SMS CONFERENCE, ISTANBUL
17 OCTOBER – 22 OCTOBER, 2024

ISTANBUL TOUR PROGRAMS
REGULAR TOUR OPTIONS

IMPERIAL TOUR (Half day Morning)

We begin our tour of the Sultanahmet district, the heart of old Istanbul, at Hagia Sophia Mosque. Built by the Emperor Justinian in the early 6th century AD and designed by Anthemius of Tralles and Isodore of Miletus, the church is one of the marvels of world architecture. Converted into a mosque in 1453. Its massive dome still dominates the skyline of old Istanbul. It is also famed for its mosaics, including glittering portraits of emperors and empresses and a poignant Virgin and Child. Next we visit the Blue Mosque (Exterior / under renovation) which takes its name from the exquisite tiles adorning its interior. Built by Sultan Ahmet I in the early 17th century and designed by a pupil of Sinan, the greatest of Ottoman architects, it is the only imperial mosque with six minarets. Its courtyard is especially grand. The Hippodrome, the stadium of ancient Byzantium, held 100,000 spectators and featured objects from all corners of the empire. Of these, an Egyptian obelisk and a bronze sculpture of three entwined serpents from Delphi survive. The Grand Bazaar was the commercial heart of the old city and its 4,000 shops are full of treasures including carpets and kilims, silks, jewelry, ceramics, icons, and leather goods. Wandering through the Grand Bazaar, indulge in some shopping, Ottoman style.

*Not available on Fridays
Regular guaranteed daily departure joint tour. Shuttle will be provided to starting point.
Per person 70,00 €
OTTOMAN SPLENDOURS (Half day Afternoon)

We begin at Topkapı Palace, from the 15th to the 19th century, the principal residence of the Ottoman Sultans. We visit the fabulous Imperial Treasury and the Baghdad Kiosk. Topkapı Palace is now a museum and has unrivalled collections of jewelry, including the Spoonmaker’s Diamond, the 3rd largest in the world. It also possesses numerous Ottoman court costumes and ceramics, notably including one of the world’s finest collections of Chinese celadon ceramics, many gifts from other rulers. Interestingly, some of the ceramics have a special glaze that was said to change color in the presence of poison. We also visit the Imperial Armory, displaying centuries of Ottoman weaponry. But perhaps the loveliest feature of Topkapı Palace are its courtyards’ ancient trees; it is easy to imagine the sultan strolling here far from the cares of state and empire. Our final stop, Hagia Eirene, the Church of the Holy Peace, is one of the few churches in Istanbul that was never converted into a mosque, as it was used as an arsenal until the 19th century. Hagia Eirene reputedly stands on the site of a pre-Christian temple and has the distinction of being the first church built in Byzantium as it was converted into the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire. From there, we visit Gülhane Park, once a part of the outer gardens of Topkapı Palace, where the Edict of Gülhane, a declaration of rights and liberties that played an essential role in the modernization of the Ottoman Empire. After the proclamation of the Republic, Gülhane Park was for many years home to the Istanbul Zoo.

*Not available on Tuesdays and Sundays
Regular guaranteed daily departure joint tour. Shuttle will be provided to starting point.
Per person 100,00 €
BOSPHORUS CRUISE (Half day Morning & Afternoon)

We begin with a brief visit to the 17th century Spice Bazaar, one of Istanbul’s most colorful, bustling attractions. Next, we travel the Golden Horn on our way to an unforgettable cruise along the Bosphorus, the majestic strait that runs through Istanbul, linking Europe and Asia. From our cruise boat, we view the dramatic sights lining the Bosphorus’ wooded shores: mosques, a bridge that for a time was the world’s longest and Rumeli Hisari, a massive fortress built by Mehmet the Conqueror in just three months as he prepared to take Istanbul. Also noteworthy on this tour are the 19th century mansions of the Ottoman elite and the Sultans’ fanciful gingerbread palaces and hunting lodges.

Regular guaranteed daily departure joint tour. Shuttle will be provided to starting point.

