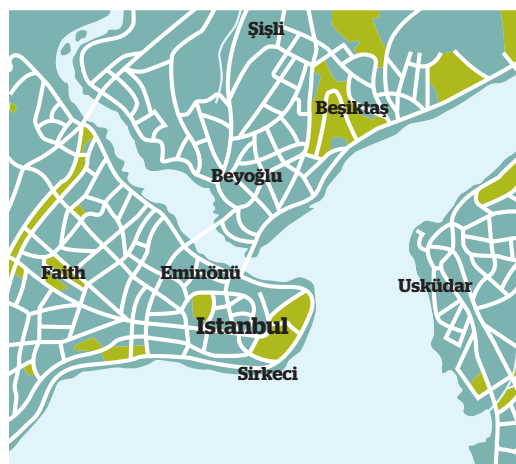


Istanbul

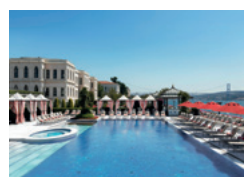
—
by Miriam Cain



The former Constantinople is being transformed into one of the world's most dynamic cities by a new generation of Turks, elevating Istanbul to a new level of style.

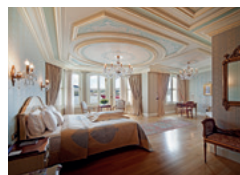
Pillow Talk

Quintessentially Eastern, with glittering mosques and beautiful vistas, Istanbul has become a favourite city break destination. The



booming metropolis has a plethora of smart hotels. **The Four Seasons Istanbul at Sultanahmet** is a characterful hotel located close to the sites of **Aya Sofya**, the **Blue Mosque** and **Topkapi Palace**. With its high ceilings and arched portals, the building, which was previously a prison, is faithful to the current trend for Ottoman revivalist style.

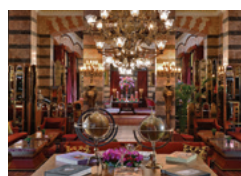
The Four Seasons Hotel Istanbul at the Bosphorus (pictured above) is located in the Ciragan Palace Kempinski Istanbul. Once the Sultan's summer retreat, it has long been the most desirable place to stay on the Bosphorus with its waterfront terrace. Also on the Bosphorus, but some distance from the centre, the **Hotel Les Ottomans** attracts Istanbul's social and business elite. Ten lavishly designed suites, a pool, and a Caudalie



Vinotherapy spa are housed in the extravagantly reconstructed 18th-century waterside residence.

Celebrating Istanbul's rich contemporary culture, the **Armaggan Bosphorus Suites** (pictured above) occupy three waterfront mansions on the European shore of the Bosphorus. Available as individual suites, three separate houses, or one large residence, their decor combines the finest in local craftsmanship and hospitality, with exquisite textiles and objects d'art.

Located close to the restaurants and smart boutiques of Istanbul's fashionable Nişantaşı district, the **Park Hyatt Istanbul** (pictured below) is ideal for those looking for absolute privacy. The exterior is Italian palazzo inspired, while the interior is understated.



The Pera Palace Hotel (pictured above) is situated at the far end of Istiklal Cadesi, where Ottoman-

era embassies sit alongside vibrant bars and restaurants. The elegant building was Istanbul's first luxury hotel accommodating passengers coming into the city on the famed Orient Express.

Bucking the trend of hotel locations in the old city or in the entertainment quarter of Beyoğlu, the recently opened **Raffles Istanbul** is located in the Zorlu Centre. Housed in a modern tower block, the interior offers stylish and contemporary rooms where the neutral décor is punctuated with Ottoman inspired detailing.

Eat, Drink + Dance

Breakfast + brunch...

Having a long and lazy breakfast or brunch is a cultural and culinary tradition when in Turkey. For a relaxed breakfast of homemade jams, cheeses and olives, **Café Privato** in Galata is an old favourite with locals and visitors to Istanbul. **Datli Maya** has a unique and rustic charm with local, organic produce.

One of the oldest establishments in the city is the **Emek Café** where you can enjoy a traditional Turkish breakfast by the water. Also by the Bosphorus, **Bebek Koru Kahvesi** serves traditional brunch with cheese, eggs, honey and smoked salmon.

Lunch...

The Hamdi Restaurant, which is located next to Galata Bridge, is a favourite for a traditional Turkish



kebab – best enjoyed while taking in the views over the New Mosque's minarets.

The terrace of **La Mouette** at the **Beyoglu Tomtom Suites** hotel overlooks the old city. With a reputation for being one of the finest restaurants in Istanbul, the imaginative dishes are created using locally sourced ingredients. Further contemporary dishes can be enjoyed at **Lokanta Maya**.

For a pleasurable Istanbul ritual of a long lunch spread out over several courses, with cold meze, hot starters, and a seafood crescendo, head to **Rumelihisari Iskele**. Located right on the Bosphorus in the shadow of a medieval fortress, the setting is magical.

Mixing old with new, the stylish **X** restaurant is located atop the century old Deniz Palas building. Renovated in 2009, the old Sea Palace now houses the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts and the **X** restaurant and is a great place to spend the afternoon.

