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Istanbul



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In the words of French poet Alphonse de Lamartine, “if one had but a single glance to give the world, one should gaze on Istanbul”. Indeed, this is a city of astonishing beauty. Its architecture, cuisine, history and culture make up a fascinating tapestry of yesterday and very much tomorrow.

A metropolitan capital with an imperial history stretching back for over 1500 years, Istanbul is today the commercial, historical and cultural core of Turkey. But most of all, it’s a buzzing, living-breathing metropolis that is knocking at the doors of the European Union.

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» ISTANBUL AT A GLANCE

The only city in the world to straddle two continents, with one arm reaching out to Asia and the other to Europe, with the strait of Bosphorus in between. European Istanbul is itself divided by the Golden Horn (Halic) into the Old City to the south, and Beyoglu and other modern districts to the north. If you've got limited time, the Old City is where you should go first as it features all the main sights of the city, and it's exactly from here that we start our journey.



Yokusu, ph. +90 212 5207740, open every day except Monday, 9am to 4.30pm), comprising twenty galleries with exhibits from Byzantium, the Ottoman Empire and the many civilizations of Anatolia and ancient Egypt. Near the Blue Mosque is the **Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum** (Sultanahmet Meydani, open every day except Monday, 9am to 4.30pm): originally a palace during the Ottoman Empire, it is now a museum hosting one of the finest collections of Islamic art in the world, with a superb display of ceramics, metalwork, miniatures, calligraphy, textiles and carpets. Not far away there's the often-overlooked **Mosaic Museum** (Arasta Carsisi, ph. +90 212 5181205, open Wednesday

to Monday, 9am to 4pm), hosting the ruins of the Great Palace of Byzantium.

The best way to leave Sultanahmet is through the imperial road of **Divan Yolu**, maybe wandering in the hundreds of tiny back streets that cover the area between the Gran Bazaar and Beyazit. Wherever you're going, you'll soon end up crossing the central Beyazit Square, once the biggest of Istanbul. Here are the **Beyazit Mosque** and the former palace that now hosts **Istanbul University**, featuring a magnificent gate and the wooden **Beyazit Tower**. Past the University and the Suleymaniye Mosque (below you'll find all info on this mosque and the bazaars), you'll get to the buzzing area of Eminou. Situated on the west side of the Galata Bridge, Eminonu hosts busy ferry, tram and train stations. Its square features the Spice Bazar, a must see for any visitor, and the **Mimar Sinan's Yeni Camii** (Yeni Camii Caddesi, 9.30am to 4.30pm), whose minarets stand tall above the buzzing activities of the place.

If you've got time and are into mosques, you can visit the stretch of land between Eminonu and Ayvansaray. The **Fatih Mehmet Camii** (Macar Kardeşler Caddesi, open every day except Friday, 9.30am to 4.30pm), with

its huge dome and tall minarets, can be seen from virtually any point of the Old city. It's actually more than a mosque, hosting a Koranic school, a library, an hammam, some lodgings, and more. Not particularly beautiful from the architectural point of view, it's actually interesting for the crowd of believers and student that populate it during the day. Not far away, up the hill, is **Selimiye Camii** (open every day except Monday, 9.30am to 4.30pm), popular for its skilfully carved door. Walk north and you'll bump into two former Byzantine churches that



have been converted into a mosque, **Fethiye Camii**, and a museum, the **Pammakaristos museum** (open every day except Wednesday, 9.30am to 5pm, tickets to be bought in Hagia Sophia). Further inland, and up another hill, is the **Mihrimah Sultan Camii** (Sulukule Caddesi), featuring a 200-windows hall with marvellous paintings. Not

far away from it is the **Chora Church** (Kariye Muzesi, open every day except Wednesday, 9.30am to 4pm in winter and to 6pm in summer, ticket about 5€), that is considered the most interesting Byzantine church after Hagia Sophia for its superb frescoes and mosaics.

