Visit Istanbul - the only city that spans two continents. See the beautiful Blue Mosque and ancient Hagia Sofia, explore opulent Topkapi Palace and test your bartering skills in the Grand Bazaar. 4 days of pure Turkish delight!

**HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS**

**Trip Highlights**
- Istanbul - Sultanahmet (Old Istanbul), Hippodrome, Blue Mosque, Hagia Sofia and Topkapi Palace
- Egyptian Spice Market and the Grand Bazaar
- Cruise along the Bosphorus Strait
- Beyerbeyi Palace and Buyuk Camilica - The city's highest vantage point

**What's Included**
- Breakfast daily and 2 lunches
- 3 nights STANDARD hotel. SUPERIOR or DELUXE hotel options are also available upon request. Accommodation rating – See Trip Notes for details
- Guided sightseeing - Istanbul sights* on days 2 and 3, plus a leisurely cruise along the Bosphorus. *Please note: Your guided sightseeing may be conducted with other passengers (private touring is available upon request for an additional cost)
- English speaking, degree qualified Turkish tour guides on days 2 and 3
- Entrance fees to all included sites
- Airport arrival transfer on day 1
- All relevant transfer and transportation in private modern air-conditioned vehicles

**What’s Not Included**
- International flights and visa
- Tipping - an entirely personal gesture

**COVID SAFE GUIDE**

**DETAILED ITINERARY**

**Day 1 : Istanbul**

Welcome to Turkey! Arrival at Istanbul airport where after you have attended to customs and immigration formalities, you’ll be met by one an On The Go representative, who will be easily recognised by the company sign he/she is carrying. From here, you’ll be transferred into Istanbul.

Day One is designed to be an arrival day, so there are no formal arrangements on this day. If arriving early enough into Istanbul, you'll have time to get acquainted with this remarkable city. Istanbul is easy to get around on foot and there are plenty of restaurants and cafes dotted about the city. If arriving before day 1 of the tour you will need to make your own way into Istanbul and to our hotel at your own expense. **Overnight - Istanbul**

**Day 2 : Old City sights**

This morning embark upon a fully guided tour of the only city that spans two continents, Europe and Asia. Officially founded by Emperor Constantine in AD326, it remained capital of the Byzantine and Ottoman empires up until 1923. Its illustrious past leaves a rich legacy of churches, mosques, palaces and museums, complemented by the behemoth Grand Bazaar and colourful street life. Sultanahmet, the compact old city of Istanbul is full of parks, gardens and stunning sights. Before lunch, visit the Hippodrome
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area - famed as the centre of Byzantine life for 1000 years and of Ottoman life for another 400! Continuing, explore the stunning Blue Mosque. Famed for its prized blue Iznik tiles and unique six minarets, it faces the Hagia Sofia.

The Hagia Sofia, constructed as a grand basilica in the 6th century by Emperor Justinian reigned as the grandest and biggest church in Christendom until the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, when it became a mosque. It is now a national museum, rather than a place of worship. After lunch, enjoy explore Topkapi Palace. Residence of the sultans for almost four centuries, it overlooks the Sea of Marmara. There’s also time to wander around the Grand Bazaar (f open) before returning to your hotel. The Grand Bazaar has over 4000 stalls selling a wide range of goods including gold, carpets, leather, clothing and Turkish handicrafts. 

**Overnight - Istanbul (B, L)**

Day 3 : Bazaars & the Bosphorus

Today, visit the Egyptian Spice market (stock up on bargain saffron, spices and Turkish Delight here!) before enjoying a cruise on the Bosphorus - the body of water that separate European from Asian Istanbul. Later, visit the Beyerbeyi Palace in all its sultanate splendour and take in the stunning views atop the city’s highest point - Buyuk Camlica. Return to your hotel and spend the remains of the day at leisure. If you weren’t able to visit the Grand Bazaar on day 2, consider a spot of retail therapy there this evening and test your bartering skills! 

**Overnight - Istanbul (B, L)**

Day 4 : Istanbul

Arrangements end after breakfast.(B)

**HOTELS**

Highlighted below are some of the hotels which we frequently use on this tour, though we reserve the right to substitute these hotels to ones of a similar standard. 

