

# 11-DAY ISTANBUL ICONS & AEGEAN ARTIFACTS VIA THE CORINTH CANAL CRUISE TOUR

ISTANBUL TO ATHENS

PRE CRUISE LAND TOUR – 3 DAYS

**WITH THREE DAYS TO EXPLORE** glorious Istanbul and another eight to discover what lies beyond the Golden Horn, you don't need an oracle to tell you this is one auspicious voyage. Everywhere you look in Istanbul you'll find some fascinating remnant of days gone by – places where chariots raced, sultans ruled, and architects' greatest aspirations were realized. After you've oohed and aahed over the world-renowned mosques, palaces, and bazaars, board your yacht to see more jewels of the Aegean. Islands glowing with whitewashed houses and blue-domed churches; origin stories of gods, oracles, and Atlantis; a canal so narrow you'll only share it with small mail boats, private yachts, and paddleboarders. Plus, enjoy a complimentary Destination Discovery Event – dinner and a concert in the moonlight in ancient Ephesus.

Please note: Bring your hat, sunscreen, sunglasses, insect repellent, and comfortable walking shoes. This tour is not wheelchair accessible and is not suitable for people with mobility issues. Order of sites visited may vary based on availability and dates.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Three nights' accommodation at Pera Palace Hotel in a Deluxe Golden Horn Room
- Breakfast at the hotel, lunch at Hamdi Restaurant
- All transfers to and from the included sites
- Two full days and one half day sightseeing in a luxury air conditioned vehicle with a professional driver and English-speaking tour guide.
- 2-hour Bosphorus cruise on a private motor boat
- Entrance fees to Byzantine Hippodrome, Topkapi Palace, Serefiye Cistern, Suleymaniye Mosque, Dolmabahce Palace, Ayasofya, and Rustem Pasa Mosque
- 8-day cruise between Istanbul and Athens

## DAY TO DAY – PRE CRUISE LAND TOUR

---



### DAY 1 – Arrive in Istanbul

Arrive in Istanbul, a city that has enchanted visitors for thousands of years. As your guide whisks you from the airport to your hotel, get a sense of this City of Seven Hills that spans two continents. Spend the rest of the day on your own exploring the neighborhoods surrounding your hotel, or just explore your hotel. Built in 1892 to host guests on the Orient Express, it's loaded with history, from where Agatha Christie supposedly penned *Murder on the Orient Express* to the Ataturk Museum in Room 101 and was also a favorite spot for the founder of Turkey's republic. Even Mata Hari stayed here.

(Includes overnight at Pera Palace Hotel.)



### DAY 2 – Istanbul Full Day of Sightseeing

Begin your discovery of Istanbul with the historic district, a UNESCO World Heritage Site crowded with centuries-old gems. See the remains of the Hippodrome, the site of chariot races and the social center of the city back when it was known as Byzantium. Decide for yourself which is more spectacular, St. Sophia, built as a Christian basilica nearly 1,500 years ago, or the Blue Mosque, commissioned by Sultan Ahmet I to outshine St. Sophia. Visit the newly restored Serefiye Cistern, one of the greatest surviving examples of Byzantine Architecture, then wrap up the day at Topkapi Palace, home to Ottoman sultans for nearly four centuries.

(Includes breakfast and overnight at Pera Palace Hotel.)



### DAY 3 – Istanbul Full Day of Sightseeing

You'll be surprised to discover just how advanced architecture was in the 16<sup>th</sup> century when you visit Suleymaniye Mosque, one of the best (and largest) examples of Ottoman Islamic architecture in Istanbul. Perfectly placed windows provide natural lighting, superb acoustics were achieved by positioning empty pots under the domes, and there's even a soot room designed to prevent damage to the mosque from candles and oil lamps. The soot was later collected and recycled into ink. From here, it's off to the Grand Bazaar to try your hand at haggling, or at least window shopping. (Without the windows.) Later, take in Istanbul's unparalleled skyline during a motor yacht cruise along the Bosphorus.

(Includes breakfast and overnight at Pera Palace Hotel.)



### DAY 4 – Istanbul Sightseeing and Embarkation

Approaching the lovely Dolmabahçe Palace on the Bosphorus with its rococo/Baroque exterior you might think you've been transported to early Europe. Sumptuous details include a 4.5-ton crystal chandelier, a gift from Queen Victoria, and handmade silk Hareke carpets. Contrast that with the classic Ottoman architecture of the intimate Rustem Pasa Mosque. The Spice Bazaar is next, an explosion of colors and aromas. Pick up some Turkish delight, dried figs, fresh-ground coffee or nuts for later. After a traditional Turkish lunch, make your way to the port and your waiting yacht.

(Includes breakfast, lunch and transfer to the yacht.)

---

Call Your Travel Advisor Today

**WINDSTAR**<sup>®</sup>  
CRUISES  
180° FROM ORDINARY<sup>®</sup>