Having gone that far, you can't miss the chance of going off the beaten track and discovering the marvellous 5th century **city walls**. Stretching for about 7km, from the Golden Horn to the Sea of Marmara, they feature an impressive number of towers and gates. At the southern point of the walls are the pentagon inner **Fortress of the Seven Towers** (or "Yedikule", open every day except Monday, 9.30am to 5pm) and the **Golden Gate**, the most impressive within the walls.

» BEYOGLU AND THE MODERN DISTRICTS

Beyoglu looks like a European district of a century ago. It's the centre of the bohemian art scene, though at the same time it's modern and hip. If you reach it by crossing the **Galata Bridge** from the Old Town, you have to go through Karakoy, a bustling port with a lively fish market, a hectic ferry terminal and a shady nightlife. Here you'll find **Istanbul Modern** (Meclis-i Mebusan

Caddesi, ph. +90 212 3347300, www.istanbulmodern.org, open every day except Monday, 10am to 6pm) the museum of contemporary art housing abstract paintings, portraits, sculptures and photographs by



local artists. If you walk further to the area of Galata, you can't miss the 14th century Genoese-built **Galata Tower** (Galata Kulesi Sokak, ph. +90 212 293 81 80, www.galatatower.net), that offers a spectacular view of the city and is considered one of the symbols of Istanbul.

If you're tired and dislike slopes, you can leave the area of Galata using the **Tunel**, the world's second oldest subway (actually a funicular, built by the French in 1875) and possibly the shortest, with its one-stop ride from Karakoy square to Tunel square. The area of Tunel, once an array of dark deserted streets and creepy abandoned buildings, has undergone tremendous development and

is today Istanbul's bohemian quarter. From Tunel you can walk towards Taksim through Istiklal Caddesi, a real hub for shopping and entertainment: fashion shops, bookshops, cinemas, restaurants and markets make of this fascinating street one of the most popular and crowded places day and night. Here are also the fish market, some embassy buildings and the churches of **St. Mary's Draperies** (the oldest of the area, dating 1789) and the Franciscan **St. Antoine**. Istiklal Cadesi is entirely pedestrian but watch out: some old and picturesque tramcars have been put again into service and now run up and down the street, close by surrounded by the crowd! Before leaving Istiklal Caddesi you can walk behind the Galatasaray Lycee and have a look to the "**French street**", one the most recent developments of the area.

Taksim, considered the centre of modern Istanbul, is a huge open square with a monument celebrating Attaturk. However, it's got very little to offer: the new subway terminal, a noisy bus terminal and many five-star hotels.

In the close-by district of Kabatas, on the waterfront, is the 19th century **Dolmabahce Palace** (Dolmabahce Caddesi, ph. +90 212 2369000, open every day

except Monday and Thursday, 9.30am to 4pm, group guided visits only, ticket from about 5€ to 9€). It's an impressive baroque and rococo palace composed of three parts: the Selamlık (the area once reserved for the men), the ceremonial halls and the Harem (the apartments of the family of the Sultan). Its beauty lies in the crystal chandeliers, the carpets and the marvellous garden, featuring a long pier and two monumental gates.

Past Besiktas, on the way that leads up the hill to Levent, there is Ortakoy, a buzzing suburb on the waterfront. The area is popular



among the locals, who come here for its cafes, bars, restaurants and summer weekend markets.

» ASIAN ISTANBUL

Tired of meeting fellow tourists? Than you should visit the district of Uskudar, a relatively quiet and attractive suburb at the western edge of the Asian side.

Though less visited, it offers a large shopping area, flea markets and old markets selling traditional products. If you cross



the Bosphorus by ferry, your first sight is the mosque of **Mihrimah Camii**, just opposite the ferry pier. Its vast porch is usually crowded by old locals spending time watching the passers-by. A few steps away are also other mosques, like the **Yeni Valide Camii**, the **Cinili Camii** and the vast **Atik Valide Camii**. Walk southward along the shore and you'll find many restaurants and cafés with gorgeous views of the Bosphorus.

