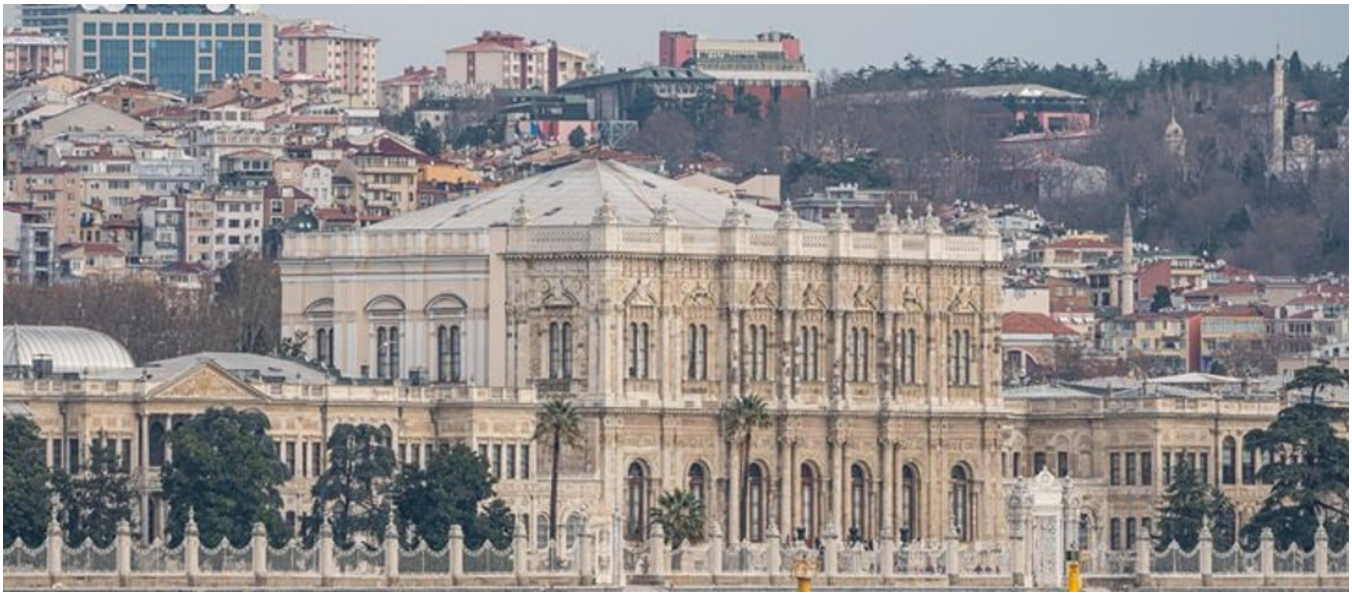
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Private 3 Day Istanbul Tour Blue Mosque Bosphorus And Palaces

3 days · Private · from Istanbul

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At a glance

Start	6:30 AM, 7:00 AM, 7:30 AM, 8:00 AM, 8:30 AM, 9:00 AM
Duration	3 days
Pickup	Pickup is included from the listed pickup points — choose yours when you book. Pickup is up to 45 minutes before the start time; we confirm your exact pickup time before the tour.
Cancellation	Free cancellation up to 24 hours before the tour starts.

Itinerary

> **Start**
Istanbul
Starts at 6:30 AM, 7:00 AM, 7:30 AM, 8:00 AM · pickup up to 45 min earlier

1 **Day 1: Hotel Pickup**
Day 1: Hotel Pickup – Begin Your Journey Through the Rich Heritage of Istanbul

2 **Sultanahmet district**
Your Istanbul adventure begins with a comfortable hotel pickup before heading to the historic Sultanahmet district. Your first stop is the legendary Hippodrome of Constantinople — once the beating heart of the Byzantine Empire, where up to 100,000 spectators gathered to watch thrilling chariot races, gladiatorial contests, and grand imperial ceremonies. Your expert guide will bring this remarkable open-air square vividly to life, sharing fascinating stories of legendary rivalries, powerful emperors, and the dramatic Nika Riots of 532 AD that nearly brought the entire empire to its knees. As you explore the square, admire three ancient monuments that have stood for centuries — the Egyptian Obelisk of Theodosius, originally erected in Karnak in 1450 BC; the Serpentine Column from Delphi; and the Walled Obelisk, once covered in gilded bronze plates. A captivating introduction to Istanbul's extraordinary Byzantine heritage.

3 **Blue Mosque**
Just steps away from the Hippodrome stands one of the most iconic masterpieces of Ottoman architecture — the Blue Mosque. Formally known as the Sultan Ahmed Mosque and built between 1609 and 1616, this magnificent structure is instantly recognizable by its six soaring minarets — a feature so unusual that it caused controversy when it was built, as only the mosque in Mecca had six at the time. Step inside to discover a breathtaking interior adorned with more than 20,000 hand-painted ?znik tiles whose striking blue hues inspired its world-famous nickname. Your expert guide will lead you through the grand courtyard and majestic domed interior, sharing the fascinating story behind its imperial design, unique architecture, and its enduring role as an active place of worship and spiritual heart of Istanbul.

