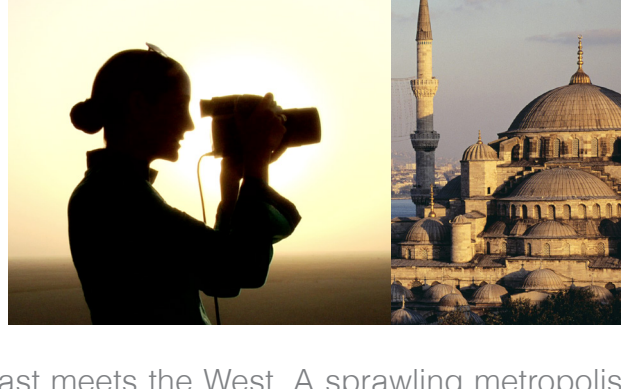




# TOP 10

## ISTANBUL | TURKEY



Hailed as the "City of the World's Desire," Istanbul is where the East meets the West. A sprawling metropolis spanning two continents, it was once the capital of two mighty empires, the Ottomans and the Byzantines, and seems to continually reinvent itself. Currently, you'll find a modern center with some of the world's greatest shopping, food, and nightlife. It's one of the sexiest cities in the world and the word fusion is regularly used, as the city does fuse the old and the new impeccably. The perfect day starts waking up to the sight of the exotic architecture, grabbing lunch and checking out some of the newest galleries and museums, sipping champagne at sunset on the Bosphorus, and at the night, when the city becomes electric, eat and drink amongst a stylish jet set crowd. If you're more apt to stay low key, Istanbul provides traditional taverns and tea gardens, where you can enjoy the traditional side of this amazing city. Without a doubt, after leaving you'll desire to return again soon.



### 1. MIX LUXURY AND HISTORY AT ONE OF ISTANBUL'S TOP HOTELS

Stay at the Pera Palace Hotel, Kampinsky Palace or even the Four Seasons, for some true luxury. At the Pera Palace Hotel, you'll find 1920s style art-nouveau décor, along with an amazing and intriguing history. Greta Garbo, Matahari and Agatha Christie have all been guests here. The hotel was built in 1892 to house passengers of the Orient Express, and has survived two world wars, the decline of the Ottoman Empire, and Istanbul's changing economic, political and social conditions. If you want a different kind of character, The Four Seasons Hotel, which was originally built as a prison in the early 20th Century, now provides ultimate luxury, the opposite of what you'd expect to find in a prison. Spacious rooms, decadent marble baths, top-quality service and understated elegance in its décor, the hotel is really central in the old city and close to everything. Remember to book early, as it is always full of lucky guests.

<http://www.jumeirah.com/en/hotels-resorts/istanbul/pera-palace-hotel-jumeirah/>  
<http://www.kempinski.com/en/istanbul/ciragan-palace/welcome/>  
<http://www.fourseasons.com/istanbul/>



### 2. TAKE A HERITAGE WALK IN THE OLD CITY

First visit the Hagia Sophia, one of my favorite buildings in the world. This historic architectural wonder has had three incarnations; originally an Orthodox basilica, later a mosque, now a museum. Famous in particular for its massive dome, it is considered the epitome of Byzantine architecture and is said to have 'changed the history of architecture'. Cross the street to the Blue Mosque where you'll quickly understand its name as you see the over 20,000 blue Iznik tiles found inside. The 19-year old Sultan Ahmet Camii, who commissioned the mosque, banned everyone from ordering blue Iznik tiles until his order was filled. Walk down the road to The Basilica Cistern, the largest of several hundred cisterns built under Istanbul. It is an underwater cavern built in the 6th Century and you'll be amazed once within the forest of columns and its magical lighting.

<http://ayasofyamuzesi.gov.tr/>



### 3. TREAT YOUR INNER FOODIE TO A VISIT TO THE SPICE MARKET

Visit the Space Market, where you'll find an amazing assortment of goodies. It's one of the oldest bazaars in the city. Then have lunch at the famous Pandelli Restaurant, which opened for business in 1901. Order one of their great kebabs and, for desert, try the milk pudding with rose water and walnuts.



