that have been used so far.

**SOUNDS OF OTTOMAN ISTANBUL**

Before and after the conquest of Constantinople, Ottoman musicians interacted with the sound culture of Arabic and Persian art music. As Tabriz, Baghdad and Arab territories were conquered, musicians from these lands arrived at the court in Istanbul, contributing to the development of Ottoman style through Persian compositional forms. By the 17th century, a distinctive Ottoman classical style was already taking shape. Its characteristics were poetic language and new forms distinct from Arab-Persian predecessors.
THE GENIUS OF SINAN

The Great Architect Sinan gave the Ottoman architecture its characteristics in the 16th century. With the magnificent works that he constructed during his lifetime, he mostly shaped the historic panorama of Istanbul along the shores of the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn. Today, it is known that Sinan built over 365 masterpieces in total, including 84 mosques, 48 Turkish baths, 36 palaces, 20 caravanserais, 8 bridges, and 5 water canals. The finest of his gifts to the city is Suleymaniye Mosque, where Sinan brought the central dome to perfection.
THE ROAD TO THE CROWN
Located at the end of the Golden Horn, Eyüp Mosque played an important role in the coronation ceremonies throughout the Ottoman era. Once appointed, the new sultan would be rowed up the Golden Horn to Eyüp Mosque, where he would walk along the Accession Road and the Sword of Osman would be strapped onto him to confirm his new office. The route of the old Accession Road is still marked by some of the city’s finest buildings from the Ottoman era.

did you know?
Sinan’s two mosques in Üsküdar and Edirnekapı for Mihrimah Sultan are famous. Twice a year, as sun sets from one mosque, moon rises from the other.
THE TULIP PERIOD

Covering the first half of the 18th century, the period known as the Tulip Period marked a time of renaissance in terms of architecture, literature, music and garden culture. The city was adorned with tulips and everywhere old buildings, mosques and madrasas were being restored and renovated. The Tulip Period also marks an important time for printing. A period of buzzing cultural activity, the Tulip Period brought an extensive interest in translation. Translation teams were established to translate works from different languages into Turkish. The arts, music, painting, and poetry flourished with the support of the court.

LEVÎ’S PAINTINGS

The most accomplished and famous painter of the Tulip Period, Levni studied at the academy of painting at Topkapı Palace. Serving as the chief court painter to the Ottoman sultans, Levni painted at a time of artistic blossoming. His paintings, mainly exquisite miniature masterpieces, depict festivities and entertainments in the Ottoman society. Pieces of his work can be seen at the library of Topkapı Palace.
İstanbul became the haunt of artists, travelling bohemians, art-enthusiast nobles, and adventurers in the 19th century. The Orient Express, the famous train that ran from Paris to İstanbul in the wake of industrial revolution, brought many writers, painters, and intellectuals to the city. These artists described the city and their experience in their own ways, sometimes in the form of a travelogue, sometimes a novel, or a painting. The city of İstanbul as reflected in these works of art is always a joy to behold.

**GATEWAY TO THE ORIENT**

Italian painter Fausto Zonaro not only painted the city, but also noted in his memoir the following picturesque description: Entering the grand port of the Orient, I have to express the astounding effect beyond all that has been imagined. As the sun was rising with its eyes fixed on the crests behind the hills on the Asian banks, the dominant luminosity of the Moon’s light and colours was gradually crawling back from the edifices of the Golden Horn and Galata. This was a peculiar, divine impression that will never be erased from my memory.

**CINEMATOGRAPHY IN İSTANBUL**

In 1896, just a few months after the cinema was invented, Alexandre Promio came to İstanbul to shoot the first moving images of the city. This footage is significant not only in the history of İstanbul as the very first appearance of the city in film, but also in the history of cinema. Promio took the first travelling shot by placing the camera on a boat that sailed down the Galata Bridge.
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2

3
İSTANBUL TODAY

İstanbul today features an outstanding combination of history and modernity. The beautiful silhouette of the city is a palimpsest that combines the architectural masterpieces of Byzantine, Ottoman and Turkish rules. The meeting point of Europe and Asia over many centuries, the matchless skyline of İstanbul, formed by the creative genius of Byzantine and Ottoman architects, also symbolizes the cultural diversity of the city today. İstanbul is a historical city, but relentlessly modern with all that it has to offer at global standards.

**did you know?**

The two bridges between two continents are described as “pearl necklaces across the neck of Bosphorus”.

Maiden’s Tower

Business District - Levent

Bosphorus Bridge at night
Family of Avrupa Konutları is Growing...
Home to thousands of families in Avrupa Konutları İstanbul...
Life goes on in green and blue in twelve thousand houses...
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“World’s most sophisticated medical technology, JCI accreditation, robust technical infrastructure, internationally experienced specialists and an unwavering commitment to patient safety and comfort. A unique and exemplary ecosystem of 17 hospitals, 12 outpatient clinics and ancillary service organizations that support healthcare delivery, Acıbadem Healthcare Group also has the exceptional advantage of benefiting from the academic resources of Acıbadem University. Drawing strength from this unique operating model, Acıbadem is the leading healthcare player in Turkey, providing world-class care in all medical and surgical specialties including heart care, neurosurgery, cancer care, orthopedics, plastic surgery, IVF and organ transplantation. Recognized for its advanced and comprehensive diagnostic and treatment services, Acıbadem has been the provider of choice for 3.5 million Turkish patients as well as over 50 thousand international patients from all around the world annually.”
Enjoying a unique geographical position straddling Europe and Asia, İstanbul is culturally rich and vibrant. You will be welcomed by an exciting mix of scents, sounds, and sights that have enchanted many visitors alike throughout the thousands of years of the city’s history. A loyal inheritor of a multicultural past and a leading metropolis moving forward at an astounding rate, the city truly merges the ancient with the modern. The domes, minarets and old bazaars of the city intermingle with the state-of-the-art convention venues, buzzing malls, leading universities and hotels at world standards.
İstanbul is quickly becoming a design city. For me, along with New York, Paris and Milan, İstanbul now has a definitive street style. Where else in the world can you find such a rich array of styles, innovatively combining western elegance with authentic touches? I love combining old with the new, antique pieces with modern styles, and İstanbul always offers the perfect circumstances for that! Around Nişantaşı, I can find the best designer shops and high-end fashion, while the historic heart of Galata houses sophisticated boutiques and personal brands. I immensely enjoy vintage hunting around Çukurcuma! You will definitely chance upon something that will make your day: sometimes a fancy dress from the sixties, sometimes a pair of antique silver earrings... İstanbul hosts some of the biggest shopping malls in Europe on the one hand, and on the other, the historic bazaars have been welcoming visitors for centuries. At street markets, you can also find dazzling pieces really cheap.

SİBEL, 26, FASHION EDITOR
Living and working in a city that is gaining even more international recognition everyday is merely rewarding. With a booming economy, Turkey is becoming an attraction spot worldwide. In recent years, İstanbul hosted many international events, large expositions and agenda-setting summits. The city offers a rich selection of big scale convention venues furnished with state-of-the-art facilities. With upscale restaurants, engaging art events, and beautiful spots to admire the view, the city offers an unforgettable visit for business travellers. Furthermore, with increased connectivity to more airports worldwide, the city is now easier to reach. In our international business gatherings, we not only provide our guests with all the conference amenities they may need, but also ensure they spend quality time here. Where on earth could you sip your morning coffee while taking in the beautiful view and smell of the Bosphorus? I have been living in this city for whole my life, and still a childish excitement takes over me each time I look at the view!

NIL, 40, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
This city, which has nourished many a civilisation on its bosom for centuries, has always been an international attraction. Not only tourists but also artists and artisans have been coming to Istanbul for centuries to seek mastery, and above all, to find inspiration for their music, fiction or painting. I am very happy to see, that has not changed. Today many artists, musicians, writers and journalists come to Istanbul to live here and find the stimulation in its streets to produce their work. In my old shop, I meet a lot of artists and musicians, young and old, who come to my store not only to shop but also to have a chat over the state of affairs in the world, in the country, or in music. It feels wonderful to feel connected to this up-and-coming generation. I might have been one of the few who are still practicing this line of business. Yet I feel happy as the young show interest in my art, and I see the glitter in their eyes.
I came to İstanbul to attend the university here for one year with an academic exchange programme. Previously I had come for holidays with my friends. We stayed here for about a week and I fell in love with the city. İstanbul is very enriching for a student due to its multicultural and international character. A mishmash of civilizations, eras, classes, and ways of life, the city is energized by a fresh generation of creative young students and artists. I am glad to have so many diverse friends here, and we all feel at home in this city. From an academic perspective, İstanbul hosts some of the world’s richest archives and libraries on Ottoman history. Nice cafes are located on every corner, where you could read and write the whole day sipping on your warm tea or coffee. A stroll along the Bosphorus always makes up for an exhausting day. Waking up to bright sunshine almost everyday gives you the kick to start your day afresh. You are always greeted with the warm smiles of your neighbours and friends.
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You are invited to experience unique luxury and home comfort in Turkish Airlines Lounge Istanbul in Turkey. Every detail inside our special lounge is designed for your comfort and relaxation. Be our guest to enjoy exclusive services in our restaurants, tea garden, library, movie theater and many more...

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A history enthusiast, a lover of glamour or of nature, you will find an İstanbul that you will adore! Protecting its thousands-year-old history yet making space for the most fashionable glamour, İstanbul is simultaneously a historic and a modern city that offers the best for every taste!

Visiting the City
14,160,000 people

11,842,983 international visitors in 2014

20,000,000 tulips planted in April

8500 years of history

72 museums

105 modern shopping malls

49 universities

World’s Top 10 congress destination
If you are a true enthusiast of history and enjoy visiting historic sites, we recommend you to spend time around the Historic Peninsula, which has been the heart of Constantinople and Imperial Capital for centuries.

As the Ottoman Empire approached its historical peak, Istanbul grew to a population of close to 700,000 in the 16th century, at the time second in size only to Beijing.

**SHOP FROM THE MUSEUM**

There are BKG Museum Shops at Topkapı Palace where you can buy unique traditional souvenirs. There are also other shops of BKG at other museums.

THE TOPKAPI PALACE & MUSEUM

The opulent Topkapi Palace served as the court of the Ottoman Empire between the 15th and 19th centuries. Sultans, ambitious courtiers lived here and visiting the palace quarters, its jewel-filled Treasury and embellished Harem gives a fascinating glimpse into the daily life in the Palace. Mehmet the Conqueror commissioned the construction of a palace shortly after the conquest in 1453.

Just before the Imperial Gate, there is the rococo-style Fountain of Sultan Ahmet III, built during the Tulip Era. Passing through the Imperial Gate into the First Court, there is the Byzantine church of Hagia Eirene, hosting many classical music concerts today. Unlike typical European palaces, which feature one large building with outlying gardens, Topkapi is a series of pavilions, kitchens, barracks, audience chambers, kiosks and sleeping quarters built around a central enclosure.

The Second Court includes the ornate Imperial Council Chamber, known as Divân-ı Hümâyûn. The council of the Sultan met here to discuss state issues. Sultan would sometimes eavesdrop through the gold grille high in the wall.

The Palace also houses the Harem, the private quarters of the imperial family, hence the word ‘harem’ meaning private. Harem was ruled by the Sultan’s Mother, who was responsible from the life and education of the concubines schooled in Islam and Ottoman culture. The Third Court is entered through the Gate of Felicity. This was Sultan’s private domain, and included an Audience Chamber, where foreign ambassadors were welcomed. Relic Rooms are also located in this part of the Palace. Beautifully decorated with İznik tiles, these rooms house many relics of the Prophet Mohammad, including his beard.

The Fourth Court features pleasure pavilions such as Mecidiye Mansion and Kiosk of Mustafa Pasha. During the reign of Ahmet III, the Tulip Garden outside the kiosk was covered with many varieties of the flower. Other beautiful kiosks in this part of the palace are Revan Kiosk, built in 1636, and Baghdad Kiosk, built in 1639. All kiosks are decorated with the finest of handmade tiles, which continue to allure visitors in their impressive shimmer. www.topkapisarayi.gov.tr

VISITING HOURS: 9:00-18:00 in mid-Apr–Oct
9:00-16:00 in Nov–mid-Apr. Closed on Tuesdays
According to some historical sources, Hagia Eirene was the first church ever built in İstanbul. Built in the 4th century, the church experienced severe damage in an earthquake in 8th century. It took its present shape following the additions and restoration work. Under the Ottoman rule, the church was used as an armoury and later as a military museum. Today, the beautiful interior of the church is sometimes used as an enchanting concert hall. The church is located within the First Court of the Topkapı Palace.

