ISTANBUL SIGHTSEEING TOURS

1. Classical Istanbul “Old City” Tour (1/2 day)
Our tour will begin with the magnificent Sultan Ahmed Mosque; popularly known as the Blue Mosque for the blue tiles adorning the walls of its interior. After the soothing but fascinating mosque visit, we will continue with Hippodrome; the most glorious and lively square of Byzantine and Ottoman period, where historical monuments can also be seen. The third stop of the tour will be Hagia Sophia; a former Orthodox Patriarchal basilica, later a mosque and now a museum, which is nominated as one of the new 7 wonders of the world. Our tour will end at the Grand Bazaar; is one of the largest and oldest covered markets in the world, with more than 64 covered streets and over 3,600 shops which attract between almost 500,000 visitors daily.

Depending on the available time left at the end of the tour, Spice Market can be added to the above program.

* Hagia Sophia is closed on Mondays, replaced by Basilica Cistern.
* Grand Bazaar and Spice Market is closed on Sundays.

2. Classical Old City Tour (1/2 day) - Topkapi Palace, Rüstem Pasha Mosque.
Our tour will begin with Topkapi Palace; the imperial residence of the Ottoman Sultans between 15th to the 19th century. The palace complex is located on the Seraglio Point (Sarayburnu), which you may overlook the Golden Horn and the Sea of Marmara. Its most valuable single exhibit is Spoonmaker’s Diamond; it is an 86 carats pear-shaped diamond. After our fascinating tour of Topkapi Palace, next destination will be Rustem Pasha Mosque; built by the great imperial architect Sinan (Mimar Sinan) between 1550-1561 by the order of Rustem Pasha, a Grand Vizier and son-in-law of Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent.

(Topkapi Palace is closed on Tuesdays, replaced by Chora Museum).

3. Full day Classical Old City Tour (with lunch)
Our tour is combination of tour No.1 & No.2 with lunch at a local restaurant. You will have a chance to see both tours in day, have a tremendous historical day of beautiful Istanbul, observe such a rich culture and get to know so much about Old City of Istanbul.
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4. Bosphorus Cruise - (1/2 day) – Golden Horn, Spice Bazaar, Bosphorus Cruise, Rumeli Fortress.
The Bosphorus tour begins with the sightseeing of Golden Horn from the bus. Golden Horn is the historical peninsula and a natural harbour serving to Istanbul for 2000 years. You can also feel historical taste of Balak and the old city walls. After a relax bus tour next destination will be historical Spice Bazaar; located in Eminonu; a great place to explore the powder of spices which is elixir of the East. Spice Bazaar is the best for buying spices, nuts, herbal teas, dried fruits, flower seeds, scarce plant roots/peels and traditional Turkish products such as Turkish delight, Turkish coffee. After tasting the nice smell of spices, you will cruise along European and Asian shores of Istanbul by boat and be surprised to see the harmony of Ottoman and modern architecture. The best part of the Cruise is having possibility to take photos of marble places as; ancient wooden villas, Rumeli Fortress, Dolmabahce Palace, Beylerbeyi Palace, Maidens Tower (Kizkulesi).

5. Asian Sights - (1/2 day) Bosphorus Bridge, Camlica Hill, Beylerbeyi Palace and shopping experience at Bagdat Street.
The Asian sight tour begins from European side and across the Bosphorus Bridge. Bosphorus Bridge is famous for connecting the two continents (Asia-Europe). After passing the fabulous bridge, you will discover the Camlica Hill; the highest point in Istanbul, you will have chance to see magnificent panorama of Istanbul and the Bosphorus from the top. After the nicest view of Istanbul, you will visit Beylerbeyi Palace; was commissioned by Sultan Abdülaziz (1830–1876) and built between 1861 and 1865 as a summer residence for Ottoman Sultans. And let’s move in to the shopping, next stop is world famous Bagdad Street; a main street in an upper-scale residential area which includes brand stores, elegant stores, nice cafes and restaurants. You can both have a shopping experience and drink a nice cup of coffee at the street.

(Beylerbeyi Palace is closed on Mondays, replaced by Hidiv Pavillion).