4 **Grand Bazaar**
From the Blue Mosque, make your way to the ultimate shopping and cultural experience of Istanbul — the Grand Bazaar. Dive into the vibrant, beating heart of Istanbul's trading history at the world's oldest continuously operating covered market, founded in 1461 by Sultan Mehmed II after the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople. With over 4,000 shops spread across 61 covered streets, this mesmerizing labyrinth is a treasure trove of handcrafted Turkish carpets, glittering lanterns, intricate ceramics, fine jewelry, and exotic spices. Follow your expert guide through the painted domes and vaulted passageways, learning the historic traditions of the guilds that built this market and picking up essential local bargaining tips. Haggling over pricing is still common, and traders follow hospitality traditions passed down through centuries. Enjoy free time to explore and shop for unique souvenirs in this ultimate sensory wonderland.

5

Hagia Sophia

With your bags full of unique souvenirs and your mind buzzing with centuries of trading history, it's time to leave the Grand Bazaar behind and make your way to one of Istanbul's most awe-inspiring landmarks — Hagia Sophia. A symbol of Istanbul's extraordinary history for nearly 1,500 years, this iconic monument was originally built as a Byzantine cathedral in 537 AD under Emperor Justinian I, later served as an Ottoman imperial mosque, and today continues as an active mosque welcoming visitors from around the world. As you admire its immense 55-meter dome — an engineering marvel that remained the world's largest for nearly a thousand years — your expert guide will reveal the fascinating layers of history within its walls, from Byzantine golden mosaics and Christian heritage to Ottoman calligraphy and Islamic architectural elements. Discover the engineering brilliance and remarkable stories that have made Hagia Sophia one of humanity's most iconic landmarks.

6

Topkapi Palace

Stepping out of Hagia Sophia and still marveling at its grandeur, prepare for your final and most spectacular stop of the day — Topkapi Palace. Home to 24 Ottoman sultans for nearly 400 years, your expert guide will lead you through magnificent courtyards, ornate pavilions, and administrative chambers that once served as the beating heart of a vast empire. Marvel at the stunning Treasury collections — including the legendary 86-carat Spoonmaker's Diamond — gaze upon rare holy relics, and admire the exquisite Iznik tiling while taking in breathtaking panoramic views over the Bosphorus Strait and the Golden Horn. Venture into the legendary Harem — a secretive world of over 400 rooms where the sultan's family lived entirely isolated from the outside world — before concluding an extraordinary Day 1 in Istanbul.

7

Istanbul

After your amazing journey for the day, you will be comfortably brought back to your hotel.This is the end of your first day of tour

8

Day 2 – Day 2: Hidden Gems, Bustling Bazaars, and the Bosphorus Await You

Day 2: Hidden Gems, Bustling Bazaars, and the Bosphorus Await You

9

Day 2 – Suleymaniye Mosque

As Day 2 begins, your guide will pick you up from the hotel for another unforgettable day in Istanbul. Your first stop is the magnificent Süleymaniye Mosque Complex, the largest Ottoman-era mosque in the city and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Built between 1550 and 1557 for Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent and designed by the legendary architect Mimar Sinan, the complex is a masterpiece of Ottoman architecture. Step inside to admire its soaring 53-meter dome, elegant Iznik tiles, stained-glass windows, and remarkable acoustics created by 64 clay pots embedded within the dome. Wander through the peaceful courtyards to visit the ornate tombs of Sultan Süleyman and Hürrem Sultan, while enjoying breathtaking panoramic views of the Golden Horn and the Bosphorus.

10

Day 2 – Egyptian Bazaar

After uncovering the mind-blowing architectural secrets and rich imperial history of the Süleymaniye Mosque, your journey takes a sensory turn just a short distance away. Await the mesmerizing sights and aromas of the vibrant Spice Bazaar, a legendary marketplace that has been one of Istanbul's most iconic trading hubs since the 17th century. Step into this bustling historic haven where your expert guide will lead you through vaulted corridors packed with stacks of colorful saffron, sumac, and traditional Turkish teas. You will have the chance to sample authentic Turkish delights, premium local nuts, and sweet dried fruits while learning how the historic Silk Road and Ottoman trade networks brought exotic spices and goods to this iconic market—giving you the perfect blend of local culture, tasting experiences, and time to shop for unique treasures.

11

Day 2 – Bosphorus

After immersing your senses in the vibrant colors and aromas of the Spice Bazaar, it's time to take to the water for an iconic Istanbul experience. A short walk brings you to the pier to embark on a scenic Bosphorus boat tour, a breathtaking cruise that glides directly between two continents—Europe and Asia. As you sail along this world-famous strait, admire the spectacular contrast of towering modern bridges alongside historic Ottoman palaces, ancient fortresses, and opulent wooden waterfront mansions (yal?s). Your expert guide will point out legendary landmarks like the Dolmabahçe Palace, Ortaköy Mosque, and the majestic Rumeli Fortress, offering you the ultimate relaxing perspective of Istanbul’s stunning skyline from the water.

