

ROMAN & OTTOMAN ISTANBUL

19 MAY – 22 MAY 2025

FROM
£3,680
PER PERSON

Tour Leaders: Douglas Skeggs & Joanna Worsley


The Ultimate
TRAVEL COMPANY



Travel with lecturer Douglas Skeggs and Joanna Worsley, to Istanbul, once the legendary city of Constantinople, where east meets west in a profusion of mosques, churches, palaces and ancient remains, and discover the rich architectural and cultural legacy of the Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman Empires.

Staying in the luxurious Four Seasons Hotel in the Sultanahmet (Old City), this captivating tour encompasses the city's most important sights, such as the Hagia Sophia, Blue Mosque and the celebrated Topkapi Palace, but also less well-known and rarely visited ones.

We explore remarkable archaeological sites, wonder the fascinating streets of the Sultanahmet, delve into bustling and colourful bazaars and enjoy the vibrant atmosphere of this historic, yet constantly evolving city.



Hagia Sophia

4-DAY ITINERARY, DEPARTING 19 MAY 2025

19 May London / Istanbul

Suggested flight (not included in the cost of the tour) Turkish Airlines TK 1980 departing London Heathrow at 11.25 hrs arriving Istanbul at 17.15 hrs. Group transfer to the Four Seasons Hotel Istanbul at Sultanahmet, where three nights are spent. Formerly a prison, the hotel was refurbished in 1918 with Turkish neoclassical architecture and an emphasis on pointed arches, ornate tiles and dramatic domes. Facilities include a spa, a courtyard restaurant with manicured gardens and a rooftop bar. Introductory walk (time permitting) followed by dinner at a restaurant within walking distance of the hotel.

20 May Istanbul

Depart on foot for an exploration of the Roman and Byzantine sights of the city. See the monuments of the Hippodrome before viewing Istanbul's most famous sight, the Hagia Sophia, from the outside (entrance into the mosque will be in the afternoon). Walk to the impressive Yerebatan Sarayı

(Underground Cistern), which was built by the Emperor Justinian's engineers to supply the Imperial Palace with fresh water. This vast underground chamber, supported by rank upon rank of columns, many of which were salvaged from pagan temples, has been superbly restored. Continue by coach to visit the Kariye Mosque (St. Saviour in Chora) and study its exceptionally fine early 14th-century mosaics and wall-paintings.

Lunch at a local restaurant. Return by coach to the Sultanahmet area to visit the Hagia Sophia, one of the great architectural wonders of the world. Built by the Emperor Justinian in the mid-5th century AD, this vast building with its huge dome still dominates the city. After the Turks conquered Constantinople (and renamed it Istanbul) in 1453 it became a mosque and remained so until Kemal Ataturk turned it into a museum in 1933 and restored its superb mosaics. In 2020 it reverted to a mosque. Return to the hotel. Dinner under own arrangements.



Yerebatan Sarayı (Underground Cistern)



Kariye Mosque wall-paintings

21 May Istanbul

Depart on foot to visit the Ottoman sights of the city. Begin with the legendary Topkapi Sarayi, the supreme achievement of the Ottoman Turkish architects, a translation of nomadic tents into delicate stone and mosaic work. This was, for over 300 years, the palace of the Ottoman Sultans and begun by Mehmet the Conqueror in 1453. Wander through its many pavilions, halls, the great kitchens, courtyards and gardens, including the famous Harem, where the Sultan's life was passed on a cloud of indolence. See unrivalled treasures from the collections of the Ottoman Sultans including dazzling jewellery and unique porcelain. Continue to the Blue Mosque, the most splendid mosque in the city, built in the early 18th century, distinguished by six slender minarets and walls covered with blue Iznik tiles.

Lunch at a local restaurant. Visit the small but delightful Sokollu Mehmet Pasha Mosque distinguished by the height of its dome and the vivid and intense colours of the Iznik tiles on its east wall. Continue by coach to visit to

the 17th century Spice Bazaar, which sells a vast variety of goods as well as spices and visit the little Rustem Pasha Mosque, one of the hidden gems of the city, sheathed in gleaming blue and red Iznik tiles. Return to the hotel and dinner at a local restaurant.

