

Sample Program

4 NIGHTS ISTANBUL INCENTIVE PROGRAM

	Morning	Lunch	Afternoon	Evening
DAY 1			Arrival Transfers	Welcome Reception
DAY 2	Topkapi Palace & Blue Mosque	Lunch at Green House	St. Sophia & Grand Bazaar	1001 Nights at Kuruçesme Divan
DAY 3	Chora Museum Süleymaniye	Lunch at Zeyrekhane	Exclusive Bosphorus Cruise	Fun Night at Flower Market
DAY 4	Morning Optional Activities	Lunch at Darüzzıyafe	PM at LEISURE	Gala Dinner at Sait Halim Paşa
DAY 5	Brunch at hotel	Departure Transfers		

DAY 1

Meet & Greet at the Airport

Upon arrival at Istanbul Atatürk airport, guests are met after the customs zone by uniformed ODS operation staff who will assist them with their luggage and escort them to the coaches at the exit.



An English speaking guide will be on board each coach to welcome guests. On the way to the hotel, the guide will give an introduction to the country and Istanbul.

Upon request, girls wearing traditional costumes can offer Turkish delight to the guests before boarding their vehicles. Additionally, refreshments can be served on board during the ride.

Upon request, luggage can be transferred to the hotel in a separate van for a speedy delivery to the rooms.

All coaches are deluxe air-conditioned vehicles with professional drivers who are experienced in the travel industry.



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Upon request, a hospitality desk can be provided at the hotel with easy access to the guests, generally in the lobby area. English speaking staff member will be present at the desk between the designated hours. This staff will be in charge of distributing the room keys, keeping record of the rooming list, providing information on the program, sightseeing tours, restaurants and shopping opportunities.

The presence of a Desk Representative from the organizing company is left to client's discretion; However, we advise to have one to ensure good communication between guests, the travel executives and the hotel.

EAST MEETS WEST RECEPTION AT THE HOTEL

Time : 19:00 – 21:00

Location : Pool area or Ballroom of the hotel

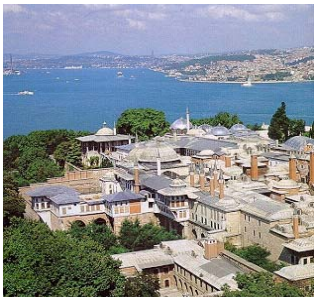
Istanbul, no longer a divide between Europe and Asia but a bridge between East and West. A city where tradition confronts modernity, Islam embraces Christianity and history greets future. Join us as we celebrate different countries of the two worlds, from Japan, China, Russia, Turkey to Italy, France and Spain. Sample drinks from different countries served from waiters dressed in the costumes of the countries they represent. Dine at your favorite buffet displaying variety of delicious dishes from around the world. Then sit back and enjoy performances by Chinese acrobats, "Kazak" dancers, Turkish folkloric groups, Soprano from Italy and of course "can can" dancers from France and "Flamenco" dancers from Spain accompanied by music. How about a ending this harmonious evening with a group of young children waiving flags of the world. Can this theme be more appropriate in any other city than Istanbul ?

DAY 2

Buffet Breakfast in the hotel.

Departure from the hotel by deluxe motor coaches for a full day city tour accompanied by English speaking guides.

TOPKAPI PALACE



In 1465, Sultan Mehmet, The Conqueror of Istanbul, ordered the construction of the first palace; his successors added new pavilions, thus spreading the palace to a total area of 70,000 sqm. The Ottoman Sultans lived in and reined the empire from this palace until the 19th century. Today a museum, the kitchens house 12,000 pieces of porcelain including a rare Chinese porcelain collection. The treasury section displays one of the richest selections of jewels and precious stones and gold objects. The visit through the palace also leads to the collection of clocks, the relics of the prophet and the Baghdad kiosk, which is a beautiful sample of Ottoman interior.

BLUE MOSQUE

Sultanahmet Mosque, also called The Blue Mosque, was designed and built in the early 17th century and since then became the famous silhouette of Istanbul with its six minarets. But it owes its name to the glazed earthenware Iznik tiles (21,043 of them) that face the lower walls of the mosque and those of the balcony. The Blue Mosque is still one of the symbols of Istanbul.



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Lunch will be served at Green House, a charming wooden villa located within the Sultanahmet square at a walking distance to the historical sights. The serene garden with a water fountain in an ideal break from the hustle and bustle of the historic peninsula.

ST. SOPHIA



Originally a church converted into a mosque and now a museum, this superb building wins admiration for the splendor of its Byzantine artwork. First by Emperor Constantine, then re-built by Emperor Justinianus in the 6th century, the Hagia Sophia was transformed into a mosque in the 15th century after the city was captured by the Ottomans who added its minarets and mausoleums. Today this magnificent example of architecture rises with dignity in the Old City. Besides the dome, which wins admiration by its height and size, the mosaics and frescoes decorating the walls are unique

examples of Byzantine art.

GRAND BAZAAR

Shopping experience of a lifetime: The construction of this unique bazaar started in the 15th century, right after the conquest of Istanbul by Sultan Mehmet, and galleries were added during the years to form today's labyrinth of more than 4000 shops, grouped in streets according to the trade. Silver, jeweler, leather goods, carpets, antiques, copper and even furniture.



TREASURE HUNT

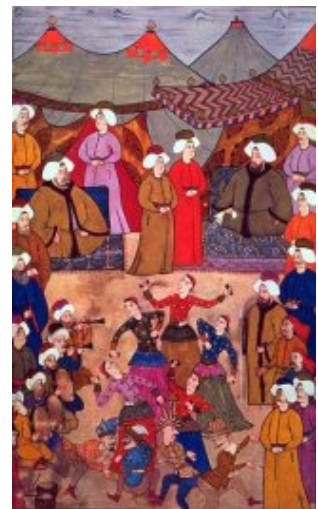
How about a Treasure Hunt in the worlds largest ancient covered Bazaar, a labyrinth of some 4400 shops, 3000 firms, 64 streets and 25,000 employees, 4 fountains, 2 mosques and 22 gates. Look for clues, explore and meet the locals while competing with your colleagues. Guests are divided into groups and given a map of the Grand Bazaar with some clues. Following these clues they are to reach certain location and find the hidden items. The winning team receives awards at the gala dinner, while all participants receive a diploma for completing the course.

ONE THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS PARTY

Time : 20:00 – 23:00

Location : Kuruçeşme Divan

Festivities during the Ottoman period were organized to celebrate religious holidays, births, weddings, circumcisions and in some cases in honor of welcoming a foreign ambassadors. They were also an opportunity to leave aside customary reserves and match up old disputes with neighbors. These festivities would last several days or even weeks. The days would begin with sports activities such as "cirit" played between teams on horseback throwing javelins and guild processions of all kinds of tradesman from farmers, millers, bakers, butchers to goldsmiths, swordsmiths, barbers and shoemakers. The most spectacular entertainments were in the evening featuring illuminated displays on the Bosphorus, and the Golden Horn, torches and candle lights throughout the city. Large pavilion tents were built and seesaws, swing boats and big wheels were set-up for children. Puppeteers, tightrope walkers, dancers in costumes, comics, jugglers and conjurers would perform for the sultan and his family while female musicians played "kanun" an instrument resembling a zither. There would even be reenactments of assaults on castles ending with dazzling fireworks. Let us take you back to a "one thousand and one nights" celebration and give you a glimpse of these impressive celebrations.



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DIVAN KURUCESME

The Divan restaurant is set against the wooded hills of the European shores of the Bosphorus straits and commands one of the most panoramic views of the area. The large complex also houses a glass tent which can be heated during the winter or ventilated during the warmer seasons. This tent is ideal for groups to hold theme events such as a 1001 nights party. The service and cuisine is excellent.



DAY 3

Buffet Breakfast in the hotel.

Departure from the hotel by deluxe motor coaches for a half day city tour accompanied by English speaking guides.

CHORA MUSEUM



The building in its present form was completed in the 11th century and adorned with beautiful mosaics and frescoes. The mosaics follow an iconographic order and have a rare quality. When in the 15th century the church was converted to a mosque after the conquest by the Ottomans, these were covered by whitewash; ironically enough, the Islam faith, which forbids representation of human figures, preserved them until our century.

SULEYMANIYE MOSQUE

One of the masterpieces by the great architect Sinan was built in the 16th century for Sultan Süleyman The Magnificent. The mosque towers over an extensive complex of institutions, including a hospital, a college, a hamam, a market and a primary school, which surround it. The Süleymaniye mosque is a marvelous work of art, dating from a time when the Ottoman Empire was at its most splendid period.



Lunch will be served at Zeyrekhane Restaurant, a restored historical building with a view that embraces both the Golden Horn and the Bosphorus. Serves Turkish specialties.

BOSPHORUS CRUISE

The Bosphorus is a winding strait separating Europe and Asia. Along its shores is a delightfully surprising mixture of past and present, grand splendor and simple beauty. The shore is lined with modern hotels as well as antique wooden houses, palaces of marble, fortresses and small fishing villages. The best way to see the Bosphorus is to take a cruise in a deluxe yacht.



During the excursion one will pass the magnificent Dolmabahçe Palace and farther along are the parks and the imperial pavilions of Yıldız Palace. Next interest point will be Ortaköy, a small district where artists gather every Sunday to display their work along the narrow streets. Elegantly spanning the water and linking Europe and Asia for the first time is the Bosphorus Bridge, one of the longest in the world. Immediately after this bridge, on the Asian side is the beautiful Beylerbeyi Palace and behind the palace rises Çamlıca Hill, the highest point of Istanbul, which is an ideal spot to view the magnificent panorama of Istanbul.

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Facing each other across the Bosphorus are the twin fortresses of Rumeli Hisari and Anadolu Hisari followed by the second link between the two continents, the Fatih Sultan Mehmet Bridge. Farther along on the European side is the beautiful bay of Tarabya, with yachts at anchor and many seafront taverns. After passing in front of some small fishing villages, the Bosphorus joins the Black Sea.

A FUN NIGHT

Theme : Eat, Drink and be Merry

Time : 20:00 – 23:00

Location : Flower Market

FLOWER MARKET

Located on the famous “Grand Rue de Pera” now called the Istiklal Street at the district of Beyoglu, The Flower market, was originally a services alley for apartment houses, built in 1900’s. At that time this area was the most fashionable part of town. The first vendors to come in here were the flower sellers, hence the name given to the arcade.

Today it is an arcade of colorful taverns, a casual eating-place which attracts locals as well as tourists. Strolling gypsy musicians playing violin, tambourine and drums add extra flavor to this already colorful location. Belly dancers can be arranged exclusively to perform for our guests while they are trying our national drink Raki (an anise base alcoholic drink) and enjoying local delicacies.



DAY 4

Buffet Breakfast in the hotel.

OPTIONAL MORNING ACTIVITIES

1) Turkish Cooking Class

We invite our guests to learn the secrets of the famous cuisine from our well-known Chefs. The Turkish Cooking Lesson will be held at an old restaurant, namely Darüzziyafe Restaurant located in the Süleymaniye Mosque complex. This most characteristic setting of Ottoman history is ideal to learn the secrets of the traditional Turkish cuisine. During the Turkish Cooking Lesson, the Chef will demonstrate the use of local ingredients, then our guests will try to cook one of the famous Ottoman dishes under the guidance of the Chef and will receive their Certificate of Excellence.



2) Carpet Weaving Demo

Carpet weaving is one of the most ancient crafts in Turkey, and for centuries, women have played a pivotal role in hand weaving double (giordes) or single (senneh) knotted pile rugs in their homes and nomadic encampments. These woman learned their weaving skills at an early age, taking months or even years to complete the beautiful pile rugs and flat woven kilims that were created for use in every aspect of daily life. From the tribal tents to the Palaces, these carpets were used for many purposes from traditional floor coverings to tent decorations, grain bags, camel and donkey bags, sofa covers and prayer rugs, as well as for ceremonial occasions. Learn the long and intricate process of carpet making from the silk cocoons to the weaving of patterns.



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3) Turkish Bath Experience

The relaxing and rejuvenating experience of Turkish Bath or Hamam, originally purified the soul as well as the body and have always been an important part of the Turkish culture. It also used to be a social event, a gathering point among the people for years. The Turkish bath begins once the guests have undressed in private changing rooms and have been given a large cloth to wrap around the body called (pestemal) which guests may take home with them. During the Turkish bath session, guests will be in a warm and humid room, where they will be doused with warm water lathered, and massaged with a kese, a especially rough bath glove. After the cleansing stage, refreshments will be served in the main entrance area where special entertainment will be provided to enhance the serene atmosphere. Traditionally there are separate sections for men and women. If preferred, bathing suites can be worn.



Lunch for the entire group will be served at Daruzziyafe Restaurant located within the grounds of the Süleymaniye Mosque famous for serving unique dishes from the Ottoman Cuisine.

Afternoon at leisure.

BLACK TIE GALA DINNER

Time : 20:00 – 23:00

Location : Sait Halim Pasha Mansion

This evening, you are the honorary guests of the Pasha and you are sure to be mesmerized by the elegant atmosphere of this mansion, not to mention the breathtaking Bosphorus flowing quietly at your side. Upon arrival to the mansion, you are greeted by the mansion girls in 19th century costumes and led to the "Haremlik" for Cocktails. If weather permits you can enjoy cocktails in the gardens. Pasha will greet guests and invite them for dinner in one of the dining rooms of the mansion. 4 course menu will be served on elegantly decorated tables with centerpieces. A live trio will accompany throughout the evening.



SAIT HALIM PASA MANSION

The Sait Halim Pasha Yali, on the upper European shore of the Bosphorus, is one of the best-preserved of the empire-style (or neo-Western classic) yalis. It is named for the Egyptian prince and aristocrat who held important positions in the Ottoman administration, and who rose to serve a grand vizier during World War I. From the yali's quay, two stone lions, brought from Egypt in the 1860's, keep a silent and distinctive watch to the east. During the 19th century, the prominent owners of the mansions would receive visiting ministers and heads of state, treating them first to banquets and later to negotiations. Early in the 20th century, negotiations with German officials in the Sait Halim Pasha Yali led to Turkish involvement in World War I.



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DAY 5

Brunch in the hotel.

Collection of luggage from the rooms followed by hotel check-out procedures.

Upon request, luggage may be transferred to the airport in advance and pre-boarding procedures may be arranged by ODS Operations Staff.

Departure from the hotel to the airport by deluxe motor coaches accompanied by English speaking guides.

Have a safe trip home.

We hope to see you again.

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