**Asur Hotel**

The friendly and cheerful Asur Hotel is a great place to base yourself when discovering Istanbul. Rooms are simple yet comfortable with parque flooring, good size beds and en suite facilities. Heading out of the hotel into the winding streets of Sultanahmet for a delicious Turkish feast is a great way to spend the evening. Perfectly located in Sultanahmet, within walking distance of most of Istanbul's top attractions. 

**Ramada Old City**

A member of the reputable Ramada chain, the Istanbul Old Town property is modern and comfortable with excellent amenities. Guestrooms are bright and spacious with contemporary amenities. Two restaurants are on offer and our personal favourite is the wonderful roof top restaurant, serving delicious local cuisine coupled with a magnificent view of the City and Sea. The perfect way to end the day. Located very close to the Historical part of the city with major Monuments are all walking distance. 

**Please note**

Planning when to travel - Topkapi Palace is closed on Tuesdays, Hagia Sofia is closed on Mondays and the Grand Bazaar is closed on Sundays. Please consider this when booking. Guided touring - Your sightseeing on days 2 and 3 may be conducted with other passengers. Private touring is available upon request, for a supplement - please enquire. 

**Accommodation ratings**

On our Private trips, you can often choose your style of accommodation. The price quoted on our website is reflective of the included accommodation, please see the “included” section on the first page of this document for details. Should you opt for an alternative hotel category, this will be confirmed in writing with the respective price on your invoice.

For further details about the indicative hotels, please see the “hotels” tab on our website. Here we rank hotel’s in their respective country (REGIONAL CATEGORY) - but we also tell you how it ranks by Western standards (OUR CATEGORY). 

**STANDARD** - Equates to a Western 3-star standard, always featuring en-suite rooms and usually a restaurant. 

**SUPERIOR** - Equates to a Western 4-star standard, featuring en-suite rooms and usually a restaurant and often a swimming pool and/or a fitness centre. 

**DELUXE** - Equates to a Western 5-star standard, usually featuring spacious, en-suite rooms, a restaurant, swimming pool and fitness centre and an array of amenities, excellent service and customer care. 

**LUXURY** - Equates to a Western 5-star plus standard - the creme de la creme. Featuring spacious, en-suite rooms, a restaurant, swimming pool and fitness centre and an array of amenities, this accommodation is a cut above the rest. Sheer opulence!

**Tipping**

Tipping is an essential part of the culture. For a job well done, we would suggest for your tour guide: USD$5-7 per traveller, for each day of sightseeing.

For your driver and On The Go Representative we’d recommend USD$2-3 per traveller for each day of service. Tipping is an entirely personal gesture and ultimately the amount is up to you. 

**KNOW BEFORE YOU GO**

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TRIP NOTES

Turkey Country Guide

Visas and passports
Visa requirements are subject to change and visa procurement is the responsibility of the traveller and not On The Go Tours. Please also ensure that your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your planned date of departure from Turkey.

After booking your holiday, please provide us with your passport details as soon as possible so that we can proceed to book all services. Please be advised visa requirements are subject to change, therefore it is essential that you check current visa requirements with the embassy before travel. For information about visas, head to www.onthegotours.com/Turkey/Visas

Turkey health requirements and water
You should seek medical advice before travelling to Turkey from your local health practitioner and ensure that you receive all the appropriate vaccinations. The tap water in Turkey is generally considered safe to drink, but as a precaution against stomach upsets you may want to drink bottled mineral water, which is readily available from shops, hotels and restaurants.

Essential packing
Please check local temperatures so you can pack accordingly. Visit www.worldclimate.com

- A small daypack for your day-to-day needs
- Tour Voucher and a copy of your travel insurance policy, spare passport photos and a photocopy of your passport
- Universal travel adaptor
- Spare camera batteries/memory card so you can go snap happy
- Take out some Turkish Lira from the ATM facilities at the airport upon arrival
- Buy a phrasebook and practice locally
- Keep a supply of small Turkish Lira notes for local transactions

It's not like home
Travelling to far-flung corners of the earth often involves encountering lifestyles and conditions that are very different from what you are used to back home. As such it is important to come prepared for unusual situations, local inadequacies and unpredictable events as and when they occur.

Foreign travel is definitely not suitable for people who expect everything to go exactly as planned, as things can and do change in foreign countries. The people, customs, creed and languages are different from one region to the next.

