

© Credits to the photographer per ©

GOOD TRAVEL EXPERIENCE GUIDE

ISTANBUL



SELECTION OF AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCES WITH POSITIVE LOCAL IMPACT



The Good Travel Alliance is a collective of destinations, tourism boards, tour operators, and travel agents working together to develop experiences with local impact: activities, attractions, events and trails.

We recognise them as Good Travel Experiences if they generate local benefits for local people (like jobs and social empowerment), whilst minimizing negative impacts on climate, environment, nature and culture.

FORCE FOR GOOD

This Guide includes some of the 110 **Good Travel Experiences** that were so far selected by the Good Travel Institute, an offspring of Green Destinations. Our independent experts verified whether these experiences indeed have positive local impact.

This Good Travel Experience Guide will be updated every few months, with an ever increasing number of experiences. All are directly bookable with the local provider.

Would you like to see your experience included?

Contact us at alliance@greendestinations.org.

ISTANBUL 

www.goodtravel.guide

IMPORTANT NOTICE:
"The Good Travel Alliance (GTA) makes no representation, warranty or guarantee regarding the information provided in this Guide, and accepts no liability for the same."



TABLE OF CONTENTS

ISTANBUL

Welcome to Istanbul!

Experience Istanbul with Positive Local Impact

City Walks – Living Streets

1. Living Streets of Istanbul - Kurtuluş Caddesi
2. Living Streets of Istanbul - Kuzguncuk İcadiye Caddesi
3. Exploring The Golden Horn
4. Walking Tour of Şişli
5. Belle Époque Apartments & Memory Walk

Unspoilt Istanbul - Neighborhoods

6. Eyüp
7. Süleymaniye
8. Üsküdar
9. Yeldeğirmeni

Community Experience & Cultural Immersion

10. Markets, Trade Routes & Culinary Hotspots
11. Sinan the Great's Architectural Legacy
12. Arts & Crafts
13. A Day In Ovacık Village

Nature & Culture Hikes - Active Outdoors

14. The Prince Islands - Büyükkada
15. The Prince Islands - Heybeliada
16. The Prince Islands - Burgazada
17. The Prince Islands - Kınalıada
18. Aydos Biodiversity Walk: Protecting an Endemic Snowdrop

Hands-on Workshops

19. Crafts in Çukurcuma: Clay, Context, and Continuity
20. From Manuscript to Water: Ebru and the Art of Flow
21. Great Palace Mosaics Museum & Mosaic Workshop
22. Woodcraft and Urban Memory in Istanbul
23. Sacred Water & Sacred Food – Üsküdar Renewal Experience

Practical Information

Where to stay?

How to prepare your visit to Istanbul?

About this Guide

**GOOD TRAVEL
EXPERIENCE GUIDE**

[www:// !\[\]\(aff7c69c44a5e015f18c35867ef3f5c3_img.jpg\) www.goodtravel.guide/istanbul](http://www.goodtravel.guide/istanbul)

ISTANBUL

Welcome to Istanbul

*“If the Earth were a single state,
Istanbul would be its capital.”*

Napoleon Bonaparte

Istanbul is a city of extraordinary layers — where history, creativity, and daily life meet across neighborhoods, shores, and communities.

As Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, we are guided by a long-term vision of a Fair, Green and Creative Istanbul. This means working toward a city that is more livable, more balanced, and more inclusive — for residents and visitors alike.

In tourism, this vision translates into a commitment to sustainability, cultural vitality, and shared heritage. We believe that Istanbul’s richness is not confined to a few iconic sites, but lives throughout the city — in its local markets, artistic communities, waterfront districts, historic streets, and evolving neighborhoods.

Through our collaboration with the Good Travel Alliance, we aim to support a form of tourism that strengthens local life, protects cultural and natural heritage, and encourages meaningful experiences for travelers.

*It is our pleasure to welcome you to Istanbul.
We invite you to explore thoughtfully, discover widely, and experience the city with curiosity and care.*

*Hüseyin Gazi Coşan
Director of Tourism
Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality*

**GOOD TRAVEL
EXPERIENCE GUIDE**

www.goodtravel.guide

ISTANBUL

Experience Istanbul with Positive Local Impact

Istanbul is not a city you simply visit as an average city trip. This is a city where you take the time to experience something else every hour of day and night - in the rhythm of ferries crossing the Bosphorus, in neighborhood markets at dawn, in the quiet rituals of tea houses, artisans' workshops, and waterfront life.

