

TOP ATTRACTIONS IN ISTANBUL



Aya Sofya (Haghia Sophia) Museum

The ancient Byzantine church, built by Justinian I between 532-537 AD after the Nika Riot, was later converted to a mosque with the addition of minarets in mid-15th century. The remarkable structure with its 56m high immense dome is a museum today in which you can see both Christian and Islamic art. There are good examples of the Byzantine mosaics as well. For about 1000 years this was the largest church in the world, and glory of the Byzantine Empire.

Website: www.hagiasophia.com

Distance from Hotel Amira: 5-10 minutes by walking

The Museum is open in between: April 15th - October 25th 09:00 to 18:00 every day except Mondays
October 25th - April 15th 09:00 to 16:00 every day except Mondays

Entrance Fee: 40 TL



Topkapi Palace

The Topkapi Palace which has been the center of the state administration for nearly four centuries of the Ottoman Empire, is preparing to host the masterpieces of the Kremlin Palace. The exhibition that is named "Kremlin Palace Treasures are in the Topkapi Palace" is inviting all residents of Istanbul to be witnesses of the great meeting of the two palaces.

Website: www.topkapisarayi.gov.tr

Distance from Hotel Amira: 5-10 minutes by walking

The Museum is open in between: April 15th - October 26th 09:00 to 18:00 every day except Tuesdays
October 26th - April 15th 09:00 to 16:00 every day except Tuesdays

Entrance Fee: 40 TL (Harem section extra 25 TL)



The Archaeological Museum

The Istanbul Archaeological Museums, a museum affiliated to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, is located in Istanbul's Sultanahmet neighborhood, on the Osman Hamdi Bey slope connecting the Gülhane Park with the Topkapi Palace. Its name is plural, since there are three different museums under the same administration: The Archaeological museum, the Ancient Orient museum (Eski Şark Eserleri Müzesi) and Tiled Kiosk Museum (Çinili Köşk Müzesi).

Website: www.istanbularkeoloji.gov.tr

Distance from Hotel Amira: 5-10 minutes by walking

The Museum is open in between: 09:00 to 16:00 every day

Entrance Fee: 20 TL



Blue Mosque (Sultanahmet Mosque)

This 17th century mosque, near Hagia Sophia, is famous for the beautiful blue tile work ornamenting its walls. Its surrounding six slim minarets distinguish it from other mosques which normally have two or four minarets. It was built by architect Mehmet Aga by the order of Sultan Ahmed I as a complex in seven years and became the most important mosque of the city, right in Sultanahmet square.

Distance from Hotel Amira: 5-10 minutes by walking

The Museum is open in between: Open everyday

Entrance Fee: No entrance fee



The Basilica (Underground) Cistern

Also known as the Sunken Palace, it was used as the water reservoir for the Byzantine Great Palace during the reign of Justinian in 532. Inside the huge building, there is a few feet of water but wooden walkways have been built for visitors. There are 336 columns supporting a cathedral ceiling and some of them were taken from torn-down temples. The interior of the building has special dim lighting and classical music is played to create an eerie atmosphere.

Website: <http://yerebatan.com/homepage>

Distance from Hotel Amira: 10 minutes by walking

The Museum is open in between: 09:00 to 17:30 every day

Entrance Fee: 20 TL

Grand Bazaar (Kapalıçarşı)



The Grand Bazaar in Istanbul is one of the largest and oldest covered markets in the world, with more than 58 covered streets and over 1,200 shops which attract between 250,000 and 400,000 visitors daily. Opened in 1461, it is well known for its jewelry, pottery, spice, and carpet shops. Many of the stalls in the bazaar are grouped by the type of goods, with special areas for leather coats, gold jewelry and the like. The bazaar contains two bedestens (domed masonry structures built for storage and safe keeping), the first of which was constructed between 1455 and 1461 by the order of Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror. The bazaar was vastly enlarged in the 16th century, during the reign of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, and in 1894 underwent a major restoration following an earthquake. We recommend you to stop by at Sevan Bicakci store, the world famous ring designer.

Website: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Bazaar,_Istanbul

Distance from Hotel Amira: 10 minutes by walking

The Grand Bazaar is open in between: 09:00 - 19:00 every day except on Sundays and during public or religious Holidays

Spice (Egyptian) Bazaar



The Spice Bazaar is located next to the Flower Market on the banks of the Golden Horn called Makron and Envalos by the Byzantine and Eminönü by the Ottomans. The Spice Bazaar is one of the most characteristic places of Istanbul. Spice Bazaar which is one of the oldest covered bazaars of Istanbul is situated within the complex of Yeni Cami. The Yeni Cami complex which was commissioned by Safiye Sultan to be built and the construction of which started in the year 1591 was completed by Hatice Turhan Valide Sultan in the year 1633. In the Bazaar which is famous for its herbalists currently dried fruits, delicatessen and various food staff besides conventional products such as natural medicines, spices, flower seeds, scarce plant roots and peels are sold. It is known that the spices sold here are in addition to their consumption as food staff, useful for the treatment of certain diseases. Lately an increase in the number of jewelry shops in the bazaar is being observed. Within the Spice Bazaar there are restaurants with a view over the Golden Horn and Galata Bridge as well.