*Available every day morning or afternoon
Per person 45,00 €
We begin by driving across the Bosphorus Bridge, for a time the world’s longest suspension bridge, and head for the summit of Çamlıca Hill and its panoramic views of Istanbul, the Sea of Marmara and the Princes’ Islands. Our next stop is the Grand Çamlıca Mosque, the largest mosque in Turkey, opened in 2019 and designed by two female architects, Bahar Mızrak and Hayriye Gül Totu. A short drive brings us to the Palace of Beylerbeyi on the shore of the Bosphorus. Perhaps the most elegant late Ottoman palace, Beylerbeyi boasts six sumptuously furnished reception halls with Bohemian crystal chandeliers and Sévres and Chinese vases, including a main salon with an indoor fountain. The sultans’ guests at the palace included Empress Eugénie of France, Shah Nasruddin of Persia and Grand Duke Nicholas of Russia.

*Not available on Mondays
Regular guaranteed daily departure joint tour. Shuttle will be provided to starting point.
Per person 50,00 €
PRIVATE TOUR OPTIONS

Full Day with Private Guide and Driver
Highlight of Istanbul Old City (combined tour Imperial and Ottoman Splendours)
Private

Per person for 2 pax: 295 €
Per person for 3-4 pax: 230 €
Per person for 5-6 pax: 185 €
Per person for 7-8 pax: 165 €
Per person for 9-10 pax: 155 €

Beauties of the Bosphorus (combined tour Bosphorus and Asia)

Per person for 2 pax: 230 €
Per person for 3-4 pax: 170 €
Per person for 5-6 pax: 125 €
Per person for 7-8 pax: 110 €
Per person for 9-10 pax: 100 €
SECRET TREASURES OF ISTANBUL

We start with a visit to Süleymaniye Mosque. Dating to the 16th century heyday of the Ottoman Empire, it was designed by Sinan, the greatest Ottoman architect. Next, we visit Fener and Balat on the shores of the Golden Horn, among the oldest neighborhoods of Istanbul, with their colorful cultures of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. We stop to taste Traditional Turkish Tea / Coffee and then see the 5th century AD remains of Istanbul’s City Walls and the Iron Church of St Stephen, also view the Aya Nikola Greek Orthodox Church (Sightseeing) the Patriarchate (Sightseeing) and St. Hiresdagabet Church (Sightseeing).

Private
Per person for 2 pax: 210 €
Per person for 3-4 pax: 155 €
Per person for 5-6 pax: 105 €
Per person for 7-8 pax: 90 €
Per person for 9-10 pax: 80 €
CHRISTIAN HERITAGE

The tour begins with a stroll alongside the beautiful Golden Horn, the perfect introduction to the splendors of Christendom that crown Istanbul’s cityscape. One such splendor is the The Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, once one of the fourteen autocephalous churches within the communion of Orthodox Christianity. Our tour of the Orthodox world will continue with a visit to Balat and the Bulgarian Iron Church, completed in 1898, brought in from Europe by rail. From here we explore the wooden buildings at the base of the towering ramparts of the Old City, where the practitioners of three distinct religions lived together harmoniously in one single neighborhood. In addition to admiring the architecture of these wooden treasures, there will be ample opportunities to photograph the Walls of Constantinople, which stand strong to this day, as well as the still standing Golden Gate—the famed entrance to the Yedikule Fortress, gateway to the heart of Byzantium. Within those walls, one of the main attractions has always been the Little Hagia Sophia, an Eastern Orthodox church, thus named because it may have served as a model for the Hagia Sophia. After that visit, we will enjoy delicious Turkish cuisine before heading on to the Galata Tower, a 14th century medieval stone tower built by the Genoese that dominates the skyline of Beyoglu, affording sweeping views of the Old City, Golden Horn, Bosphorus, and the Sea of Marmara from its parapet, as well being one of the most striking landmarks in the city. From the Galata Tower we will take a short walk up historic Istiklal Avenue to the Saint Antoine Catholic Church, the most beautiful Catholic Church in Istanbul, built in 1912.