12

Day 2 – Basilica Cistern

After stepping off your relaxing Bosphorus cruise, your journey takes you beneath the bustling streets of Istanbul into a quiet, mystical subterranean world. Await the jaw-dropping sights of the Basilica Cistern, the largest of the ancient reservoirs lying beneath the city. Built in the 6th century during the reign of Byzantine Emperor Justinian, this hauntingly beautiful chamber is often called the "Sunken Palace" due to its forest of 336 grand marble columns rising majestically from the water. Wander along the elevated pathways as dramatic, atmospheric lighting casts shimmering reflections all around you, and follow your expert guide to the far corner to marvel at the legendary, enigmatic Medusa head pillars—serving as the ultimate magical finale to your exploration of Istanbul.

13

Day 2 – Istanbul

As another unforgettable day comes to a close, you will be comfortably transferred back to your hotel with a camera full of photos and memories to last a lifetime.

14

Day 3 – Day 3-Explore the modern istanbul

Day 3-Explore the modern istanbul

15

Day 3 – Dolmabahce Palace

You will be picked up from your hotel on this exciting journey to explore the modern and late-Ottoman side of Istanbul. Your first stop is the magnificent Dolmabahçe Palace, a breathtaking symbol of the empire's 19th-century European influence. Situated elegantly along the waters of the Bosphorus, this grand palace served as the main administrative center of the late Ottoman Empire and the residence of the final sultans. As you step inside, you will be dazzled by its opulent blend of Baroque, Rococo, and Neoclassical architectures mixed with traditional Ottoman style. Marvel at the famous Crystal Staircase, wander through grand ceremonial halls, and gaze up at the world's largest Bohemian crystal chandelier—a stunning gift from Queen Victoria—while your expert guide reveals the fascinating history of the empire's final chapters and the early years of the Turkish Republic.

16

Day 3 – Taksim Caddesi & ?stiklal Caddesi

Leaving the grandeur of Dolmabahçe Palace behind, continue into the vibrant heart of modern Istanbul. A short drive brings you to the iconic Taksim Square, home to the historic Republic Monument. From here, enjoy a guided walk along the famous Istiklal Street (?stiklal Caddesi), a lively pedestrian boulevard lined with elegant 19th-century European-style buildings, historic embassies, charming arcades, and the renowned Flower Passage (Çiçek Pasaj?). As the nostalgic red tram passes by, soak up the district's unique atmosphere, filled with boutiques, cafés, galleries, and street performers. You'll also have the chance to sample local favorites like the famous ?slak (wet) burger or simply enjoy the energy of one of Istanbul's most vibrant and cosmopolitan neighborhoods.

17

Day 3 – Galata Tower

After soaking up the vibrant energy and beautiful 19th-century architecture along Istiklal Street, your journey continues to one of Istanbul's most defining historical landmarks. A short walk down the winding slopes brings you to the foot of the magnificent Galata Tower for a captivating exterior visit. Originally constructed in 1348 by the Genoese colony as a watchtower named the Christea Turris (Tower of Christ), this striking medieval stone fortress dominates the city's skyline. As you stand in its lively surrounding square, your expert guide will share incredible tales of its centuries-long history—from its role as a fire spotting tower during the Ottoman era to the legendary 17th-century story of Hezarfen Ahmed Çelebi, who allegedly flew across the Bosphorus using artificial wings. It is the perfect opportunity to snap some iconic photos from the base of this ancient monument before continuing your exploration.

18

Day 3 – Karakoy

Leaving the medieval charm of Galata behind, continue downhill into Karaköy, one of Istanbul's most vibrant waterfront neighborhoods and the final stop of your 3-day journey. Once a historic port district dating back to Byzantine times and later an important Ottoman center for trade and finance, Karaköy has evolved into one of the city's most creative and cosmopolitan quarters. Stroll with your guide through streets where historic architecture blends with contemporary art, boutique shops, and stylish cafés. Relax over a traditional Turkish coffee or tea, sample renowned local baklava, and reflect on your unforgettable journey through the history, culture, and timeless spirit of Istanbul.

19

Day 3 – Istanbul

After an unforgettable three days exploring the timeless history, vibrant culture, and modern energy of Istanbul, you will be comfortably brought back to your hotel as your tour comes to a beautiful close.

o

Drop-off

Back in Istanbul
About 3 days in total

For reference only – the order and timings can change on the day. Your confirmed details come with your booking.

What's included

+ Expert guide
+ Bottled water
+ Walking/Public Transporation experience

Not included

- Foods & drinks
- Tips & gratuities
- Public Transportation Fees
- Bosphorus Ferry Ticket
- Optional Museum Entrance fees
- Topkapi Palace & Harem
- Hagia Sophia
- Serefiye Cistern (Alternative)
- Basilica Cistern
- Dolmabahce Palace

Know before you go

- Stroller / pram accessible
- Public transportation is nearby
- Infant seats available

Custom pickup & drop-off

We can arrange a custom pickup and drop-off location. Pickup and drop-off at most downtown hotels and the cruise terminal are free. Pickup or drop-off at the airport, or outside the city limits, costs extra – contact us to arrange airport pickup and drop-off.

Contact us for airport pickup »

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