

ISTANBUL GRAND TOUR: BOSPHORUS, BAZAARS & BEYOND

5 Days · 4 Nights — Departs from İstanbul · Flights not included

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The tour starts at Istanbul Airport (SAW or IST) and ends at Istanbul Airport (SAW or IST).

Day 1

Tour Program

Eyüp Cable Car Pierre Loti Eyüp Sultan

At 14:10, we meet our esteemed guests and your cultural guide at Istanbul Airport, International Departures, Gate 9. After the meeting, we depart for Eyüp with our waiting vehicle. Upon arriving in the Eyüp area, we take the cable car up to Pierre Loti. Pierre Loti Hill is a hill overlooking the Golden Horn in the Eyüpsultan district of Istanbul. The hill is named after the French novelist and Orientalist Julien Viaud, who came to Istanbul in 1876 and frequently visited a tearoom on this hill. A proposal to rename the hill as Eyüpsultan Hill was met with strong objections from many circles and was rejected by the municipal council. The hill and its tearoom are popular destinations frequently visited by tourists in Istanbul.

After a brief explanation from our guide and a short tea/coffee break, we visit Karyağdı Tekke and the Executioner's Graves, then walk down from the cemetery. Along the way, we see Kaşgari Tekke and the graves of important historical figures such as Sokollu Mehmet Pasha, Lala Mustafa Pasha, Siyavuş Pasha, Ferhat Pasha, Adile Sultan, Gazi Ethem Pasha, and Marshal Fevzi Çakmak.

We visit Eyüp Mosque and the Eyüp Sultan Tomb. Eyüp Sultan Mosque is located in the Eyüpsultan district of Istanbul, outside the walls of Constantinople, along the Golden Horn. The complex also contains the tomb of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, the standard-bearer and companion of the Prophet Muhammad. After visiting this historically and spiritually significant mosque, we have some free time, then continue our walk while listening to stories from our guide about the Cülus Road. In this district, which is very important for Ottoman and Islamic history, it is possible to see many tombs and graves of notable historical figures in the surrounding area.

Afterward, we return to our vehicle and head to the restaurant for our meal. Following lunch, we arrive at our hotel in Istanbul. Accommodation is at our hotel in Istanbul.

Day 2

Tour Program

Beşiktaş Dolmabahçe Palace 15 July Martyrs Bridge 15 July Martyrs Monument and Museum Çamlıca Hill Üsküdar Kadıköy

After enjoying a buffet breakfast at our hotel, our first stop is Dolmabahçe Palace, famous for its Baroque style and elegant architecture, and the place where Atatürk closed his eyes for the last time. Dolmabahçe Palace was first expanded during the reign of Sultan Ahmed I, with the area filled with stone and the pavilion enlarged, giving the palace its name. In the 19th century, Sultan Mahmud II built a new palace on the same site. The current structure was commissioned by Sultan Abdülmecit in 1842 and built by the architect Garabet Balyan. Construction continued until 1853. The palace served as Abdülmecit's residence and official business center. After Abdülmecit, his brother Abdülaziz also lived here. Following the proclamation of the Republic, Dolmabahçe Palace became Atatürk's presidential residence in Istanbul. Atatürk's death on November 10, 1938, marked a historic moment at the palace.

The main complex includes the Harem, Mabeyn, the Clock Tower, and Dolmabahçe Mosque. The palace has 285 rooms, 46 halls, 6 baths, and 68 toilets, covering an area of 110,000 square meters. In the 1910s, it was equipped with electricity and a central heating system. The Mabeyn stairs' railings are adorned with crystals, and the Throne Hall features a 36-meter-high dome with a 4-ton crystal chandelier containing 750 lamps, giving the hall a distinctly European ambiance.

After visiting Dolmabahçe Palace, we enjoy a panoramic view of Beşiktaş and cross the 15 July Martyrs Bridge to reach the Hafıza 15 July Museum and Monument. Hafıza 15 July Museum, opened on July 15, 2019, is located on the Anatolian side of the 15 July Martyrs Bridge in the Üsküdar district of Istanbul. The museum displays personal belongings of those who resisted the 15 July coup attempt and the equipment used by the coup plotters. At the martyrdom monument, we pray for those who lost their lives and then continue to Çamlıca Hill, the highest hill in Istanbul.

