

Istanbul

in numbers

3

bridges between
2 continents



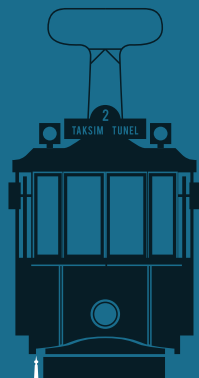
Europe

Asia

capital of
3 empires

2

airports



5

4 historical
bazaars

imperial
palaces

dozens of summer
palaces and mansions



15.840.900



people

7,980,000

international visitors
in 2021



8500

years of
history



10th most visited city in the world

54

museums



220

hospitals



125

modern
shopping
malls



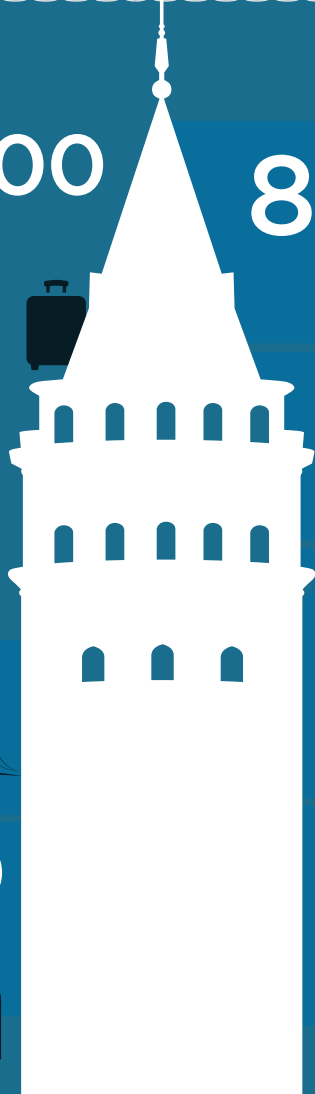
100,000

bed capacity



53

universities and
5 technoparks



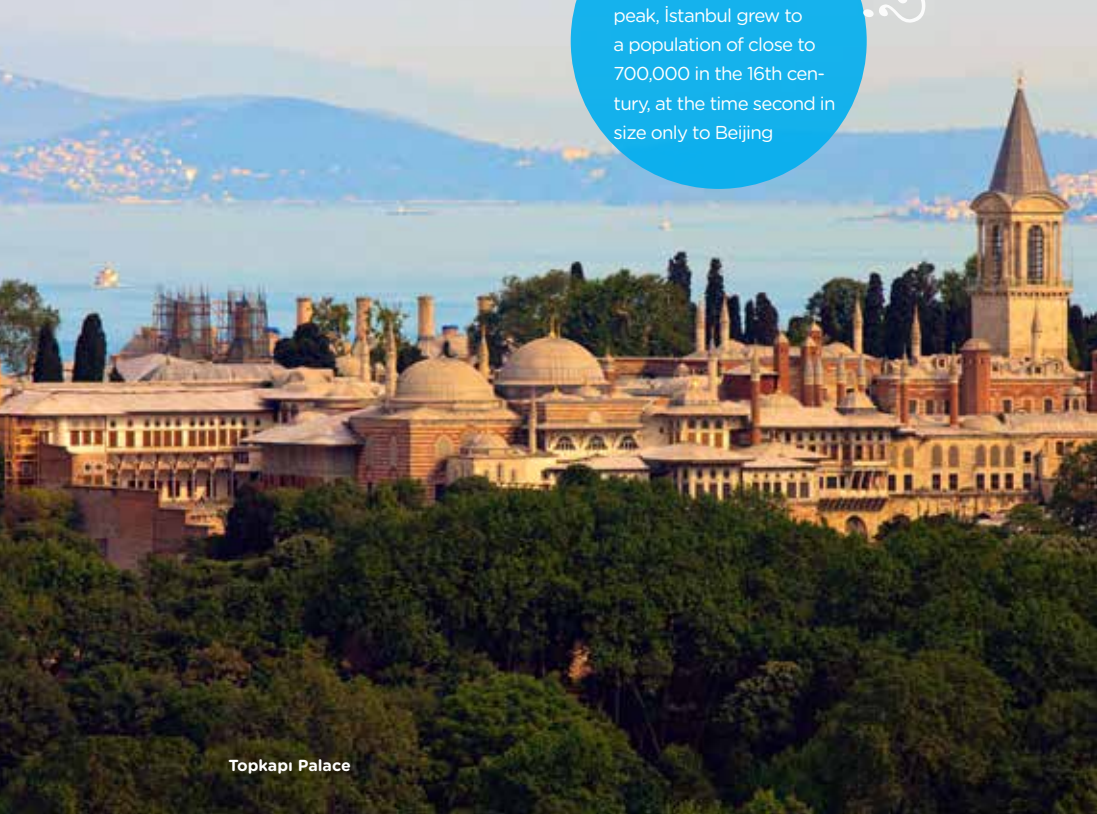
The Historical Istanbul

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.



did you know?

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





THE TOPKAPI PALACE & MUSEUM

The opulent Topkapı 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, Topkapı 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 Hümayûn*. 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



BASILICA CISTERN

This subterranean cistern in Sul-tanehmet area was commissioned by Emperor Justinian in 532. It is the largest surviving Byzantine cistern in İstanbul and includes 336 columns. Taken from ruined temples for the construction of the cistern, each column here has a different design and decoration. Their reflection falling on the still water on the ground add to the enchanting beauty of the interior. Walking along the wooden platforms, you will come across various beautiful columns, column heads, and even statues, such as the famous Medusa.

Visiting hours: 09:00-17:30

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SECRECY

With its 336 columns, the Basilica Cistern resembles a palace buried under the soil. The Ottomans heard about it approximately one hundred years after the fall of Constantinople and they named it "Yerebatan" meaning "sunken". Pierre Gilles is the intellectual philologist who found the historical place, with the help of very old manuscripts.

HAGIA EIRENE

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.

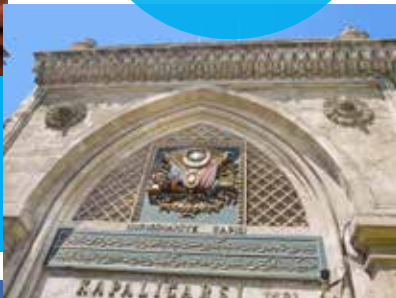
Visiting hours: 9:00-16:00 Closed on Tuesdays





did you know?