Visiting hours: 9:00-16:00 Closed on Tuesdays
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The original church was built in the 4th century and was consumed by fire in the 5th century. Theodosios II commissioned a new church immediately afterwards, and a second church rose in its place in 415. This monumental structure was totally destroyed during the Nika Uprising in 532. Emperor Justinian hired two celebrated architects of the time to build an impressive church for the Empire. As one of the architects died during the construction, the peers modified his plans and the unique structure of Hagia Sophia took its final shape in 537. The original floral and geometrical mosaic decorations survived from the 7th century. Figurative mosaics date back to post-iconoclastic period. The church was converted into a mosque after the Ottoman Conquest of Constantinople in 1453. Ottomans buttressed the edifice with architectural elements displaying Ottoman character. Mosque elements such as a mimbar, a mihrab, preacher’s platform and wooden balustrades were added inside. Mahmut I had a library built here. The southern courtyard includes mausoleums of Murat III, Mehmet III, and Selim II. The original baptistery was converted into a mausoleum for Mustafa I and Sultan Ibrahim. Hagia Sophia opened as a museum in 1935.

Visiting hours: 9:00-16:30 - Closed on Mondays
Commissioned by Sultan Ahmet I in 1616, the Blue Mosque in Sultanahmet features an elegant exterior with several domes, half domes, and slender minarets. The interior is decorated with the finest pieces of blue tiles from İznik, which is why the Sultan Ahmet Mosque is most commonly known as the Blue Mosque. The mosque is characterized by its six minarets, which is unusual in terms of Ottoman architecture. Blue Mosque has the largest courtyard of all Ottoman mosques. Beautifully lit by chandeliers and lavishly decorated with carpets, the interior is expansive. Admission to the Mosque is controlled so as to preserve its sacred atmosphere for worshippers. Visitors are required to cover themselves on entry.

**Visiting hours:**
08:30-17:00 (Closed to tourists during 5 daily prayer times)
14:15-17:00 on Fridays (Closed before noon due to Sermon)

**THE BLUE MOSQUE**

*did you know?*

The Sultan Ahmed Mosque is first one of the two mosques in Turkey that has six minarets.

**TWO RELIGIOUS FIGURES, UNDER THE SAME ROOF**

When Papa Francesco visited Istanbul in 2014, he didn’t forget the sacred places. During his visit to Sultanahmet, he said that he would like to pray in this mosque. That day, Papa Francesco and the Grand Mufti of Istanbul prayed side by side in Blue Mosque.
THE GRAND BAZAAR

A mix of local scents, sounds, and colours, this bustling bazaar has been the heart of the old city for centuries. Originally built as a small vaulted warehouse by Mehmet the Conqueror in 1461, it gradually expanded as new lanes were added in the following years. Located in Beyazit, the neighbouring shops and caravanserais slowly became included and the structure turned into a vibrant marketplace marking the heart of the city.

Visiting hours: 09:00-19:00
Closed on Sundays and on Bank Holidays

A JOURNEY IN TIME

Stepping into the bazaar feels like a journey in time, which takes you back to the golden age of Ottoman Empire with all artisans at work and shop owners hawking to sell best of their products. Bargaining for the best price is a tradition as well as sipping on a cup of Turkish coffee cooked over a coal fire.

Having more than 4000 shops, the Grand Bazaar is visited by the tourists and the citizens regularly.
Hisart The Live History and Diorama Museum

THE HISTORY IS COMING ALIVE HERE

hisartmuseum.com
The Romantic İstanbul

Although İstanbul is a metropolis where one is surrounded by thousands of people, it still offers some surprisingly romantic retreats. There is something about this busy city - the energy, the Ottoman and Byzantine architecture mingling with shantytowns, the lights of the Bosphorus flickering on the water - that can also be magical.
The Golden Horn had always been Istanbul’s primary harbour. In the 1700s, during the so-called ‘Tulip Era’, it was the favourite retreat of Ottoman state elite who built mansions with gardens full of tulips and hosted lavish parties. The small ferries that zigzag between quays on each side of the Horn are a wonderful way to get around. A walk through Balat, the neighbourhood that housed the first Jews who settled in Istanbul after the Spanish expulsion, is awe-inspiring. Similarly, the former Greek neighbourhood Fener is rich with layers of history. It houses the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Bulgarian church of St. Stephen, one of few prefabricated cast iron churches in the world. A beautiful place for a break is Pierre Loti, an open air café, located on a hill overlooking the Golden Horn. You can take a picturesque trip with a cable car up to the hill and watch the sunset as the last rays bathe this ancient city in a golden light.
PRINCES’ ISLANDS

In early summer, when the heat starts to rise, many İstanbullites relocate to their summer houses on the islands to swim and sunbathe. Especially on the weekends, the islands are flooded with local tourists waiting in line for the famous horse carriage tour. Friday afternoon ferries to the islands appear like carnivals overflowing with cheerful crowds. If you prefer to be undisturbed or need some calm, you should take the trip in spring or autumn when the islands are serene and quiet. No motor vehicles are allowed on the islands, so it is the perfect spot to clear your head from the urban rumble. You can get around the island on an old-style horse carriage. The ferry trip is also more soothing during these seasons. Smelling the salt air and watching seabirds fly along can be quiet dreamy. Once you are on the island you can stroll or bike through the streets where beautiful wooden mansions and gardens line the way as views of the distant city spread out before you. You can sip tea by the water or watch waves crash on rocky shores from windy hill tops.

EMIRGAN PARK

Emirgan is one of the largest public parks in Istanbul. Two beautiful ponds and plants of more than 120 species make this park an enchanting and serene destination in any season. The park has three wooden pavilions, which were built in the early nineteenth century as hunting lodges or guesthouses, and are named after their exterior colour. You’ll be infatuated by the opulent interior decorations, ceiling ornaments and outstanding carvings on the facades. 

Visiting hours: 07:00-22:30
The Maiden’s Tower

The Maiden’s Tower is located on an islet at the entrance of the Bosphorus. It was first built in 1110 by the Byzantine Emperor Alexius Comnenus. Since then it has been destroyed and rebuilt several times and assumed numerous functions varying from watchtower to lighthouse, eventually becoming a restaurant. Legend says that an emperor built the tower to protect his beloved daughter from an evil prophecy. An oracle had told him that his daughter would be killed by a venomous snake on her 18th birthday. Hence, in an effort to keep her from harm, the emperor put his daughter on this islet, away from the land and its snakes. Unfortunately, to no avail. Just as the oracle had prophesied, the princess was bitten by a snake, which was hiding in the fruit basket that the emperor brought as a gift for his daughter on this special day. The Maiden’s Tower is a perfect place to enjoy the enchanting view of the Bosphorus from within.

Cihangir, Çukurcuma, Galata Walking Tour

For city dwellers, the Cihangir-Çukurcuma-Galata route is the perfect path to surrender to the lure of urban attractions. The path leads up and down the ancient hills of İstanbul’s Beyoğlu district, offering enchanting glimpses of the sea and the historical peninsula through narrow streets lined with 19th century apartment buildings. Immersed in this historical atmosphere are art galleries showcasing contemporary art, stylish boutiques selling hip clothing, trendy cafes where you can enjoy a cup of gourmet coffee while reading a book or watch hipsters from all nationalities stroll by. Çukurcuma is the antique dealers quarter. Many display their goods in front of their shops, turning the streets into a colourful parade of retro objects and antique furniture.
The Bosphorus

Whether a moonlit romantic night-cruise or a guided boat tour undertaken under the warm sun, all of the many ways of experiencing the beautiful Bosphorus is merely enchanting. You can hire a private boat or hop on one of the many boats departing from Eminönü or Kabataş piers. If you prefer taking a leisurely walk enriched by visits to monumental buildings on the shore, make sure you spare enough time to make the most of it.

BOSPHORUS BRIDGE
Linking Asia to Europe, this iconic bridge was built in 1973, which marked the 50th anniversary of the foundation of Turkish Republic. At night, the Bridge is showered with colourful lights. There is no pedestrian access to the Bridge.
ORTAKÖY MOSQUE

This iconic mosque, making up the most distinctive scenes of İstanbul with the Bosphorus Bridge, stands out with its exquisite decorations in Ortaköy. Built in 1853, this baroque-style mosque represents the finest example of late Ottoman period architecture.
Visiting hours: 09:00-19:00

DOLMABAHÇE PALACE

Upon Sultan Abdülmecit’s decision to move the imperial court from Topkapi to a brand new palace on the shores of the Bosphorus, imperial architects Nikoghos and Garabed Balyan were commissioned to construct an impressive palace in latest European fashion. Construction was completed in 1854 and the imperial family moved in two years later. The palace is surrounded by well-tended gardens and boasts lavish and almost theatrical interiors.
www.millisaraylar.gov.tr
Visiting Hours: 09:00-16:00,
Closed on Mondays

In 511 BC, Persian King Darius The Great made a floating bridge by placing all the ships in his navy side by side and allowed his army of 700,000 people to cross the strait on foot.
BEYLERBEYI PALACE
The summer lodge of royalty, Beylerbeyi Palace is located on the Asian Side across Ortaköy. Built by Sarkis Balyan, the famous architect that has built many edifices in Istanbul, constructed this palace for Sultan Abdulaziz in 1865. The exterior decorations of the Palace were inspired from the Neo-Classical style that was popular in Europe in the 19th century, while the interior displays the finest examples of traditional Ottoman style decorative art. The Palace also served as a residence for visiting royalty.
Visiting hours: 09:00-16:30,
Closed on Mondays and Thursdays

KULELI MILITARY HIGH SCHOOL
Situated on the Anatolian shores of the Bosphorus, Kuleli Military High School displays classical Ottoman architectural style of barracks. After the conquest of Istanbul, Janissary Barracks were established here. Kuleli Barracks was used by cavalry squads from 1828 to 1837. During the great plague, the Barracks served as a quarantine building. After the plague was over, Sultan Abdulmecit commissioned a renovation of Barracks. A hospital and a Turkish bath with a dome were thus added to the complex.

YILDIZ PALACE MUSEUM
One of the last residences of the imperial family, Yildiz Palace was commissioned by Abdulhamit II at the end of the 19th century. Exhibiting the finest blend of Rococo and Islamic styles, the Palace is set amidst a large and well-protected park covering an area of 500,000 square meters and containing plants from all corners of the world.
Visiting Hours:
09:30-19:00, Open Everyday (15 April-1 November)
09:30-16:30, Closed on Tuesdays (1 November- 15 April)
RUMELI FORTRESS

This fortress was built in 1452 by Mehmet the Conqueror with the prospect of conquering the city. While making preparations for the conquest, Mehmet the Conqueror built a wall in order to control the Bosphorus Strait and to prevent the reach of aid from the Black Sea during the siege. It is constructed just opposite of Anadolu Fortress, which is another castle built in 1394 for similar purposes by Ottoman Sultan Bayezid, who had attempted to conquer the city before Mehmet II. Consisting of one small tower, three main towers and thirteen small watchtowers, the fortress stands pretty intact today. Converted into a museum in 1960, Rumeli Fortress serves as a concert venue for open-air gigs in summer months. **Visiting hours: 09:00-18:00 Closed on Wednesdays**

FATIH SULTAN MEHMET BRIDGE

The second bridge on the Bosphorus connecting Europe with Asia, it was named after Mehmet the Conqueror, who conquered Istanbul from the Byzantine Empire in 1453. (Portrait by Italian painter Gentile Bellini above) The bridge was built in 1988 due to the heavy traffic across the Bosphorus strait. Pedestrian access is not allowed.

**did you know?**

The 3rd bridge is being built for rail and motor vehicle transit over the Bosphorus, north of two existing bridges in Istanbul, Turkey.
The Green İstanbul

Benefiting from a matchless geographical location and a mild humid climate, İstanbul boasts beautiful natural landscapes as well as city gardens, where nature lovers may take a break from the bustling rhythm of the city.
ATATÜRK ARBORETUM

Located on the edge of Emirgan Forest, this Arboretum is an almost mystic place, especially on hazy autumn days. It features over 2000 plant species from around the world, and a picturesque pond. Stop by to get some beautiful nature photography.

VALIDEBAĞ GROVE

This 200-year-old lush grove was established by Sultan Selim III. Threatened by urban transformation, the grove still offers best of city gardens easy to get by public transport.