From there you can enjoy the sight of the **Maiden's tower** (or "Kiz Kulesi", www.kizkulesi.com.tr), located on a small island at the entrance of the Bosphorus and used mainly as tourist attraction, café and restaurant. You can reach it by boat, leaving from the southern part of Uskudar ferry dock, with a ticket that includes transportation and a café (around

3€, Tuesday to Sunday, 12am to 7pm) or a dinner (around 32€, same days, from 8pm).

In Haydarpasa, south of Uskudar, there's a beautiful Prussian-style **train station** dating 1908, with an impressive facade covered in textured sandstone.

Further south is the district of Kadikoy, a lively area where tiny cobbled lanes are filled with cafés, restaurants, bars, shops and cinemas. Fashion victims will enjoy Bagdat Caddesi and Bahariye Caddesi, two trendy shopping streets, while more down-to-earth clothes can be found in Gen Azim Gunduz.



» CLASSICS YOU CAN'T MISS

Topkapi Palace (Babi Humayun Caddesi, Gulhane, ph. +90 212 5120480, www.topkapisarayi.gov.tr), open every day, close on Tuesday from November to March, 9am to 4.30pm in winter

or 7pm in summer, ticket around 10€ for the entrance, 10€ for the museum and 10€ for the harem): the former home for the Ottoman sultan is today a museum and a symbol of Istanbul. Built in the 15th century on the tip of land where the Golden Horn, the Sea of Marmara and the Bosphorus come together, it was the political centre of the Ottoman Empire between the 15th and 19th centuries. The palace is a maze of



buildings built around a series of courtyards – typical of the Islamic tradition – where are displayed the Spoonmaker's Diamond (the fourth largest diamond in the world), the Topkapi Dagger (a gift from Mahmut I), a vast collection of paintings and miniatures, and the Pavilion of the Holy Mantle (including a footprint, a tooth and a hair of the Prophet Mohammed).

Hagia Sophia (Sultanahmet Meydani, ph. +90 212 5221750, open every day, close on Monday

from November to April, 9am to 4.30pm, ticket around 11€ for the entrance and 11€ for the gallery): one of the most incredible and significant architectural monuments in the world, it was originally a church, built by Justinian in the 4th century. 916 year later, Hagia Sophia was converted to a mosque and minarets were added to the original structure. In 1935 Ataturk declared it a museum, protected today by UNESCO. Its main feature is a huge dome that seems to have no supports but actually sits on pendentives, carrying the weight to four piers at the corners. Because of this particular structure, together with the forty windows placed around its base, the dome seems to be floating upon four great arches, while a mystical light flows in. The most interesting aspects of the internal features are the marbles and the restored Byzantine mosaics displayed in the gallery.

Blue Mosque (At Meydani Sokak 17, Sultanahmet, ph. +90 212 4580776, open every day, closed daily during prayers, free entrance): the most impressive mosque of Istanbul was built in the 17th century by order of Sultan Ahmed I, after whom it was named Sultanahmet Camii – later dubbed "Blue mosque" for its interior ceramic tiles. The



building features a square frame topped by an ascending system of domes and semi-domes that culminate in the central dome. Around 260 stained glass windows admit natural light, today assisted by chandeliers. The visual effect of light flooding in the gigantic dome is extraordinary. This is the only mosque in the world with six minarets, each of them with three balconies: until recently the “muezzin” or prayer-caller had to climb a narrow spiral staircase five times a day to announce the call to prayer! In summer nights, the mosque is lit up with a colored lightshow accompanied by music, check near the entrance to find out more.

Hippodrome (Atmeydani, in front of the Blue Mosque): though very little has remained of the beautiful 4th century hippodrome, here there’s anyway the most ancient monument of Istanbul, the Egyptian Obelisk. Other monuments of the area are the

Serpentine Column, the Colossus or Column of Costantine Porphyrogenitus, and the rather kitsch German Fountain.



