



ISTANBUL

WITH DOUGLAS SKEGGS

22 – 26 October 2009 • 5 Days / 4 Nights from £1,395

Topkapi Palace • Boat Trip on the Bosphorous • Blue Mosque

Istanbul, capital of the great Ottoman Empire, enjoyed more than four centuries of imperial patronage, resulting in one of the most famous skylines in the world. Its mosques and palaces are complemented by exquisite tile decoration, fine woodwork and luxurious furnishings.

The Topkapi Palace, home to the sultans and their families, remains a treasure house filled with silk textiles, gem-encrusted tableware,

Chinese porcelains, Iznik pottery and illuminated manuscripts. This magnificent monument, together with the Blue Mosque and

Aghia Sophia, represents a fusion of cultures at the nexus of East and West.

Day 1 To Istanbul: Fly from London to Istanbul with British Airways and transfer to the Hotel Eresin Crown for 4 nights. Early evening private boat trip down the Bosphorous, the straits separating Europe and Asia. See the Dolmabahce and Beylerbeyi Palaces, Ottoman summer mansions, Ortakoy mosque, the Rumeli Fortress and Bosphorus Bridge. (D)

Day 2 Istanbul: Morning exploration of the Ottoman buildings around the Hippodrome, and Aghia Sophia. At more than 1,400 years old, Aghia Sophia is a testament to the sophistication of the 6th century Byzantine capital. Visit the Library of Sultan Mahmud I and the Tombs of Sultan Selim II, Murad III and Mehmet III. Continue to Yerebetan Saray or the Basilica Cistern, a beautiful example of Byzantine engineering. Afternoon visit to the Turkish Islamic Arts Museum, the Spice Market and the hidden mosque. Built for Süleyman's vizier, Rustem Pasha, the mosque is notable for its numerous windows and has one of the finest interiors in Istanbul, covered in Iznik tiles of the very highest quality. (B)

Day 3 Istanbul: Morning visit to Sultanahmet Camii. One of the most famous religious buildings in the world, the Blue Mosque takes its name from the colour of the Iznik tilework decorating its interior. Continue to the Topkapi Palace, built by Mehmet II between 1459 and 1465, shortly after his conquest of Constantinople, and a stunning monument to the power of the Ottoman Sultans. The Harem here is a labyrinth of exquisite tiled rooms, and the Treasury contains an extensive collection of glittering jewels. Afternoon visit to the Archaeological Museum, containing one of the world's richest collections of classical artifacts and treasures from the pre-classical world. Finally, visit the Pera Museum and the winding streets of Cukurcuma, the antiques district. (B)



Blue Mosque, Istanbul

Day 4 Istanbul: Morning visit to the Grand Bazaar, a unique covered market, and the Beyazit Mosque, the oldest surviving Imperial mosque. See Fethiye Camii, the former Pammakaritos Orthodox Church that features exquisite 14th century mosaics, and continue to St.Saviour in Chora (Kariye Cami), containing some of the finest Byzantine mosaics and frescos. Drive

to the Eyup District, Istanbul's first Ottoman Turkish settlement. (B, D)

Day 5 To London: Morning at leisure. Transfer to the airport and fly to London Heathrow. (B)

Note: If you wish to extend your stay in Istanbul, please contact Cox & Kings for details.

TOUR CODE: TIS

PRICE: £1,395

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: £245

Price Includes: Return flights from London Heathrow with British Airways; accommodation in a 4 star hotel; transfers; sightseeing; taxes; services of a local Tour Manager. Meal Basis: B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner.