

The best MARCO POLO Insider Tips

Our top 15 Insider Tips



INSIDER TIP → A mix of healing herbs

Dealers at the Egyptian Bazaar (photo right) will mix tea for a cough, a cold or a diet according to your wishes → p. 38

INSIDER TIP → An up-and-coming

Bosphorus village

The multicultural quarter of Kuzguncuk has retained its historic architecture and picturesque charm, and now attracts artists and intellectuals → p. 53

INSIDER TIP → Good, plain fish

In the Adem Baba fish restaurant in Arnavutköy you can enjoy plain and simple seafood at a reasonable price → p. 56

INSIDER TIP → City spirit

No trip to İstanbul would be complete without a raki evening in Beyoğlu! The favourite bar among the district's intellectuals is Yakup 2 → p. 69

INSIDER TIP → Small, friendly, cheap – and known to all

Atatürk liked to drink his raki here: Cumhuriyet Meyhanesi is one of the city's oldest taverns → p. 70

INSIDER TIP → A sea of books

The Denizler Bookstore is a veritable treasure trove for literature and maps connected with the sea → p. 74

INSIDER TIP → Find peace in a tea garden

The little Bebek Kahve café is right by the harbour, which makes it a good place to end a long walk along the Bosphorus → p. 71

INSIDER TIP → Fragile and beautiful

The state glass and ceramics manufactory of Paşabahçe sells attractive souvenirs at reasonable prices, and will pack the treasures you buy for shipping → p. 76

INSIDER TIP → Patchwork kelims

Throw nothing away – that's the motto at Ethnicon. This company's beautiful kelims are unique products, made by joining old fabrics together → p. 79

INSIDER TIP → Swinging İstanbul

The International Jazz Festival is a highlight of the annual calendar of events. Concerts by high-calibre artists draw crowds at venues scattered across the city → p. 105

INSIDER TIP → A quiet harbour tavern

Karaköy Lokantasi at the passenger ferry terminal is a good address: the food is tasty and plentiful, the atmosphere is quiet and laid back, and the prices are reasonable → p. 71

INSIDER TIP → Turkish pop and rock

Club Babylon (photo left) is a rendezvous for İstanbul's alternative music scene → p. 85

INSIDER TIP → A shop for discerning punters

Haremlike stands for top quality: whether you want items for your bathroom or bedroom, you get the best. The name for this fabric store comes from the women's quarters at Ottoman palaces → p. 79

INSIDER TIP → Hands-on technology

Stride onto the captain's bridge, visit a submarine or a railway, or admire many other exhibits on the themes of transport, communication and astronomy at the excellent Rahmi-Koç Industrial Museum in Hasköy → p. 103

INSIDER TIP → The history of women's rights

A wonderful historic building on the Golden Horn is home to an institution that is unique in Turkey: a women's library devoted to the struggle for female emancipation → p. 98



BEST OF ...

GREAT PLACES FOR FREE

Discover new places and save money

● *Holy places of Islam*

The *Eyüp Mosque* is a major place of pilgrimage, as the Prophet Mohammed's standard-bearer is buried here, and the site therefore attracts the faithful in great numbers. You can visit the mosque free of charge and get in tune with the respectful mood of the pilgrims → p. 39

● *A lively village by the sea*

If you want to sit in comfort on the Bosphorus to enjoy the sunshine and all the goings-on around, you can go to one of the expensive restaurants by the shore. Or save money by taking a trip to *Ortaköy*. There is always something to watch here – from the concentrated backgammon players to the giant tankers on the water → p. 57

● *The seat of the Greek Orthodox patriarch*

A good place to track down the spirit of old Byzantium: the *Church of the Patriarch* in Fener was closed to the public for many years. Now you can visit it free of charge → p. 97

● *Is there an avant-garde artist in the house?*

SALT is the place to go in Istanbul's art scene. Its varied exhibitions give visitors an opportunity to enter into a close dialogue with avant-garde works – free of charge, thanks to the generosity of wealthy sponsors → p. 49

● *In the sultan's garden*

Follow in the sultan's footsteps in *Yıldız Park*. Ancient plane trees create an atmosphere of calm and provide shade. What was once the ruler's private park is now freely accessible to all (photo) → p. 51

● *Tour of the city by tram*

A trip with a tour bus is not all that cheap. By contrast it costs practically nothing to travel round Istanbul by *tram*. The trip from Aksaray to Kabataş, through the old quarter and across the Golden Horn, will set you back just a couple of TL → p. 39

 Dots in guidebook refer to 'Best of ...' tips

ONLY IN İSTANBUL

Unique experiences

● *A stroll through the bazaar*

Shopping as in bygone days – at the *Grand Bazaar* you get to know the original oriental version of the shopping centre in its purest form, especially if you take a stroll through its lanes out of season → p. 40

● *A wonderful mosque*

It is one of the largest and most beautiful places of worship in the entire Islamic world: the Sultan Ahmet Camii. Why is it known as the *Blue Mosque*? The question is answered when you enter and see the interior, lined with blue faience (photo) → p. 30

● *Palace of tents*

The *Topkapı Palace* is still a reminder of the way of life of the Turkish people before they arrived in Anatolia. The diverse pavilions that make up the sultan's palace give an impression of tents of stone, even if they are somewhat larger and more opulent than those of the sultan's ancestors → p. 34

