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## Istanbul Turkey

Cliché or not, Istanbul really is the city where east meets west. An exceptional mix of the ancient and contemporary – an experience not to be missed. This is the junction where Asia meets Europe and it was no accident that three successive great empires chose Constantinople, as it was then named, as their capital. The Romans, Byzantines and Ottomans have left an indelible stamp on modern-day Istanbul with wonderful examples of the city's vivid and colourful past to be found around virtually every corner.



Exclusive Escapes



Your knowledgeable and friendly guide will discuss an itinerary that is most appropriate to you and will provide you with a fascinating insight into the history and culture of the city.

This half-day is spent on foot exploring the SultanAhmet region, but you will only visit sites that are of specific interest to you. Entrance fees and meals are not included. For guests not staying in this area transport is of course provided to and from SultanAhmet.

For additional exploration a personal guide can be pre-arranged for a cost (including transport).

Half Day: £75. Full Day: £110

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How to Enjoy Istanbul

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CITY BREAK OR COMBINED WITH CAPPADOCIA AND/OR THE LYCIAN COAST

Istanbul is a fascinating city to visit on a short break. However, the vast majority of our guests visit Istanbul in combination with either Cappadocia and/or the Lycian Coast.

We like to consider ourselves expert in arranging individual holidays of this nature – indeed any holiday using Istanbul as a launch pad for exploration of Turkey.

The contrast provided by the cultural overload and hustle and bustle of Istanbul combined with the inspiring landscapes of the National Park of Cappadocia and/or the peace and beauty of one of our coastal retreats makes for a perfectly balanced holiday offering many diverse experiences.

Please refer online for prices and examples of these holidays.

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Istanbul Hotels  
Why Our Selection?

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We are extremely proud of the fact that our guests are so well thought of that the vast majority of our boutique properties are exclusively presented to UK guests by *Exclusive Escapes*.

Our carefully selected portfolio of properties provides our guests with the opportunity to experience the city in a way only very few are able to. All offer a real sense of character and individuality that certainly suits our philosophy, a long way removed from the feel of an antiseptic and impersonal city hotel chain.

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## What To Do In Istanbul

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### THE OLD CITY

The majority of our chosen hotels are in the SultanAhmet region of the Old City, with its labyrinthine streets and plethora of cultural and historic sites. These include the Blue Mosque, with its 21,000 hand-painted Iznik tiles, the huge dome of Hagia Sophia, the Imperial Treasury and the Topkapi Palace – the list is endless, and the exploration a joy.

The Istanbul skyline is a most remarkable sight. It is punctuated by thousands of minarets, both ancient and modern, that rise up the hillsides from the banks of the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn.

### BEACHES

The Bosphorus is, of course, a predominant feature throughout Istanbul and it is an absolute must to see the city from the water. One option is to take the 45-minute ferry across to the beautiful and traffic-free Princes Islands where exploration is by horse-drawn carriage or on foot. The numerous beaches are a wonderful surprise.

### WALKING

Although seemingly vast, as with many cities, the ideal way to explore Istanbul is on foot. Paths follow the banks of the Sea of Marmara along old city walls towards Galata Bridge where ferries depart to all points.

Crossing the bridge you climb through the winding streets to the ancient Galata Tower. This tower dominates the skyline and provides the most wonderful views across the city. The surrounding region is currently being regenerated at a pace and provides a fascinating insight into Istanbul life.

From here the hill leads down towards the modern city centre of Taxim Square and then on past the Beşiktaş football stadium and onto the former grand Ottoman Palaces such as the fabulous Dolmabahçe Palace and the Çırağan Palace (now a hotel in our portfolio).

### CULTURE & NIGHTLIFE

The city, though rich in ancient culture, is also extremely contemporary. It boasts restaurants to rank amongst the best in the world, streets full of shops of all varieties, a vibrant café music scene, frequent concerts, exhibitions of the highest quality and some of the most dramatically located nightclubs you will find, set on the banks of the Bosphorus.

Istanbul – where east meets west – an extraordinary mix of the ancient and contemporary, and an experience not to be missed.

### COMPLIMENTARY PRIVATE GUIDE

We do not offer any of the shared excursions that exist throughout Istanbul as we wish to provide a more personal service. In order to allow you to establish your bearings on your first morning, *Exclusive Escapes* provide a private guide for a half-day to all guests who are visiting Istanbul for at least two nights.