

# QUICK GUIDE

ISTANBUL

3 DAYS – 3 PERSPECTIVES



# Istanbul

## DAY 1: EUROPE

Start with breakfast or tea at the hotel's terrace or with a morning stroll through the empty old city in Sultanahmet area accompanied with a simit in your hand. Best time is before 8 o'clock, it can get crowded afterwards.

The old city is best explored on foot. Make sure to see what everyone quarrels about – the legendary Hagia Sophia mosque, the stunning patterns of Blue Mosque (the ceiling is currently being renovated), the Basilica Cistern Museum (freshly refurbished), the Sultan's Topkapi Palace. Each of these places will make a separate impression, the latter may take up to couple of hours. Try complimentary treats at the Grand Bazaar and the Egyptian Bazaar and embrace the centuries of trading traditions even if you don't plan to buy anything. For actual shopping, I recommend the smaller Arasta Bazaar, where you can negotiate prices and escape crowds.

You can get local food (köfte, kuru fasulye, adana kebab, menemen) on the street called Hocapaşa Lokantalar Sokağı (note, toilet is only in the nearby mosque, for a small fee). You can eat great desserts at Hafiz Mustafa by the tram tracks, and for Turkish shisha with an authentic atmosphere, be sure to visit Anadolu Nargile Çorlulu Ali Paşa Medresesi.

The evening will look nice from one of the rooftop bars, e.g. Roof Mezze 360 or Konak Cafe & Restaurant if you are next to the Galata tower (now a museum, but once the highest point of Beyoğlu).

### OTHER ATTRACTIONS ON THE EUROPEAN SIDE:

✚ Istiklal Street – the most popular pedestrian street with numerous shops and crowds.

✚ Galata Tower and the oldest underground tunnel after London's Underground leads to the beginning of Istiklal Street (on the corner on the left there is delicious ice cream in Cremeria Milano).

✚ The Greek-Jewish district of Balat – vintage shops, cool cafes, Greek colourful houses – close to Sultanahmet and crowded at weekends.

✚ Karaköy district and Galata Harbour, where the Museum of Contemporary Art reopened recently after long renovation.

✚ A visit to the hammam, which helps to relax after a long sightseeing tour. A few tested: Kılıç Ali Paşa Hamamı, Çemberlitaş Hamamı (the oldest), Çağaloğlu Hamamı.

✚ Cruise on the Bosphorus (to the Black Sea) and visiting the Beşiktaş districts and the Dolmabahçe Palace, Ortaköy district, Bebek coastal line with fashionable yacht clubs, cafes and beautiful views.



# Istanbul

## DAY 2: ASIA

Find the nearest ferry station (Eminönü, Karaköy, Beşiktaş) and cross the Bosphorus Strait to Üsküdar, one of the most conservative, yet beautiful and interesting districts of Istanbul. Take a 40-minute walk along the water through the trendy Kuzguncuk neighborhood (or take a cab or a bus).

Enjoy an open-air breakfast by the Bosphorus at İsmet Baba, stroll down İcadiye Street up to the colourful cottages. Return to the water and go to the palace of the last sultan Abdulaziz - Beylerbeyi, called mini Versailles (or take a taxi or minibus, the way is short but goes through a noisy tunnel). The palace is located right on the Bosphorus by the great bridge over it. It's worth going there for the views alone, and the interiors of the palace are stunning!

In Üsküdar, you can also visit the country's largest mosque, Büyük Çamlıca Camii, and the telecommunication tower with a panoramic terrace, Çamlıca Kulesi, both designed by women. Return to the Bosphorus, watch the sunset from Asian side over Leander's Tower and take the ferry back.

### OTHER ATTRACTIONS ON THE ASIAN SIDE:

✦ Kadıköy district - the real face of Istanbul - good local market, trendy cafes, the only opera house in the city, bar street, street with raki and meze and delicious fish dishes (my favorite restaurant here is Rota Lokantasi), for wine it's best to go to Viktor Levi (for evening or lunch with a cheese board), or grab a delicious veggie wrap in Falafella, eat best cheesecake in Vitavien Cafe, attend live music concert in legendary Dorock bar.

✦ Moda area - most prestigious part of Kadıköy where you can grab famous waffle in Moda and enjoy its park. Great for a walk, chill coffee time, views of Marmara sea.

✦ Polonezköy - a Polish village in Istanbul, containing a 150-year history of Poles living in this area (access only by taxi/car/motorcycle). Visit the Zofia Ryży Memorial House, the Polish cemetery and the Polish church, and try to talk to the locals in Polish, chances are high they will answer back!

✦ Places: Çengelköy (for Bosphorus view restaurants, e.g. Inci Bosphorus), Bagdat street (street full of fancy modern cafes and shopping), Tuzla (Postane Mahallesi - local beach in summer, old Greek houses, biggest Aquapark in town and an outlet mall) famous fish restaurants along the coast, e.g. Tuzla Balıkçısı.



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## DAY 3: PRINCESS ISLANDS

After breakfast (which you can also have on the boat), take the ferry to Adalar (tur. "islands"). The nearest ferry directly to the islands starts from the KABATAŞ ferry station (now under reconstruction, but look for the entrance through the gates, direction 'ADALAR'). If the weather is very foggy and windy, ferries may be canceled (happens sometimes in winter). The Princes' Islands are a complex of nine islets in the Marmara Sea located along the Asian part of Istanbul. There are beautiful Ottoman houses (e.g. Con Paşa Köşkü), a ban on vehicles, and a holiday-picnic-biking atmosphere where you can hire a bike to explore the surroundings. It is a great place to relax from the busy city (especially after crowds in Sultanahmet). You can swim here in summer, and the beaches are better and cleaner on the back side of the island (facing open sea).

The largest and most popular island is Büyükdada (tur. "Big island"). The highlight of a trip can be a visit to the church of St. George (Aya Yorgi) on the hill with the amazing views on Istanbul and Marmara sea. The island is famous for its delicious ice cream (e.g. Tarihli Prinkipo Dondurma), greek heritage and dense greenery.

\*This is a usual commuting route and you can use Istanbul card just like in any other transportation.



*Merhaba!*

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