

Istanbul, Turkey

Two continents, one shore day. Istanbul stacks 2,500 years of empire — Byzantine domes, Ottoman minarets, spice-scented bazaars, and a stunning Bosphorus approach — right outside the world's first underground cruise terminal.

Docked – Galataport, Karaköy Typical call: 10-14 hrs Turkish Lira (cards widely accepted) Turkish (English common in tourist areas)

🍷 MY DAY IN PORT

Ship/Date: _____	Arrive: _____	All aboard: _____
Excursion: _____	Notes: _____	

GETTING ASHORE

Docking: Galataport, Karaköy — underground terminal, steps from the city

Best For: History, mosques, bazaars, Bosphorus views, modern art

Walk to Old City: T1 tram from Karaköy to Sultanahmet (4 stops, ~10 min)

Don't Miss: Hagia Sophia upper gallery (€25, go at 9 AM); fish sandwich at Eminönü

Getting around: Taxi ~\$5–\$15 USD to nearby areas · Rideshare Uber · Hop-on hop-off Hop-on hop-off

TOP THINGS TO DO

- **Hagia Sophia & Blue Mosque** — The two defining monuments of Istanbul face each other across Sultanahmet Square.
- **Topkapi Palace** — The Ottoman sultans' imperial palace overlooks the Bosphorus at the tip of the Old City.
- **Grand Bazaar & Spice Market** — The Grand Bazaar (Kapalıçarşı) is one of the world's oldest covered markets — 60 streets, 4,000+ shops.
- **Bosphorus Cruise** — A 90-minute public ferry from Eminönü runs up the Bosphorus past Ottoman yalı mansions, Rumeli Fortress, and the two suspension bridges — remarkable...
- **Basilica Cistern** — The 6th-century Byzantine underground cistern (Yerebatan Sarnıcı) was fully renovated and reopened in 2022 with improved lighting and accessibility.

BEST WALKS

- **Sultanahmet Heritage Walk** 2.5 km · 1.5–2 hrs · Easy (mostly flat with gentle rises) — The classic Old City loop.
- **Galata & Karaköy Waterfront Walk** 2 km · 1 hr · Easy (one uphill stretch to tower) — Walk straight off the ship along the Galataport promenade, past the Istanbul Modern Museum, to the Galata Bridge.

WEATHER · DAYLIGHT · MONEY

🌡️ CLIMATE (AVG °F · RAINY DAYS)				🇹🇷 DAYLIGHT & 💰 MONEY	
Mon	High	Low	Rain	Apr 6:25AM–7:43PM · Jun 5:31AM–8:37PM · Aug 6:14AM–8:02PM · Sep 6:45AM–7:13PM · Oct 7:15AM–6:23PM	
Apr	61°	48°	9d		
Jun	78°	65°	8d		
Aug	85°	72°	3d		
Sep	78°	66°	7d		
Oct	68°	58°	7d		