Basilica Cistern (or “Yerebatan sarayi”, Yerebatan Caddesi 13, ph. +90 212 5221259, open every day, 9am to 5.30pm, ticket around 10€): this bizarre “sunken palace” was built in the 6th century by Justinian I as an enlargement of an earlier cistern built by emperor Constantine. It was meant to supply water to the Great Palace and, later, to the Topkapi Palace. Once in disuse, it was restored about 20 years ago by removing mud and water and adding narrow raised pathways providing access for visitors. With its 335 columns supporting its fine brick vaulting, the cistern offers a breathtaking view. Classical music concerts are held here because of the magical atmosphere and the great acoustics.

The Bazaars: the Grand Bazaar (Kapali Carsi, Beyazit, www.mygrandbazaar.net) is claimed to be one of the world’s oldest and largest covered markets. The streets around it now host most of the real trading but the bazaar is still the centre for jewellery, pottery, carpets and fabrics. The bazaar contains two “bedestens” – domed masonry structures – and hundreds of roads scattered around them, each devoted to a particular trade. If all that shopping, bargaining and fending off persuasive salesmen is a little too tiring, you can relax, eat and sip a tea in one of the traditional



cafés dotted inside the bazaar. The second bazaar of Istanbul is the **Egyptian Bazaar** (or **Spice Bazaar**, Yeni Camii Caddesi, open every day except Sunday) constructed in the same complex as the Yeni Camii. Here the air is filled by the strong aroma of ginger, cardamom, pepper and saffron coming from the piles of spices sold in the stalls. These

days it is also popular for great varieties of lokum (Turkish delight), souvenirs, tea, herbs and local delicacies.

Suleymaniye Mosque (Prof. Siddik Sami Onar Caddesi, ph. +90 212 5140139): it’s the largest mosque in Istanbul and one of the most beautiful. Built in the 16th century by the famous Turkish architect Mimar Sinan, it’s considered his masterpiece. It has four minarets with ten carved balconies, and a magnificent dome. The weight of the dome is carried by four piers that get sharper upwards, thus making the structure look “as light as feather.” The light comes in through the 138 windows, all made with valuable glass.

Beylerbeyi Sarayi (Bogazici Korusu 1, ph. +90 216 3219320, open every day except Monday and Tuesday, 9.30am to 5pm,



ticket around 5€): having to pick the best sightseeing attraction of the Asian side of Istanbul, it would be this palace, built in 1861-1865. Though it's a typical Ottoman palace, its style is very much European, as well as much of the furniture. The two main parts are the selamlık (the area for public business) and the harem (for private business). Beylerbeyi's main feature are the pavilions located on the terraced gardens behind it: the Sari Kosk beside the pool on the upper terrace, and the Mermer Koşk with its interior fountain and marble walls. Take your time in the garden, sit down on the marble dock, observe the Bosphorus in front of you... you won't regret having gone that far from the city centre!

Bosphorus by boat: you cannot leave Istanbul without a traditional and unforgettable boat excursion up the Bosphorus. Those travelling on a shoestring can board one of the passenger boats that regularly zigzag along the shores – check out the “transports” chapter for more details. But if you want the proper cruise, you have a choice of tours leaving from the main docks, Eminou in particular. The IDO company runs a five-hour Bosphorus scenic tour with its traditional old ferries (<http://www.ido.com.tr/> for updated timetables

and info). A shorter tour (about two hours) is run by Tur Yol, that uses modern boats departing from Eminou dock.

» TRANSPORTS

All right, you might be a good walker, but Istanbul's so huge that sooner or later you'll have to give up, so here are some tips about getting around.



Buses are definitely the cheapest way to travel, though they are usually overcrowded and it's not easy to find out which one you should catch. For public buses (red), tickets must be bought at kiosks before boarding, while other buses (mainly green/blue), operated by private companies, accept cash payment on the bus.

