



Tour Name

Lonely Planet Experiences: Istanbul Conquered

Tour City

Istanbul

Tour Snapshot

Either I conquer Istanbul or Istanbul conquers me. – Fatih Sultan Mehmet. Journey in the footsteps of the city's most famous ruler and conquer Istanbul in just a day. This is the ultimate all-in-one introduction to the sites everyone must see in Istanbul, with a locals-know twist. Visit Turkey's iconic historic spots such as the jaw-dropping Hagia Sofia, the beautiful Blue Mosque, and the pretty, tree-lined ancient Hippodrome, and learn how Istanbul has stood strong through the centuries. Eat a tasty Turkish lunch with locals at a hidden café, then listen to stories of how generations of sultans lived at the grand Topkapi Palace, overlooking the gorgeous Bosphorus Strait. Finish it all off with a backstreet tour and some good-natured haggling with local artisans in the Grand Bazaar.

Experience the best travel stories for yourself. Join a local expert and uncover hidden gems on this city adventure hand-picked by the world's leading travel publisher. Lonely Planet Experiences powered by Urban Adventures bring stories to life in the best-loved cities around the globe.

Highlights

- Visit the mesmerising ancient site of Hagia Sophia and marvel at this masterpiece of Byzantium history

- Take in the majestic Blue Mosque and learn about the delicate, intricate work that makes up this world-famous site
- Listen to colourful stories of sultans at Topkapi Palace and explore all the site's ancient treasures
- Enjoy a tasty Turkish lunch with locals in a hidden café
- Haggle with local vendors and get lost in the labyrinth of alleys that make up the famous Grand Bazaar
- Each Lonely Planet Experience comes with six-months free access to Lonely Planet's Guides App which includes over 8,000 destinations guides and unbeatable discounts to Lonely Planet Guidebooks

Local Impact: How you will help the local community by joining this tour:

- On this tour you will visit cultural heavy hitters like the Hagia Sophia Museum, the Blue Mosque, the Hippodrome, and Topkapi Palace. Your tour includes entrance fees to all of them, which helps to preserve these important cultural sites.
- On this tour you will have a chance to try different Turkish delicacies at local cafes, and in doing so you will be supporting small, locally-owned business.

Inclusions: Local English-speaking guide, entry fees, lunch, tea and coffee

Exclusions: Extra drinks, tips or gratuities for your local guide

Schedule details

- Duration:9 hours
- Meeting point:
 Pudding Shop Lale Restaurant, Divanyolu Caddesi No. 6, 34400, Sultanahmet. The restaurant is located on the street where the tram line runs through Sultanahmet, approximately a 3-minute walk from the Sultanahmet tram stop.
- Find the exact meeting point with what3words: [///polished.doormat.us.es](http://polished.doormat.us.es)

- Starting time: 8.30 AM
- Ending point:
Grand Bazaar

Full Itinerary

Can you “conquer” Istanbul in just one day? We’re certainly going to try! Take a journey from Byzantium to Constantinople to Sultan Mehmet Fatih’s city of Islam on this historical tour that stops at some of the most iconic sites in Turkey while also showing you the city’s exciting present.

Start your Istanbul tour with a dose of awe at Justinian the Great’s Hagia Sophia. This masterpiece of Byzantine architecture stands tall and proud in downtown Istanbul, holding within its walls more than 1,500 years of Turkish history. This mind-bogglingly beautiful site is also somewhat of a chameleon — it has lived its long life as a church, a mosque, and now as a museum. It’s also a movie star: anyone who’s seen *From Russia with Love* will feel a bit like James Bond when they step inside.

You’ll then head just across the street to the jewel in the Istanbul crown. Sultan Ahmet I’s Blue Mosque is one of the most striking sights in Istanbul, with its iconic blue-tiled walls (the tiles number in the tens of thousands!), 260 windows, and six minarets. Don’t forget to ask your guide the significance of those six spires.

Next, your Istanbul city tour will take you to the ancient Hippodrome. Today, this charming promenade is a popular meeting point for Istanbulites, but it is also an integral part of Turkish history. Chariot races once took place along this strip, which was also home to the notorious Nika riots — a dramatic political protest in 532 AD that led to the massacre of tens of thousands of people.

Need a break? We’ll step back to the present and join the locals as we lunch in a hidden café. You’ll enjoy friendly conversation with members of the community and learn about daily life in Istanbul.

Once you’re filled with Turkish cuisine, Topkapi Palace awaits. This opulent complex overlooking the Bosphorus is a true Istanbul treasure, with many colourful stories about the rich sultans who lived there between 1453 and 1839.

Lastly, you’ll seek out treasures of a different kind in Istanbul’s famed Grand Bazaar, which offers up 3,000 shops to explore along 61 streets. Meet a few of the local characters, perfect your haggling skills, have a true Turkish coffee, and shop till you drop.

Note that the Grand Bazaar is closed on Sundays, so if you choose a Sunday departure, you'll explore the nearby vibrant Spice Market, filled with delectable and colourful Turkish spices, treats, coffees, and teas.

Following recent safety incidents we recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest information on travelling in Turkey before your departure and ensure that your travel insurance covers you for all areas of your itinerary. We have links to prominent government travel advisories and regular updates on issues affecting this trip on our Travel Alerts page - www.intrepidtravel.com/au/travel-alerts.

Additional information

Inclusions: Local English-speaking guide, entry fees, lunch, tea and coffee

Exclusions: Extra drinks, tips or gratuities for your local guide

Dress standard: While Istanbul is quite liberal, please be aware that the standard of dress throughout Turkey is conservative. To respect this and for your own comfort we recommend modest clothing. This means clothing that covers your shoulders and knees for both women and men. Note that at the Blue Mosque, women are required to cover their hair (we recommend bringing a scarf with you), and both men and women will need to remove their shoes.

Your Trip: For your Urban Adventure you will be in a small group of a maximum of 12 people.

Confirmation of booking: If you have your voucher, your booking is confirmed. We'll see you at the start point. Get in touch if you have any concerns or require more information via the email address or phone number (business hours only) on your voucher. **IMPORTANT note:** The Blue Mosque in Istanbul will be closed between 1st March - 15th May for renovation. To compensate we will be visiting Sokollu Mehmet Pasha Mosque, which was built in 1572 (older than Blue Mosque) and location is here

Additional Information: Destination re-opening in April, 2020

Closure of sites: **IMPORTANT note:** The Blue Mosque in Istanbul will be closed between 1st March - 15th May for renovation. To compensate we will be visiting Sokollu Mehmet Pasha Mosque, which was built in 1572 (older than Blue Mosque) and location is here

Child Policy: Children between the ages of 6 and 11 inclusively are permitted on this tour at the rate listed above. Please select 'child' above when booking. Children below the age of 6 are not permitted on this tour.

Local contact

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