Private
Per person for 2 pax: 245 €
Per person for 3-4 pax: 190 €
Per person for 5-6 pax: 145 €
Per person for 7-8 pax: 120 €
Per person for 9-10 pax: 105 €
JEWISH HERITAGE

We begin our tour of Istanbul’s Jewish heritage with a visit to the Galata District of Istanbul and the Ashkenazi Synagogue. Built in 1900 by Austrian Jews, it is the only active Ashkenazi Synagogue in the city. From there we will take a short walk to the Neve Shalom Synagogue, built by two young Turkish-Jewish architects to meet the demands of the growing Jewish population in the neighborhood in 1930. Afterward, we will visit the Museum of Turkish Jews, located in the former Zulfaris Synagogue, constructed by Italian Jews in the 15th century, during the Republic of Genoa’s rule of the Galata district as a semi-autonomous precinct.

Next, we will take a stroll along the breathtaking Golden Horn to the neighborhood of Balat, once the most important Jewish neighborhood in Istanbul, as evidenced by the superb architecture of its Jewish houses and the Ahrida, Istanbul’s oldest synagogue. First built in the 1400s, the building has been extensively restored and reflects architectural styles from several periods. It houses an immaculate collection of carved wood furniture, including a pulpit that resembles a boat’s prow - possibly a reference to Noah’s Ark. For lunch we’ll enjoy authentic Turkish cuisine in the charming Bosphorus village of Ortakoy. Lunch will be followed by a leisurely tour of the village which boasts an alluring combination of well-preserved historic wooden houses and charming local boutiques.

Ortakoy’s Jewish roots will be explored with a visit to the Etz Ahayim Synagogue, rebuilt in 1941 following a fire, within view of the iconic Bosphorus bridge.

This tour will provide the Synagogue visit only exterior. Interior visits are not allowed due to security reasons.

Private
Per person for 2 pax: 220 €
Per person for 3-4 pax: 170 €
Per person for 5-6 pax: 120 €
Per person for 7-8 pax: 100 €
Per person for 9-10 pax: 90 €

Offer 8 / 14 06.06.2024
Meet at the Airport and drive to Soğanlı. Visit to Soğanlı Valley that is an Open-Air Museum in a wild natural setting near a typical Cappadocian village with its different style Rock-Cut churches and frescoes. Villages in the valleys, surrounded by the “table top” mountains, are spectacular. Keşlik Monastery, near Cemil village, hides its frescoes behind a very thin smoke layer which we can only see by torch light. The Medrese (Theological School) from Seljuk Turks in Taşkinpaşa is the witness of an early and rich Turkish settlement in the town. Visit to Mustafapaşa (Sinassos), an ancient Greek town with its spectacular old Greek houses: very fine examples of late Greek settlements and architecture. Lunch will be in one of them. After lunch drive to Red Valley. Walking in one of the most attractive valleys of Cappadocia: Red Valley, with its fabulous volcanic rock formations, is in the heart of Cappadocia but away from the tourist crowd. Rock-Cut hermit churches with frescoes and paintings fit with the Valley’s meditative atmosphere, remained intact since the beginning.

Private
Per person for 2 pax: 250 €
Per person for 3-4 pax: 205 €
Per person for 5-6 pax: 135 €
Per person for 7-8 pax: 115 €
Per person for 9-10 pax: 105 €
FULL DAY LEGEND TOUR

Our first real encounter with Cappadocia’s almost Martian landscape is in the Dervent valley, where the rock formations are amazing. A walk through the Zelve Open Air Museum is a journey into the past, with its troglodyte houses. This is one of the earliest inhabited and latest abandoned monastic settlements in Cappadocia. After Zelve we visit Pasabag’s “fairy chimneys”, where the voice of the wind harmonises with the songs of the fairies. From here we pause at Avanos, a centre of terracotta art since 3,000 BC, for a demonstration in a traditional pottery workshop. After lunch in Avanos, we visit the famous Goreme Open Air Museum to see the best examples of Byzantine art in Cappadocia. These are found in rock-cut churches with frescoes and paintings dating from as early as the 10th century. We complete the tour with a visit to the Uchisar Rock-Castle, giving you a panoramic view of the valleys of Cappadocia.