Please visit www.onthegotours.com/Turkey/Travel-tips-and-useful-info for local customs, currency, WiFi and other helpful information to prepare you for an enjoyable holiday.

Shopping
Turkey is a virtual Aladdin’s Cave. The Grand Bazaar in Istanbul is cavernous and full of unusual and everyday objects. Known locally as Kapalı Carşı – the Grand Bazaar in Istanbul’s Old City is a massive conglomeration of shops (some 4000) divided into areas specialising in gold, carpets, leather, souvenirs and clothing.

Turkish handicrafts include a rich variety of textiles and embroideries, articles of copper, onyx and tile, mother-of-pearl, inlaid articles, leather and suede products. Jewellery, carpets and kilims represent top buys at the bazaar. Opening hours: Mon to Sat 0900 – 1900hrs (closed Sunday).

Carpet Buying
Turkey is justly famous for its carpets and kilims (a napless woven rug) and you’ll be spoilt for choice. To ensure you get a good buy, spend time visiting several shops to compare price, pattern-type and quality. A good quality, long-lasting carpet should be 100% wool. Check the quality of the weave for possible holes. A wool carpet will have fine, frizzy fibres if you turn the carpet on its back. Cheaper carpets are made of cotton and most often the fringe will be too.

If you want a wool carpet the fringe is of cotton, it’s likely the carpet won’t be a woollen one! The lies can be bigger than the fall of Ottoman Empire. Don’t make the mistake of buying a cotton carpet at the price of a wool one! Many carpets are made to look like antiques at prices to match.

In the tourism industry it’s common practice for commission to be offered in exchange for recommending particular shops or suppliers. This can become an issue when clients feel obliged to purchase. We do our best to avoid this by monitoring all shopping experiences offered.

All shopping experiences on your tour have been noted in the itinerary and they have been carefully selected based upon positive feedback from On The Go travellers. You are under no obligation to partake in a listed shopping experience and you are most welcome to wait inside or outside the premises.

Although we only visit reputable retailers, please note that we cannot explicitly guarantee the quality of their products. All purchases made whilst on holiday with us are at your own discretion. Please make sure that you are completely happy with your purchase. On The Go cannot be held responsible for any items that you buy if they fail to meet expectation, or any shipping arrangements. Proceed with caution.

What to expect and Ramadan
Ramazan dates: 13 April - 12 May 2021 (approx). The month of Ramazan (Ramadan), the ninth of the Islamic calendar, is a great time to travel in the region as you get a real insight into the Muslim faith. It is a time for spiritual reflection, prayer, doing good deeds and spending time with family and friends.

The fasting is intended to help teach Muslims self-discipline, self-restraint and generosity. It also reminds them of the suffering of the poor, who may rarely get to eat well. During the day, people must refrain from eating, drinking, smoking and sexual activity, so if you encounter someone who is a bit grumpy please be understanding, flexible and sympathetic. As tourists you will be generally unaffected although some places may close early, but your tour leader will do their best to plan around this. Most hotels bars and tourist restaurants will remain open. In the evening you will experience a celebratory atmosphere at iftar, when people break their
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fast. To witness Ramazan is a real highlight making your tour in the region that bit more interesting. Each year it begins roughly ten days earlier than the year before, according to the Gregorian calendar.

Please visit www.onthegotours.com/Turkey/Travel-tips-and-useful-info for local customs, currency, WiFi and other helpful information to prepare you for an enjoyable holiday.

Turkey site opening times
Popular sightseeing spot in Istanbul are closed on specific days. Please plan your visit accordingly.

- Topkapi Palace - Closed Tuesdays
- Grand Bazaar - Closed Sundays
- Blue Mosque - Closed during all prayer times and Friday’s until 3pm
- All museums in Turkey will open at 1pm, on the 13th of May and 20th of July 2021
- The Spice Bazaar and Grand Bazaar are closed as follows:
  2020: 1, 2, 3 Aug / 29 Oct
  2021: 1 Jan / 13, 14, 15 May / 20, 21, 22, 23 Jul / 29 Oct

Blue Mosque renovations
The Blue Mosque (also known as Sultanahmet Camii in Turkish) is currently undergoing renovations and for the foreseeable future there will be scaffolding erected inside and other construction works will be taking place. Whilst we will visit the inside of the Blue Mosque when included on a tour, please be aware that some parts of the Mosque may be off limits to tourists.

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