



Istanbul Travel Guide

"From Bucket lists to boarding passes!"

Best Time to Travel

Spring (April–May): Enjoy beautiful tulip festivals and mild, comfortable weather for exploring.

Autumn (September–November): Perfect for sightseeing with lower humidity and fewer crowds than summer.

Note: Summers can be quite hot and crowded; winters are cool and occasionally rainy.

Make Sure to Pack

Modest Clothing: Essential for visiting mosques—women should carry a scarf to cover hair; shoulders and knees must be covered for all.

Comfortable Walking Shoes: You will be walking extensively on cobblestones and uneven historic sites.

Tech Gear: Universal power adapter (Turkey uses Type F plugs) and a portable battery pack.

Small Cash Reserves: Always carry Turkish Lira for small market purchases, tea, and street food.

Must-See Highlights

Hagia Sophia & Blue Mosque: Marvel at the stunning architecture and historic significance of these adjacent landmarks.

Topkapi Palace: Explore the lavish home of Ottoman sultans, including the impressive Harem section.

Grand Bazaar & Spice Bazaar: Experience the vibrant energy, colors, and scents of these legendary historic markets.

Bosphorus Cruise: A must-do to see the city from the water and experience the bridge between Europe and Asia.

Galata Tower: Head up for panoramic views of the city skyline and the Golden Horn.

What NOT To Do (Don'ts)

Don't skip the dress code: Always respect prayer times and dress appropriately when entering any mosque.

Don't accept unsolicited tours: Be wary of friendly strangers offering "free" guided tours—stick to licensed guides.

Don't rely solely on credit cards: While widely accepted, smaller shops and authentic local experiences often require cash.

Don't get discouraged by traffic: Istanbul traffic is legendary—always allow extra time for transfers, especially for airport trips.

Cruising & City Hacks

Istanbulkart: Buy an Istanbulkart immediately—it's essential for seamless, cheap travel on all trams, ferries, and buses.

Tipping: Rounding up or leaving 5-10% is standard in local eateries; service charges are rarely included.

Dining Tip: Explore the street food scene—simit, kebabs, and fresh balık ekmek (fish sandwiches) are authentic delights.

Haggle Politely: When shopping at the Grand Bazaar, treat bargaining as a friendly conversation, not a battle.

Practical note: Attraction hours, entry requirements, and transit rules can change—verify details before your trip.