

## Welcome to Istanbul !

Dear Traveller, Welcome to Turista Travel Istanbul web site! First of all , let me say that we are member of TURSAB ( Association of Turkish travel agencies ) licence no 2181 . We are glad you have chosen us to guide you through this beautiful country. Turista Travel shall endeavour to make your stay here comfortable, organized and unforgettable. We at Turista Travel shall accommodate you in finding the right mix to suit your needs. Whether you want to travel in an organized group, on your own, or a little of both.

Istanbul, once known as the capital of capital cities, has many unique features. It is the only city in the world to straddle two continents, and the only one to have been a capital during two consecutive empires - Christian and Islamic. Once was capital of the Ottoman Empire, Istanbul still remains the commercial, historical and cultural pulse of Turkey, and its beauty lies in its ability to embrace its contradictions. Ancient and modern, religious and secular, Asia and Europe, mystical and earthly all co-exist here.

Its variety is one of Istanbul's greatest attractions: The ancient mosques, palaces, museums and bazaars reflect its diverse history. The thriving shopping area of Taksim buzzes with life and entertainment. And the serene beauty of the Bosphorus, Princes Islands and parks bring a touch of peace to the otherwise chaotic metropolis. Sultanahmet: Many places of tourist interest are concentrated in Sultanahmet, in heart of the Imperial Centre of the Ottoman Empire. The most important places in this area, all of which are described in detail in the "Places of Interest" section, are Topkapi Palace, Aya Sofia, Sultan Ahmet Camii (the Blue Mosque), the Hippodrome, Kapali Carsi (Covered Market), Yerebatan Sarnici and the Museum of Islamic Art.

In addition to this wonderful selection of historical and architectural sites, Sultanahmet also has a large concentration of carpet and souvenir shops, hotels and guesthouses, cafes, bars and restaurants, and travel agents. Beyo lu and Taksim: Beyoglu is an interesting example of a district with European-influenced architecture, from a century before.

Europe's second oldest subway, Tunel was built by the French in 1875, must be also one of the shortest - offering a one-stop ride to start of Taksim. Near to Tunel is the Galata district, whose Galata Tower became a famous symbols of Istanbul, and the top of which offers a tremendous 180 degree view of the city. From the Tunel area to Taksim square, is one of the city's focal points for shopping, entertainment and urban promenading: Istiklal Caddesi is a fine example of the contrasts and compositions of Istanbul; fashion shops, bookshops, cinemas, markets, restaurants and even hand-carts selling trinkets and simit (sesame bread snack) ensure that the street is packed throughout the day until late into the night. The old tramcars re-entered into service, which shuttle up and down this fascinating street, and otherwise the street is entirely pedestrianised. There are old embassy buildings, the colourful ambience of Balik Pazari (Fish Bazaar) and restaurants in Cicek Pasaji (Flower Passage).