

Istanbul / Itinerary 4/5 days:

Day 1 – Thurs. 12th Sept. – Those joining from the UK will arrive at 16.35 to be met and transferred to our hotel. They will have time to relax in the evening, and the following morning before the rest of the group arrive from Tbilisi.

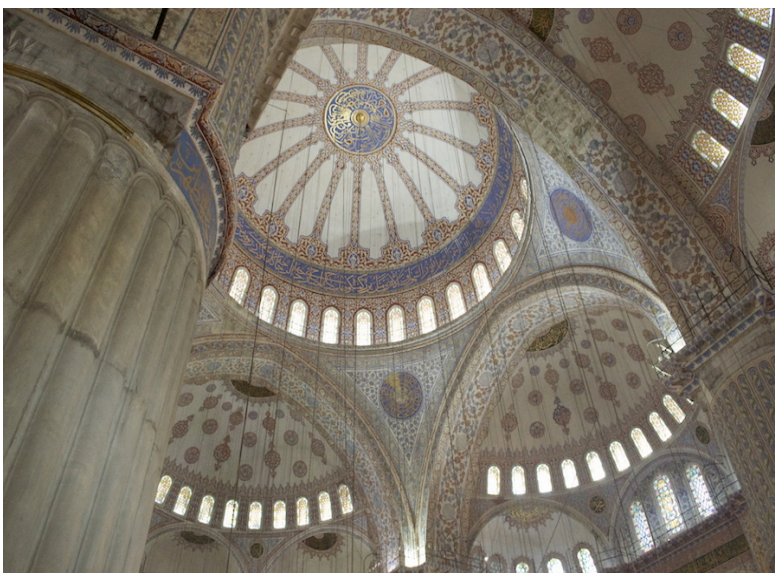
Day 2: Istanbul

The group arriving from Tbilisi will be met at the airport at 12.05 and transferred to the hotel. After settling in to our accommodation and meeting the rest of the group, we will have a free afternoon and evening. Overnight at hotel.

Day 2: Sultan Ahmet Mosque, Topkapı Palace, Hippodrome – Saint Sophia – Cistern Basilica - B



Hagia Sophia



The magnificent dome of the Blue Mosque

After we have our breakfast, we will visit Topkapı Palace, is administrative palace of the Ottoman Dynasty that rule on three continents for centuries. Amazes of the buildings are at the centre of the Ottoman Empire between the 15th and 19th centuries. In these opulent surroundings, the sultans and their court lived and governed. Continue to visiting with Sultan Ahmet Mosque (Blue Mosque) is more familiarly known as Blue Mosque because its interior gleams with a magnificent panelling of blue. It has 6 minarets and very nice cupolas. it was built by architect Mehmet between 1609 and 1616. After visiting we stroll around Ancient Hippodrome the scene of chariot races and the centre of Byzantine civil life, stood in the open space in front of the Blue Mosque. We will see tree charming monuments. . We continue to visit the great Aya Sofia – crowning glory of Byzantium. Now called Ayasofya Museum. It is really on of the finest buildings of all time. Built by Constantine the Great and reconstructed by Justinian in 6th century. Its immense dome rises 55 meters above the ground and its diameter spans 31 meters. We will absorb the building's majestic serenity and admire the fine Byzantine mosaics. Later we will visit the Cistern Basilica. Overnight at hotel.

Day 3: Cruise around the Bosforo, Suleymaniye Mosque, Big Bazar - B



The Bosporus



Exotic spices

After breakfast we will walk down to Eminonu (15 min) to embark our special boat. The Bosphorus is a water pass that spans 36km between Black sea and the Sea of Marmara and 700m. Wide at the narrowest point. At this location, on the either side of the strait, stands the two medieval castles built by the Ottoman Turks for the conquest of the city Anadolu hisari (14th century) in Asia, and right across, the awesome Rumelihisari constructed in the 15th century. The winding strait that separates Europe and Asia. (It takes about 2 hours)

Later we continue the Suleymaniye Mosque, the Mosque of Suleyman the Magnificent where he and his wife, Hurrem Sultan, are buried. It was built between 1550 and 1557 by the famous architect Sinan. Erected on the crest of a hill, it is conspicuous from its great size, emphasised by four minarets rising one from each corner of the courtyard. Inside the mihrab (praying niche showing the direction to Mecca) and the mimber (pulmit) are of finely carved white marble, and there are fine stained glass windows. We continue visiting Covered Bazaar, the world's largest covered market. These labyrinths of the streets and passages houses are more than 4.000 shops. Covered bazaar is still commercial centre of the old city. Overnight at hotel.

Day 4: Egypt Bazaar - fly home

Today we visit to Misir Carsisi (Egypt bazaar) transports you to fantasies of the mystical East. The smell of the whole kinds of spices fills the air. Later free time until transfer time. Transfer to the airport and fly home.

Cost: If extending from Georgian trip - £250
If joining from the UK - £300

Included:

- Hotels; (3 stars Monaco , Budo Hotel)
- 3/4 breakfast
- Bosphore tour (public boat)
- English speaking guide
- All transfers and transportation

Not included:

- Flights
- Insurance
- all lunches and dinners
- Entrance fees are not included. (Hippodrome, St. Sophia, Blue Mosque, Topkapi Palace, Cistern Basilica, Egypt Bazar, Big Bazar)

Hotels List:

<u>3 Star Hotels:</u>
Monaco Hotel / www.istanbulmonacohotel.com
Or Budo Hotel www.budohotel.com