FENERBAHÇE PARK

This park is located on a small peninsula right next to Kalamış Marina on the Anatolian side. It has tea gardens with wonderful sea views. It is especially delightful to watch the sunset.
**SOME PARKS WORTH VISITING**

**Çubuklu Hidiv İsmail Paşa Park**
This extensive park is located around a large and beautiful pavilion, on top of a hill overlooking the Bosphorus.

**Belgrad Forest**
Lying 15 kilometers northwest of Istanbul, this forest is mostly frequented by bikers and hikers on weekdays. On weekends, large families flock in with their elaborate picnic gadgets and colourful children’s toys.

**Fethi Paşa Estate Park**
Located on the Asian shores of the Bosphorus, this park offers marvellous views of the Bosphorus in Üsküdar.

**Gezi Park**
If you need a break from the hustle and bustle of Taksim Square, Gezi Park, which is the closest park where you can relax.

**Göztepe Park**
This park is located right next to Bağdat Street - one of Istanbul’s the most popular shopping streets on the Asian side. It is a well-groomed park with handsome flower beds. It is also one of the most child friendly parks.

**YILDIZ PARK**
This luxuriant park, stretching over a slope right behind the Çırağan Palace, used to be the dwelling ground of Ottoman elite. Numerous pavilions were built during those times and now serve as restaurants and cafes.

**GÜLHANE PARK**
This used to be the outer garden of the Topkapı Palace during Ottoman times. It has a superb view of the Bosphorus and is conveniently located close to the main tourist attractions in Sultanahmet.

**MAÇKA PARK**
If you are shopping in Nişantaşı and prefer to take a break in greenery rather than in one of the fancy cafes, Maçka Park is the perfect place. It rests on the slope overlooking the Dolmabahçe Palace.
As the European Capital of Culture in 2010, İstanbul certified its richness and generousness in that field too. Alongside the historical sources, today, a number of modern art exhibitions are opening gates to the art lovers in İstanbul. Throughout the year, not only the Turkish artists but also the works of famous modern art creators from all around the world are displayed to such enthusiastic crowds.
**İstanbul for Art Lovers**

The art scene in İstanbul has witnessed an explosion in recent years. Independent galleries have been popping up in the back streets of Tophane, Karaköy, Galata, Cihangir, and Nişantaşı neighbourhoods, as well as the more unlikely districts of Maslak, Arnavutköy, and Balat.
Guided tours such as ArtWalk İstanbul or Tophane Art Walk take visitors through these galleries that have each a unique focus: Elipsis Gallery specialises in photography, Mixer offers a selection of emerging local artists, Galeri NON supports non-disciplinary art practices, and DEPO showcases art with socio-political implications. The century-old art nouveau building Mısır Apartmanı, on the lively Istiklal Street, attracts art lovers with its architecture as well as the numerous galleries that it houses. Aside from these smaller enterprises, exhibition spaces founded by financial institutions also shape the scene. Most favoured are SALT and ARTER, which share a mission of promoting contemporary art in Turkey. There are also a number of private museums that play a major role, such as İstanbul Modern Museum, dedicated to contemporary art from Turkey; The Pera Museum that aims to offer a broad range of high-quality culture and arts services; and The Sakıp Sabancı Museum, which focuses on traditional Ottoman art while also offering large-scale exhibitions of famous artists such as Picasso, Joan Miró, and Anish Kapoor.
ORHAN PAMUK
İSTANBUL: MEMORIES AND THE CITY

Orhan Pamuk is one of the writers who are “definitely” in love with İstanbul. His famous work, “İstanbul: Memories and the City”, though an autobiographical piece of art, is actually a novel which clearly shows the reader “the old İstanbul”. Throughout the novel, the reader catches the chance of viewing İstanbul as it was so many years ago. The reason for this is that just like so many writers and artists in general, Pamuk also identifies himself and his mindset with the atmosphere of İstanbul. The book is illustrated with the photographs by famous artist Ara Guler. The reason for this is also the fact that the depressive mode in these İstanbul pictures, especially the landscapes represent his set of mind at those times, according to Orhan Pamuk.

İSTANBUL AS A CINEMA CITY

Around February, the independent film festival İf warms the hearts of film buffs with an heart-throbbing selection from independent festivals worldwide such as Sundance. The largest film event of İstanbul is the İstanbul Film Festival, which was launched in 1982. The two-week event has become essential for cinephiles from all around the country. If you are visiting around October, you can enjoy another film festival, called FilmEkimi, showcasing the year’s favourites hand-picked from major festivals such as Cannes, Berlinale, and Venice. İstanbul also hosts small-scale film festivals that focus on specific subjects such as Filmmor Women’s Film Festival, Documentarist, and International Crime & Punishment Film Festival. İstanbul is not only an attraction for festivalgoers. It has also been an inspiration for filmmakers from the earliest days of cinema. Recently many filmmakers have been visiting the city quite often to shoot their films: Tom Tykwer’s action thriller the International (2009) starring Clive Oven and Naomi Watts, the espionage film Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy (2011), Ben Affleck’s political thriller Argo (2012), and the latest James Bond film Skyfall (2012) were all set in this fascinating city.

There are lots of movies shot in İstanbul. Skyfall, Taken 2, Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy, Ghost Rider, The International, Hitman, and The Fall, are only few of them.

Did you know?

There are lots of movies shot in İstanbul. Skyfall, Taken 2, Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy, Ghost Rider, The International, Hitman, and The Fall, are only few of them.
BIENNALES

The art event that attracts most attention, not only in the country but in the whole region, is the İstanbul Biennial. It is organised by the İstanbul Foundation For Culture and Arts, and aims to promote the formation of an international cultural network between local and international art circles, artists, curators and art critics by bringing together new trends in contemporary art every two years. In 2015, the İstanbul Biennial will run from September 5 to November 1. Over the years the Biennial has gained worldwide acclaim as one of the most prestigious of its kind. Another important event, Contemporary İstanbul International Art Fair, is now in its eighth year and is held around November. The latest addition to this rapidly expanding scene of art fairs is ArtInternational, which brought together 63 galleries from 19 different countries in its first year.
Is it Istanbul which makes people turn into sensitive artists with breathtaking views; or is it the human beings themselves who portray this city with such appealing pieces of art? Obviously, these two are just combining each other and introducing us a perfect match. Istanbul and artists are inseparable parts in this world, painting each other with different colours of life. Performing arts are by all means an indispensible part of Istanbul's metropolitan life. Watching a modern adaption of one of the famous plays of Shakespeare in a building dating from the 18th century? Having the chance of listening live a worldwide-renowned violin virtuoso? In Istanbul, you can watch the most fascinating stage performances in historical or modern performance venues such as the Church of Hagia Irene or the Harbiye Amphitheatre. Housed in the iconic Surreyya Opera House, Istanbul State Opera and Ballet performs highlights from Turkish composers or stage adaptations of classical Turkish literature. (www.dobgm.gov.tr). Every summer, the International Opera Festival welcomes musicians from all across the world.

The Istanbul State Theatre features a rich programme every season containing all-time favourites such as Shakespeare adaptations as well as children plays. Bringing together theatre companies and dance groups from Turkey and abroad, the Istanbul Theatre Festival is held around May every year.
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SAKİP SABANCI MUSEUM
Affiliated with Sabancı University, the Sakıp Sabancı Museum is located on the Equestrian Villa (Turkish: Atlı Köşk) in Emirgan, one of the oldest residences on the Bosphorus. It first opened its doors to visitors in 2002. With a rich collection of painting and calligraphy, the museum has exhibited the works of many famous artists. muze.sabanciuniv.edu/en

MUSEUM OF TURKISH CALLIGRAPHY ART
This museum hosts a collection of art and handicrafts dating from the 13th century. Among other objects, some dating back to the 13th century, the collection includes Korans, Tuğra (decorative seals of the sultans) and miniatures, as well as important examples of stone and glass work. www.vgm.gov.tr

İSTANBUL FOUNDATION FOR CULTURE AND ARTS
İstanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (İKSV) is a non-profit cultural institution that organises the İstanbul Festivals of Music, Film, Theatre and Jazz, as well as the İstanbul Biennial, the İstanbul Design Biennial, autumn film week ‘Filmekimi’, Leyla Gencer Voice Competition, and special events throughout the year. www.iksv.org

İSTANBUL MODERN
İstanbul Museum of Modern Art is Turkey’s first private museum to organize modern and contemporary art exhibitions. With its exhibition halls, photography gallery, library, cinema, restaurant and store, it constitutes a multi-faceted platform for culture and the arts. www.istanbulmodern.org/en
PERA MUSEUM
Pera Museum has evolved to become a leading and distinguished cultural center in one of the liveliest quarters of Istanbul. The museum has three permanent collections, “Orientalist Paintings”, “Anatolian Weights and Measures”, and “Kütahya Tiles and Ceramics,” and offers an outstanding range of diverse high quality culture and art services. en.peramuzesi.org.tr/

SALT
SALT explores critical and timely issues in visual and material culture, and cultivates innovative programs for research and experimental thinking. Assuming an open attitude and establishing itself as a site of learning and debate SALT aims to challenge, excite and provoke its visitors by encouraging them to offer critique and response. www.saltonline.org

ARTER
With the slogan “a place for art,” Arter was founded by the Vehbi Koç Foundation in 2010. In addition to presenting the private collection and archives of Vehbi Koç, Arter also has the goal of promoting and exhibiting new artistic works. Arter regularly updates a program which includes the works of both local and international artists. www.arter.org.tr

TURKISH AND ISLAMIC ARTS MUSEUM
The Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum (Turkish: Türk İslam Eserleri Müzesi) was the first Turkish museum to include both Islamic and Turkish art together. It is now housed in the 16th-century İbrahim Paşa Palace. The museum has a rich collection from the Ottoman period, including many imperial fermanis, charters, and endowments. The museum’s carpet collection, at around 1,700 pieces, is also well worth seeing. www.tiem.gov.tr
İstanbul has always been described as a city which is “never sleeping”. The reason of this epithet is that İstanbul offers a number of special events, organizations, and concerts at any time, no matter what the time is. It is quite reasonable to say that the generosity it offers, is a result of the wide range of residents it has. As a city hosting millions of people, the city of İstanbul has to enliven up the days and nights of its beloved residents with various events.
İstanbul for Event Seekers

İstanbul’s rich cultural heritage and immense size mean that there is always something exciting happening. The silhouette of minarets, the ‘seven hills’, and, of course, the Bosphorus create a vibrant and beautiful backdrop for events, attracting local and international crowds all around the year.

World famous stars of music of almost every genre have performed in Istanbul and the city remains as one of the major stops of the global tours of the megastars.
Major rock bands such as Metallica, or pop stars including Lady Gaga and Madonna performed against this fantastic backdrop. Grand venues, host extensive expositions that draw large numbers of businesses from the Middle East and Europe to the city. For fashion lovers, Turkey’s premier fashion event Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week İstanbul is one of the events to look forward. It offers an international platform for designers from the region to connect with media and buyers. Another area of growing attention is sports. In 2010, the World Basketball Championship was held in İstanbul, and in 2006, the Red Bull Air Acrobatics race was held for the first time in İstanbul, attracting a record number of almost one million spectators to the Golden Horn.

WORLD STARS AWAITED
2015 will be a fast-paced and active year for the music lovers in Istanbul. Itzhak Pearlman, Kylie Minogue, Justin Timberlake, Goran Bregovic, Blind Guardian, Dimitri Vegas, Chill, Jessie J, One Republic, Opeth, Anathema, Laidback Luke, Farid Farjad and Enrique Iglesias are just a couple of the names that will hit the stage in İstanbul.
MELODIES ENRICHING THE BOSPHORUS

İstanbul offers a rich variety of music events for music lovers of all genres, ranging from classical to heavy metal. The İstanbul Foundation For Culture and Arts has been organising İstanbul’s most famous festival, the International İstanbul Music Festival, since 1973. The festival focuses on classical music, creating programmes in which international orchestras and conductors perform with Turkish soloists, or vice versa. In 1986, the foundation established the Jazz Festival as a separate event, hosting world-famous artists such as Sting, Björk, and Buena Vista Social Club. Following in its footsteps, one of Turkey’s major Banks, Akbank established the Akbank Jazz Festival, with events taking place at numerous venues spread all over the city. One Love İstanbul Festival and Chill Out Festival are festivals of different genre, being organised for almost a decade. One of İstanbul’s most popular events for rock lovers is Rock’n’Coke, which is held every two years and spans over three nights. The festival presented legendary bands such as Limp Bizkit, Nine Inch Nails, Muse, Franz Ferdinand, Placebo, The Cure, The Prodigy, and Linkin Park.

**did you know?**

The free and unsponsored rock festival of Turkey, Barışarock (meaning ‘rock for peace’) is being organised since 2003, presenting mostly local bands.