The best way to travel is actually the **tram**: besides the nostalgic Istiklal Caddesi tram (running every day till midnight, tickets – around 0,5€ – sold at the station kiosk), there's a main line running from Eminou/Sirkeci station to Zeytinburnu through the Old City,

and stopping in front of all main sightseeing attractions. Tickets (about 0,7€ each), valid for a ride whatever the distance covered, must be bought at stops.

A new **funicular** has been inaugurated in 2006, connecting Kabatas, south of the Dolmabahce Palace, with Taksim Square (ticket about 0,7€).

The **underground** includes both the Tunel, the 19th century funicular connecting Karakoy to Tunel, and the modern subway system, that is well under development. The latter is basically a two-line system: a Metro line connecting Taksim to the commercial district of Levent, and a line serving the Old city and connecting it to the airport of Ataturk. Trains run from 6am to about 12pm, ticket around 0,7€.

For more info, maps and timetables of metro, tram and funicular, check www.istanbul-ulasim.com.tr/en.

An easy and pleasant way to travel up, down and across the Bosphorus is the **ferry boat**. A very cheap ticket (0,7€ one way, or little more, depending on distances) allows you to actually travel from Europe to Asia and back! Tickets must be bought at ferry docks, make sure you don't buy them on board from dodgy sellers. There are ten main ferry docks: Karakoy, Kabatas, Besiktas and five in

Eminou on the European side; Uskudar and Kadikoy on the Asian side. Service runs every 15-20 minutes until 11pm. Some traditional old ferries are today operated by the IDO company from the east side of Galata Bridge. The same company offers also fast “**sea buses**” that are a bit more expensive than ferries. Check <http://www.ido.com.tr/> for updated timetables and info.

If you're staying over for quite some time, it's worth considering a **pass** – the Akbil. It can be bought at any kiosk with a 4,5€ deposit (keep the receipt if you want to have some chances to get it back!) and is accepted on Istanbul's buses (both public and private), trams, Tunel, Metro, funicular, ferries and “sea buses”.

» EAT & DRINK

In the Old City:

Virtually all tourists end up in the restaurants and cafés of Sultanahmet, so be ready to be hooked and dragged in. Though



most of the places have blended their Ottoman traditions with a more international taste, you can still find some original Turkish cuisine. For example at the *Kosk Café & Restaurant* (Akbiyik Caddesi, Adliye



Sokak 9, ph. +90 212 5173479) and the *Koy Sofrasi Ocakbasi* (Kadirga Limani Caddesi 132, ph. +90 212 5180315), offering a simple menu and cheap dishes. The *Rumeli Café* (Divanyolu Caddesi, Ticarethane Sokak 8, ph.+90 212 5120008) is a Turkish-Greek restaurant open till late. If you want something different, than try the *Sarnic* (Sogukcesme Sokagi, ph. +90 212 5133660, open evening only, closed Monday and July), where you can have a candle-lit dinner in a former cistern. If you happen to be near the Gran Bazaar, move away from the expensive restaurants and go to the peaceful *Daruzziyafe Restaurant* (Sifahane Caddesi 6), with beautiful halls and porches.

In the area of Fatih there's the *Komur Lokantasi* (Kucuk Mustafa Pasa,

Mustantik Sokak 33), specializing in kebabs. In the area of Samatya, near the city walls and close to the Sea of Marmara, there are plenty of typical restaurants that have the privilege of not being too touristy. Most of them serve delicious fish dishes, like the *Sedir* (Buyukkuleli Sokak 59, ph.+90 212 4584702) and the *Safa* (Ilyas Bey Caddesi 169, Yedikule), while for meat and meze your place is the *Develi Restaurant* (Balik Pazari Gumusyuzuk Sokak 7, +90 212 5290833), with its refreshing rooftop terrace.