For more culture and cuisine, head to **Müzedechanga** located inside the **Sabanci Museum**. The menu is known for its creative spins on Mediterranean cuisine, enjoyed in an elegant setting with views over the water from the terrace.

Dinner...

The warm evenings allow you to drink at roof top bars, dine at Bosphorus front restaurants or in courtyards beneath Ottoman mosques.

Istanbul's trend for roof top dining spots started over a decade ago with **Leb-i derya** when the owners of Beyoglu realised the potential of pairing the city's magnificent views and warm climate with good food. The newest location of **Leb-i derya** is atop of Istiklal Caddesi's Richmond Hotel and is a great spot for a drink before or after dinner. More stunning views can be enjoyed from **Ulus 29** and **Sunset Grill and Bar**.

Located in Nisantasi Akaretler, **Gile** is a contemporary, fine dining restaurant serving Turkish cuisine. Just a stone's throw from the Bosphorus, **Karaköy Lokantası** is also known for its traditional Turkish cuisine and has been a long favourite with in-the-know locals.

Best reached by boat, **Lacivert** is situated on the Asian side and has spectacular views. Also accessible by boat, out on the Galatasaray islet, **Fish** serves an unusual selection of meze and fresh fish, but aside from its unusual menu, it is known as one of the city's most

Above

— Take a cruise to the **Princes Islands** - the summer retreat of the city's elite; the iconic **Grand Bazaar** will not disappoint

Below

— Climb the **Galata Tower** for 360-degree views over the city and beyond



stunning and exclusive places to eat, drink and enjoy the river.

Last but not least, the newly opened **Raffles Hotel** at the Zorlu Center welcomes **Rocca** to Istanbul's gastronomic scene. The menu combines **Rocca's** traditional offerings with Turkish flavours.

Do + discover

Istanbul has a host of places to visit in the old city and across the **Golden Horn** to the buzzing entertainment quarter of **Beyoglu**. Nestled beneath the historic domes is a city with a vibrant art, design and cultural scene. Originally founded by the Greeks in the seventh century BC, Istanbul became

Constantinople in the fourth century AD, capital of a Byzantine Christian world before it fell to the Ottoman



Turks in 1453. The relics of the two great powers stud the old quarter. Leading historic sites include the **Topkapi Palace** (pictured above), the **Byzantine Church of the Holy Wisdom Aya Sofya** (pictured above),





splendid pavilions of the Ottoman Empire, the **Kariye Museum**, the **Basilica Cistern**, and the **Süleymaniye Mosque**. For amazing 360-degree views of the city and beyond climb the **Galata Tower** in the Beyoglu district.

Istiklal Avenue in the old European quarter houses contemporary art galleries, which sprang up after the opening of the **Istanbul Modern** gallery over a decade ago. The gallery's huge exhibition space is housed in a white cube located on the Bosphorus, with works of art displayed alongside a restaurant, cinema, design store and library. The **Pera Museum** in Galata exhibits contemporary

and Ottoman art and ceramics.

Head to the **Sakip Sabanci Museum** in Emirgan where you will find Ottoman calligraphy collections and temporary exhibits from artists such as Anish Kapoor.

Highlights of Istanbul art calendar include the **Istanbul Design Biennial**, which runs annually from early November to mid-December, and the Istanbul Biennial, which is held before the Design Biennial. Other cultural events run throughout the year including the **Istanbul Film Festival** in April, followed by the **Istanbul Theatre Festival** in May, and the **Istanbul Music and Jazz Festivals** in June and July.

See + Shop

Shopping in Istanbul conjures up scenes of sumptuous Turkish carpets in an ancient bazaar and it doesn't disappoint. Dating back to the 15th century and boasting almost 4,000 shops, the **Grand Bazaar** stocks everything from Turkish carpets and traditional jewellery to the latest designer labels. Discover the centuries old bazaar that echoes with market traders haggling over Middle Eastern paraphernalia

For a modern take on the bazaar and a more sophisticated market place, step inside **Dhoku** in the Grand Bazaar, where you will find minimalist cool kilims

At a glance

Best travel time Late spring or early autumn is the best time to visit with sunny days providing the ideal weather to explore the city on foot. Mid-summer is hot, and from mid-December through mid-March cold winds blow in from the Black Sea.

Currency Turkish Lira

Language Turkish

Vibe Bohemian cool

woven by hand in Turkish mountain villages. Away from the market, head to **Istiklal Caddesi** where you will find international brands, while the 19th century arcades running off the main street are home to eclectic boutiques.

The **Çukurcama** area is dotted with antique shops, while the **Horhor** near



Aksaray has five floors packed with shops selling everything from fashion to interior design.

For herbs and spices, head to the **Spice Bazaar** situated on the Golden Horn, and for traditional shopping at its best head to the Muslim Orthodox faith district for the Wednesday market **Çarşamba**.

If on the water take a cruise to the **Princes' Islands** (pictured below).



The summer retreat of the city's elite, beautiful wooden mansions dot the landscape and, with no cars allowed, the islands provide a respite from the bustling city of Istanbul.