

Western Districts

Neighbourhood Top Five

1 Kariye Museum (p114)

Admiring the mosaics and frescoes adorning the interior of one of İstanbul's Byzantine treasures.

2 Eyüp (p119)

Taking a ferry up the Golden Horn to visit the Eyüp Sultan Mosque and enjoy the hill-top view from the terrace of Pierre Loti Café.

3 Patriarchal Church of St George (p117)

Visiting this church, one of Turkey's major pilgrimage destinations, and wandering up nearby Vodina Caddesi for a glimpse of Fener and Balat's neighbourhood life.

4 Asitane (p122)

Sampling dishes such as stuffed quince, goose kebab and

'fatty apron' kebab, once enjoyed by Süleyman the Magnificent and other sultans.

5 Yavuz Sultan Selim Mosque (p118)

Exploring the streets around this historic mosque in the fascinating Çarşamba district.



For more detail of this area see Map p252 ➔

Explore Western Districts

It's a great shame that so few visitors head to this fascinating part of town. Try to dedicate at least one day of your stay to exploring the area; two would be better.

Spend the first of these taking the Golden Horn ferry trip from Eminönü, first alighting at Ayvansaray to visit the Kariye Museum (Chora Church) and then continuing to Eyüp. Either on the same day or the next, try to incorporate a wander along Vodina Caddesi to experience the eclectic, bohemian and multicultural Fener and Balat neighbourhoods and to see the Patriarchal Church of St George's ornate interior. If you are able to spend a second day here, we recommend starting in the Bazaar District and then continuing uphill towards the Fatih and Yavuz Sultan Selim Mosques. A good day for this is Wednesday, when the weekly market takes place in the streets around Fatih Mosque. Note that these districts are quiet at night and on Sundays, so you're best off exploring during the day on weekdays or Saturdays.

Local Life

➔ **Produce shopping** Locals shop along Fevzi Paşa Caddesi and at the Çarşamba Pazarı, aka Wednesday Market (p118) in Fatih, on Murat Molla Caddesi in Çarşamba and along Vodina Caddesi in Balat.

➔ **Gathering spots** Popular local gathering spots include the terrace of the Yavuz Sultan Selim Mosque (p118) and the forecourts of the Eyüp Sultan Mosque (p118) and Fatih Mosque (p118).

➔ **Cultural hub** Vodina Caddesi has several antique shops and regular antique auctions, along with little stores selling vintage clothing, handmade shoes, ceramics and more. With artists moving into the area, galleries and studios are likely to spring up in the coming years.

Getting There & Away

➔ **Ferry** The most enjoyable way to access the neighbourhood, the Haliç (Golden Horn) ferry from Eminönü stops at Ayvansaray near Edirnekapi and at Eyüp, with a new stop in Balat set to be added.

➔ **Bus** Regular services (99, 99A and 99Y) travel from Eminönü up the Golden Horn on the main shore road. Bus 55T links Fener and Balat with Taksim. En route back to Eminönü, 99Y detours to Karaköy via the Atatürk Bridge, before recrossing the Golden Horn on the Galata Bridge.

➔ **Taxi** From Taksim to Fener costs around ₺15; Sultanahmet to Edirnekapi about ₺20.

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

Much of this area's appeal lies in its neighbourhood charms. Especially around Vodina Caddesi, you can enjoy the contrasts between tumbledown late-Ottoman houses and graffiti murals, İstanbul hipsters and conservative Islamic folk, chic cafes and locals selling fresh veg from vans on back lanes. Rather than rushing through, factor in time to walk the streets – preferably on a Wednesday, when the Çarşamba Pazarı (Wednesday Market; p118) is held around the Fatih Mosque.

Best Churches

- ➔ Patriarchal Church of St George (p117)
- ➔ Church of St Mary of the Mongols (p120)
- ➔ Church of St Stephen of the Bulgars (p121)

For reviews, see p117. ➔

Best Byzantine Mosaics

- ➔ Kariye Museum (p114)
- ➔ Fethiye Museum (p117)

For reviews, see p117. ➔

Best Cafes

- ➔ Coffee Department (p122)
- ➔ Pierre Loti Café (p122)
- ➔ Aziz Cafe (p122)

For reviews, see p121. ➔