6. Bosphorus Cruise & Asian Sights with lunch Combination of Tour No.4 & No.5
Our tour will combine both Bosphorus and Asian Side tours. You will be surprised by the transition from history to modernity, actually you will feel the history visiting Golden Horn, Spice Bazaar, and observe up-to-date modernity while cruising along the European and Asian shores of Istanbul, we will continue on Asian Side visiting Camlica Hill, Beylerbeyi Palace, and Bagdad Street. (BY BUS)

Our tour will begin with a taste of Golden Horn; a historic inlet of the Bosphorus dividing the city of Istanbul and forming the natural harbor that has sheltered Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman ships for years. It has witnessed many tumultuous historical incidents and its dramatic vistas have been the subject of countless works of art. Also you will chance to see Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Fener, Metal Church of St. Stephen the Bulgarian, Jewish Hospital, Eyüp Sultan Mosque, and Pierre Loti historical coffee house. After the taste of historical places, you will visit the most influencing park called Miniaturk; miniature open-air museum which contains 105 worldwide symbols of Ottoman Empire, done in 1/25th scale. It is the world's largest miniature park with its 15,000 m² (160,000 sq ft) model area. At the end of our tour you have to be ready for an interesting exhibition. Rahmi M. Koc Museum; a private industrial museum dedicated to history of transport, industry and communications.

8. Trendy Istanbul – Nisantasi, Istanbul Modern Museum

Istanbul is a bustling, sprawling metropolis with more than 15 million people, in touch with the latest European fashions and trends but also at ease with its own past. Today, we will have the chance to find out more about the modern face of Istanbul. This Neighbourhood is called Nisantasi; where history combines with modern and trend. When you take a walk at street of Nisantasi, you will see lots of brand stores under historical buildings and of course some celebrities. This will be your day of modernity and our next stop will be Istanbul Modern Museum; contemporary art museum that is based on 8000sqm located on the shores of Istanbul. It is the reflection of Turkish new age artistic works. The museum, located in a converted warehouse in Tophane district on the Bosphorus, is the first of its kind in Turkey. Also there is a fancy restaurant and cafe on the top floor of the museum.

9. Levantine Experience - Pera (Beyoglu), Istiklal Street, Flower Passage, Galata Tower

Our tour will begin with searching an area called Pera or now called Beyoglu; during the 19th century it was home to many European traders, and housed many embassies, especially along the Grande Rue de Péra (today İstiklal Avenue). The presence of such a prominent European population; commonly referred to as Levantines, made it the most Westernized part of Istanbul. When you started to walk down at famous İstiklal Street
ISTANBUL SIGHTSEEING TOURS

there are lots of historical buildings and churches. There also some places which are worth to see like **Flower Passage**; opened in 1876, the 19th century Flower Passage can be described as a miniature version of the famous Galleria in Milan, Italy. And it has rows of historic pubs, wine houses and restaurants. Next to Flower Passage, there is famous **Nevizade** which is famous for its pubs and crowd. Especially young people prefer to chill at this atmosphere. Next step will be **Tunel Square**; it is also famous for its small bars and Turkish cuisine restaurants under the historical building. After that crowd here you come to magnificent **Galata Tower**; historical medieval stone tower that was built in 1348. One of the city's most striking landmarks, it is a high, cone-capped cylinder that dominates the skyline and affords a panoramic view of Old Istanbul. You will have the chance of taking incredible pictures from the top of the tower.

**10. Prince Islands (Full day with lunch)**

During the Byzantine period, prince and other royalty were exiled on the islands, and later members of the Ottoman Sultan’s family were exiled there too, giving the islands their present name. Our tour begins with cruising on the Sea of Marmara and travel to **Buyukada**; largest and the best known of the Prince Islands. After Lunch, we will tour the island in one of the horse-drawn carriages known as phaetons, the only vehicles permitted to use on island. Then there is going to be plenty of time for shopping and leisure. During the summer months the Prince Islands are popular destinations for day trips from Istanbul.

**ISTANBUL SIGHTSEEINGS**

*In Alphabetical Order*

**ANCIENT CITY WALLS** the land walls, for the most part, date from the reign of Emperor Theodosius II (408-450). The initial phase of construction, which produced one long high wall punctuated at regular intervals by some hundred bastions of defence towers, was completed in 413 under the supervision of Anthemius Perfect of the Eastern Empire.

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM** in the various halls of this museum, archaeological pieces such as sarcophagus, tombstone, epitaph, bust, sculpture, relief, column heads and mosaics from Greek, Roman and Byzantine civilizations are on display.

**BASILICA CISTERN** (Underground Cistern), the name of this subterranean structure derives from a large public square on the First Hill of Constantinople, the Stoa Basilica, beneath which it was originally constructed. Three hundred and thirty-six massive Corinthian columns support the immense chamber's fine brick vaulting.

