



Türkiye

Must See Attractions

Istanbul



Istanbul Archaeology Museum



The Istanbul Archaeology Museums comprise three main museums: the Archaeological Museum, the Museum of the Ancient Orient, and the Museum of Islamic Art. Located in Istanbul's historic Sultanahmet district, these museums collectively house an extensive collection of artifacts from various civilizations, spanning thousands of years.

The Archaeological Museum itself holds a vast array of exhibits, including artifacts from ancient Greece, Rome, Mesopotamia, and Anatolia. Visitors can explore sculptures, sarcophagi, pottery, coins, and other archaeological finds that shed light on the diverse cultures and civilizations that once thrived in the region.

The Museum of the Ancient Orient focuses on artifacts from Mesopotamia, highlighting the cultural and historical significance of ancient civilizations such as the Sumerians, Assyrians, Babylonians, and Hittites. It houses cuneiform tablets, ancient texts, and monumental artifacts that offer insights into these ancient societies.

The Museum of Islamic Art features a remarkable collection of Islamic artworks, including ceramics, textiles, manuscripts, calligraphy, and decorative arts spanning various Islamic periods and regions. It showcases the intricate craftsmanship and artistic achievements of Islamic culture.

Visitors to the Istanbul Archaeology Museums have the opportunity to delve into millennia of history and witness the richness and diversity of civilizations that have shaped the region. The museums' collections not only educate about ancient cultures but also contribute significantly to our understanding of the broader historical narrative of the Mediterranean and Near East.

Hagia Sophia



The Hagia Sophia, originally constructed as a cathedral in Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul) during the Byzantine Empire, is an architectural marvel with a rich and complex history. Built in the 6th century under the orders of Emperor Justinian I, it stood as the largest cathedral in the world for nearly a thousand years. For centuries, the Hagia Sophia served as a significant religious center for Eastern Orthodox Christianity until the Ottoman Empire's conquest of Constantinople in 1453, after which it was converted into a mosque by Sultan Mehmed II. This transformation involved the addition of minarets and various Islamic architectural elements while preserving much of the original structure and Christian artwork.

In 1935, under the Republic of Turkey and the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the Hagia Sophia was secularized and turned into a museum, symbolizing the secular principles of the new Turkish state.

However, in July 2020, a Turkish court ruling allowed the Hagia Sophia to be re-designated as a mosque, leading to its reconversion into a place of Islamic worship. This decision sparked international discussions regarding its status as a cultural and historical landmark.

Throughout its existence, the Hagia Sophia has been celebrated for its architectural brilliance, including its massive dome, intricate mosaics, and the harmony between Byzantine and Islamic architectural elements. Its history as a significant religious site for both Christianity and Islam makes it a symbol of cultural and religious coexistence.

Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum



The Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum, located in Istanbul, is a treasure trove showcasing an extensive collection of Islamic art spanning over a thousand years. Housed in the former palace of Ibrahim Pasha, the grand vizier of Suleiman the Magnificent, the museum holds exquisite artifacts such as calligraphy, ceramics, textiles, carpets, and illuminated manuscripts.

The museum's displays highlight the artistic achievements of various Islamic cultures, including pieces from the Ottoman Empire, Seljuk, Abbasid, and Andalusian periods. Intricate tilework, mesmerizing carpets, ornate metalwork, and stunning Qur'anic manuscripts are among the notable items in this museum.

It's a fantastic place to immerse yourself in the rich cultural heritage of Islamic art, offering insights into the craftsmanship, aesthetics, and cultural significance of these artworks throughout history.

Istanbul Museum of Science and Technology in Islam



The Istanbul Museum of Science and Technology in Islam, also known as İstanbul İslam Bilim ve Teknoloji Tarihi Müzesi in Turkish, is a unique museum dedicated to showcasing the scientific and technological advancements made in the Islamic world throughout history.

This museum highlights the contributions of scholars, scientists, and inventors from the Islamic civilization, emphasizing their achievements in fields such as astronomy, mathematics, medicine, chemistry, engineering, and more. It aims to shed light on the often overlooked but significant role that Islamic scholars played in shaping the progress of science and technology.

The museum exhibits various replicas, models, and interactive displays that illustrate the inventions, tools, and scientific instruments developed by scholars in the Islamic world during different periods. Visitors can explore exhibits on early astronomy and navigation tools, innovative medical instruments, advancements in architecture and engineering, and the development of various scientific theories and concepts.