Private
Per person for 2 pax: 250 €
Per person for 3-4 pax: 190 €
Per person for 5-6 pax: 140 €
Per person for 7-8 pax: 120 €
Per person for 9-10 pax: 110 €
FULL DAY MIRAGE TOUR

The tour begins with a descent towards the centre of the earth, with a trip to the underground city of Kaymakli; one of the largest and deepest of Cappadocia’s many such settlements. From here we drive to Ihlara canyon, walking through the canyon via the Steps of Anatolia to Belisirma village, the ancient Peristrema. Set by the Melendiz River this is known as the “Valley of the Sky”. Churches carved from the rocks form a gallery of early paintings that are remarkable for their accuracy. We lunch in Belisirma at a local restaurant by the river. On the way to the Caravanserai of Agzikarahan, we visit the beautiful village of Selime. Agzikarahan is a very fine example of the Turkish Seljuk art, built in the early 13th century on the legendary Silk Road, for the accommodation of the traders and their camels.

Private
Per person for 2 pax: 245 €
Per person for 3-4 pax: 185 €
Per person for 5-6 pax: 135 €
Per person for 7-8 pax: 115 €
Per person for 9-10 pax: 105 €
FULL DAY DREAM TOUR

Our first stop is the Soganli valley, which is one of the earliest settlements in Cappadocia. After this, we drive back to Urgup through the unspoiled villages of Cappadocia, surrounded by the “table-top” mountains. On the way we visit the Medrese in Taskinpasa, a Theological School of the Seljuk Turks. Visit to Mustafapaşa (Sinassos), an ancient Greek town with its spectacular old Greek houses: very fine examples of late Greek settlements and architecture. Lunch will be in one of them. After lunch in Mustafapaşa, we take hike along the Red Valley, one of the most breathtakingly and mysteriously beautiful valleys in the region. The valley, with its fabulous volcanic rock formations, is in the heart of Cappadocia but well away from the mainstream tourist haunts. The little chapels of the hermits, carved out of the valley walls, lend a spiritual dimension to the beauty.

Private
Per person for 2 pax: 225 €
Per person for 3-4 pax: 165 €
Per person for 5-6 pax: 115 €
Per person for 7-8 pax: 95 €
Per person for 9-10 pax: 90 €
SHOP, COOK, EAT & HIKE

Today, we will have chance to meet a local family and at the same time to get to know a little bit more about Turkish cuisine. First, we visit a local market or a local spice store. Then we continue to the village house where country women teach us how to prepare three most popular dishes in CaPer personadocia and Anatolia. They will show us how to make gozleme (cooked thin sheets of dough with cheese in them), yaprak sarma (stuffed vine leaves) and manti (meat pastry). And we will have lunch with the hosts and their families altogether. After lunch walking for about 4 km in one of the most attractive valleys of CaPer personadocia: Red Valley, with its fabulous volcanic rock formations, is in the heart of CaPer personadocia but away from the tourist crowd. Rock-Cut hermit churches with frescoes and paintings fit with the Valley’s meditative atmosphere, remained intact since the beginning.

Private
Per person for 2 pax: 225 €
Per person for 3-4 pax: 165 €
Per person for 5-6 pax: 140 €
Per person for 7-8 pax: 120 €
Per person for 9-10 pax: 100 €
Rates are including;
✓ Luxury air-conditioned minibus for tours
✓ English speaking professional local guide
✓ Entrance fees to the sites and museum
✓ Local 3 course lunch on the tour days
✓ % 20 VAT and city taxes

Rates are not including;
✗ Accommodation
✗ Personal expenses
✗ Drinks
✗ Domestic flights ca 70 € per person per flight subject to change according to booking day
✗ Airport transfer
  o Istanbul Airport one way 110 €
  o Kayseri Airport one way 150 €
✗ Gratuities for the guides and drivers

Please note no reservation made,
all rates and services are subject to availability