Having more than 4000 shops, the Grand Bazaar is visited by the tourists and the citizens regularly.



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.

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



HAGIA SOPHIA

Dominating the Sultanahmet Square and the city's skyline, this quaint edifice has been expanded and restored several times throughout the centuries. Hagia Sophia has always been unique as an architectural piece from the first day it was built.

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





THE BLUE MOSQUE

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)

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.



PRACTICAL INFO



LOCATION AND GEOGRAPHY

Istanbul 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.



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.



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.



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:

Istanbul is the largest populated city of Turkey with a population of 15 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:

2-4 May (only for 2022)

Kurban Bayram:

9-12 July (only for 2020)



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.



VISAS:

To enter into Turkey visas are required but most of the visas can be purchased for £10 or \$20 at Turkey's airports or border gates. Since the information

of visas is changeable, please contact the visa information for foreigners on Turkish Foreign Ministry website.

www.mfa.gov.tr

Turkey's electronic online visa application system offers to its applicants a comfortable and practical way to obtain visa.

www.evisa.gov.tr



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?

Nasılsın? (na suhl suhn)

Fine, thank you İyiyim, teşekkürler. (ee yee yeem teh shek ürr 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 uer eh der eem)

You're welcome.: Bir şey değil. (bir shey de yeel)

Yes: Evet. (eh vet)

No: Hayır. (Hah yuhr)

Excuse me? Bakar mısınız?

(bah kar muh suh nuhz)

Excuse me : (begging pardon)

Afedersiniz. (af air dair sin niz)

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 : Tünaydın.

(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.