By showcasing the scientific heritage of Islamic civilization, this museum provides insight into the contributions that have had a profound and lasting impact on the advancement of knowledge worldwide. It serves as an educational and cultural space, promoting a deeper understanding of the scientific and technological legacy of the Islamic world.

Topkapı Palace



Topkapı Palace, the Jewel of the Ottoman Empire, situated in Istanbul, served as the primary residence and administrative headquarters of the Ottoman sultans for nearly 400 years. This magnificent palace, overlooking the Bosphorus, the Golden Horn, and the Sea of Marmara, holds a significant place in Turkish history and stands as a testament to the grandeur of the Ottoman Empire.

Constructed in the 15th century after the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople, Topkapı Palace expanded over time with various additions and renovations by succeeding sultans. It encompasses multiple courtyards, lush gardens, opulent pavilions, and numerous rooms and chambers that reflect the lifestyle, culture, and power of the Ottoman rulers.

The palace served not only as a residence for the sultans and their families but also as the center of state affairs, where political decisions were made and administrative matters were conducted. It housed an array of treasures, including precious artifacts, weaponry, Islamic manuscripts, and priceless jewels, many of which are on display in the palace's museum today.

Visitors to Topkapı Palace can explore its various sections, such as the Harem (private quarters of the sultan and his family), the Imperial Treasury with its stunning collections, the Throne Room, and the kitchens. The palace offers a glimpse into the lavish lifestyle of the Ottoman elite and the rich cultural heritage of the empire.

Beyond its historical significance, the palace complex provides breathtaking views of Istanbul and remains one of the city's most visited attractions, attracting tourists and history enthusiasts alike.

Sultanahmet Mosque



The Sultanahmet Mosque, also known as the Blue Mosque, is one of Istanbul's most iconic landmarks and a masterpiece of Ottoman architecture. Commissioned by Sultan Ahmet I in the early 17th century, it stands as a symbol of both religious devotion and architectural brilliance.

Its nickname, the Blue Mosque, originates from the intricate blue tiles adorning the interior walls. The mosque's design is awe-inspiring, with its multiple domes, six slender minarets, and a spacious courtyard. The interior is adorned with more than 20,000 handmade ceramic tiles, featuring various floral and geometric patterns, enhancing the mosque's beauty.

The central dome is particularly impressive, soaring high and supported by four massive columns. The mosque's layout and architectural elements reflect a blend of Islamic, Byzantine, and traditional Ottoman influences, showcasing the cultural and artistic fusion of that era.

The Sultanahmet Mosque remains an active religious site, welcoming visitors and worshippers alike, providing a glimpse into both its historical significance and architectural grandeur.

Spice Bazaar



The Spice Bazaar, known as the "Misir Çarşı" in Turkish, is another renowned and historic market in Istanbul, situated in the Eminönü quarter, close to the Galata Bridge and the New Mosque. It's also sometimes referred to as the Egyptian Bazaar.

Dating back to the 17th century, the Spice Bazaar is a captivating marketplace famous for its aromatic spices, herbs, dried fruits, nuts, teas, Turkish delight, and other culinary delights. It's a sensory experience where visitors are greeted by a myriad of scents, colors, and flavors as they navigate through the stalls and shops.

The bazaar's striking architecture, with its domed ceilings and rows of stalls adorned with vibrant displays of spices and goods, adds to its charm. It was historically a vital center for the spice trade, attracting merchants from different parts of the world.

Apart from spices and food items, the Spice Bazaar also offers a variety of other products such as textiles, ceramics, souvenirs, and traditional Turkish goods. Many visitors not only come to shop but also to soak in the bustling atmosphere, savor the rich scents, and experience the lively ambiance of this historic marketplace.

Similar to the Grand Bazaar, bargaining is also part of the shopping experience in the Spice Bazaar, allowing visitors to engage in friendly negotiations while purchasing their desired items. A visit to the Spice Bazaar provides a glimpse into Istanbul's cultural heritage and its historic role as a center for trade and commerce.

Ortaköy Square



Ortaköy Square, located in the Ortaköy neighborhood on the European side of Istanbul, is a vibrant and picturesque area that attracts locals and tourists alike.

The square itself is a hub of activity, known for its lively atmosphere, charming cobblestone streets, and a variety of attractions. At the center of the square is the Ortaköy Mosque, officially known as the Büyük Mecidiye Camii. This stunning mosque, with its distinctive neo-Baroque architecture and beautiful seaside location, is one of the prominent landmarks in the area.