**MERCEDES BENZ FASHION WEEK**

Luxury design event

Mercedes Benz Fashion Week attracts thousands to see the best fashion designers’ creations on the catwalk. Tens of Turkish and international fashion brands and designers present their collections during the event, and numerous international celebrities show up to see what latest fashion is like.
EXPERIENCE CENTURIES-OLD TRADITIONS

There is no better time than the month of Ramadan to travel back in time in İstanbul. During this three-days, the flow of life in İstanbul changes dramatically. The city is adorned with colourful lights, food stalls and classical shadow play shows – all reflect the centuries-old traditions of Ramadan. The tradition of illuminated mosques completes the festival atmosphere. If you wish to experience İstanbul in its totally authentic Ottoman atmosphere, look out for this time of the year. Everything from morning to the late hours of the night will feel like centuries ago.

During the month of Ramadan, drummers walk the streets before sunrise to wake up everyone to prepare for fasting. The breakfast is usually served before sunrise and it is called “sahur”. During the day, locals do not consume any food or drink, until the last hours of the sunshine. After the sunset, it is a custom to gather around a rich table, called “iftar”. This is a very special hour of the day, and you will see special items of food prepared and sold particularly for this time of year, such as flatbread, dates, lokum, baklava, güllaç and various other sweets. Many restaurants offer special iftar menus.

Ramadan Bayramı is especially rewarding for children, as they go around in their neighbourhood, from door to door and wishing people a Happy Bayram. As a reward, they receive candies, chocolates, or even a small amount of money. It makes the streets even busier with cheerful kids running around in their best attire for the occasion.
Among a number of intercontinental organizations, sportive events supported by worldwide known corporations take the lead. Soil, air, water... The athletes and sport lovers from all over the world, get together in Istanbul for intercontinental events like Eurasia Marathon, Bosphorus Cross-Continental Swimming Race and Cross-Continental Cycling Tour.

**Eurasia Marathon** has been organized each year since 1979 and embraces people from all over the world. Everyone can attend the event because there are 3 different routes which are 10, 15 and 42,195 kilometres long. The runners cross over the Bosphorus Bridge on which walking is prohibited during the rest of the year. So they get the unique chance of witnessing such a

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**BEST PUBLIC EVENT BY TIGER WOODS**

The privilege of lying across two continents brings about benefits! When Tiger Woods, who is among the most successful golf players of all time visited Istanbul in 2013, he also performed an intercontinental show for this city. He hit the golf ball on the Bosphorus Bridge, from the Asian Side, to the European Side. This famous performance brought Turkey an international award. His public show gained “The Best Public Event” award by the European Best Events Awards in 2014.

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**INTERCONTINENTAL EVENTS**

İstanbul is not a city “divided” but rather “spread” over two continents. Moreover, it is not just the splendid view that the citizens benefit from; but also the activities and events that are held on the routes that include the two continents at the same time.

Istanbul gained yet another title when it was chosen by the European Capitals of Sport Association (ACES) to be 2012’s European Capital of Sports.
splendid landscape in the middle of the bridge. The route starts from a distance of 200 metres to Bosphorus Bridge in the Asian Side and finishes at Sultanahmet in the European Side. The route covers mostly the seaside, enabling the runners enjoy too. Throughout the route, the needs of the runners like water, candies, fruit are met. The marathon in 2015 is on November 15th.

If seeing the two continents in the middle of the bridge is not enough for you, this city is also inviting everyone to experience the same in the sea! **Bosphorus Cross-Continental Swimming Race** is organized annually and receives a great deal of interest from everyone no matter if they are professional athletes or not. Since 1989, 700 people are swimming overarm each year, starting from Kurucesme in the European side to Kanlica in the Asian Side. The next event will be held July 26th, 2015.

World Environment Day on the 5th of June is celebrated with a **cycling festival** in İstanbul. The festival is hosted by Turkey’s Bicyclists Association and the cyclists attending have the privilege of pedalling across the two continents. The aim of this organization is to draw attention to environmental pollution and raise public awareness of the need for fighting against it. The route starts from Bakirkoy Ozgurluk Square in the European Side and ends at Uskudar in the Asian Side. Please do not forget that each organization require a beforehand registration.
Some of the scheduled concerts and events in 2015 and early 2016.

**AN EVENING WITH HUGH JACKMAN**
Zorlu Performing Arts Center
05/30/2015 – 06/01/2015

**INTERNATIONAL THEATRE FESTIVAL**

**1ST INTERNATIONAL DIGITAL LIFE ENVIRONMENTS CONGRESS**
05/4-6/2015
İstanbul University Congress and Cultur Center

**GORAN BREGOVIC**
05/06/2015 – 08/12/2015

**INTERIOR DESIGN SYMPOSIUM**
Hakkı Eldem Auditorium
İstanbul
05/7-8/2015

**ONEREPUBLIC**
Volkswagen Arena İstanbul
05/09/2015

**SEMA CEREMONY**
Galata Mevlevihane Museum
05/10/2015-06/14/2015

**TOP 100 DJS TOUR – DIMITRI VEGAS**
KüçükÇiftlik Park İstanbul
05/16/2015

**SEZEN AKSU**
Bostancı Showland İstanbul
05/22/2015

**CHILL OUT FESTIVAL**
23-24 May 2015

**ITZHAK PEARLMAN**
Zorlu Performing Arts Center
05/28/2015

**12 CELLIST OF BERLIN PHILHARMONIC**
Hagia Irene İstanbul
06/01/2015

**OLIVER SCHNYDER – İSTANBUL RECITALS**
Sabancı Museum – The Seed
İstanbul
06/04/2015

**MOZART MARATHON WITH FAZIL SAY**
Kadıköy Süreyya Opera
İstanbul
06/09/2015

**RUSSIAN ARMY CHORUS**
Zorlu Performing Arts Center
06/13/2015

**KYLIE MINOGUE**
KüçükÇiftlik Park İstanbul
06/16/2015

**BOSTON GAY MEN’S CHORUS**
Zorlu Performing Arts Center
06/27/2015

**TIGRAN HAMASYAN – THE YETEVAN STATE**
Hagia Irene İstanbul
06/30/2015

**SHOPPINGFEST**
06-28 June 2015

**İSTANBUL OPERA DAYS**
INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL ONE LOVE FESTIVAL
27 June - 15 July 2015

JOAN BAEZ
Harbiye Cemil Topuzlu Concert Hall
07/01/2015

JESSIE J
KüçükÇiftlik Park İstanbul
07/03/2015

MELODY GARDOT - WOJTEK MAZOLEWSKI QUINTET
Basketmakers' Kiosk İstanbul
07/06/2015

BURAk BEDIKYAN EUROPEAN QUARTET
Salon İKSV İstanbul
07/14/2015

REUNION EXHIBITION
Sakıp Sabancı Museum
04/09/2015-07/26/2015

PAINTER AND PAINTING EXHIBITION
The İstanbul Museum of Modern Art
01/09/2015 - 07/28/2015

SPACELINER EXHIBITION
Arter Modern Art Museum
05/15/2015 - 08/02/2015

MAGNUM - CONTACT SHEETS
The İstanbul Museum of Modern Art
02/26/2015 - 08/02/2015

MASA CULINART ARTS ACADEMY WORKSHOP
MSA Academy
04/16/2015 - 08/04/2015

ENRIQUE IGLESIAS
KüçükÇiftlik Park İstanbul
08/19/2015

MAMMA MIA!
Zorlu Performing Arts Center
09/29/2015 - 10/04/2015

İSTANBUL BIENNIAL
September 2015 / November 2015

DIANA KRALL
Zorlu Performing Arts Center
10/27/2015

RACHID TAHA
İstanbul
10/28/2015 - 10/31/2015

FARID FARJAD
Zorlu Performing Arts Center
11/19/2015

AKBANK JAZZ FESTIVAL
October 2015 - November 2015

INTERNATIONAL İSTANBUL FILM FESTIVAL
April 2016

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For updated event calendar
Established in 1997, The İstanbul Convention & Visitors Bureau (ICVB) is a non-profit destination marketing organisation.

ICVB’s main goal is to represent Istanbul around the world and to seek international associations and corporations planning to hold high-profile international congresses and events.

ICVB has played a key role in Istanbul’s rapid rise of popularity as a congress destination according to the ICCA statistics. Thus reassuring the significance of Istanbul’s 8,500 year of history as well as professional services offered by the city’s tourism industry and professional solutions offered by ICVB’s strategies.

ICVB members include the leading corporations and associations involved in the conference and incentive tourism such as hotels, conference and exhibition centres, DMC & PCOs, airlines and other companies. The ICVB, working in close collaboration with the Turkish Ministry of Culture & Tourism, the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce and the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality; designs and implements special events and other marketing strategies to raise Istanbul as a congress and event centre.

İstanbul Convention & Visitors Bureau
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www.icvb.org

facebook.com/istanbulCVB  twitter.com/istanbul_cvb
Alongside the four independent meeting clusters spread around the city, Istanbul is now, one of the “World’s Top Top 10 Congress Destinations”. With its deluxe convention and exhibition centers, this city is the house of glory for the professionals of the business World.
With a commercial heritage dating back to more than thousands years ago, İstanbul has always been an important hub along the busy trade route between the East and the West. Thanks to its prime location, guarding the sea traffic along the Bosphorus Strait, the city quickly flourished as a cross-continental trading hub.
Today, İstanbul is increasing in popularity as an international business destination with its high-standard meeting facilities. In 2014, the city ranked 9th worldwide for hosting 130 international congresses by International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA). Nationally, İstanbul is responsible for over half of Turkey’s trade, and internationally the city is an important meeting point for representatives from many industries. With 7 convention centres and 3 exhibition centres, the city can host small meetings and big-scale congresses of 30,000 participants. Catering to every need of an international organization at world standards, İstanbul offers visitors a gratifying experience to remember. After a busy day of meetings, guests can enjoy a delicious meal while taking in the glittering city lights over the Bosphorus. They can wake up to the refreshing breeze of the sea and enrich their business visit with a day of sightseeing or strolling along the historic side of the city.

The main gateway to İstanbul for business travellers is Atatürk International Airport, Europe’s fifth busiest airport, while Sabiha Gökçen Airport on the Asian side has grown quite rapidly and started serving international flights as well. With plans underway to build a third international airport, which will be the biggest in Europe, İstanbul is determined to thrive even further as a 21st century international business centre.

**A TRULY CONGRESS CITY**

‘As World’s Top 10 Congress Destination’ İstanbul is an ideal city to hold congresses with 100 to 30,000 or more participants as the city is home to 7 convention centres and 3 exhibition centres each capable of hosting major events with thousands of delegates. There are also many unusual venues situated in historic sites and Bosphorus shores that offer unique experiences for events.
**CNR EXPO**
The fairs held at CNR EXPO, which is preferred by the business world with its indoor area of 150,000 m² and outdoor area of 120,000 m² and 8 halls, are world class fairs and held in accordance with the international norms of fair organization business. CNR EXPO Yesilkoy is the largest fair complex in Eurasia, and has a car park capacity of 7,500 cars.

**HALİÇ CONGRESS CENTER**
The center is the only venue in Istanbul by the sea side which gives the unique opportunity of using sea transportation to the center, spans 102,000 sqm, includes an open space of 16,000 sqm and a total indoor exhibition area of 9,000 sqm, comprising four buildings that are interconnected with broad galleries and lounges filled with sunshine, it offers 21 multi-functional rooms including 5 state-of-the-art Auditoria.

**GRAND CEVAHİR**
With 2500 m² of usable space and 8.65 meter high ceiling the Ball Room measures up as the largest in Turkey and Europe without any structural columns. The Ballroom is dividable into 3 sections and its stage is 310 m². Cevahir Auditorium, one of the unique Hotel Auditorium in Turkey, with 1013 people capacity has state-of-the art systems for all kinds of organizations. There are 22 multi-purpose meeting rooms at the Grand Cevahir Hotel.

**İSTANBUL CONGRESS CENTER**
İstanbul Congress Center (ICC), was built in September 2009. The Congress Center is a seven floors facility which covers 119,500 m². İstanbul Congress Center is located centrally, close to the historical and touristic richness of the city and hosts the leading hotel chains of the world and its position provides convenience in terms of access and transportation.
**İSTANBUL EXPO CENTER**

İstanbul Expo Center is located in World Trade Center İstanbul facility that takes part across International Ataturk Airport. World Trade Center İstanbul, located in an area of 500,000 m², is one of the largest and most comprehensive trade centers in the world. Within this area, there are 11 exhibition halls, and three business towers that comprises of rental offices, a food court, and a business club.

