



CLASSICAL CONSTANTINOPE

- TRIP NOTES -

CLASSICAL CONSTANTINOPLE (4 DAYS)

Istanbul



WELCOME

Thank you for booking your holiday with *Travel The Unknown*. We love travel and we are confident that you will go away with fantastic memories of our *Classical Constantinople* tour.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Admire the stunning Blue Mosque
- Learn about life in Ottoman times in Topkapi Palace
- Appreciate the genius in the design of the Hagha Sophia
- Experience the Grand Bazaar, the most colourful of markets
- Enjoy world class cuisine in this foodie heaven

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Airport transfers
- Accommodation
- Entrance fees to sites
- 90 minute boat ride on the Bosphorus
- Breakfasts
- English-speaking guide
- Climate Care contribution

Itinerary

Please download the detailed itinerary for your tour from our website. We have made it simpler to navigate and there is now one-click access to each tour via the Trip Finder in the main menu, then click on the Itinerary tab to download your itinerary.

Itinerary Disclaimer

Itineraries are correct at the time of printing. Our itineraries are sometimes updated during the year to incorporate suggestions from past travellers and sometimes our own research too. Please ensure that you print and review a final copy of these **Trip Notes** and itinerary a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that may affect you.

Joining & Finishing Points

All travellers will be greeted at Istanbul airport by a *Travel The Unknown* representative and will be escorted to their accommodation.

All customers will be escorted to the flight departing from Istanbul airport at the end of the tour.

Flights from London

We normally use the scheduled services of the airlines (depending on availability). As flight timings and schedules change regularly we recommend you call one of our specialist sales staff or your agent to confirm up-to-date timings. Please note timings may change at a later date and cannot be confirmed until approximately two weeks before departure.

UK Regional Flights

Travel The Unknown is committed to making joining our trips as easy as possible, wherever you may live in the UK. The Flight Inclusive price is based on a London departure, but we are happy to tailor this to your local or regional airport.

Accommodation

Travel The Unknown will provide you with the best accommodation available, in keeping with the natural environments of our destinations. Either ourselves or our trusted ground handlers have personally vetted all accommodation.

Location	Accommodation
Istanbul	Sude Konak Hotel or Olimpiyat Hotel

If any of our preferred first choice accommodation is not available, we will organise something of a similar standard.

Style of Travel

This trip combines culture and light walking. Although activities have been planned on most days, you can opt in or out of any activities as you please. These tours are for independent people, so we try to be flexible where we can, and give you time to explore on your own too.

Meals

All breakfasts are included in the tour price. We felt it is better to let you choose where to eat at other times as this gives you maximum flexibility and choice. Please see itinerary for the meal plan.

You should budget about £10 (\$15) per meal for additional meals.

Group Size

To minimise the footprint our tours leave - both on the environment and the local culture - we keep our group sizes as small as possible but on this itinerary the group may be larger than 12 people.

Tour Guides

All *Travel The Unknown* group trips in Turkey are accompanied by one of our local Turkish group leaders. The aim of the group leader is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. Our group leaders are experienced, qualified guides and have a broad general knowledge of the areas visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects. The use of local guides helps lower costs.

Physical Demands

This trip involves a reasonable amount of walking. If you are unsure as to your own suitability for this tour please contact us to discuss.

A basic level of fitness and decent health is assumed. Accommodation is comfortable however.

Optional Activities

From time to time other activities may be possible to arrange. Costs for such additional activities will not be covered in the standard tour package. Contact us in advance of your trip for more information.

Single Travellers

As experienced solo travellers, there were many times when we wanted to join tour groups, as it is a great way of meeting like-minded travellers, as well as getting to see some places that were otherwise not on our itineraries.

We try to keep our single supplements as low as possible. You will only have to pay a supplement if you want your own room. If you are open to sharing a room with another single same-sex traveller, then you pay no supplement.

Fellow Travellers

Travelling in a group is very rewarding and is a great way to meet new people. There may be large variations in age and nationality. This is most often a good thing, but can occasionally cause some teething problems, so we ask you to be patient with your fellow passengers and realise that everyone likes to travel a little differently. Please consider your fellow passengers too, and try to respect meeting times, especially for game drives.

PRACTICALITIES

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory for all our trips. As a minimum we require that your insurance covers you for medical expenses including emergency repatriation. We also strongly recommend you are covered for personal liability and loss of luggage and personal effects. You will be required to give details of your insurance prior to departure. Please go to www.traveltheunknown.com/partners for links to excellent deals on travel insurance.

Visas and Permits

Visas are required by the majority of travellers to Turkey. Visas can be purchased on arrival by the majority of nationalities. Check the following site for the latest visa information:

<http://www.turkishconsulate.org.uk/en/visa.asp>.