**BAGDAD STREET** It is a main street in an upper-scale residential area. The one-way avenue with old plane trees is flanked with shopping malls, department stores, fashion garment stores, elegant shops offering world famous brands, restaurants of international and local cuisine, pubs and cafés, luxury car dealers and bank agencies. Bağdat Avenue can
also be considered as a large open-air shopping mall. Most of the retail stores are open on all days of the week, including Sunday afternoon.

**BEYLERBEYI PALACE**, used as the Sultan's summer residence, it was offered to the most distinguished foreign dignitaries for their visits. The palace looks its most attractive from the Bosphorus, from where it’s two bathing pavilions, one for the harem (women's only) and the other for the selamlik (men's only), can best be seen.

**BEYOĞLU-PERA** The area that is now known as Beyoğlu has been inhabited for millennia, and records show that a settlement existed on the northern shore of the Golden Horn since the time of Christ. Modern day Beyoğlu is an entertainment and shopping district for people from all sorts of ages and backgrounds in Istanbul. The main thoroughfare is the historical and attractive İstiklâlâl Caddesi, running into the neighbourhood from Taksim Square, a pedestrianised solid mile of shops, cafés, patisseries, restaurants, pubs, winehouses and clubs, as well as bookshops, theatres, cinemas and art galleries. Some of İstiklâl has a 19th century metropolitan character, and the avenue is lined with elegant Neoclassical and Art Nouveau buildings.

**BLUE MOSQUE** is famous with its blue Iznik tiles and unique with its magnificent series of domes and semi-domes, its six slender minarets sprouting from the corners of the mosque, its spacious courtyard, and its grandiose yet elegant proportions, make the Blue Mosque one of the architectural marvels of the world.

**BOSPHORUS BRIDGE** a unique chance to step from one continent (Europe) to another (Asia) within few minutes. The Ataturk Bridge carries 200.000 vehicles and 600.000 people a day. It is the fourth longest suspension bridges in the Europe and seventh in the world.

**BOSPHORUS CRUISE** discover the wealth of impressive sights all along the shores in a Bosphorus boat trip along Istanbul’s famous waterway dividing Europe and Asia. On the way to the Black Sea, you can see the finest and richest examples of the Ottoman houses and palaces on the shores, such as; Dolmabahçe Palace, Beylerbeyi Palace, Maiden's Tower, Rumeli Fortress, Ortakoy & Besiktas squares. The cruise ends at Spice Bazaar.

**CAMLICA HILL** is one of the highest points of the Bosphorus and Istanbul. The Camlica Hill has a wonderful panorama including the Sea of Marmara, the Bosphorus, Historical Peninsula and islands.

**CHORA MUSEUM**, the mosaics and frescoes in St. Savior are by far the most important works of Byzantine pictorial art known today, in terms of both their beauty and their number. It is fascinating to realize that they are coeval with the frescoes of Giotto in Italy. In addition, while different in certain particulars, they nonetheless appear to radiate the same sense of living, breathing reality so characteristic of the Early Renaissance.

**DOLMABAHÇE PALACE**, the area was originally the bay where the navy anchored in the early periods when the Ottomans conquered Istanbul. Between 1611-1614, this bay filled in and a timber building with a large garden called "the Besiktas Palace" was built with the order of Sultan Ahmet I. Sultan Abdulmecit I chose the land of the Besiktaş Palace, which had become completely useless due to a fire, as the site of the new palace, since it was by the seaside and close to the city centre. Then it became recent residence for Ottoman Sultans with 365 rooms and 22 saloons. Famous of it’s great collection of European antiquity, furniture and 4.5 tons chandeliers.
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**EYUP SULTAN MOSQUE** is situated in the district of Eyüp on the European side of Istanbul, near the Golden Horn, outside the Walls of Constantinople. Built in 1458, it was the first mosque constructed by the Ottoman Turks following their conquest of Constantinople in 1453. The mosque rises next to the place where Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, the standard-bearer of the Islamic prophet Muhammad, is said to have been buried during the Arab assault on Constantinople in 670. His tomb is greatly venerated by Muslims, attracting many pilgrims. Some of the personal belongings of Muhammad are preserved in the tomb.

**FLOWER PASSAGE** Opened in 1876; the 19th century Flower passage can be described as a miniature version of the famous Galleria in Milan, Italy, and has rows of historic pubs, winehouses and restaurants.

**GALATA TOWER** The Galata Tower is a medieval stone tower in the Galata district of Istanbul. One of the city's most striking landmarks, it is a high, cone-capped cylinder that dominates the skyline and affords a panoramic vista of Old Istanbul and its environs. The tower was built as *Christea Turris* in 1348 during an expansion of the Genoese colony in Constantinople. In 1630-1632, Hezarfen Ahmet Çelebi flew as an early aviator using artificial wings for gliding from this tower over the Bosporus to the slopes of Üsküdar on the Anatolian side, nearly six kilometres away.