**İSTANBUL LÜTFİ KIRDAR - ICEC**

The first and leading congress centre, İstanbul Convention & Exhibition Centre, (ICEC) is located in the centre of İstanbul with magnificent Bosphorus view. The centre consists of two facilities, Main Building and Rumeli Fair and Exhibition Centre, which offers a total of 45 spacious and recently renovated multi-functional meeting rooms.

**WOW CONVENTION CENTER**

WOW Convention Center, the biggest congress and accommodation center of İstanbul has 34 halls, 8500 m² meeting area and a capacity of 6500 people. WOW İstanbul Hotels & Convention Center has been renovated in order to maximize the guest satisfaction. Serving with its new face as of 2014, our facilities have been designed taking the smallest details into consideration for the comfort of the guests.
From five-star deluxe residence hotels to boutique hotels with minimalist design, Istanbul offers a wide range of accommodation choices for everyone. Nearby the touristic attractions or just next to a gigantic convention center, considering the millions of visitors Istanbul embraces each year, it is definitely not dubious to say anyone can discover the hotel suitable for themselves in this city.
İstanbul for City Explorers
True lovers of urban life will continue to be enchanted with countless historical places, churches, palaces and mosques, as well as with the buzzing rhythm of the city. İstanbul offers an unforgettable experience with its colorful daily life and dynamic nightlife. It is no coincidence that in 2010, İstanbul was chosen the European Capital of Culture. With a history dating back to thousands of years, İstanbul is one of the world’s most exciting metropolises with intercontinental events; international conferences; film, music and theater festivals; international biennials; rich museums; promising art galleries; exciting antique dealer stores; and fascinating concerts. If you are a true lover of metropolitan life, stay at a central hotel around Cihangir or Galata, and enjoy the vibrant streets around Taksim, the heart of the city. Take the funicular to Kabatas, and hop on a Bosphorus tour or take the boat to Kadıköy, the heart of the Anatolian side of the city. Plunge into the colourful and vibrant bazaar of Kadıköy filled with the scent of Turkish coffee and oriental spices. Stop by one of the hundreds of cosy cafes or pubs before heading back to your hotel. Or, why not take a walk along the Bosphorus shores around Bebek, the hip neighbourhood with the best of restaurants and cafes? With a unique combination of accessibility, variety and natural beauty, İstanbul has the true mix for every taste.

**WAITING TO BE DISCOVERED**

İstanbul offers a great adventure for the people who are in love with “discovering” new areas and cultures. Modern İstanbul exceeded from the borders of seven hills but it still has untouched areas waiting to be explored.
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Century-Old Brands Association is a young NGO which was founded on December 12th, 2011 with the aim of reaching out to old and respectful brands of Turkey most of which exist in Istanbul.

These brands are an important part of the economic and cultural history of Turkey. They were founded in the Ottoman Empire. They have witnessed the foundation of the Republic of Turkey. Now they have come together to build a platform in order to preserve and promote the city’s century-old values.
Kurukahveci Mehmet Efendi has been producing the most irresistible coffee in Turkey for 144 years.

With its delicious foam and wonderful aroma, there is no drink quite like Turkish coffee.

Served in small but delicious doses, the calorie and caffeine count in a cup of Turkish coffee are moderate, meaning you can enjoy it more often.

The wonderful taste of Turkish coffee has been bringing people together for centuries, inspiring countless works of art and having a profound influence on culture.

The telve, or Turkish coffee grounds, can be read to tell one’s fortune. It is the only coffee that can be used to predict the future.

Kurukahveci Mehmet Efendi has been producing the most irresistible coffee in Turkey for 144 years.
Who can ever claim that the Turkish Cuisine is not one of the World’s best tastes? Especially with its famous recipes inherited from the Ottoman Empire, Turkish Cuisine has an outstanding place among all other. In İstanbul, you can find the most delicious meals prepared with secret recipes. Even though these dishes are associated with different parts of the country, the restaurants in İstanbul cope with all of them fairly well.
The Turkish cuisine’s richness of variety offers a wide choice for those who want to experience and enjoy new flavours. From exquisite pastry choices to delicious meat, fish and vegetable specialities; Turkey’s gastronomic panorama reflects a remarkable culinary synthesis coming from its cultural heritage.

Istanbul is the junction point of world and Turkish cuisine’s multi-coloured traditional traits. Hence Istanbul provides a wide range of food choices originated from all around the world. With the magical touch of many civilizations and cultures, Turkish Cuisine offers to its visitors a very rich fusion. Foods, beverages and their consumption rituals are Turkey’s one of the most important cultural projections and Istanbul is the junction point of world and Turkish cuisine’s multi-coloured traditional traits.

Offering Turkish tea is a proof of hospitality and many restaurants serve it after meal with no charge. While “döner kebab” is a roasted meat on a revolving spit, Iskender Kebap is made of grilled lamb meat and hot tomato sauce served over pita bread with melted butter and yoghurt. Adana and Urfa Kebaps are cooked on a wide skewer. Şiş Kebap is made of cubic cut meat
What to eat in Istanbul?

Usual kebabs that you can even eat at home?
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grilled on a barbecue. Surrounded by seas, Turkey is the place for seafood lovers. Bluefish, bonito, mackerel, sole, octopus, trout, picarel and specially cooked mussel with rice definitely deserve to be tasted. Börek is a layers of pastry filled with either meat, potato, cheese or vegetables. Lahmacun is a thin pizza with minced meat and onion on the top. Circle shaped and covered with sesame seeds, Dolma made from vine leaves and rice came into life from Turkish people’s emigrations. Meal is eaten and its time to select from the long dessert menu. Traditionally the meal ends with a glass of tea, helping you to digest. Sütlaç (rice pudding), muhallebi (milk pudding) and kazandibi (white pudding with burnt surface) are milk-based desserts. Famous Baklava with pistachio or walnut, Ekmek Kadayıfı with clotted cream and Künefe with soft cheese are among pastry-based desserts. As for fruit-based desserts; quince, fig, pumpkin and pear wait to be tasted. Made from yoghurt, water and salt, refreshing Ayran is generally served with a meal. In brief, if you experience Turkey’s traditional foods and beverages, you will also experience the Turkish people’s hospitality, fellowship and joyfulness. Be prepared!
A great part of traditional Turkish cuisine is comprised of desserts and probably the most famous of Turkish desserts is baklava. In this land, the story of baklava is quite old and detailed. Baklava has been the dessert of the ceremony and celebration for Turkish people throughout the centuries, it achieves to have a part in daily life as the essential dessert.

Thanks to Köşkeroğlu Baklava’s experience and know-how, types of baklava prepared with butter, flour, walnuts and pistachio turn into a feast for the gods. Köşkeroğlu Baklava providing customers with quality service has variety of desserts and foods such as “Baklava”, “Şöbiyet” (multiflaked pastry with cream and pistachio filling), “Dürüm “(sweet wrap), “Fistik Sarma” (a sweet dish of filo dough wrapped around a filling nuts) “Gelin Bohçası”, “Burma Kadayıf” (shredded wheat dessert with pistachio filling) Water Heurek with Butter, Special Cookies of Gaziantep, types of Kahke with olive oil. You can also add richness to these desserts and foods with flavourings such as ice-cream or cream. You can protract your relaxation time with various hot and cold beverages. Moreover, you can relieve tiredness with homemade lemonade in hot days. “Katmer”, a taste from Gaziantep and eaten hot, will be a delicacy that you will never get out of your mind.
MEZE CULTURE

New venues and hip restaurants serving fusion cuisine have been popping around the city, yet the quintessential eating experience remains always a classic: the traditional mezze (Turkish style appetizers) at a meyhane accompanied by the local spirit raki. Especially Beyoğlu houses hundreds of meyhanes, but those along the bustling Nevizade Street, just behind the majestic Çiçek Pasaji are authentic and lively.
Istanbul has a lot more to offer than its rich history. In the narrow streets winding between historic buildings and ancient palaces, a pulsating modern culture has been thriving. The sound of espresso machines as well as the smell of local cuisine and Turkish coffee fill the backstreets of İstiklal. If you prefer to taste local wine, make sure to stop by one of the historic wine houses at Pera. Gourmet travellers will adore the local scents emanating from the tea and spice stores in the Grand Bazaar, in Sultanahmet, and the Egyptian Spice Market, in Eminönü. The Grand Bazaar also houses a historic coffeehouse, where you can find the best Turkish coffee in town cooked on coal fire. The waterfront restaurants in chic Bebek and cosy Ortaköy serve local food such as kebabs, gozleme (savory pancakes), and flatbread. The bohemian Çukurcuma and Galata neighbourhoods feature modest eateries specializing in local or regional food. Upscale restaurants mastering modern world cuisine are mostly nestled in the chic streets of sophisticated Nişantaşı, Maslak, Levent, and Etiler. The narrow streets of Galata are dotted with hip brasseries while Karaköy is up and coming as a popular district for ambient restaurants.

**Did you know?**

Simit is a traditional breading which is very popular in Turkey. Often sold by street vendors, its customary to have your simit with tea.
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Located overlooking the Golden Horn, Asitane opened its doors in 1991, together with the Kariye Hotel, a restored 19th century traditional Ottoman mansion. The restaurant, was named after one of the many names given to Istanbul.
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Settled on a roof with a breathtaking view at Istiklal Avenue, Peyderpey presents a delicious synthesis of traditional Ottoman and contemporary Turkish cuisine.
In addition to the finest quality Ottoman cuisine, İstanbul features first-class world cuisine in select restaurants. Many travellers may primarily look forward to tasting the best of Ottoman culinary culture, characterised by a rich blend of spices, meat and vegetables, covering a vast geographical area from Balkans to Middle East. However, İstanbul also offers visitors some finest quality world cuisine at premium restaurants. Michelin-starred chefs often come to İstanbul both to enrich their culinary experiences and to find inspiration in the local fare. From Massimo Bottura serving at Zorlu Center’s Ristorante D’Italia, to Tom Aikens, Enrico Cerea and Rudolf Van Nunen, some very successful chefs find their way into İstanbul and offer their best fusions here. In addition to the stars, many up-and-coming talented chefs visit İstanbul in the scope of Omnivore Festival. Furthermore, world-class chain restaurants are increasing their interest in İstanbul. Here in İstanbul, you have the best chance of expanding your tastes not only into the local culinary culture but also into some of the best world cuisine. Enjoy İstanbul, home of Mediterranean, Lebanese, Far Eastern, Indian and different world cuisines.

Ristorante Italia di Massimo Bottura, a contemporary Italian fine dining restaurant inside Eataly İstanbul. Massimo Bottura is the highly regarded chef-patron of the three Michelin starred Osteria Francescana in Modena, a restaurant that has been voted best restaurant in Italy many times and currently sits at #3 on The World’s 50 Best Restaurants list. Whilst Ristorante Italia takes some inspiration from the award winning establishment in Modena, Massimo Bottura’s first restaurant outside of Italy will be an entirely unique proposition. At Ristorante Italia traditional Italian flavours and contemporary cooking techniques come together to bring the very best of the past into the future. Massimo Bottura has reworked 100 classic Italian recipes from the northern Alps to the southern tip of Pannelliera to embrace the diversity and bounty of the Italian kitchen. The resulting dishes form the repertoire from which the menus are drawn. Iconic Italian dishes have been challenged, reimagined and transformed.
Sometimes a sophisticated nightclub with dazzling view nearby the sea, sometimes an underground bar with non-stop headbangers or just a relaxing café serving you hookah and also open all night long… We said İstanbul never sleeps, so it will not let you sleep too!
Nightlife in İstanbul is multifarious, ranging from some rooted establishments to hip clubs, from partying by the sea to underground rock cafes, from gigantic venues to cozy live music bars. All these nightlife choices are scattered around the city, which boasts several centers when it comes to nightlife. The music scene around the bohemian Galata neighbourhood attracts international jazz aficionados. There are several rooftop terraces, where you can enjoy nice music while watching the beautiful sunset across the fascinating scene of Golden Horn. If you rather dance to house music and looking for a fancy clubbing experience, the upscale clubs along the shores of the Bosphorus stand out with their exquisite ambience. Featuring lush waterfront terraces facing the glittering Bosphorus Bridge and an unforgettable sight, the venues in Ortaköy, Kuruçeşme and Bebek welcome internationally renowned DJs and live performers throughout the year. The Asian side of the city, known as Kadıköy, is known for the local music scene. Alongside of hip bars featuring a large variety of music, including jazz, reggae, world music, electronic, Latin or Turkish vibes, there are numerous underground clubs, bars and live performance venues where alternative indie pop and rock bands can be enjoyed.
İstanbul for Clubbers

**WILD NIGHTS**

İstanbul is just the right city to go wild! Every summer, worldwide known DJ’s visit the city and perform fabulous shows to enthusiastic crowds. Dj-ane da Queen, Michael Mayer, DJ Meg, Mark Knight and Luke Vibert are just a few of those famous DJ’s who will visit Istanbul this year.
If you feel bemused by the baffling diversity of İstanbul's nightlife, here are some of the top picks of the city's popular bars, clubs, and venues. Probably the city's classiest club is located on the banks of the Bosphorus: Reina. Spread on two floors, Reina offers supreme entertainment and an unparalleled restaurant, which is famed for its first-class cuisine. Another sophisticated venue for high-class entertainment is Suada. What makes this venue so attractive is its unparalleled location covering an island on the Bosphorus. SupperClub and Nupera are also high end places in Beyoğlu area for a classy evening.
If you rather prefer dancing or listening to some fine-quality electronic music, Indigo is the home of İstanbul's electro scene. Located in Beyoğlu, the club welcomes acclaimed international and local DJs. If you like to feast your ears on some of the local indie tunes, then Babylon surely has something to surprise you. For more than ten years Babylon has been serving as a multi-purpose performance centre. In fact, it features a large variety of music, including jazz, world music, and electronic, and it is well-known for hosting some of the leading indie musicians from Turkey.