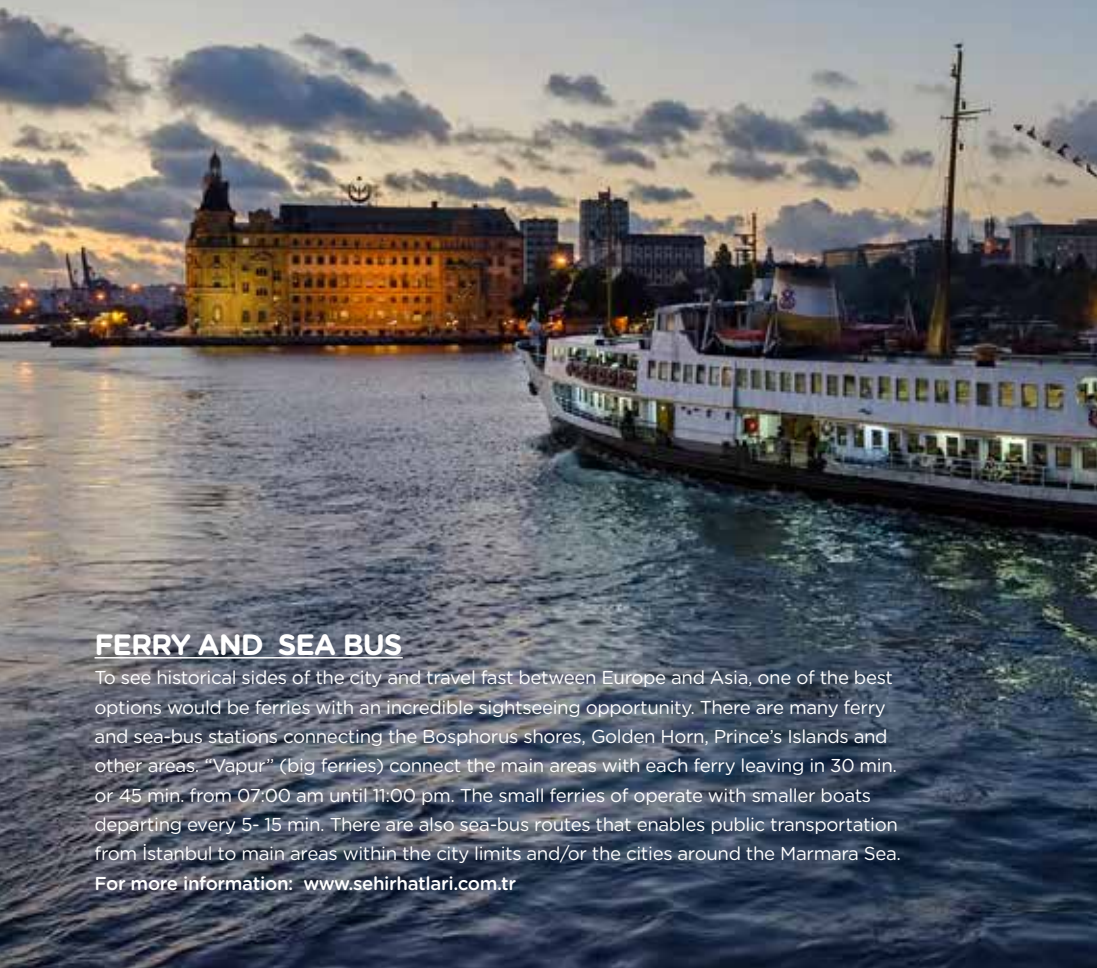
(Hosh gel din)

I don't understand : Anlamıyorum (An-la-muh-yor-uhm),

Where is the toilet? : Tuvalet nerede? (Too va let ner eh de?).

ACCESS IN İSTANBUL

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

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**



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 Haciosman to Yenikapı (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: <https://ulasim.istanbul/>



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; Kazlıçeşme in European side and Ayrılık Çeşmesi in Asian side, one can enjoy the travelling of changing continents. Kazlıçeşme stop is 10 kilometers to the Atatürk International Airport and from the Yenikapı stop (also in European side) there are sea busses to cities in the south of Istanbul

For more information www.marmaray.gov.tr