This is not a typical travel guide. This Good Travel Experience Guide is the first of its kind, designed for travelers who seek more than landmarks and photographs. It is for those who value authentic encounters, slower exploration, and experiences that positively contribute to local communities.

Inside, you will find two complementary ways to discover Istanbul:

Guided Walks and Hosted Experiences

Small-scale, thoughtfully designed experiences led by tour guides of Hike'n Sail Türkiye, a tour operator that is certified for sustainability and independently assessed under the Good Travel Alliance framework. These guided experiences connect you with neighborhoods, culinary traditions, artisans, and local voices — always with respect, fairness, and environmental responsibility at their core.

Self-Guided Good Travel Recommendations

A carefully curated selection of locally rooted places you can explore independently — family-run eateries, traditional hamams, markets, artisan workshops, hidden streets, ferry routes, island escapes, and cultural spaces.

These are not tours. They are trusted recommendations that help you step beyond mass tourism and into the living city.

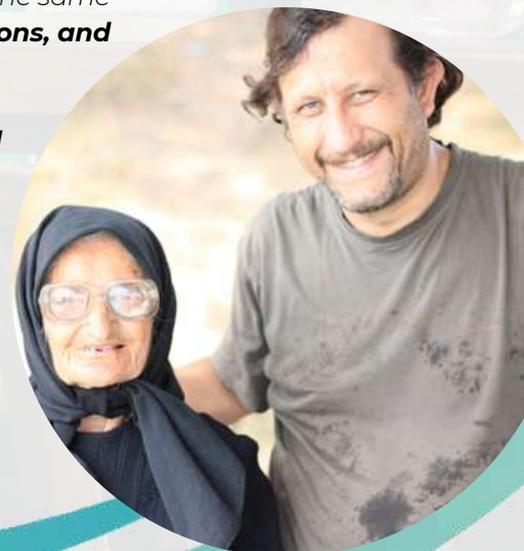
*Whether guided or self-directed, every entry in this guide shares the same purpose: **to strengthen local livelihoods, preserve living traditions, and encourage meaningful, responsible travel in Istanbul.***

I truly hope you will experience Istanbul, discover its soul, and fall in love. 

*Alper Ertubey,
Hike'nSail, Istanbul
Hike'n Sail Türkiye*

**GOOD TRAVEL
EXPERIENCE GUIDE**

www.goodtravel.guide



ISTANBUL

Experience Istanbul with Positive Local Impact



Whether guided or self-directed, every entry in this guide shares the same purpose: to strengthen local livelihoods, preserve living traditions, and encourage meaningful, responsible travel in Istanbul.

I truly hope you will experience Istanbul, discover its soul, and fall in love. 



Alper Ertubey,
Hike'nSail, Istanbul



For the location of all Good Travel Experiences, see the web version in <https://goodtravel.guide/istanbul>.



**GOOD TRAVEL
EXPERIENCE GUIDE**

www.goodtravel.guide

ISTANBUL

City Walks - Living Streets



For the location of all Good Travel Experiences, see the web version in <https://goodtravel.guide/istanbul>.



**GOOD TRAVEL
EXPERIENCE GUIDE**

www.goodtravel.guide

LIVING STREETS: KURTULUŞ CADDESİ

MULTICULTURAL HERITAGE AND EVERYDAY LIFE

Explore Kurtuluş Caddesi, one of Istanbul's most authentic living streets, where daily life reflects the city's multicultural fabric. This guided walk passes neighborhood bakeries, delicatessens, churches, synagogues, and vibrant local businesses that shape the district's character.

 CULTURE EXPERIENCE

GOODTRAVEL
ALLIANCE 

ISTANBUL, TURKIYE

Along the way, discover how Greek, Armenian, Jewish, and Muslim communities influenced the area's culinary traditions and architecture. Based on respectful observation and storytelling, the experience directly supports family-run establishments while offering insight into coexistence, migration, and living urban heritage.



GOOD TO KNOW

Duration: 4 Hrs

Type of activity: Urban walk, cultural exploration

Accessibility information available: Yes

RECOGNITIONS

 GTE SCAN: **82%**



Making contributions to the local economy



Empowering local people or communities

CONTACT US

<https://hikeandsail.com/>

operasyon@hikeandsail.com

gokhan@hikeandsail.com

+90 5322640429 / +90 5555853781



LIVING STREETS: KUZGUNCUK İCADIYE CADDESİ

VILLAGE-SCALE CHARM AND LAYERED IDENTITY

Arrive by ferry to Kuzguncuk and stroll along İcadiye Caddesi, a neighborhood where wooden houses, synagogues, churches, and mosques coexist within a compact urban landscape. This slow-paced walk highlights the district's intimate scale and strong sense of community.