Website: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basilica_Cistern

Distance from Hotel Amira: 30 minutes by walking

The Spice Bazaar is open daily



Suleymaniye Mosque

The Suleymaniye Mosque, built on the order of Sultan Suleyman (Suleyman the Magnificent), "was fortunate to be able to draw on the talents of the architectural genius of Mimar Sinan" The construction work began in 1550 and the mosque was finished in 1558. The mosque is modeled in part on the style of a Byzantine basilica, particularly the Hagia Sophia, which was perhaps a conscious move on the part of the sultan to create a continuity and a symbolic connection with the city's past.

Distance from Hotel Amira: 4 km - 30 minutes by walking
The Mosque is open in between: 09.00 – 18.00 everyday (except pray times)
Entrance Fee: No entrance fee

Chora (Kariye) Church & Museum



The Chora Church is considered to be one of the most beautiful examples of a Byzantine church. The church is situated in the western, Edirnekapi district of Istanbul. In the 16th century, the church was converted into a mosque by the Ottoman rulers, and it became a secularised museum in 1948. The interior of the building is covered with fine mosaics and frescoes.

Website: www.choramuseum.com
Distance from Hotel Amira: 6.4 km
The Museum is open in between: 09.00-19.00 every day except Wednesdays
Entrance Fee: 30 TL

Dolmabahce Palace & Museum



The Dolmabahçe Palace was home to six sultans from 1856, when it was first inhabited, up until the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924: The last royal to live here was Caliph Abdülmecid Efendi. A law that went into effect on March 3, 1924 transferred the ownership of the palace to the national heritage of the new Turkish Republic. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder and first President of the Republic of Turkey, used the palace as a presidential residence during the summers and enacted some of his most important works here. Atatürk spent the last days of his medical treatment in this palace, where he died on November 10, 1938. This palace is also designed and constructed by Garabet Amira Balyan.

Website: www.dolmabahce.gov.tr
Distance from Hotel Amira: 7.5 km
The Museum is open in between: 09.00-16.00 every day except Mondays and Thursdays
Entrance Fee: Selamlık (Official part) 30 TL - Harem (Privy Chambers) 20 TL - Common Ticket for both 40 TL

Beylerbeyi Palace & Museum



Beylerleyi Palace was commissioned by Sultan Abdülaziz (1830–1876) and built between 1861 and 1865 as a summer residence and a place to entertain visiting heads of state. The palace is designed and constructed by Sarkis Amira Balyan. Empress Eugénie of France visited Beylerbeyi on her way to the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and had her face slapped by the sultan's mother for daring to enter the palace on the arm of Abdülaziz.

(Despite her initial reception, Empress Eugénie of France was so delighted by the elegance of the palace that she had a copy of the window in the guest room made for her bedroom in Tuileries Palace, in Paris.) Other regal visitors to the palace included the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. The palace was the last place of captivity of the deposed sultan Abdulhamid II from 1912 until his death there in 1918.

Website: www.beylerbeyi.gov.tr

Distance from Hotel Amira: 15.5 km

The Museum is open in between: 9.00-16.00 every day except Mondays and Thursdays

Entrance Fee: 20 TL

The Maiden Tower



Maiden's Tower was first built by the ancient Athenian general Alcibiades in 408 BC to control the movements of the Persian ships in the Bosphorus strait. Back then the tower was located between the ancient cities of Byzantium and Chrysopolis. The tower was later enlarged and rebuilt as a fortress by the Byzantine emperor Alexius Comnenus in 1110 AD, and was restored and slightly modified several times by the Ottoman Turks, most significantly in 1509 and 1763. The most recent facelift was made in 1998.

Steel supports were added around the ancient tower as a precaution after the 17 August 1999 earthquake. Used as a lighthouse for centuries, the interior of the tower has been transformed into a popular café and restaurant, with an excellent view of the former Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman capital. Private boats make trips to the tower several times a day.

Website: www.kizkulesi.com.tr/en

Distance from Hotel Amira: 24 km and 5 min. by boat

The Maiden Tower is open in between: 9.00-00.30 every day

Istanbul Modern Museum



The Istanbul Modern, as it's called (or Istanbul Museum of Modern Art), is a fine modern art museum (Istanbul Modern Sanat Müzesi) located in a vast former dock warehouse in Tophane (TOHP-hah-neh) on the southern Bosphorus shore one km north of the Galata Bridge and Karaköy (Galata) and south of Kabatas and Dolmabahçe Palace. Opened in 2004, the museum is sparely, beautifully done. Changing exhibits include works by both Turkish and foreign artists, although the museum's prime purpose is to encourage the creation of modern art in Turkey, so Turkish artists are rightly given primacy of place.