In warmer months, it is always more pleasant and preferable to enjoy the open air. Then you may venture up the Bosphorus towards Bebek, an upper class district with upscale pubs, bars, cafés, and fine dining by the sea. Situated at the heart of Bebek, Lucca starts as a restaurant and turns into a bar after the sunset. The DJs take over the scene on Fridays and Saturdays.

Nightlife spreads both banks, and ArkaOda and many other in Kadıköy stands out with their friendly atmosphere and good music. If you seek the opportunity to familiarize yourself with local DJs and underground music scene, Kadıköy may offer some unforgettable moments.
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Through its history, İstanbul has always been a global center for trade, thanks to its unique location. Today, as well as maintaining that historical heritage, İstanbul has elegant high streets, state of the art malls and even a festival for shopping, attracting millions to the city for a shopping extravaganza!
Istanbul for Shopping Lovers

Istanbul is one of the cities with most shopping malls. There are currently 114 shopping malls in the city.
Alongside of traditional street markets and historic bazaars, İstanbul offers many sophisticated boutiques in its bohemian backstreets and worldwide brands in its upscale shopping malls, such as Zorlu, İstinye Park, Akasya and Mall of İstanbul. İstanbul has 114 malls across the city. Whether you seek vintage fashion, contemporary design or local brands, İstanbul has a lot to offer for every taste. The stylish neighbourhood Nişantaşı is constantly buzzing with shoppers hanging around the elegant cafes and classy boutiques. Here you can have a taste of high-end fashion and check out the latest collections by such luxurious brands as Chanel, Prada, Louis Vuitton as well as Turkish brands such as Vakko and Beymen. Smaller boutiques feature incredibly versatile pieces ranging from party dresses to more relaxed leisure elegance. İstanbul also offers the best of Ottoman-inspired jewellery in the stores around Nişantaşı as well as the 553-year-old Grand Bazaar and another upscale shopping street Bağdat Caddesi. You can also find finest silky shawls and scarves in traditional patterns as well as other traditional items in the historic Grand Bazaar and Egyptian Bazaar. The Bağdat Caddesi, on the Asian side of the city, spans a few kilometres along the coast. Walking and window-shopping along the boulevard is a leisurely way to spend a day, stopping by nice restaurants and cafes.

ANTIQUE HAVEN
Nearby İstiklal Street, always abuzz with shoppers, the backstreets around Galata and Çukurcuma neighbourhoods house some of the most promising up-and-coming fashion design. Here you can find the finest vintage pieces as well as handcrafted jewellery, hand-painted textile items and stylish urban wear. The antique dealers offer authentic decoration items.
iStanbul ShoppingFest started in 2011 with the aim to revive the economy by combining shopping with entertainment. The festival takes place every summer and is spread all over the city. In 2015, the festival is scheduled to run from June 6 until June 28. While most stores and malls join the fest by offering surprise discounts, and organising fun events, ShoppingFest also comprises historical shopping sites such as the Mahmutpaşa Bazaar. On certain days, special sales are offered on select merchandises: Gold Day provides major discounts on jewellery, Adorn Your House Day is filled with surprise prices for creating a dream home, Shoes and Bags Day is the dream of shoe lovers, and Cosmetics Day is a great opportunity to buy cosmetics and personal care products. With advantageous campaigns and discounts offered by the most prestigious brands, the festival also features concerts, fashion shows, street parties. A wonderful opportunity to indulge in the city and all it has to offer to take home!

**did you know?**

Each year, Istanbul Shopping Fest covers the concerts of the most famous singers, stage shows, DJ performance and of course, “legendary discount for all”.
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83 METER OCEAN TUNNEL
SHARK KINGDOM
As a metropolis, İstanbul has a lot to offer to families travelling with children and looking to spend peaceful time not only by getting around but also by getting to know the city’s cultural heritage.
The first theme park of Turkey, Vialand, covers an area equal to 100 football pitches. In 2014 Vialand had 8.5 million visitors from all around the globe.

The fabulous city offers children the chance to familiarise themselves with the history, art, nature, and cuisine of the region. Hopping on a boat tour in the morning and cruising along the Bosphorus is perhaps one of the best ways to enjoy the best sights of the city with children. Make sure to take them to Rahmi Koç Museum, which is located on the shores of the Golden Horn. The museum includes antique machines, cars, ships, and even a plane as well as a submarine. You can spend quality time at the café by the water while the children enjoy the many attractions at the museum’s garden. Istanbul
MINIATURK THEME PARK

One of the world’s largest theme parks, Miniaturk covers an area of 40,000 square metres of open space filled with the miniaturised models of the most popular tourist attractions. The park contains a total of 122 models, 58 of which are from Istanbul, while 52 are from other cities in Anatolia. Kids will also have a chance to see historic structures modelled on their originals such as the Temple of Artemis at City of Ephesus.

When the weather is nice, the best place for kids to make a quick Istanbul tour is the Miniaturk Theme Park. Here the visitors can see the miniaturised models of famous sites such as Hagia Sophia, Blue Mosque, Topkapi Palace, to name but a few. The biggest dinosaur theme park in Europe, Jurassic Land is a place where kids can learn and have fun at the same time.

KIDZANIA ISTANBUL
GET READY FOR A BETTER WORLD!

KidZania, the global leader in edutainment for children, provides children and their parents a safe, unique, and very realistic educational environment that allows kids between the ages of 4 to 14 to do what comes naturally to them: role-playing adult activities. KidZania is a complete child-size city with buildings, paved streets, vehicles and a functioning economy. In KidZania, as in the real world, children perform “jobs” and are either paid for their work (as a fireman, doctor, dentist, journalist, shopkeeper, etc.) or pay for goods and services.

Come and Join The Fun at KidZania Istanbul!

From archaeologist to secret agent, KidZania Istanbul offers nearly 90 role-playing activities in more than 60 establishments with a range of difficulty that meets the abilities and interests of every child. Kids work to earn KidZos, KidZania’s own currency, so they can buy goods and services or join activities in KidZania. KidZania is real state with a hospital, fire station, bank, supermarket, pizzeria, theater, stadium, archeological museum, university and much more.

Contact: 0850 200 54 39 (KIDZ)
www.kidzania.com.tr
Online ticket sales: www.kidzaniabilet.com
In Istanbul, there are many places where your children can enjoy an instructive visit. If your kids are nature lovers, they will appreciate an exciting visit to the Istanbul Aquarium. Recently opened, the Aquarium is currently the biggest thematic aquarium in the world. Offering a rich variety of activities and events for children, the Aquarium hosts about 15,000 creatures. Home to Europe’s biggest sharks, the Turkuazoo Aquarium offers another chance for an instructive visit with the possibility of diving. If your kid is into art, definitely take them to Istanbul Museum of Modern Art. Kids will also enjoy a ride on the nostalgic tram in Beyoğlu. You can watch the crowds and shop windows from your seats as the tram travels along the Grand Rue de Pera, known today as İstiklal Street.

If you rather prefer entertaining yourselves and the kids as a whole family, Vialand is a perfect place to spend time altogether. Istanbul Dolphinarium is the biggest Dolphinarium in Europe. Visitors may enjoy the dolphin shows, discover the world of the sea mammals such as dolphins, playful fur seals, massive walruses and the gorgeous white whale and spend great time at the Istanbul Dolphinarium.
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İSTANBUL
AKVARYUM IS WAITING FOR YOU

İstanbul Akvaryum offers a greater adventure with its travel route, thematic areas, a thousand square meter rainforest and interactive new generation technology, when compared to other aquariums in its field.

Cultural, geographic, historical and architectural characteristics of relevant area, decorative items, interactive plays, sound and lighting, films and visual graphics where detailed information on that area are available in the thematic areas. Visitors can see sea animals belonging to these regions and get information about geographic and cultural characteristics of that region. All creatures living in İstanbul Akvaryum maintain their life under conditions that are similar to their natural environment.

There are a number of different species in İstanbul Akvaryum. You can see red-bellied piranhas actually living in Amazon
Rainforest in there. They are one of the most interesting creatures for the visitors in İstanbul Akvaryum. They wander about and hunt in shoals. They can smell one drop of blood in water from 2 km distance. Though piranhas are really impressive, the biggest creature of İstanbul Akvaryum is Lemon Shark. It lives in the Main tank that is the largest tank of the aquarium. Lemon Shark has a lifetime of 25 years in average and it does not rest or sleep during their lives because their gills that they breath through do not work while they do not move.

İstanbul Akvaryum is divided into different sections with different themes so that everyone can find the place for themselves: Amazon Rainforest, 5D Cinema, Hurricane Simulator, Mirror Maze and Diving with Sharks. The Amazon Rainforest’s temperature, humidity rate, tiny but toxic frogs, the world’s smallest crocodile will make you feel the exact atmosphere of the Amazon. You can also have blast in 5D Cinema. Differently from other 5D cinema systems, 5D 6-axis cinema has a platform moving on six pistons and allows horizontal motion as well, maximizes the experience with fog, wind and water effects, blowing to face and neck, forward-backward, right-left movements. Moreover, the Hurricane Simulator in İstanbul Akvaryum is faster than a shark with its 150 km/h speed and stronger than the scary jaw of a crocodile with its wind. In Mirror Maze, you will come across to similar passages, endless reflections, thrilling dead-ends and new surprises at every corner while you are trying to find Mysterious Antique Totem of Amazon. Also in amazon section, a mother and baby capybara, the largest rodent in the world awaits the visitors. Last but never the least, İstanbul Akvaryum gives its visitors a unique chance to dive with the sharks. It is possible in the main tank with a water capacity of 4 thousand cubic meters, which hosts 5 thousand creatures.
nearby places
The vicinity of İstanbul has numerous tranquil alternatives for visitors and İstanbulites alike, who are looking for a bit of breath out of the city life. Just an hour drive from the city, you will experience the surprising natural jewels of İstanbul.
AĞVA
A small town by the Black Sea, AĞva is only 97 kilometres far from İstanbul. Located on the delta of the Göksu and Yeşilçay rivers, this small town stands out with its picturesque landscapes. Nestled amidst lush greenery, AĞva attracts many visitors due to its exotic ambience. With hotels mostly located on the riverbanks, it offers an unforgettable getaway. In summer months, visitors may go for a refreshing swim in the Black Sea. If you are visiting in warm weather, make sure to take a boat tour to see some extraordinary waterfalls and secluded coves.
How to get there? Public transport busses no. 139 or 139A leave from İstanbul Harem to Şile and AĞva.

PRINCE’S ISLANDS
During the summer months the Princes’ Islands are popular destinations for day trips from Istanbul. As there is no traffic on the Islands, the only transport being horse and cart, they are incredibly peaceful compared with the city of İstanbul. How to get there? Ferryboat and sea bus trips from Kabatas, Kadıköy or Bostancı.