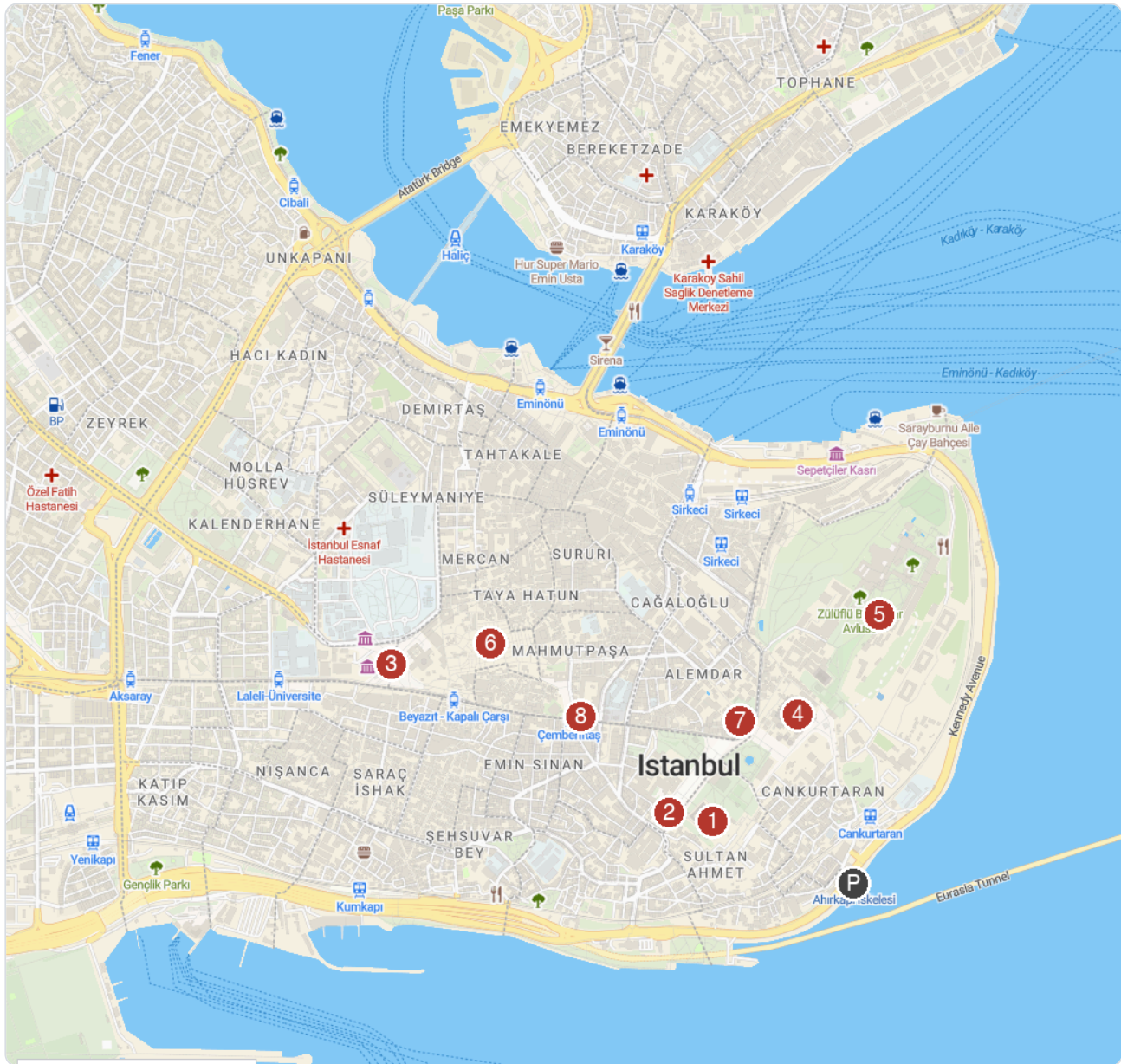
KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- Hagia Sophia — plan around prayer times: The tourist upper gallery closes on Fridays 12:30–2:30 PM for congregational prayers and briefly around other daily prayer times. Arrive by 9 AM for shortest queues; buy tickets at the dedicated booth outside. Women must cover hair — bring your own scarf.
- Use Turkish Lira when you can — merchants accepting euros or USD apply poor exchange rates. ATMs at Galataport dispense lira; avoid currency exchange booths on the pier. Museum entry fees are priced in TL for foreigners (except Hagia Sophia's €25).
- T1 tram = your best transport: Karaköy stop is 2 minutes from the terminal exit. 4 stops to Sultanahmet (~10 min), 6 stops to Grand Bazaar (Beyazit). Load an Istanbulkart at the Biletmatik machine or tap contactless. Taxis are fine but traffic can be brutal.
- Grand Bazaar closes Sundays and on public holidays — check your call date. The Spice Bazaar also closes Sundays. If your ship calls on a Sunday, the waterfront Galataport shops, Istanbul Modern, and Bosphorus ferries are still open.
- Eat a fish sandwich: The balık ekmek (grilled mackerel in bread) boats at Eminönü — 1 tram stop from Galataport — are an unmissable Istanbul institution. Under \$3, freshly grilled, eaten standing on the waterfront. Also try a simit (sesame bread ring) from any street cart.
- Back to ship: Galataport is clearly signed throughout Karaköy. From Sultanahmet, tram takes 10 min back to Karaköy. For evening departures, the Bosphorus lit at dusk from the tram or deck is genuinely spectacular — be on deck for sail-out.

Istanbul, Turkey — Port Map

cruiseports.org

Red = walkable sights · Amber = excursions farther out · P = cruise terminal. Numbers match the order you'd typically visit.



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|---------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|---|
| 1 The Blue Mosque | Iconic Ottoman mosque known for its blue tiles and six minarets. | 2 Serpent Column | Ancient Greek bronze column from Delphi, now in Hippodrome. |
| 3 Beyazit Square | Historic public square next to Istanbul University's main gate. | 4 Hagia Sophia Grand Mosque | Historic Byzantine church, then mosque, now a grand mosque again. |
| 5 Topkapi Palace Museum | Former Ottoman sultans' imperial residence, now a vast museum. | 6 Grand Bazaar | Historic, sprawling covered market for shopping and souvenirs. |
| 7 Basilica Cistern | Ancient underground Byzantine water reservoir with stunning columns. | 8 Cemberlitas Hammam | Historic 16th-century Ottoman Turkish bathhouse, still operating today. |
| P Cruise port / terminal | | | |