Surrounding the mosque, visitors will find an array of small boutiques, art galleries, cafes, and restaurants offering a diverse selection of food and beverages. Ortaköy Square is especially popular for its street food vendors selling traditional Turkish snacks and treats like kumpir (stuffed baked potatoes), waffles, and other local delicacies.

The square enjoys a scenic location along the Bosphorus, providing stunning views of the strait and the iconic Bosphorus Bridge. It's a fantastic spot for relaxation, enjoying a meal with a view, and soaking in the unique atmosphere that blends tradition with modernity.

Especially during weekends and evenings, Ortaköy Square comes alive with both locals and visitors strolling around, enjoying the ambiance, and taking in the beauty of this charming neighborhood. Whether for sightseeing, dining, or simply enjoying the vibe, Ortaköy Square offers a delightful experience in Istanbul.

Maiden's Tower



The Maiden's Tower, also known as Kız Kulesi in Turkish, is a distinctive and iconic structure located on a small islet off the coast of Istanbul in the Bosphorus Strait. This historic tower has a rich history and has served various purposes throughout the centuries.

Its exact origins are uncertain, but it's believed that the Maiden's Tower dates back to ancient times, possibly as a defensive fortification or a lighthouse. Over the years, it has been used as a watchtower, a customs station, and even a quarantine site for travelers arriving in Istanbul.

The tower's name, Maiden's Tower, is linked to several legends and myths. One popular legend tells the story of a sultan's daughter who was prophesied to die by a snake bite. To protect her, her father built the tower in the middle of the Bosphorus. Despite his efforts, a snake hidden in a fruit basket brought to her on her birthday led to her demise.

Today, the Maiden's Tower stands as a picturesque and romantic symbol of Istanbul. It's accessible by boat and has been repurposed as a popular restaurant and café with stunning views of the city skyline and the Bosphorus. Visitors can enjoy a meal or a cup of coffee while taking in the beautiful scenery and the historical significance of this iconic landmark.

Grand Bazaar



The Grand Bazaar, or Kapalıçarşı in Turkish, is one of the oldest and largest covered markets in the world, situated in the heart of Istanbul. With a history dating back to the 15th century, this bustling bazaar is not just a marketplace but also a cultural and historical landmark of the city.

Covering an extensive area with over 60 streets and more than 4,000 shops, the Grand Bazaar is a labyrinth of vibrant alleys and passages, each dedicated to different types of goods. Here, you can find a vast array of items including Turkish carpets, jewelry, ceramics, spices, textiles, leather goods, souvenirs, and much more.

The bazaar is not only a hub for shopping but also a place where visitors can experience the vibrant atmosphere, interact with local shopkeepers, and immerse themselves in Istanbul's rich cultural tapestry. Bargaining is a common practice here, so visitors often engage in friendly haggling while shopping for their desired items.

In addition to the shops, the Grand Bazaar features historic buildings, mosques, fountains, and courtyards, adding to its allure as a cultural destination. Exploring the maze-like corridors of the bazaar allows visitors to discover hidden gems and experience the centuries-old traditions of trade and commerce in Istanbul.

Whether shopping for unique souvenirs, experiencing Turkish hospitality, or simply soaking in the lively ambiance, a visit to the Grand Bazaar offers a glimpse into the vibrant and colorful spirit of Istanbul's past and present.

Galataport Istanbul



Galataport is a significant redevelopment project located in the Karaköy district of Istanbul, situated along the city's historic waterfront on the European side. It's a massive mixed-use development that aims to revitalize the area, offering a blend of cultural, retail, entertainment, and residential spaces.

The project's centerpiece is the cruise ship terminal, designed to accommodate large cruise liners, making it a gateway for international travelers visiting Istanbul. Galataport also includes a promenade along the Bosphorus, providing scenic views of the strait and creating a vibrant public space for locals and tourists alike.

With a focus on cultural and commercial offerings, Galataport features a diverse range of facilities, including art galleries, shopping malls, restaurants, cafes, hotels, and recreational areas. The aim is to create a dynamic destination that preserves the area's historical character while introducing modern amenities and attractions.

The development of Galataport represents Istanbul's efforts to enhance its waterfront areas, promote tourism, and create vibrant public spaces that cater to both residents and visitors. It's envisioned as a hub that celebrates the city's rich heritage while embracing contemporary lifestyle and commerce.

Dolmabahçe Palace



Dolmabahçe Palace, situated on the European coast of the Bosphorus Strait, is an opulent and majestic palace that served as the main administrative center for the Ottoman Empire in the later years of its existence.