Büyük Çamlıca Hill is located in the Üsküdar district on the Asian side of Istanbul, with an elevation of 268 meters above sea level. The hill is home to Nurbaba Tekke (Bektashi) and the Küçük Çamlıca TV Tower. The Büyük Çamlıca facilities, restored by the late Turing President Çelik Gülersoy, offer a scenic and naturally beautiful location, making it a popular spot for both local and international tourists. From Çamlıca Hill, we can see many parts of Istanbul like a postcard. During our tea/coffee break, guests may also visit the Çamlıca Mosque.

After the break, we move to Üsküdar. When Üsküdar is mentioned, one immediately thinks of the Maiden's Tower. The Maiden's Tower is built on a small islet near Salacak, close to the Marmara Sea in the Bosphorus. After enjoying a meal with a view of the Maiden's Tower, we take a panoramic tour and reach Kadıköy. In Kadıköy, we explore the bazaars and streets, receive information from our guide, and then enjoy some free time. After the free time, we return to our hotel.

Day 3

Tour Program

Dikilitaş (Obelisk of Theodosius) Serpentine Column German Fountain Sultanahmet Mosque (Blue Mosque) Hagia Sophia Topkapi Palace and Surroundings Basilica Cistern (Yerebatan Sarnıcı) Column of Constantine (Çemberlitaş) Grand Bazaar Mahmutpaşa Spice Bazaar (Mısır Çarşısı) Eminönü Eminönü Mosque

After breakfast at our hotel, we head to the Sultanahmet district, home to some of Istanbul's oldest and most magnificent monuments. (From this point, all museums are within walking distance, so the vehicle will only be used for the return. We recommend wearing comfortable walking shoes and bringing an ID and photo for museum cards.)

Our first stop is the Hippodrome, also known as At Meydanı, where we see three beautiful obelisks that remain from ancient times and the German Fountain, built in Germany and installed in Istanbul in 1901. After our guide's explanation, we visit Sultanahmet Mosque, built by Mimar Sedefkar Mehmet Ağa on the orders of Sultan Ahmed I. Due to its blue, green, and white İznik tiles and its semi-domes and large dome decorated predominantly in blue, Europeans named it the "Blue Mosque."

Next, we visit Hagia Sophia, Istanbul's largest mosque with a history of over 1,500 years. Hagia Sophia has been built three times on the same site, and the current structure is known as the "Third Hagia Sophia." Its initial construction began under Emperor Constantine I when Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire. Built on one of Istanbul's seven hills as a wooden-roofed basilica, it was called the "Great Church" and inaugurated in 360 under Emperor Constantius II. A fire during a rebellion in 404 destroyed most of the building, leaving no remnants from that era. After learning about its fascinating history from our guide, we continue to Topkapi Palace, the Ottoman dynasty's residence for 400 years and the administrative center of the empire for 400 of its 600 years. The palace, located at Sarayburnu, once housed nearly 4,000 people. During our visit, we take photos with panoramic views of the Marmara Sea, the Bosphorus, and the Golden Horn from the palace's summer courtyard.

Following a specially arranged meal for our group and some free time, we proceed to the Basilica Cistern (Yerebatan Sarnıcı), built in 526-527 to meet Istanbul's water needs. Located southwest of Hagia Sophia on Soğukçeşme Street, it is locally called the "Sunken Palace" due to the many marble columns rising from its waters.

From the cistern, we walk to the Column of Constantine (Çemberlitaş), also known as the Burnt Column or Column of Constantine, erected in 330 in honor of Emperor Constantine I on one of Istanbul's seven hills, now called Çemberlitaş. Along the way, we pass many shops selling souvenirs.

Next, we explore the Grand Bazaar, one of the oldest and largest covered markets in the world, located in the center of Istanbul between Beyazıt, Nuruosmaniye, and Mercan. It contains approximately 4,000 shops and employs about 25,000 people. During peak times, it can host up to 500,000 visitors. In 2014, it was the most visited tourist attraction in the world with 91,250,000 visitors. The Grand Bazaar is often considered the world's first shopping mall. After free time in the bazaar, we walk toward Eminönü via Mahmutpaşa Street. Mahmutpaşa Bazaar, built in 1462 by Veli Mahmud Pasha, a grand vizier during the reign of Sultan Mehmet II, consists of 256 shops along the sloped Mahmutpaşa Yokuşu. The bazaar also includes a tomb, a bathhouse, a public fountain, and other historical structures. Guests have free time for shopping along the way.