Health

All *Travel The Unknown* travellers need to be in good physical health in order to participate fully in the group travel experience. If, in the opinion of our ground handler, any traveller is unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group, *Travel The Unknown* reserves the right to exclude them from all or part of a trip without refund. Please read the itinerary for this tour thoroughly and then realistically self-assess your physical ability to complete the trip as described. Please consult with your doctor if you have any doubts or give us a call with any queries you may have.

An excellent resource for up-to-date travel medicine requirements is: www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk. We recommend that you also consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information before departure. You should also carry a first aid kit as well as any personal medical requirements. Please be aware that in some remoter areas you could be some distance from medical facilities. For legal reasons our leaders are prohibited from administering any type of drugs including headache tablets, antibiotics, etc.

NOTE: Do not leave it to the last minute to see you doctor as you may have to get immunised or start taking tablets some time prior to departure. You should see your doctor or visit a travel clinic at least 45 days before your departure.

When organising your own meals, be selective where you eat. Choose places that seem quite clean and where many locals eat. A high turnover usually means food is not left lying around and has been made fresh. We recommend that you stick to drinking bottled water, even when brushing your teeth.

At the time of writing the following vaccinations were recommended for travel to Turkey: Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Tetanus-Diphtheria, Typhoid, Mumps, Measles and Rubella.

Travellers should vigilantly protect themselves against mosquito bites by wearing long-sleeved tops, long trousers and using a mosquito repellent with a high quantity of DEET

Safety

Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure. For the UK, please visit: www.fco.gov.uk.

We strongly recommend that you use a neck wallet or money belt while travelling to ensure the safety of your documents and other valuables. It is not advisable to bring valuable jewellery when travelling. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.

During your trip we have built in some free time. Any optional activities you undertake are not part of your *Travel The Unknown* itinerary, and *Travel The Unknown* makes no guarantees about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgment. *Travel The Unknown* cannot be held responsible for any injuries or losses that may occur for any such optional activity. Please also note that *Travel The Unknown* retains the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns.

Dangers

Turkey is generally a very safe place to travel. However, you are still subject to the same problems that you find the world over – e.g. pickpockets can operate in busy places. It is important to be more vigilant in busy areas. You are responsible for your own belongings.

There is very rarely any trouble in the areas our tours cover. We closely monitor the safety situation on a continuous basis, using both government sources and our own network of contacts on the ground. Please check www.fco.gov.uk for the latest government advice on travel to the region. Please contact us at info@traveltheunknown.com if you have any further questions or concerns about safety issues.

In addition we recommended that you read the Health section for how to mitigate dangers to your health.

Electricity

Electricity in Turkey is 230 Volts, alternating at 50 cycles per second. If you travel to Turkey with a device that does not accept 230 Volts at 50 Hertz, you will need a voltage converter.

There are three main types of voltage converter. Resistor-network converters will usually be advertised as supporting something like 50-1600 Watts. They are light-weight and support high-wattage electrical appliances like hair dryers and irons. However, they can only be used for short periods of time and are not ideal for digital devices.

Transformers will have a much lower maximum Watt rating, usually 50 or 100. Transformers can often be used continuously and provide better electricity for low wattage appliances like battery chargers, radios, laptop computers, cameras, mp3 players and camcorders. However, they are heavy because they contain large iron rods and lots of copper wire.

Some companies sell combination converters that include both a resistor network and a transformer in the same package. This kind of converter will usually come with a switch that switches between the two modes. If you absolutely need both types of converter, then this is the type to buy.

Turkey Plug Adapters and Outlet Shapes

Outlets in Turkey generally accept 1 type of plug:



Two round pins

If your appliances plug has a different shape, you may need a plug adapter. Depending on how much you plan to travel in the future, it may be worthwhile to get a combination voltage converter and plug adapter.

Check out www.traveltheunknown.com/estore for some adapters that will be suitable for Turkey.

Communication

There are many internet cafes and call shops in Istanbul. International calls are also reasonably simple. Most foreign mobile phones will work in Istanbul.

TIP: If you think you will need to make or receive a lot of calls, then it would be worth investing in a prepaid SIM card on arrival at the airport. You have to make sure your handset is unlocked prior to leaving the UK.

Time

Turkey is 2 hours ahead of GMT.

Note, the time difference will reduce to 1 hour when clocks go forward for summer time.

Laundry

Laundry facilities are available at our hotels for a charge. However, we advise you not to leave laundry to the last minute as sometimes drying times may be required.

MONEY

Spending Money

Every traveller is different and therefore spending money requirements will vary. Some people spend a lot of money on drinks, whereas others may spend more on souvenir or present shopping. Please consider your own spending habits when it comes to allowing for drinks, shopping, participating in optional activities and tipping.

Tipping

Tipping is totally voluntary and often not expected. It is however almost always appreciated. You should need no more than £5-10 (\$7-15) for tipping local staff in restaurants, hotels etc. It is also customary to tip guides and drivers if you have been happy with their services.