**GOLDEN HORN:** is a historic inlet of the Bosphorus dividing the city of Istanbul and forming the natural harbor that has sheltered Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman and other ships for thousands of years. It is a scimitar-shaped estuary that joins the Bosphorus just at the point where that strait enters the Sea of Marmara, thus forming a peninsula the tip of which is "Old Istanbul". The significance of the designation "golden" is obscure. It has witnessed many tumultuous historical incidents and its dramatic vistas have been the subject of countless works of art. Panoramic drive by the coast viewing from the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Fener, Metal Church of St. Stephen the Bulgarian, Jewish Hospital, Eyüp Sultan Mosque, and Pierre Loti historical coffee house.

**GRAND BAZAAR** was built at the command of Fatih Mehmet shortly after the Conquest. It is the most attractive shopping centre and biggest "souk" in the world with 4399 shops, 2195 workshops, 497 stalls and 18 fountains; selling antiques, jewellery, gold, carpets, leatherwear and souvenirs.

**HAGIA SOPHIA** one of the greatest marvels of architecture, constructed as a basilica in the 6th century by Emperor Justinian in the years 532 to 537. The courtyard of Hagia Sophia harbours a number of minor but fascinating Ottoman structures.

**HIDIV PAVILLION** is located on the hills of Cubuklu neighbourhood in Beykoz district on the Asian side of Istanbul. It was built in 1907 by Italian architect Delfo Seminati as a residence for the Ottoman governor (Hidiv or Khedive) of Egypt, Abbas Hilmi Pasha. The mansion sits in a large area and at the main entrance there is a monumental fountain, rising all the way to the roof which is covered with stain glass.

**HIPPODROME** is the ancient centre of sportive events (chariot races, athletics) and political activities of the old city. Serpentine Column, Obelisk of Theodosius, German Fountain of Wilhelm II are the monuments decorating the Hippodrome.
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**ISTANBUL MODERN** Founded in 2004, Istanbul Modern was the first private museum to organize modern and contemporary art exhibitions in Turkey and it occupies a large site on the shores of the Bosphorus, encompassing 8,000 square meters. The Museum offers a wide array of services in a multifaceted venue, including permanent and temporary exhibition galleries, photography gallery, library, cinema centre, café and a design store. In addition, the Museum also offers video, educational and social programs.

**MAIDEN'S TOWER** is located at the intersection point of the two continents Europe and Asia. Due to its location, it has been the symbol of Istanbul. The Maiden's Tower (Turkish: Kız Kulesi), also known in the ancient Greek and medieval Byzantine periods as Leander's Tower (Tower of Leandros), sits on a small islet located in the Bosphorus strait off the coast of Üsküdar in Istanbul, Turkey.

**METAL CHURCH OF ST. STEPHEN THE BULGARIAN** also known as the Bulgarian Iron Church is a Bulgarian Orthodox church in Fatih, Istanbul, Turkey, famous for being made of cast iron. The church belongs to the Bulgarian minority in the city. The Bulgarians of the Ottoman Empire used to pray at the churches of the Phanar Orthodox Patriarch, but due to nationalistic movements, Bulgarians were allowed a national church in the 19th century, the Bulgarian Exarchate.

**MINIATURK** is a miniature park situated at the north-eastern shore of Golden Horn. Miniaturk is the world's largest miniature park with its 15,000 m² model area. The park contains 105 models done in 1/25th scale. 45 of the structures are from Istanbul, 45 are from Anatolia, and 15 are from the Ottoman territories that today lie outside of Turkey. Also featured are historic structures like the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus and the Mausoleum of Maussollos at Halicarnassus (now Bodrum).

**MUSEUM OF THE ANCIENT ORIENT** is the first building to the left at the entrance of the Archaeological Museum. Originally a school building, it was converted into a museum in 1917, and then modernized between 1963-1973. The artefacts brought here from Egypt and the Middle Eastern countries that were under Ottoman rule prior to World War I, and relics from ancient Anatolian civilizations comprise a unique and beautiful collection.

**NISANTASI** Nişantaşı is famous for its many Art Nouveau apartment buildings and is home to several prominent figures of the Turkish jet-set, culture and art. In Nişantaşı you can have a cup of coffee at Armani Café or shop at the nearby Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Hugo Boss, Escada, Kenzo, Prada, Cartier, Hermes, Chanel, DKNY, Max Mara, Burberry, Roberto Cavalli, Tod’s, Guiseppe Zanotti or any other famous boutique within walking distance. Especially on Saturday nights Nişantaşı becomes crowded with people who come to the famous pubs and cafés of this district to spend some time. On Sundays the neighbourhood becomes less crowded and is mostly left to its residents.