In Beyoglu and the modern districts:

Whatever you're looking for, you'll find it in Istiklal Caddesi and the maze of streets around it. At the *Ora* (ImamAdnan Sokak 4) there's cheap but tasty food, lots of drinks and most of the time live music. There are concerts also at the *Intermezzo* (Asmali Mescit Sokak 19), offering simple Ottoman cuisine. Those who are into wine will love the *Viktor Levi Sarap Evi* (Hamalbasi Caddesi 12), where local wines can be enjoyed with various types of Turkish cheese, or the *Sappho Wine Bar* (Bekar Sokak 14, open 10am to 2am, ph. +90 212 2450668), a dark wine cellar with exposed red-brick and stone walls offering meze dishes and an excellent selection of Turkish wines.

If you just need to sit down and have a coffee, try the former patisserie

Urban Café (Kartal Sokak 6/A), or the *Mephisto* (Istiklal Caddesi 197), a funky place you reach walking through a record shop. Another trendy place near Istiklal Caddesi is the two-level *Cep Art Café* (Asmalimescit 41, open till midnight, ph. +90 212 2920038), that combines art gallery and café. Many restaurants animate the former flower market, Cicek Pasaji (just off Istiklal Caddesi), like the *Kimene Restaurant* and the *Sevic Restaurant*. Just behind Cicek Pasaji is a narrow but buzzing street, Nevizade Sokak, where you'll find plenty of restaurants, cafés and bars: the *Ney'le Ney'le* has a romantic atmosphere and a good menu of fish. Just around the corner is the *Degustasyon* (Balik Pazari, Sahne Sokak 41, ph. +90 212 2920667) a modest-looking place where one of Turkey's famous TV chefs prepares a good range of Turkish mezes, salads and fish dishes.

If you are in the Ortakoy area, try the *Café Crème* (Degirmen Sokak 12, ph. +90 212 2277294, 10am to 11pm), a three-floored café with a soft ambience and a delicious Mediterranean cuisine.

In the Asian side:

Being less touristy, you'll find quite a few cheap restaurants in this part of Istanbul. In Uskudar, try the *Kanaat Lokantasi* (Selmanipak Caddesi 25, ph. +90 216 3333791), an old restaurant with lots of traditional

dishes, or the *Buyuk Camlica Et Lokantasi* (Buyuk Camlica Caddesi 20, ph. +90 216 3183161), with a stunning view over the Bosphorus. At the *Olcay* (Pasalimani Caddesi 62, 11am to midnight, ph. +90 216 3339222) you can listen to live and loud traditional Turkish music while having a good selection of meze dishes.

In Kadikoy, the *Greenhouse Kitap*



& Café (Dumlupinar Sokak 17, ph. +90 216 4493034, open Tuesday to Saturday, 11am to 6.30pm) is a bookstore-café with a beautiful terrace where you can sip your coffee. If you are looking for the unusual, try the *Karga Café* (Kadife Sokak 16, ph. +90 216 4491725, 9am to 2am), a spooky café (the

name means “raven”) serving light meals, desserts and coffee. Female solo travellers will enjoy the *Café Antre* (Caferaga Mah., 10am to 10pm, ph. +90 216 338 3483) a female-friendly place run by women for women, located in an old Ottoman townhouse. Nearby is the *Mosquito Café* (Caferaga Mah., 9.30am to 10pm, ph. +90 216 4185659) a student/hippie hang out serving excellent cakes and desserts. Miss your pint? The *Belfast Pub* (Caferaga Mah., ph. +90 216 4189706) might be Irish in name only but it offers reasonably priced cold beer and soft background Irish music.

» NIGHTLIFE

In Sultanahmet, *Cheers* (Akbiyik Caddesi 20, open every day, 10am to 2am, ph. +90 5324096359) offers the cheapest beers in town to a crowd of travellers. For something more typical, the *Cagaloglu Hamami Café* (Prof. K.I. Gurkan Caddesi, Gagaloglu) is a café located in a former hammam, dating 1741, where you can listen to live traditional Turkish music. Also *Sal* (Buyukparmakkapi Sokak 18, ph. +90 212 243 4196) is very popular with tourists seeking a true Turkish experience. Here low coffee tables bump your knees while you sip raki and watch some rowdy musicians. The liveliest part of the city is definitely Beyoglu and again the