Departure Tax

Unless otherwise specified departure tax will be included in the cost of your package when you booked your international flight with *Travel The Unknown*. Where you are arranging your own international flights please check with your travel agent or airline.

Emergency Funds

Please also make sure you have access to an additional £200 (\$350), to be used when unforeseen incidents or circumstances outside our control (eg. a natural disaster, or political strife) necessitate a change to our intended itinerary. This is not a common occurrence but it's better to be prepared.

Money Exchange

Currency exchange rates often fluctuate. For the most up to date rates please refer to the following website: www.xe.com.

ATM machines which accept Visa or Mastercard are common throughout Turkey. Other bank cards can prove more difficult to use. Travellers cheques are also not commonly accepted. We recommend that you therefore carry a Visa or Mastercard, as well as some cash in a hidden money belt or neck wallet. Cash should be in US dollars or as second choice Euro. Major credit cards are accepted in most larger shops and restaurants.

TIP 1: Slightly torn, faded or badly marked banknotes may be difficult to exchange. Coins are typically not exchangeable.

TIP 2: We recommend you take out the majority of the spending money you require when you arrive in Istanbul and distribute it and keep it in secure places throughout the rest of the trip.

Note: Please inform your bank that you are travelling to Turkey to make sure your debit/credit cards are not blocked.

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Responsible Travel

As regular travellers, one thing that never ceases to amaze and inspire us while travelling is the kindness and generosity of people, who often have very little to their name. We firmly believe that the people who make these places special should also benefit from them. Therefore as first preference we use local guides and locally-owned lodges, shops and eateries. We do our best to ensure that the benefits of our tours reach as widely as possible into the communities where they operate and also invest a significant amount of our profits in development projects within those communities.

Environment

The biggest environmental impact of your holiday with *Travel The Unknown* is the CO₂ generated by your flights and land travel. As a responsible tour operator, we have included in our tour prices the costs of offsetting CO₂ emissions from all international and domestic flights as well as land travel forming part of the tour.

We have partnered with *Climate Care* for this purpose. If you are making independent flight arrangements, we urge you to take responsibility for your CO₂ emissions by offsetting through *Climate Care*, or another reputable offsetting scheme.

We also ask you to be vigilant about disposing of your waste. Dispose of all rubbish correctly and do not leave litter or cigarette butts in natural environments.

Our brochures and stationery are printed on FSC-accredited or recycled paper. To minimise waste, all of our brochures and trip notes are available for download online.

Visit www.traveltheunknown.com/responsible for further information.

Culture Shock

Turkey is a Muslim country and the dress code is quite conservative in many places though in most of Istanbul it is a lot less conservative. For visiting mosques full length trousers should be worn and women may have to cover their heads. Bring light clothes for places that are hot. But also be properly prepared for the colder temperatures during the winter months. If you have any questions please feel free to contact us. Full contact details can be found on our website: www.traveltheunknown.com/contactus.

Climate

Istanbul experiences hot and humid summers with temperatures averaging 28 (Celsius) in July and August. Spring and Autumn are mild and pleasant with temperatures ranging from 15 – 25 degrees. Winters are cold at 10 degrees with even colder nighttimes and occasional snowfalls.

WHAT TO BRING

The list below is not exhaustive:

- Day pack – useful for carrying basic items when walking
- Sandals and walking shoes
- Binoculars
- Torch (check batteries)
- Sunglasses and sun cream (min Factor 15)
- Insect repellent
- Small towel
- Basic toiletries (inc. hand sanitiser)
- Tissues
- Drinking bottle
- Watch (strict time-keeping is required at times)
- Money for meals, souvenirs, contingencies
- Notebook, pen
- Book
- Travel pillow (can come in handy for longer journeys)

Electronic Items

- Digital camera – bring accessories: memory cards, battery, charger
- If film camera – bring film, lenses, batteries, etc.
- Mobile phone and charger
- Plug adaptors (2-round pin – same as European style)
- Music player (MP3, CD player, Ipod and relevant charger)
- Laptop and charger (useful if you want to keep a blog and upload photos)

Tour Photos

We prefer to use photos taken on our tours on our website so we actively encourage you to send us your photos. Happy snapping!

Our Newsletter

If you would like to find out about new tours and all that is happening with *Travel The Unknown* then sign up to our newsletter on our website.

Feedback

We have spent much time and effort to make your trip a memorable experience for all the right reasons. However, we are constantly looking to improve our tours and any feedback you can give us or suggestions you may have would be very much appreciated.

Turkish Cheat Sheet

teshekurler	thank you
Merheba	Hello
et	Meat
evet	Yes
hayir	No
sijak su	hot water
anlamadim	I don't understand
luutfen	please
nasilsiniz	how are you?
Iyiyim	I'm fine
Kach para?	How much?
Var...	There is some
Yok...	There isn't any
Tuvalet	toilet
Nerede ?	where?
Yemek	food
Yemek var mi?	Is there any food?
Anahtar	key