● *A boulevard for pleasure and culture*

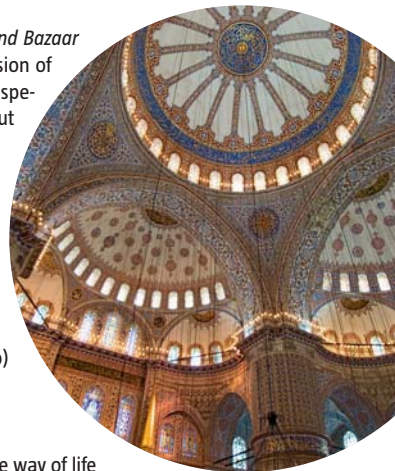
Sooner or later every visitor to Istanbul ends up on *İstiklal Caddesi*. There is a palpable sense that this fine avenue in the in-district of Beyoğlu is the vibrant heart of the city. Cinemas, bars and culture – there is something here for every taste → p. 48

● *Bridge between contrasts*

The *Galata Bridge* across the Golden Horn is the symbolic centre of Istanbul. Nowhere is the contrast of old and new, oriental and western, as apparent as here. And all the anglers are the clearest possible proof of the importance of the sea as the basis for the existence and life of the city → p. 40

● *Ferry across the Bosphorus*

A *boat ride across the Bosphorus* is one of the most enjoyable experiences in Istanbul. Get aboard in Eminönü and savour the slow trip through the straits to the terminal. Then take ample refreshment in one of the fish restaurants before taking the ferry back. The excursion will give you completely new impressions of the city, and provide some memorable photos of your time in Istanbul → p. 56



ONLY IN

THE PERFECT DAY

Istanbul in 24 hours

08:30am BREAKFAST IN THE CITY CENTRE

Start the day with breakfast in the centre on **Taksim Square** → p. 50 in the café **Gezi** → p. 62. From here you have a great view of the modern city centre – and a first impression of Istanbul's buzz, and how hectic things are, too.

09:30am A LIVELY AVENUE

Fortified for the day ahead, take a trip on Istanbul's most interesting means of transport, the historic tram system, to ride along **Istiklal Caddesi** → p. 48 (photo left). This way you get to know the upper section of the famous old boulevard with its art galleries, bookshops, cinemas, cafés and shopping arcades. Alight at the Galatasaray Lycée and take a brief stroll through what used to be the flower arcade. The fish market of Beyoğlu will give you a taster of the atmosphere on Istanbul's markets.

10:30am WALK BY THE WATER

From Galatasaray continue on foot along Istiklal Caddesi to Tünel Square, and pay a visit here to the **Mevlevi Monastery** → p. 49, which was once the headquarters of the dancing dervishes in Istanbul. From the monastery a boulevard leads downhill directly to the **Galata Tower** → p. 46. The viewing terrace of the tower gives you a fantastic all-round view of the city centre. After that go down the hill until you are in Karaköy, the heart of the city, by the Golden Horn and the **Galata Bridge** → p. 40.

11:30am A MIDDAY TREAT

The bridge links modern Karaköy with the old quarter. Walking across is a bit like travelling back in time – a feeling that will get even stronger when you plunge into the bustle of the **Egyptian Bazaar** → p. 38 on the other side. This oriental market is a feast for all the senses, as here you will see and smell all the spices you can imagine. Have a good look round to work up an appetite for lunch. **Pandeli** → p. 65 above the entrance to the bazaar is just the job for a good midday meal.



Get to know some of the most dazzling, exciting, and relaxing facets of Istanbul – all on a single day

02:00pm IMPRESSIVE MONUMENTS

On the hill above the spice bazaar stand the two buildings that every visitor to Istanbul has to see: **Hagia Sophia** → p. 32 and the **Blue Mosque** → p. 30. They are among the most impressive places of worship in the whole world. Take time to let these monumental works of architecture work their magic on you.

03:30pm IN THE SULTAN'S PALACE

Beyond Hagia Sophia lies the great gateway to the first courtyard of the **Topkapı Palace** → p. 34 (photo centre), once the residence of the sultan. Explore the extensive palace grounds with their delicate architecture and learn about the long-gone days of the ruling family and their court. After this visit follow the signs to the **Archaeological Museum** → p. 29 and take a break in their tea garden.

06:00pm İSTANBUL FROM THE WATER

Walk through Gülhane Park down to where the boats moor in Eminönü. Private ferry operators offer a two-hour round trip on the Bosphorus. In the light of the setting sun you will see **Istanbul Modern** → p. 48, Istanbul's leading museum of art, and the **Dolmabahçe Palace** → p. 46, before passing under the first Bosphorus bridge and returning to the pier.

08:30pm ROUND OFF THE DAY WITH A MEAL AND MUSIC

Cross the Galata Bridge to get back to Karaköy and take the city's oldest subway line, the **Tünel** funicular railway, back to Tünel Square. In the alleys opposite the exit there are dozens of bars, clubs and restaurants, for example **Yakup 2** → p. 69. If you are still up for it after a meal, drop in at one of the music clubs such as the nearby **Babylon** → p. 85 (photo right).



Starting point: Taksim Square
The historic tram stops behind the Atatürk Monument at the start of Istiklal Caddesi