

The Queen of Cities

A November departure, opened for a small group

Every other city has a history. This one has two, and they are still arguing.

25–28 NOVEMBER 2026 · 4 DAYS · 3 NIGHTS · MINIMUM 6, MAXIMUM 14 GUESTS

REFERENCE	DATES	HOTEL	PRICE
TG-QC-NOV-2026	Wed 25 – Sat 28 Nov 2026	Riva Hotel, İstanbul · 3 nights, breakfast	\$1,399 per person

This departure is for travellers who already hold a valid visa for Türkiye, or who need none. There is not enough time to obtain one before 25 November. Confirm your place by **Friday 30 October** and complete your transfer by **Friday 6 November 2026**.

Why these four days. The major sites of İstanbul close on different days and they do not coordinate: Topkapı on Tuesdays, Dolmabahçe and the other imperial palaces on Mondays, the Grand Bazaar on Sundays. A four-day programme that begins on the wrong weekday cannot include everything. These particular four days are the one window in late November where **nothing in this programme falls on its closing day**. We work that out before we write a single line of the itinerary.

Day by day

- Day 1** Arrival, and the welcome dinner **WEDNESDAY 25 NOVEMBER**

Met in the arrivals hall at **İstanbul Airport** and taken to the hotel by private vehicle. The rest of the afternoon is yours, to sleep or to walk — the hotel is central and the old city is on foot from the door. In the evening the **welcome dinner**, where you meet your English-speaking guide and the rest of the group before the programme proper begins.

OVERNIGHT **İSTANBUL** · WELCOME DINNER INCLUDED
- Day 2** The imperial core — both of them, on one hill **THURSDAY 26 NOVEMBER**

An early start, because this is the day that needs the light. **Hagia Sophia**: for nine hundred years the largest church in Christendom, then a mosque, then a museum, and a mosque again. Then **Topkapı Palace**, taken seriously rather than walked past — the courtyards, the treasury, the **Harem**, and the terrace where the Bosphorus meets the Sea of Marmara and you can see why somebody put a capital here. After lunch the **Basilica Cistern**, Justinian's underground water chamber, three hundred and thirty-six columns in the dark. The afternoon closes above ground on the **Hippodrome** and in the **Blue Mosque**.

OVERNIGHT **İSTANBUL** · HAGIA SOPHIA · TOPKAPI & HAREM · BASILICA CISTERN
- Day 3** The last empire, and the hill the Genoese built **FRIDAY 27 NOVEMBER**

Morning at **Dolmabahçe Palace**, where the Ottomans moved when the old palace on the hill began to look like the past: European rooms, a crystal staircase, a four-and-a-half tonne chandelier, and the clock in the room where Atatürk died, still stopped at five past nine. The afternoon crosses the Golden Horn to **Karaköy** and up to the **Galata Tower**, held by Genoese merchants as a trading colony while the empire went on around them — and the view from the top, which everybody photographs and which still deserves it.

OVERNIGHT **İSTANBUL** · DOLMABAĞÇE PALACE · GALATA TOWER
- Day 4** What the city actually sells, and then home **SATURDAY 28 NOVEMBER**

The last morning is the commercial city rather than the imperial one. The **Grand Bazaar**, trading on the same ground since the fifteenth century and still a working market rather than a monument; then the **Spice Bazaar**, where the smell arrives before the stalls do. A last stop at the **Süleymaniye Mosque**, Sinan's own favourite and the quietest great building in the city, before the private transfer to **İstanbul Airport**.

GRAND BAZAAR · SPICE BAZAAR · SÜLEYMANIYE · PRIVATE AIRPORT TRANSFER

The price

\$1,399 per person

Two people sharing a room · minimum 6 guests, maximum 14 · confirm by Friday 30 October 2026

WHO	RATE	PRICE
Adult, two sharing a room	full	\$1,399
Child aged 12 and over	full	\$1,399
Child aged 9 to 11	75%	\$1,050
Child aged 3 to 8	50%	\$700
Child under 3	free	—

The single supplement of \$175 applies to the whole stay, not per night. Children's rates apply when the child shares a room with two adults. Reduced-rate children do not count towards the minimum of six; the departure needs six guests paying the full adult rate before it runs.

What the price includes

- **Three nights** at the Riva Hotel, İstanbul, **with breakfast**
- The **welcome dinner** on the first evening
- A **professional licensed English-speaking guide** with the group throughout
- A **private air-conditioned vehicle with driver** throughout
- **All entrance fees** for the places named above: Hagia Sophia, Topkapı Palace and the Harem, the Basilica Cistern, Dolmabahçe Palace, the Galata Tower
- **Airport transfers** on arrival and departure, by private vehicle
- Someone reachable in Türkiye for the whole of your stay

What it does not include

- **International flights** — we can quote these separately
- **Visa or e-visa fees** — paid to the government directly
- **Travel insurance** — we advise it, but we do not sell it
- **Lunches** and all dinners other than the welcome dinner
- **Drinks**, tips and personal spending
- The **private Bosphorus cruise**, which is offered as an option during the trip and priced separately — you decide once you are here
- **Anything not written above.** If a line does not appear in this programme, it is not in the price — ask us and we will add it and re-quote

Booking

Two dates, and they are close together.

Friday 30 October 2026 — confirm your place. Write to us with the names of everyone travelling, exactly as they appear in the passports, and tell us whether you want a twin, a double or a single room. We send you our bank details and a booking confirmation the same day.

Friday 6 November 2026 — your transfer must have reached our account. We ask for the **full amount by bank transfer** rather than a deposit. That is not how we usually work, but there are under four weeks between that date and the departure, and the hotel rooms for these dates are held on a non-refundable rate.

The departure runs with a minimum of six guests at the full adult rate and takes a maximum of fourteen. Places are confirmed in the order the transfers arrive.

A visa in hand is a condition of joining this departure. Whether you need one for Türkiye depends on the nationality written in your passport, not on where you live. Gulf nationals — Saudi, Emirati, Kuwaiti, Qatari, Bahraini and Omani — need no visa for a tourist stay. Most other passports do, and for several of them the e-Visa is available only to holders of a valid Schengen, USA, UK or Ireland visa or residence permit; otherwise the application goes to a Turkish consulate. Check your own case at www.mfa.gov.tr and www.evisa.gov.tr. We are a travel agency and do not handle visa applications. If you do need a visa and do not already hold one, there is not enough time before 25 November — write to us anyway and we will put you on the January or February departures instead.

A word about the season, honestly. Late November gives İstanbul about nine and three quarter hours of daylight, and the sun is down by a quarter to five. That is why the great interiors sit in the mornings in this programme and the covered ground — the cistern, the bazaars — sits in the afternoons. Expect four to eleven degrees by day and a real chance of rain; bring a coat that handles wind rather than an umbrella, because the wind takes umbrellas. What you get in exchange is the thing no amount of money buys in July: Topkapı's courtyards nearly empty, and a mosque with four people in it instead of forty.

Times. The order of each day is fixed; clock times are set against the group's arrival and departure flights once those are booked, and your guide confirms the following day's start time with you each evening.