Upon reaching Eminönü, we visit the Spice Bazaar (Mısır Çarşısı), one of Istanbul's oldest and most famous covered markets, located behind the Yeni Mosque next to the Flower Market. Famous for its herbalists, the bazaar still sells traditional products like natural medicines, spices, flower seeds, and rare roots and barks, as well as dried fruits, delicacies, and various foods. The bazaar is open on Sundays. Guests have free time to shop according to their needs. At the prearranged meeting time, we regroup and head back to our hotel.

Day 4

Tour Program

Fener-Balat Bosphorus Boat Tour Ortaköy

After breakfast at our hotel, we head to the historic Fener-Balat district. During the Byzantine era, the steep streets of this neighborhood led its residents to call it Petrion. As we ascend these slopes, we encounter charming houses with Greek architecture proclaiming, "We are part of this city," and visit notable landmarks such as the historic Fener Greek Patriarchate, the spiritual center for approximately 250 million Orthodox Christians worldwide.

Other highlights in the district include Küçük Mustafa Pasha Bath, Gül Mosque (Aya Theodosia Church), Yeni Ayakapı, Aya Yorgi Church, Fener Neighborhood, Fener Greek High School for Boys, Panagia Muhliotissa Church, Yuvakımyon Greek Girls' School (outside view), Dimitri Kantemir's House (outside), Women's Library (outside), Bulgarian Church, Tur-i Sina Metochion (outside), Balat Square, Ahrida and Yanbol Synagogues (outside), Surp Hresdagabet Church, Ferruh Kethuda Mosque, Ayvansaray Panayia Balinu Church (outside), Ayios Dimitrios Kanebu Church, Atik Mustafa Pasha Mosque (St. Peter & Mark Church – Aya Tekla Church), and many more.

After exploring Fener-Balat, we board our private boat for an approximately 2-hour Bosphorus cruise. During the cruise, we admire many beautiful coastal neighborhoods such as Kuzguncuk, Bebek, Arnavutköy, Küçüksu, and Kandilli, along with their historic buildings, waterfront mansions, and some palaces featured in popular TV series. Landmarks along the Bosphorus include Yeni Mosque, Spice Bazaar, Süleymaniye Mosque, Galata Tower, and Çırağan Palace, offering a picturesque view throughout our cruise.

Following the cruise, we dock at Ortaköy pier and enjoy some free time. Afterwards, we proceed to a restaurant for dinner and then return to our hotel.

Day 5

Tour Program

Galata Tower Beyoğlu and Surroundings Tünel Square Çiçek Pasajı Hacıpulo Passage Narmanlı Han Galatasaray Square İstiklal Avenue St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church Aya Triada Greek Orthodox Church Taksim Square Halep Passage Taksim Mosque Atatürk Cultural Center Transfer Airport

After enjoying a buffet breakfast at our hotel, we depart by bus for the Beyoğlu district. Today, our tour explores Galata and Beyoğlu, neighborhoods that reflect Istanbul's multicultural heritage.

Our tour begins at Şişhane Square, recently renovated and now home to the Beyoğlu Municipality, Istanbul's first modern municipal building. From here, we follow Büyük Hendek Street to the square surrounding Galata Tower. During the walk, our guide shares the history and cosmopolitan character of Galata. In the small square around the tower, we learn about its history dating back to the 6th century and take photos. We also have the opportunity to ascend Galata Tower for stunning panoramic photos of the city.

After a short break, we pass through Serdar-ı Ekrem Street, seeing the famous Doğan Apartment and the Crimean Church, built by the British to commemorate the Crimean War. Following Galip Dede Street, we arrive at Tünel Square, where our first stop is the historic Galata Mevlevihanesi. Tünel is considered by some to be the world's second, and by others the third, underground railway. It is also the endpoint of the nostalgic tramway that runs from Taksim Square along İstiklal Avenue.

From Tünel Square, we begin our walk along İstiklal Avenue, Istanbul's most famous pedestrian street, stretching 1.5 kilometers. Guided by our expert, we explore side streets and discover hidden gems. Along the way, we pass historic consulate buildings, inns, passages, churches, art galleries, cinemas, cultural centers, and food stops. Highlights include Narmanlı Han, St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church, the famous Çiçek Pasajı and Nevzade Street, Hacıpulo Passage, Galatasaray High School and Square, Hüseyin Ağa Mosque, and Emek and Atlas Cinemas.

