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#### In This Book

#### QuickStart Guide

Your keys to understanding the city – we help you decide what to do and how to do it



### Need to Know

Tips for a smooth trip



Neighbourhoods What's where

## **Explore İstanbul**

The best things to see and do, neighbourhood by neighbourhood



# **Top Sights**Make the most of your visit



**Local Life**The insider's city

## The Best of İstanbul

The city's highlights in handy lists to help you plan



**Best Walks**See the city on foot



**İstanbul's Best...**The best experiences

## Survival Guide

Tips and tricks for a seamless, hassle-free city experience



#### Getting Around

Travel like a local



#### **Essential Information**

Including where to stay

Our selection of the city's best places to eat, drink and experience:



Eating

Orinking

**Entertainment** 

Shopping

### These symbols give you the vital information for each listing:

- Telephone Numbers
- Opening Hours
- Parking
- Nonsmoking
- @ Internet Access

  ➡ Wi-Fi Access
- ▼ Wi-Fi Access

  ✓ Vegetarian Selection
- fil English-Language

- ₱ Family-Friendly
- Pet-Friendly
- Bus
- Ferry
  M Metro
- S Subway
- Tram
- ☐ Train

### Find each listing quickly on maps for each neighbourhood:



### Lonely Planet's istanbul

Lonely Planet Pocket Guides

are designed to get you straight to the heart of the city. Inside you'll find all the must-see sights, plus tips to make your visit to each one really memorable. We've split the city into easy-to-navigate neighbourhoods and provided clear maps so you'll find your way around with ease. Our expert authors have searched out the best of the city: walks, food, nightlife and shopping, to name a few. Because you want to explore, our 'Local Life' pages will take you to some of the most exciting areas to experience the real Istanbul.

And of course you'll find all the practical tips you need for a smooth trip: itineraries for short visits, how to get around, and how much to tip the guy who serves you a drink at the end of a long day's exploration.

It's your guarantee of a really great experience.

#### **Our Promise**

You can trust our travel information because Lonely Planet authors visit the places we write about, each and every edition. We never accept freebies for positive coverage, so you can rely on us to tell it like it is.

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# **Explore İstanbul**

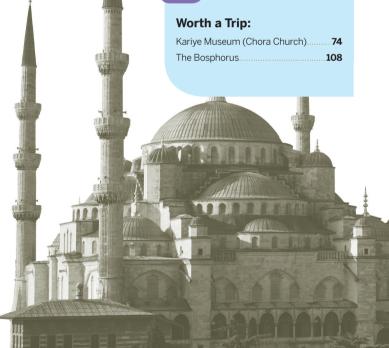
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#### Welcome to İstanbul

In İstanbul, extraordinary experiences are found around every corner. Here, dervishes whirl, *müezzins* call from minarets and people move between continents multiple times a day. Home to millennia-old monuments and cutting-edge art galleries (sometimes in the same block), it's a destination where eating, drinking and dancing are local priorities, and where everyone is welcome to join the party.



Food stalls near the New Mosque (p66)
MATT MUNRO/LONELY PLANET ®



#### Aya Sofya (p24)

History resonates when you visit this majestic basilica. Built in the 6th century AD, its remarkable features include a massive dome and a stunning collection of Byzantine mosaic portraits.





### Topkapı Palace (p42)

A series of mad, sad and downright bad sultans lived in this pavilionstyle palace during the glory days of the Ottoman Empire. Reminders of their privileged lifestyles are everywhere to be seen



### The Bosphorus (p108)

A ferry trip down the mighty Bosphorus strait showcases a passing parade of mosques, palaces and mansions on both the Asian and European shores.



## Grand Bazaar (p56)

Sometimes described as the world's oldest and most evocative shopping mall, this colourful and chaotic covered market is the heart of İstanbul's Old City and one of its most atmospheric destinations.

### Kariye Museum (Chora Church; p74)

Great things can come in small packages. This diminutive Byzantine church is made extraordinary by virtue of its interior, which is crammed with exquisite mosaics and frescoes.



#### İstanbul Archaeology Museums (p46)

An eclectic and exhilarating collection of antiquities, classical sculpture, Ottoman tilework and Byzantine artefacts is showcased at this museum complex next to Topkapı Palace.





## Süleymaniye Mosque (p60)

Truly deserving the tag 'living history', this imperial mosque atop the city's fourth hill is one of few that has retained, restored and creatively reused its original outbuildings.



#### İstiklal Caddesi (p78)

A promenade down this pedestrianised 19th-century boulevard is the quintessential İstanbul experience, offering a colourful snapshot of local life.

#### İstanbul Modern (p80)

İstanbul has one of the most exciting contemporary art scenes in the world, and this gallery housed in a converted shipping warehouse on the Bosphorus is its pre-eminent venue. (Below: False Ceiling by Richard Wentworth)



### Dolmabahçe Palace (p100)

This palace on the Bosphorus shore – built as the Ottoman Empire's power waned but making no concessions to this fact – gives a fascinating glimpse into the artificial lives and ostentatious taste of the sultans.





#### Basilica Cistern (p30)

Both architectural tour de force and virtuosic engineering feat, this evocatively lit underground cistern is one of İstanbul's most mysterious and magnificent Byzantine monuments.



#### Blue Mosque (p28)

Beloved of tourists and locals alike, the most photogenic of İstanbul's imperial mosques is also one of the busiest places of worship in the city. DOZIER MARC/GETTY IMAGES ©



### Insider tips to help you find the real city

istanbul's 14 million residents enjoy an exhilarating lifestyle that is crammed with culture, against the backdrop of history and underpinned by family and faith. Head to their neighbourhoods, mosques, shops and cafes to see what makes life here so special.

### Between the Bazaars (p62)

- ► Local shopping
- ► Historic buildings

The winding streets linking the historic Grand and Spice Bazaars are crammed with İstanbullus every day of the week except Sunday. Locals have purchased provisions, outfitted themselves and stocked up on household goods of every possible description here for centuries, and most show no sign of moving their custom to the soulless shopping malls found in the suburbs. Celebrate this fact by punctuating your visit to İstanbul with some exploration of the bazaars.

# An Afternoon in & Around Galata (p82)

- ► Fashionable boutiques
- ► Byzantine heritage

Lying in the shadow of its medieval tower, the district of Galata melds historic credentials (intact 19th-century streetscapes and buildings, Byzantine towers and churches) with some of the city's best boutiques, a growing avant-garde arts scene, and a bustling fish market and tradesman enclave. An afternoon spent wandering here will give you glimpses into İstanbul's multifaceted lifestyle.

### Weekend Wander in Ortaköy (p102)

- ► Snack and market stalls
- ▶ Bosphorus views

A former fishing village, Ortaköv makes the most. of its magnificent Bosphorus location. Centred on a waterside square full of eateries and cafes. the suburb is home to one of the city's prettiest mosques and plays host to crowds of locals on weekends, who flock here to promenade, take ferry cruises, snack on local fast foods, browse the stalls of the Sunday handicrafts market and drink in the bars and cafes.