**ORTODOX PATRIARCHATE OF FENER** The Ortodox Patriarchate of Fener was briefly headquartered in the Church of the Holy Apostles in the 15th century, but was soon transferred to the Theotokos Pammakaristos Church (now Fethiye Mosque). It remained there until 1586, when it moved to St. George Church. St. George had been part of a monastery before it welcomed the Ortodox Patriarchate of Fener. Over the centuries, it has been periodically damaged, the last time during the fire in 1941. Repairs began in 1989 and were completed in 1991.
PIERRE LOTI is a lovely cafe among the green, located on a hill with beautiful trees, where you can enjoy the wonderful view of the Golden Horn. You can reach the cafe by following the road signs from Eyüp or you can use teleferic at the skirts of the hill. The café takes its name from a regular visitor from years ago, Pierre Loti, the French author who was very fond of İstanbul and wrote as he sat in this cafe while enjoying the view. If you're lucky, you can watch the Sultanate Caiques as they sail along the Golden Horn.

PRINCESS' ISLAND a cruise to the biggest Island of nine various sized islands in the Sea of Marmara called Buyukada. This popular summer resort with its sandy beaches and pinewood scenery was once the pleasure island of the Byzantine Princes'. You will have horse-drawn carriage follows a course between the mansions in well-kept gardens, seafood in a good restaurant and free time on the island.

RAHMİ M. KOC MUSEUM is a private industrial museum in Istanbul, it is dedicated the history of technology, unique with sheltering thousands of items from gramophone needles to old boats, aircrafts, steamed locomotives, a full size submarine, typical Turkish boats, Sultan’s carriage, olive oil mill, toys, printing machines, antique cars collection, horse-drawn carriages, bikes and motorbikes. Aviation and navigation scientific instruments.

RUMELI FORTRESS (from the sea/no interior visit), in 1452, Mehmet II prepared to besiege Constantinople by constructing a fortress at Rumeli Hisari. It took less than four months to build, thanks to 3000 labourers and master masons assigned to the task. Its crenellated walls and round towers are popular with photographer and what you see from the top of the walls is one of the nicest views of the Bosphorus.

RUSTEM PASHA MOSQUE designed by the court architect Sinan for the Grand Vizier of Suleyman the Magnificent. A typical sample of Islamic architecture amidst the rows of shops near the Spice Bazaar, famed with its exquisite and colourful tiles set in floral and geometric designs.

SPICE BAZAAR mystical smells of different aromas of various spices, shops selling fruits, vegetables, fish, flowers etc. This covered market is an attractive L-shaped building to the southwest of the New Mosque (Yeni Cami). Its English name survives from the time when the market specialized in the sale of spices and herbs, as well as medicinal plants and drugs.

SULEYMANIYE MOSQUE is without question one of the greatest works of its architect, Sinan. Begun in 1550, the mosque was completed in 1557, with two more years required in order to finish the entire complex.

THE EYUP QUARTER Eyup quarter and mosques take their name from Eyup Ensari, the companion and standard-bearer of the Prophet Mohammed killed during the first siege of Constantinople.

TOPKAPI PALACE as the administrative centre, for nearly 400 years, for the Ottoman Empire, which was one of the greatest empires of the world, Topkapi Palace is certainly the most important historical site to be visited in Istanbul, exhibiting imperial treasury, sacred Islamic relics, kitchen, Chinese porcelain, weapons, calligraphy section and Harem.
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**TURKISH & ISLAMIC ARTS MUSEUM** features ceramic works, plaster reliefs, carpets from Selçuk and Ottoman period, jewelled pieces, mother of pearl inlaid Koran desks, very valuable hand written Korans, miniatures.

**ZINDAN HAN** built during the Byzantine Empire. It was the first Women Prison in the world by the Ottomans, restored back to the original style nowadays.

**SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS**

*Blue Mosque*  
*Bosphorus Bridge*

*Maiden’s Tower*  
*Rumeli Fortress*
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Topkapı Palace

Dolmabahce Palace

Galata Tower

Hagia Sophia

Pera Beyoglu

Flower Passage
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Grand Bazaar

Blue Mosque

Beylerbeyi Palace

Bosphorus Cruise

Camlica Hill
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Archeological Museum

Spice Bazaar