Did you know?
With river Göksu in the west and river Yeşilçay in the east, the name AĞva means “between the rivers”. The settlement became shooting place in a number of television serials.
**POLONEZKÖY**

A picturesque getaway with a historic atmosphere, Polonezköy was founded in early 19th century by Polish settlers. Established in the midst of lush greenery, Polonezköy (literally translates as the Polish Village) is characterised by beautiful houses sitting on well-tended gardens and walking paths through the forest. Especially in spring and summer, Polonezköy is filled with flowers and vivid colours of nature. İstanbullites come here to find some peace in nature and picnic in the shade of magnificent trees, only a few kilometres from İstanbul. Photography enthusiasts visit the village for some stunning nature photography. With a rich historical heritage blending Polish and Ottoman character as well as its charming landscapes, Polonezköy is a romantic getaway at a remarkably short distance from the central İstanbul.

How to get there? Since Polonezköy is not serviced by public transport, the best way to get there is to rent a car and take the highway known as the Riva Road. It is about 25 km from the city centre.

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**SAPANCA**

With its picturesque lake and relaxing ambience, Sapanca is a perfect escapade. Walk around the lake and slow down by the shore to take a break from the hustle and bustle of the city. The lakeside atmosphere offers a rich variety of ways to unwind and admire the healing beauty of the nature. Thanks to the humidity and oxygen levels in the air, Sapanca is home to a truly rich mix of flora and a lush forest. In winter, you can go skiing at the scenic Kartepe. Waking up to birdsongs, enjoying local food at waterfront restaurants, and relaxing with a walk or bike ride along the lakeshore are only 90-minute drive away from İstanbul.

How to get there? Busses leave from İstanbul Harem Bus Terminal to Adapazari and they stop at Sapanca.
Beaches Of Istanbul

If you are visiting İstanbul in warm months, you can find nice beaches only a few kilometres away from the city. Most of the nearby beaches provide good facilities, which make them ideal for families with children.

ŞİLE

A lovely Black Sea resort located about 70 km from İstanbul, Şile is a historic fishing village, where you can take a glimpse of local life outside the metropolis. This little town is about an hour’s drive from the city centre, yet houses some beautiful sandy beaches that are easily accessible from the highway. The town has a lot of rocky peaks that offer a breathtaking view on the old harbour. A popular day-tripper destination in summer, Şile features many bars and restaurants serving delicious food and offering a wonderful view of the Black Sea and the historic Ottoman lighthouse.

How to get there? Şile is a part of the İstanbul public transport system so you can take a bus from Harem, no. 139 and 139A.

PRINCES’ ISLANDS BEACHES

Easy to get with an enjoyable ferry ride along the Bosphorus, Princes’ Islands include some nice beaches suitable for swimming. Surrounded by the cleanest waters of the Marmara Sea, five islands, namely Büyükada, Heybeliada, Burgazada, Heybeliada and Sedefada feature beautiful beaches. Admission is with ticket.
**BEYKOZ**

Beykoz Beach is a matchless location for a refreshing swim while enjoying the unique view of the Bosphorus Bridge. About 300 metres long, it is a serviced beach complete with sun loungers, parasols, changing rooms, bathrooms and shower rooms. It is part of the public transport network and easy to get with a public bus.

**KILYOS**

Located on the shores of the Black Sea, Kilyos is home to several beaches. Accessible by city bus, minibus, fast ferry or traditional ferry, Kilyos features a free public beach as well as serviced beach clubs that are admissible with a ticket. In summer months, most of these beaches play host to events such as DJ performances, festivals, and concerts.

**POYRAZKÖY**

Poyrazköy Beach is located at the end of the Bosphorus on the Anatolian side and known for its calm sea. It is a serviced beach complete with sun loungers and parasols. İstanbulites usually prefer Poyrazköy for a weekend beach retreat.

**did you know?**

Kilyos is one of the popular locations for kiteboarding in Turkey. Kiteboard World Tour was held in Kilyos in 2012. You can get lessons for kite surfing at the beach clubs.
İstanbul has so much to offer for different tastes that you have to plan carefully to get the most out of it. Don’t worry! We did this for you in the following pages. Either for a short visit, or a week’s stay, you’ll find plenty of time to experience this magnificent city!
One Day Visit

If you have only one day to spend in Istanbul, the best way to get the most out of the city is to indulge in the sights, sounds, and scents of the famous Sultanahmet area. Here, you can get a feel of the rich Byzantine heritage, the glory of the Imperial Capital and the welcoming city of today. From glittering mosaics to aspiring minarets, from royal magnificence to the buzzing rhythm of everyday life, Sultanahmet will offer you the ultimate Istanbul experience in a nutshell.

09:00 VISIT HAGIA SOPHIA
One of the signature landmarks of the city that remains impressively intact, Hagia Sophia is almost an embodiment of the Istanbul’s history. You can see the original structure dating back to the 5th century and the additions, amendments, changes made in the following centuries to reflect the characteristic style of the period. As much as its admirable hybridity on the outside, Hagia Sophia spectacularly blends centuries old Christian icons with imposing Islamic calligraphy. Take your time to explore every little corner of this edifice and make sure to spend some time in its garden, where you can familiarise yourself with the archaeological findings unearthed from the site.

11:00 VISIT THE BLUE MOSQUE
Two prominent monuments of Istanbul stand face to face in Sultanahmet. Once you step out from Hagia Sophia, just walk straight and you will be approaching the magnificent Blue Mosque. This elegant mosque was built in the 17th century to celebrate the Ottoman power at the site of the Hippodrome and the Byzantine Palace; hence, its symbolic power. What makes the mosque so distinctive is its synthesis of Christian architectural elements with traditional Islamic architecture to reach a culmination of styles up to its day. Make sure you spend some time in silence inside the mosque to admire its prayerful candle-lit atmosphere and elegant blue tiles.
**12:00 VISIT THE TOPKAPI PALACE**

We suggest you to have a quick bite before entering the Palace, because even a quick visit takes a few hours. Served as the royal residence for Ottoman sultans for nearly 400 years, Topkapı Palace is actually a large complex consisting of four main courtyards and many smaller buildings including mosques, harem, a hospital, bakeries, and mansions. The site not only provides an insight into the everyday life of royals but also the running of the state.

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**16:00 WALK THROUGH AND SHOP AT GRAND BAZAAR**

One of the oldest and largest covered markets in the world, the Grand Bazaar dates from the 15th century. This is the perfect place to end your visit by shopping for some souvenirs for beloved ones back home. A walk through the Bazaar is a journey amidst enchanting scents of spices, dazzling colours, beautiful handicrafts, and, of course, the tempting smell of Turkish coffee. Make sure to stop by one of the traditional cafes to have a sip of strong Turkish coffee before leaving for the airport.
If you plan to stay for three days in İstanbul, you can have a taste of its history as well as modern marvels. Since İstanbul is such a big city, you will still need to hurry if you want to make most of it. At the end of these three days, you will definitely want to come back for a longer visit!

**Three Day Visit**

**DAY ONE**

In addition to the Day One programme, which suggests a visit to the Hagia Sophia at 09:00, a visit to the Blue Mosque at 11:00, a visit to the Topkapı Palace at 12:00, and a walk through the Grand Bazaar at 16:00 (see previous page for details), you can continue with the following:

19:00 DINNER

Sultanahmet area is famous for its meatball restaurants. Make sure you try one of the traditional meatball restaurants before heading back to your hotel.

**DAY TWO**

Since Day One has been a busy day with a lot of walking and sightseeing, it is a good idea to spend the second day in a relaxing mood.

09:00 BREAKFAST BY THE BOSPHORUS

What could be more rewarding than a warm cup of tea by the Bosphorus in the fresh, sea-scented air? Get on a vehicle and head to Ortaköy or Bebek to sit by the sea and have some traditional Turkish breakfast, served alongside of freshly brewed tea. Take your time to delight in the fresh air and beautiful scenery at this matchless spot on earth.

12:00 BOAT TRIP ON THE BOSPHORUS

There are many privately-owned boats running along the Bosphorus, alongside of regular public ferries. If you take the former, you will probably have a guide on board or an audio guide that gives information on the landmark structures along the Bosphorus, such as historic mansions, military mansions, or ancient walls. If you take the latter, you have the privilege of enjoying the classical İstanbul ferry, which is so characteristic of the city's historic and modern image alike. A boat trip usually takes several hours and some trips are inclusive of a lunch, or dinner on board.

19:00 DINNER IN ORTAKÖY

Eating out by the shore and enjoy the seafood from the Bosphorus is the best way to end the day. Since restaurants in Ortaköy are various, just pick one!
12:00 GALATA TOWER AND LUNCH
Just continue down the Istiklal Street until you reach a quarter that looks like a small Italian piazza. It is beyond simple likeness, because this little square, which is home to the Galata Tower, was once a Genoese neighbourhood. The medieval tower, built in the 14th century, stands intact and open for public visit. It is a rewarding experience to ascend the tower and enjoy the panorama over the Golden Horn and the Bosphorus. The little square at the foot of the tower is home to cute restaurants, which offer a gratifying lunch.

15:00 ARTWALK AND SHOPPING
The sidestreets of Galata include promising art galleries, where you can explore the local and global trends in artistic production, as well as haute couture boutiques, which feature outstanding local fashion. From Galata, make sure you walk towards Çukurcuma and Cihangir. These neighbouring quarters offer not only an enjoyable walk along narrow streets dotted with historic facades of old Istanbul, but also include best vintage shops in town. Here you can find antique dealers selling rare furniture and curiosity items as well as vintage clothing.

19:00 DINNER IN CIHANGIR
The picturesque neighbourhood of Cihangir is spotted with cosy restaurants serving quality food. Pick one and enjoy your final evening in the city.
If you are lucky enough to plan a one-week visit to İstanbul, then you can have a taste of its history, modern marvels, attractive shopping streets, and go a bit out of town for a relaxed day. Just an hour of driving away, you will find beautiful beaches, authentic villages, and picturesque shorelines.

**Seven Day Visit**

Please refer to Three-Day Visit pages for the details of the first three days

**DAY FOUR**

**09:00 KABATAŞ FERRY DOCKS**

Kabataş is the nearest ferry dock to Taksim Square, and it is easily reached by the historic funicular line that connects to the Taksim station on the city’s underground. We suggest you to catch the morning boat to Kadıköy, the Asian side of the Bosphorus. The boats run to Kadıköy from Kabataş every half an hour. Make sure to grab a seat in the open air, if you are visiting in summer. This ferry ride is a wonderful occasion to delight in the beautiful scenery of the Bosphorus. You will see the monumental Hagia Sophia and the graceful Topkapi Palace standing out. Make sure to order a cup of tea to sip on during the picturesque journey.

**09:30 BREAKFAST IN KADIKÖY**

Kadıköy is vibrant and always dotted with street musicians. If you are lucky, you may see groups of youngsters dancing to their music near the docks. We suggest you to have a quick breakfast with coffee and croissants at the café just across the ferry docks.
10:30 WALK THROUGH THE STREET MARKET
Kadıköy is famous for its street market and a walk though the colourful stalls is not only a feast to the eye but to all your senses. As you walk from one shop to another, you will enjoy travelling from one attractive smell to another. Here you can find the best of local spices, local cheese, and local coffee. Make sure to choose from the authentic coffee stores for a cup of Turkish coffee and enjoy the traditional serving with lokums.

12:00 STROLLING ALONG MODA
Follow the street towards Moda. You can either go back to the seaside to take the waterfront route, or stroll along the lively Moda Avenue. The Moda Avenue is dotted with nice boutiques, art stores, and cosy cafes. Walk until the Moda Tea Garden.

13:00 MODA TEA GARDEN AND LUNCH
One of the best places for enjoying a cup of tea while watching the Bosphorus is Moda Tea Garden. Here you may spend quality time in calm. If you are travelling with children, they will love the playground located in the midst of a green park behind the tea garden. This is also a perfect place for picnicking when the weather is nice. We suggest you to choose from many restaurants by the shore for lunch, or go for a nice picnic in the sun.

16:00 SHOPPING AT THE BAHARIYE AVENUE
As you leave Moda, head back to Kadıköy and continue to Bahariye Avenue. This is a lively street filled with worldwide brands. It also contains the historic tram and the iconic Sureyya Opera House.

19:00 DINNER
For an authentic dinner, we suggest you to head to Çiya Restaurant, located in the Kadıköy street market. With its rich menu of classical Ottoman cuisine, kebabs and vegetarian choices, Çiya is an indispensable stop for anyone travelling to Kadıköy.

21:00 LAST FERRY TO KABATAŞ
Catch the last ferry to Kabataş at 21:00.
09:00 VISITING ISTANBUL MODERN
İstanbul is home to some very nice museums, and it is a good idea to spare one day for museum visiting. Located by the Bosphorus, İstanbul Museum of Modern Art houses the highlights of Turkish modern art. Here you will have a chance to acquaint yourselves with paintings, installations, and sculptures produced in the modernist era of Turkish art. The museum also includes a children’s hall with workshops and activities for children. The museum’s cafe offers a breathtaking panorama of the Bosphorus and a nice place to have a cup of coffee, breakfast or lunch. The museum’s library is also worth visiting.