22 May Istanbul / London

Check-out of the hotel and depart by coach to visit the beautiful Beyazid Mosque, one of the oldest in the city and located close to the site of the Forum of Theodosius. Continue on foot to the immense Grand Bazaar, a unique covered market of over 4000 shops selling carpets, leather goods, jewellery and many other items. Although there are many tourist shops it is also still the place where the ordinary citizens of Istanbul do their general shopping.

Lunch at a local restaurant. Group transfer to the airport. Suggested flight (not included in the cost of the tour) Turkish Airlines TK 1983 departing Istanbul at 18.45 hrs arriving London Heathrow at 20.50 hrs.

TOUR PRICES PER PERSON

Tour Price	£3,680
Single Supplement	£950

Please note we have not included the cost of the flights in the tour price. Please contact us for prices should you wish to book them through us.

PRICE INCLUDES

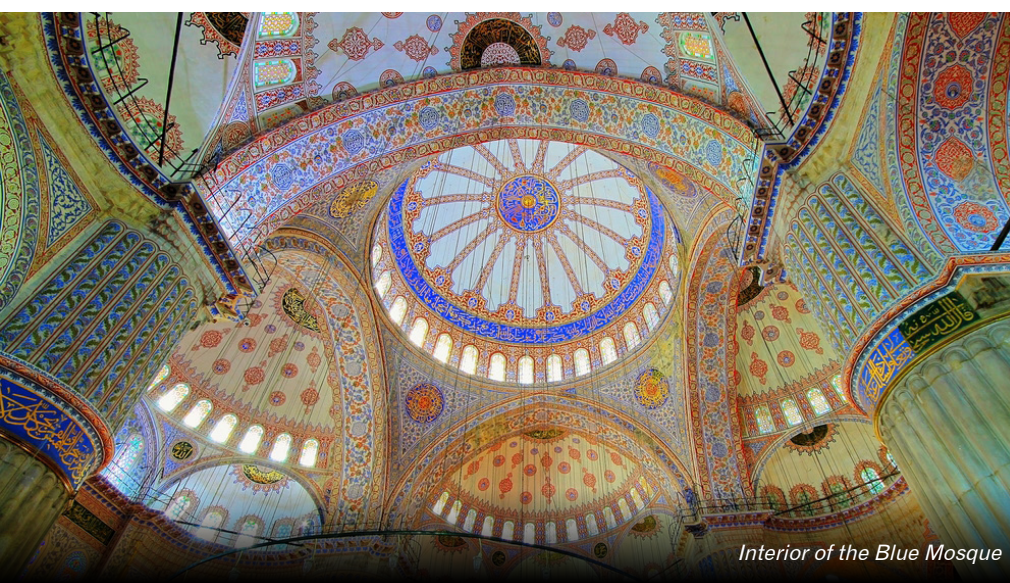
- Accommodation throughout as shown in the itinerary
- Breakfast daily; 3 lunches; 2 dinners
- Group transfers and transportation as per the itinerary
- All entrance fees, visits, excursions and transportation as per the itinerary
- Gratuities in restaurants for included meals; gratuities to guides/s; gratuities to driver/s; portorage
- Local English-speaking guide/s
- The services of your tour leader and guest lecturer throughout

PRICE EXCLUDES

- International flights
- Travel insurance
- Items of personal expenditure (e.g. telephone calls / laundry etc.)
- Government levies or taxes introduced after costing and publication of this programme on 31/05/24.



Topkapi Sarayi



Interior of the Blue Mosque



Beyazid Mosque



YOUR TOUR LEADERS



DOUGLAS SKEGGS

Douglas Skeggs read fine art at Magdalene College, Cambridge and since 1980 has been a lecturer on the history and techniques of painting. He has made several art documentaries and written and advised on many more. An accomplished painter in his own right, he has held three one-man exhibitions of his work. His biography of Monet, *River of Light: Monet's Impressions of the Seine*, sold 65,000 copies, and he has also written several novels.



JOANNA WORSLEY

After leaving school, Joanna travelled extensively through Asia working in Hong Kong and Delhi and developing a passion for India. She then spent several years in Los Angeles producing film and music videos. Being half-Greek she has a particular love for Greece too and has a house on the island of Skyros.



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