### 4. SHOP 'TIL YOU DROP AT THE GRAND BAZAAR

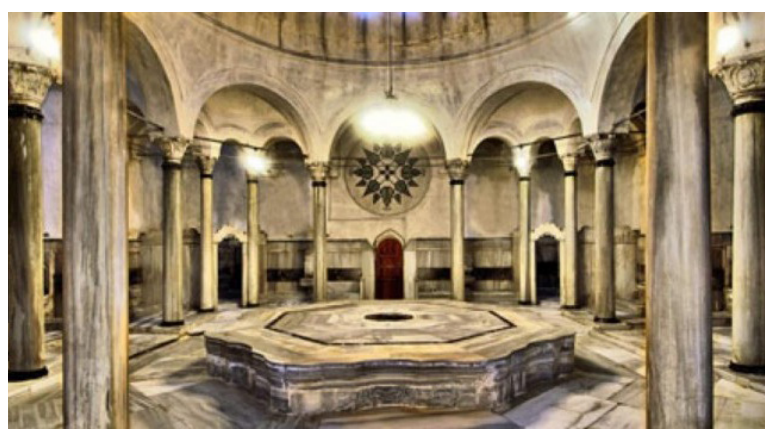
For some fantastic shopping visit The Grand Bazaar, one of the largest covered markets in Istanbul, with over 58 streets and 1,200 shops. Opened in 1461, the bazaar sells everything under the sun but is best known for its jewelry, pottery, carpet, and spices.

[http://www.grandbazaaristanbul.org/Grand\\_Bazaar\\_Is-istanbul.html](http://www.grandbazaaristanbul.org/Grand_Bazaar_Is-istanbul.html)

### 5. RELAX IN A TRADITIONAL STEAM BATH

After shopping, unwind at the nearby Cagaloglu Hamam, or steam baths, and feel like you're in a scene from 1001 Nights. The steam room is spectacular and hasn't changed since it was built in the 1700's. The Hamams are quite popular amongst locals, and can get quite crowded so be prepared. First, you'll relax in a warm room where you'll begin to perspire before moving to a hotter room, after which you'll splash yourself with cold water. Finish the experience with a shower and massage before retiring to the relaxation room.

<http://www.cagalogluhamami.com.tr/>



### 6. UNWIND WITH A COCKTAIL AT KAMPINSKY CIRAGAN PALACE HOTEL

Have a late afternoon or evening cocktail at the Campinsky Ciragan Palace Hotel. The only imperial palace hotel located on the magical Bosphorus, it overlooks the ancient city of Istanbul and gives visitors historical ambiance. It is a lovely place to unwind after a long day of sightseeing.

<http://www.kempinski.com/en/istanbul/ciragan-palace/welcome/>

### 7. VIEW INNOVATIVE CONTEMPORARY ART AT THE MODERN ARTS MUSEUM

Istanbul is host to the Contemporary Art Biennale and is now a hotspot for contemporary art and design. Opened in 2004, the Modern Arts Museum is the only gallery in Istanbul that houses innovative, new art. Find work by local artists ranging from sculptures and paintings to less conventional creations. You'll also find an extensive library, café, cinema and gift shop. It's located in the historical district, inside a restored warehouse, where you'll find a great combination of Western and Turkish influences.

<http://www.istanbulmodern.org/>



### 8. TASTE SOME OF ISTANBUL'S CULINARY DELIGHTS

Have dinner at Changa or Vogue for modern takes on Turkish cuisine. Vogue has been around for a decade now and has fast become an institution. The menu changes often here, so you're always in for a surprise or two. And don't forget to visit the roof terrace where you'll get an amazing view and be surrounded by the fashionable natives. Changa is equally as good, offering a sleek 1960s and 70s-inspired décor to compliment traditional Turkish food with a modern update as Pacific Rim/Turkish fusion.

<http://www.voguerestaurant.com/>

### 9. SAIL AROUND THE BODRUM COAST, THE 'TURKISH RIVIERA'

Bodrum was once a quiet town catering to fishermen and sponge divers. A wave of intellectuals began to migrate here in the 1950s and since then, Bodrum has attracted artists seeking a place for secondary residence. Now, many have become regulars who stay yearlong. Bodrum now hosts many poets, singers, artists, as well as commercially minded investors and package tourists. Fly to the beachside resort town of Bodrum and spend a night at the lovely Amga Hotel. It's a picturesque boutique hotel built amongst ancient olive trees. Take a quick tour of Bodrum, with its white washed houses and cascading bougainvillea, exploring its winding streets filled with cafes and little boutiques. Pop in to the Marmera Hotel for an afternoon cocktail by the pool. The sailing in this area is wonderful. Visit Cleopatra's Beach and other places of historical interest or just relax and enjoy the gentle sea breeze.



### 10. EXPLORE THE GEOGRAPHICAL WONDER OF CAPPADOCIA

Visit Cappadocia, an ancient city built into the rocks. A mix between The Flintstones and a lunar landscape, it is most famous for its natural rock formations and underground cities. Visit the Valley of Fairy Chimneys, where you'll see the effect of thousands of years of erosion on soft volcanic stone topped with hardened lava. Then visit some of the over 100 painted churches in the religious hidden city of Ilhara Canyon. Stay at the Museum Hotel, built in these caves dwellings. Guests experience authenticity and luxury, and will find themselves surrounded with artifacts and collectables from the period when Cappadocia thrived. Finally don't leave without taking a hot air balloon ride over this amazing landscape.