12:00 MUSEUM OF INNOCENCE
From İstanbul Museum of Modern Art, you can catch a taxi to the Museum of Innocence, located nearby, in Tophane. This fascinating museum, designed and put together by the Nobel Prize-winning novelist Orhan Pamuk, is no less a piece of conceptual art. The museum displays a quirky collection of objects that evoke the daily life around 1970s, when Pamuk’s novel of the same name is set.

15:00 İSTANBUL ARCHAEOLOGY MUSEUMS
From the Museum of Innocence, you can hop on a taxi and get to the İstanbul Archaeology Museums, located in Sultanahmet. İstanbul Archaeology Museums is composed of three main parts: the Archaeology Museum, the Museum of the Ancient Orient and the Tiled Pavilion. The Museum was designed and put together by the famous painter, Osman Hamdi Bey.

19:00 DINNER IN EMINÖNÜ
As you get out of the museum, walk to Eminönü, the historic district on the shores of the Golden Horn. Hamdi Restaurant is famous for its kebabs and mezes. It has a nice terrace, which offers a breathtaking panorama of the Golden Horn and the Bosphorus.
09:00 KABATAŞ FERRY DOCKS
Catch the morning ferry to Princes' Islands. Make sure you get on the right ferry, since there is usually more than one leaving at the same time from the docks to different destinations. You should follow the ‘Adalar’ sign.

10:30 ARRIVAL IN BÜYÜKADA
The Islands lie about 20 km southeast of the city in the Sea of Marmara. Therefore, it takes a longish ferry ride to reach there. Büyükada, just as all the islands, are free of car traffic and it comes as a welcome relief after all those days you have spent in the midst of the city’s bustling rhythm. Transportation is by bicycle, horse-drawn carriage and foot, as in centuries past. Take your time to walk around and enjoy the calm. Bicycles are available for rent in several of the town’s shops, and shops on the market street can provide picnic supplies.

14:00 VISITING MONASTERY OF ST GEORGE
Located between Büyükada’s two highest hills, the Greek Monastery of St George is the main attraction of the island. To get there, just walk from the ferry straight ahead to the clock tower. If you wish to do some shopping, turn left along Recep Koç Sokak. The walk to the Monastery takes at least one hour. Along the road you will see impressive wooden villas set in gardens.

19:00 DINNER
You may hop on one of Büyükada’s numerous horse carriages and ask the driver to take you to restaurant, most of them having an authentic setting. The carriage ride is an unforgettable journey past historic mansions and pines. Most of the restaurants offer a stunning location overlooking nearby islands and the open sea. You may prefer to spend the night here, or catch the latest ferry at the midnight.

09:00 BREAKFAST AT YOUR HOTEL

10:30 HAMMAM EXPERIENCE
Ayasofya Hürrem Sultan Hammam is one of the oldest in Istanbul, and it was built by the worldwide-renowned Ottoman architect Sinan in 1584. You may treat yourself to a true Turkish bath experience under the huge, elegant dome. Pamper yourself in this historic hammam to prepare for a long journey back home.

www.ayasofyahamami.com
LOCATION AND GEOGRAPHY
İstanbul is a transcontinental city straddling two continents by its inland sea Marmara. The city is divided into four regions and has a natural harbor, the Golden Horn. One of the world’s busiest waterways, the Bosphorus, is situated in northwestern Turkey between the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara. Connecting the two seas, Bosphorus also separates İstanbul to two sides known as European side and Asian side.

LANGUAGE
Turkish

CURRENCY
The Turkish Lira is the official currency of Turkey. Bank notes come in denominations of 5, 10, 20, 50, 100 and 200 TL. Coins come in the amounts of 1, 5, 10 and 25 Kuruş and 1 Lira.

ATMS
ATMs can be found all around the country. All of them offer foreign language options and pay out Turkish liras. Cash withdrawal limits vary from bank to bank and are around 800 TL to 1,500 TL.

WEIGHT AND MEASURES:
Metric System

ELECTRICITY:
220 volt, 50 cycle. Most hotels have a receptacle with 110 volts. Socket type is standard European two-pin.

CHANGING MONEY
Foreign exchange offices, which are known as “döviz bürosu” can be found throughout the country. Operating hours are mostly Monday to Friday, from 09:00 to 17:00. In the arrivals section of Atatürk and Sabiha Gökçen Airport, there are 24-hour exchange offices. Also the exchange offices located in shopping malls and touristic areas are open later and on Saturdays. US Dollars and Euros are accepted in highly touristic districts like Sultanahmet and Taksim but rates are often not competitive.

CREDIT CARDS
Credit cards are widely used and accepted. Visitors can use their Visa, Mastercards, Amex and Diner’s.

BUSINESS AND BANKING HOURS:
Offices and banks are generally open 09.00 to 17.00 Mondays to Fridays, and close for lunch 12.00 to 13.30.

DEMOGRAPHICS:
İstanbul is the largest populated city of Turkey with a population of 14.1 million.

LOCAL TIME
UTC/GMT + 2 hours
OFFICIAL HOLIDAYS:
April 23rd National Sovereignty and Children's Day,
May 19th The Commemoration of Atatürk Youth and Sports Day,
August 30th Victory Day,
October 29th Republic Day and 1st of May Workers' Day are public holidays.
Ramadan Bayram:
17-19 July (only for 2015)
Kurban Bayram:
23-27 September (only for 2015)

NATURE & CLIMATE:
İstanbul is a city where four seasons can be experienced. Spring and autumn are two unpredictable seasons with a range from chilly to warm. The average winter weather is between 5°C and 9 °C. During the summers average temperature is between 18 °C and 28 °C. The hottest months are July and August while the coldest months are January and February.

POST OFFICE
Post Offices and the Postal Service in Turkey are generally abbreviated to PTT. (www.ptt.gov.tr)

TELEPHONE
İstanbul's telephone service has two area codes, one for the Anatolian side and one for the European. If the land line you need to call is on the other side you must also include its area code (0216 for the Anatolian side and 0212 for the European side).
Turkey's country code is 90.

PRACTICAL TURKISH
Hello: Merhaba. (mehr hah bah)
How are you? Nasilsın? (na suhl suhn)
Fine, thank you: İyiyim, teşekkürler. (ee yee yeem teh shek ur lerr)
What is your name?: Adın ne? (ad uhn ne)

My name is ______ . Adım ______ . (Ad uhm _____ .)
Nice to meet you : Memnun oldum. (mem noon oll doom)
Please : Lütfen. (Luet fen)
Thank you.: Teşekkür ederim. (teh shek ur eh der eem)
You're welcome.: Bir şey değil. (bir shey de yeeel)
Yes: Evet. (eh vet)
No: Hayır. (Hah yuhr)
Excuse me? Bakar misiniz? (bah kar muh suh nuhz)
I'm sorry: Özür dilerim. (Ö zuer dil air rim)
Goodbye : Hoşçakalın. (Hosh cha kaluhn)
Goodbye : Güle güle. (guele guele)
Good morning : Günaydın. (Guen eye duhn)
Good afternoon : Tunaydin. (Tuen eye duhn)
Good day: İyi günler. (e yee guen ler)
Good evening : İyi akşamlar. (e yee ak sham lar)
Good night : İyi geceler. (e yee ge jay ler)
Good night (to sleep) : İyi uykular (e yee yoo ku lar)
Welcome : Hoşgeldin. (Hosh gel din)
I don't understand : Anlamiyorum (An-la-muh-yor-uhm),
Where is the toilet?: Tuvalet nerede? (Too va let ner eh de?).

My name is ______ . Adım ______ . (Ad uhm _____ .)
Nice to meet you : Memnun oldum. (mem noon oll doom)
Please : Lütfen. (Luet fen)
Thank you.: Teşekkür ederim. (teh shek ur eh der eem)
You're welcome.: Bir şey değil. (bir shey de yeeel)
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visit for more..
İstanbul offers a huge network of public transportation. With city busses and railways such as subway, tram systems and Marmaray, İstanbul offers plenty options to get around the city. As the Bosphorus divides the city into two parts, the ferries and sea-busses also become a practical means of daily transportation. Yet the whole system can easily be accessed with a single transportation card – İstanbulkart.

FERRY AND SEA BUS
To see historical sides of the city and travel fast between Europe and Asia, one of the best options would be ferries with an incredible sightseeing opportunity. There are many ferry and sea-bus stations connecting the Bosphorus shores, Golden Horn, Prince’s Islands and other areas. “Vapur” (big ferries) connect the main areas with each ferry leaving in 30 min. or 45 min. from 07:00 am until 11:00 pm. The small ferries of operate with smaller boats departing every 5-15 min. There are also sea-bus routes that enables public transportation from İstanbul to main areas within the city limits and/or the cities around the Marmara Sea.
For more information: www.sehirhatlari.com.tr
**SUBWAY AND TRAM**

Istanbul's subway and the tram system have a wide network and provide easy access to your desired point both in Asian and European sides. Istanbul's subway operates from Hacıosman to Yenikapi (M2); from Aksaray – Atatürk Airport to Kirazlı (M1) and from Kirazlı to Olimpiyatköy (M3) on the European side. Also subway runs from Kadıköy to Kartal (M4) on the Asian Side. The tramline operates from Bağcılar to Kabataş (T1), Habibler to Topkapı (T4), Kabataş to Taksim (F1). There is also a funicular system that runs between Kabataş and Taksim (F1).

For more information: www.istanbul-ulasim.com.tr

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**MARMARAY**

The dream of connecting the two continents under the sea has come true in February 2014 with Marmaray in Istanbul. The “Marmaray Train System” is a 76 kilometers tube tunnel that enables passengers to pass under the Marmara inner sea with train in only a couple of minutes. Between the last stops; Kazılcıçeşme in European side and Ayrılık Çeşmesi in Asian side, one can enjoy the travelling of changing continents. Kazılcıçeşme stop is 10 kilometers to the Atatürk International Airport and from the Yenikapi stop (also in European side) there are sea busses to cities in the south of Istanbul.

For more information: www.marmaray.gov.tr

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**BUS & METROBUS**

Frequently used all around the city, buses are an economic means of transport. The private laned express bus service “Metrobus” carries thousands of commuters daily; provides fast and comfortable transportation between the two ends of Asian side and the European side. For more information: www.iett.gov.tr
İSTANBUL ATATÜRK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

İstanbul Atatürk International Airport is the city’s gateway to the world, hosting millions of passengers every year and servicing airlines from all over the world. With its architecture, speed of passenger throughput, level of service and advanced technology, it is also one of the top airports in the world. Operated by TAV İstanbul Terminal Operations Co., a subsidiary of TAV Airports Holding since 2000, the airport is ranked as the second in the category “Best Airport of South Europe” in “The World's Best Airports 2009 Awards” event organized by Skytrax Research, the leading research Advisors to the world airline and air transport industry based in London, UK. The data on movement to and from the airport, shows Turkey’s integration to the world. Atatürk International Airport hosts around 1050 flights a day and services approximately 135,000 passengers a day, a figure that rises to 140,000 to around 160,000 and flights to 1,150 to 1,250 a day at peak times. The airport is situated 28 kilometers west of city center on 9,470,554 square meters of land. www.ataturkairport.com

SABİHA GÖKÇEN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

The airport is located on the Anatolian shore of İstanbul at Pendik / Kurtköy, at a distance of 40 km to Kadiköy, 12 km to Pendik and 50 km to Taksim. It has a really convenient traffic in terms of transportation with its 1.5 km connection to the TEM motorway. The Haydarpasa-Gebze Express line is in maintenance and will be available in the near future departing from Pendik Train Station where the line will be connected to Marmaray Metro and Pendik YHT High Speed Train. In the meantime IETT public buses serves between Sabiha Gökçen Airport and Kartal-Kadıköy metro where our guests can travel by rail line. Public transportation (IETT) departs from Sabiha Gökçen Airport (SAW) to downtown İstanbul. There are many ways to travel from Sabiha Gökçen Airport into the several main locations of İstanbul such as Sultanahmet, Taksim, Eminönü (Sirkeci), Beyazıt (Laleli), Esenler, Harem, Bakırköy, Yeşilköy, Tuzla, by taxi, Havataş shuttles or the public bus services (IETT).

www.sgairport.com
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MAPS

World Map and Location of Turkey

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