Commissioned by Sultan Abdülmecid I in the mid-19th century, Dolmabahçe Palace reflects a blend of Ottoman, Baroque, Rococo, and Neoclassical architectural styles. It was intended to replace the older and more traditional Topkapi Palace, offering a more modern and luxurious residence for the sultans.

The palace boasts an impressive facade with ornate details, expansive gardens, and a stunning waterfront location that provides sweeping views of the Bosphorus. Its interior is equally lavish, featuring intricate decorations, crystal chandeliers, grand halls, and sumptuous furnishings that showcase the wealth and splendor of the Ottoman Empire.

Notable rooms within the palace include the Crystal Staircase, the Ceremonial Hall (Muayede Salonu), the Crystal Chandelier Room (Mabeyn Salonu), and the lavish Harem section, offering insights into the lifestyle of the Ottoman elite.

Dolmabahçe Palace holds historical significance as the place where Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey, spent his last days before passing away in 1938. Today, the palace operates as a museum, allowing visitors to explore its opulent interiors, gardens, and artifacts, providing a glimpse into the grandeur and history of the Ottoman era.

Galata Tower



The Galata Tower stands tall and proud on the skyline of Istanbul, offering panoramic views of the city and the Bosphorus. Located in the Galata district, this iconic medieval tower has a history that dates back to the 14th century.

Initially built by the Genoese as part of the fortifications surrounding their colony, the tower has served various purposes throughout history, including as an observation point, a watchtower for fires, and even as a prison. Its distinct cylindrical shape and stone structure make it a prominent landmark in Istanbul.

Visitors can ascend the tower to its observation deck via an elevator or stairs, where they're treated to breathtaking views of Istanbul's historic peninsula, the Golden Horn, the Bosphorus Strait, and the modern cityscape. Sunset and evening visits are particularly popular, offering stunning views as the city lights up.

Apart from its panoramic views, the Galata Tower has become a symbol of Istanbul, attracting tourists, photographers, and history enthusiasts alike. Surrounding the tower is the lively Galata neighborhood, known for its vibrant streets filled with cafes, shops, and a bohemian atmosphere.

The tower's historical significance, combined with its picturesque views and its role as an iconic part of Istanbul's skyline, makes it a must-visit destination for anyone exploring the city.

Bosphorus Strait Tour



A Bosphorus Strait tour is an exceptional way to experience Istanbul's beauty and witness the city's stunning landmarks from a unique perspective. The Bosphorus Strait, connecting the European and Asian sides of Istanbul, is a crucial waterway and a symbol of the city's cultural and historical significance.

These tours typically depart from various points along the Bosphorus and offer a leisurely cruise along the strait. During the tour, you'll have the opportunity to see an array of iconic landmarks, palaces, and architectural marvels that line the shores of Istanbul.

The tours often provide informative commentary about the historical significance of the sights, giving visitors a deeper understanding of Istanbul's heritage. Sunset cruises or evening tours also offer a magical experience as the city lights up and creates a mesmerizing ambiance.

Whether opting for a guided tour or a private cruise, exploring Istanbul from the Bosphorus Strait offers a memorable and scenic way to appreciate the city's rich history, architectural splendor, and natural beauty.

Basilica Cistern



The Basilica Cistern, known as Yerebatan Sarayı or Yerebatan Sarnıcı in Turkish, is an ancient underground reservoir in Istanbul, Turkey. Constructed during the reign of Byzantine Emperor Justinian I in the 6th century, this impressive cistern served as a water storage system for the city.

What makes the Basilica Cistern so fascinating is its sheer size and architectural ingenuity. It covers an area of about 9,800 square meters and has the capacity to hold over 80,000 cubic meters of water. The cistern consists of a vast space supported by rows of columns, with 336 marble columns arranged in 12 rows, each consisting of 28 columns.

Among the columns, two stand out due to their unique design, featuring Medusa head bases at their bottoms. These bases are believed to have been repurposed from earlier Roman structures and add to the mysterious and captivating atmosphere of the cistern.

Visitors can explore the Basilica Cistern via raised walkways, observing the columns, the dimly lit environment, and the reflection of the water that creates an almost surreal ambiance. Over time, the cistern has also been featured in various films, adding to its allure as a historical and cinematic attraction in Istanbul.

Museum İstanbul E-Card



What Is MuseumPass İstanbul E-Card ?

In İstanbul, 13 museums under the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism and Directorate of National Palaces can be visited for 5 days with MuseumPass İstanbul. The price of MuseumPass İstanbul, which is valid for 5 days from your first visit to the museum and the archaeological sites, is 9,350 TL (USD 235).

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