area of Istiklal Caddesi. Many clubs offer live music: electronic music at *Indigo* (Akarsu Sokak 309, Galatasaray, ph. +90 212 2451307, www.livingindigo.com), jazz and world music at *Babylon* (Seyhbender Sokak 3, ph. +90 212 2927368, www.babylon-ist.com), rock music at the *Mojo* (Buyukparmakkapi Sokak 25, 9pm to 4am, ph. +90 212 2432927) and the *Caravan Rock Bar* (Duduodalari 19, Balik Pazari). The popular *Dulcinea* (Meselik Sokak 20, open Monday to Saturday, 3.30pm till late) is a bar, café, restaurant and art gallery during the week, but on Friday and Saturday it's club night with trance and techno music. For some fine jazz, on the top level of the two-floored *Jazz Café* (Hasnun Galip Sokak 20) there's a performance space where you can enjoy live funk/acid jazz/blues Tuesday through Thursday. More jazz at the *Gramofon* (Tunel Meydani 3, 9am to 2am, ph. +90 212 2930786), a café by day and a classy place to hang out and drink while listening to live jazz five nights a week.

In Besiktas, jazz lovers cannot miss the *Q Jazz Club* (Ciragan Caddesi 84, 10am to 4am, ph. +90 212 2362121), a 17th century brick cellar style bar that caters to the whims of jazz fans.

Two of the hottest clubs of Istanbul are in Ortakoy. The *Scene* (Muallim Naci Caddesi 109, midnight to 5am, ph. +90 212 2611988) is one

of Istanbul's biggest underground clubs: house and techno can be heard on Fridays, deep trance on Saturdays and garage and jazzy house on Wednesdays. The *Reina* (Muallim Naci Caddesi 10, www.reina.com.tr) is actually a vast playground filled with bars, restaurants and dance floors.

» TURKISH BATHS

are mostly in the area of Sultanahmet, though you should go somewhere else if you are looking for the real thing. The *Cagaloglu Hamami* (Prof. K.I. Gurkan Caddesi, near Hagia Sophia) is very touristy and expensive, but it's also one of the oldest hammams of Istanbul. Better go for the *Gedikpasa Hamami* (Gedikpasa Caddesi) or the *Nisanci Hamami* (Turkeli Caddesi), both



ENJOY YOUR HOOKA!

Once upon a time, the narghile, or Turkish water pipe, was the centre of Istanbul's social and political life. Today the locals still consider it one of life's great pleasures... want to give it a try? Most of the places where you can smoke a hooka are in Yaniceriler Caddesi, near the Gran Bazar: *Corlulu Ali Pasa* and *Koca Sinan Pasa Turbesi* are both in secluded internal courts, just round the corner from some tomb yards, while *Rumeli Kahvesi* is actually inside the cemetery of an old medersa, though it's not as spooky as you might think. In the south of Sultanahmet, near the sea, is *Yeni Marmara* (Cayiroglu Sokak), where you can also sit in the terrace and enjoy the view. In Beyoglu, at the *Ortakahve* (Buyukparmakkapi, ph. +90 212 252 2629) there's even the choice of a wide range of flavours.





quite old and typical, and preferred by the locals. These are all open to men and women but this is not the rule: elsewhere, remember to check at the entrance if women are admitted!

» USEFUL INFO

Phone numbers:

Emergencies 112

Police 155

Information 118

Tourism Information Office,
Divanyolu Caddesi 3, Sultahahmet,
ph. +90 212 5188754, open every
day 9am to 5pm.

Central Post Office, Yeni Postahane
Caddesi, Sirkeci.

German Hospital, Siraselviler
Caddesi 119, +90 212 2932150

American Hospital, Nisantasi
Guzelbahce Sokak 20, ph. +90 212
2314050

Tourism Police, Yerebatan Caddesi
2, Sultanahmet, ph. +902125274503
or 5285369, to be contacted in case
of theft or loss of documents, before
going to the consulate.

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