Website: www.istanbulmodern.org

Distance from Hotel Amira: 5.5 km

The Museum is open in between: Tuesday – Sunday: 10.00 am - 6.00 pm Thursday: 10.00 am - 8.00 pm
The museum is closed on Mondays

Çemberlitaş Turkish Bath (Hamam)



The Çemberlitas Bath is located on Çemberlitas Square on Divanyolu Street situated in the midst of some of Istanbul's greatest monuments. It is next to the Vezirhan monument erected by Constantine I (324 - 327). The Köprülü Mahmud Pasa complex with its mosque, school and tombs are directly opposite the bath and at its sides are the Vezir Han and the old university building. Also in the near vicinity of the bath are the tomb of Sultan Mahmut II and its treasury, the Köprülü Library, the Atik Pasa Mosque and school and the tomb of Ali Baba.

Website: www.cemberlitasamami.com

Distance from Hotel Amira: 20 minutes by walking

Open daily from 06:00 to 24:00

Süleymaniye Turkish Bath (Hamam)



The Magnificent Sultan Süleyman had this Hamam built by the famous Architect Sinan in 1550. Their service includes: Washing, peeling, soap massage, locked clothes changing cabin, towel (peptamal), slippers (takunya). Süleymaniye Hamam is a mixed (male/female) hamam. There are no different section for each sex thus the families may comfortably enjoy our hamam together. Our masseurs (tellaks) are trained and professional people.

Website: www.suleymaniyehamami.com

Distance from Hotel Amira: 4.7 km

Open daily from 10:00 to 24:00

Little Hagia Sophia



It is formerly the Church of the Saints Sergius and is a former Greek Eastern Orthodox church dedicated to Saints Sergius and Bacchus in Constantinople, converted into a mosque during the Ottoman Empire.

Website: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_Hagia_Sophia

Distance from Hotel Amira: 200 m - 1 minute by walking

The Mosque is open in between Open everyday (except pray times)

Entrance Fee: No Entrance Fee

Hippodrome



The Hippodrome of Constantinople was a circus that was the sporting and social centre of Constantinople, capital of the Byzantine Empire. Today it is a square named Sultanahmet Meydanı (Sultan Ahmet Square) in the Turkish city of Istanbul, with a few fragments of the original structure surviving.

The word hippodrome comes from the Greek hippos - horse -, and dromos - path or way -. Horse racing and chariot racing were popular pastimes in the ancient world and hippodromes were common features of Greek cities in the Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine eras.

Website: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hippodrome_of_Constantinople

Distance from Hotel Amira: 5-10 minutes by walking

The Mosque is open in between Open everyday

Entrance Fee: No Entrance Fee

Galata Tower



Galata Tower has dominated Beyoğlu's skyline since 1348 and still offers the best panoramic views of the city. Above, the Golden Horn, Seraglio Point and Old Istanbul are seen from Galata Tower (looking south). Originally named the Tower of Christ, it was the highpoint in the city walls of the Genoese colony called Galata. Most of the walls are long gone, but the great tower remains. Until the 1960s it was a fire lookout tower. Now the upper floors hold an uninteresting restaurant-nightclub, and a panorama balcony. The panorama balcony, encircling the highest row of windows, is narrow, open to the weather, and not recommended for anyone suffering from acrophobia (fear of heights). If you want the full effect, be here at the time of a call to prayer, preferably the sunset call. The balcony is open daily from 9 am to 5 pm

Website: www.galatatower.net

Distance from Hotel Amira: 6 km

Open daily from 09:00 to 17:00 - Restaurant & Turkish Show from 20:00 to 00:30

Princes' Islands



The Princes' Islands are composed of nine islands off the Asian coast of Istanbul, in the Sea of Marmara. There are regular passenger ferries and fast passenger ferries (sea bus) to the four of the islands from Kabatas and from Bostanci districts. Motor vehicles are not permitted on the islands except the ones belonging to local municipality for public works, so people walk or rent a bicycle or horse-drawn carriage, even a donkey. These are nice little islands where local people have their summer homes or go there for small beaches and for picnicking, or just to wonder around at the weekends. These four islands are known as Adalar (Islands) in general in Turkish

and their names are Buyukada, Heybeliada, Burgazada, and Kinaliada. There is also Sedefadasi which is not very popular as the other ones and very small settlement on it. There are no settlements on Hayirsizada, Sivriada and Yassiada, and Kasikada is a private island. The name of the islands come from the Byzantine period, when princes and empresses were exiled there. But during the Ottoman period, especially around 19th century with the use of steamboats, these islands became a popular resorts for Istanbul's rich people, building their wooden houses. Jewish, Greek and Armenian communities were a large part of the inhabitants of the islands. Today, the islands are popular tourist destinations for daily excursions especially during summer months. There are many monasteries and historic buildings on the islands, besides Victorian style old wooden mansions.