During our walk, we take a break for authentic Turkish coffee at Mandabatmaz, one of Beyoğlu's must-visit spots.

The walk concludes at Taksim Square, considered the heart of the city. Our guide shares stories about the square's history, including the Water Pump, the Republic Monument, Topçu Barracks, Gezi Park, the new Taksim Mosque, and the Atatürk Cultural Center. After some free time, we board our bus at Taksim Square and transfer to the airport. Upon arrival, we bid farewell and look forward to seeing you on another tour.

SERVICES INCLUDED

- All city tours with our private vehicle
- 4 nights' accommodation in a 5-star hotel
- 4 buffet breakfasts
- 4 lunches or dinners
- All excursions with a professional guide
- Boat or yacht tour
- On-board bus refreshments and services
- Mandatory travel insurance
- Various souvenirs as mementos of the tour
- Surprises
- Entrance fees to museums and historical sites (guests without a Turkish ID or Blue Card will pay an additional €150 during the tour)

SERVICES NOT INCLUDED

- International round-trip airfare
- Personal expenses

ACCOMMODATION — 5 Days · 4 Nights

5 DAYS 4 NIGHTS - STAY IN QUALITY HOTELS

Day 1: Istanbul: SHERATON LEVENT, RENAISSANCE POLAT BOSPHORUS, or similar

Day 2: Istanbul: SHERATON LEVENT, RENAISSANCE POLAT BOSPHORUS, or similar

Day 3: Istanbul: SHERATON LEVENT, RENAISSANCE POLAT BOSPHORUS, or similar

Day 4: Istanbul: SHERATON LEVENT, RENAISSANCE POLAT BOSPHORUS, or similar

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

No other important information for this tour.

GENERAL TERMS & CONDITIONS

General Terms and Conditions

General terms are an integral part of the tour program and cannot be considered separately. The tour circular, published on 14.02.2025, is valid as of that date. Any later circular for the same tour supersedes the previous one.

Cancellation and Refund Policy:

Free cancellation is available up to 30 days before departure; a refund with a €250 deduction is possible.

Cancellations made within 30 days of the tour will incur a 50% deduction.

Payment Terms:

For reservations, 50% of the tour fee must be paid. The remaining balance is due 1 month before the tour date.

Tour Information:

Duration: 5 days, 4 nights, with 4 nights of hotel accommodation.

Seat numbers cannot be guaranteed at the time of reservation.

Transportation and hotel notes on the reservation cannot be guaranteed.

Child Discounts:

Child discounts apply for one child accompanying two adults.

Children aged 0–7 may not be provided a separate bed in hotels.

Pricing and Refunds:

Tiered pricing may be applied for the tour.

Unused services such as transportation, accommodation, and excursions are non-refundable.

Cancellation Rights:

If the minimum number of participants is not reached, the producer agency reserves the right to cancel the tour up to 7 days before departure. In such cases, the producer agency is responsible for informing the guests directly.

In the event of cancellation by the producer agency, all payments will be fully refunded without deduction.

Tours with Flights:

For tours including flights, airline contracts apply.

Cancellation insurance does not cover air travel.

Economy class is used in all flight-inclusive tour programs.

Program Changes:

The guide may adjust the schedule or order of visits during the tour due to weather, road conditions, or other reasons.

The producer agency is not responsible for sites that cannot be visited due to force majeure (weather, road conditions, overcrowding, etc.).

Participation Requirements:

Participants must carry medical reports regarding health conditions, pregnancy, or medications they must use regularly.

Hotel names mentioned in the program are prioritized accommodations, but hotels may change while maintaining similar standards due to high occupancy or force majeure.

Clothing and Vehicle Information:

Guests should wear clothing, accessories, and shoes suitable for the geographical area, weather conditions, and tour concept (boots, sandals, water shoes, etc.).

Vehicle types are used according to group size:

Buses: 28-46 passengers

Midibuses: 17-27 passengers

Minibuses: Up to 16 passengers

The above tour program is originally prepared by the producer agency in accordance with Turkish Consumer Law No. 6502.

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