CULTURE EXPERIENCE

GOODTRAVEL
ALLIANCE 

ISTANBUL, TURKIYE

Independent bookstores, traditional bakeries, and artisan cafés reveal everyday rhythms shaped by diversity and memory. Focused on coexistence and respectful cultural exploration, the experience offers a human-scale perspective of Istanbul beyond its monumental landmarks.



GOOD TO KNOW

Duration: 4 Hrs

Type of activity: Urban walk, cultural exploration

Accessibility information available: Yes



RECOGNITIONS

 GTE SCAN: **82%**



Making contributions to the local economy



Empowering local people or communities



CONTACT US

<https://hikeandsail.com/>

operasyon@hikeandsail.com

gokhan@hikeandsail.com

+90 5322640429 / +90 5555853781



EXPLORING THE GOLDEN HORN

HERITAGE, MOSAICS, AND AUTHENTIC LIFE ALONG ISTANBUL'S HISTORIC WATERFRONT

The Golden Horn's neighborhoods — Balat, Fener, and Eyüp — are living mosaics of Istanbul's multicultural past and vibrant present. Narrow streets lined with colorful Ottoman houses, Byzantine ruins, churches, synagogues, mosques, and historic landmarks like the Chora Church reflect centuries of intertwined heritage.

CULTURE EXPERIENCE



ISTANBUL, TURKIYE

This walking tour invites travelers to explore authentic markets, artisan workshops, and traditional cafés while taking in scenic views of the Golden Horn inlet. Rich in history, culture, and local life, the route is ideal for those seeking a genuine connection to Istanbul's diverse traditions and communities.



GOOD TO KNOW

Duration: 6 Hrs

Type of activity: Walking Tour

Accessibility information available: No



RECOGNITIONS

 GTE SCAN: **88%**



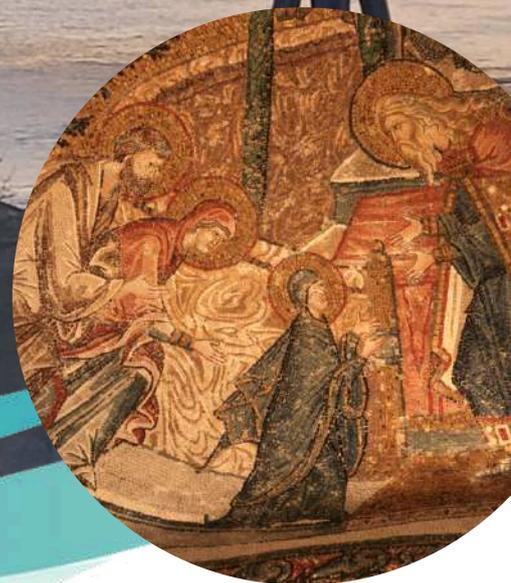
CONTACT US

<https://hikeandsail.com/>

operasyon@hikeandsail.com

gokhan@hikeandsail.com

+90 5322640429 / +90 5555853781



WALKING TOUR OF ŞİŞLİ

DISCOVER ISTANBUL'S FIRST GREEN DESTINATIONS CERTIFIED MUNICIPALITY

Explore Şişli, a lively district of Istanbul where history meets sustainability. Recognized as Türkiye's first municipality awarded by Green Destinations, Şişli showcases eco-conscious urban planning and cultural vibrancy.

 CULTURE EXPERIENCE

GOODTRAVEL
ALLIANCE 

ISTANBUL, TURKIYE

This guided walking tour takes visitors through historical landmarks, community-led green initiatives, and inviting public spaces, offering a deeper look into how modern sustainability blends with the district's heritage and daily life.



GOOD TO KNOW

Duration: 6 Hrs

Type of activity: Walking Tour

Accessibility information available: N/A



RECOGNITIONS

 GTE SCAN: **88%**



CONTACT US

<https://hikeandsail.com/>

operasyon@hikeandsail.com

gokhan@hikeandsail.com

+90 5322640429 / +90 5555853781



BELLE ÉPOQUE ARCHITECTURE WALK

ART NOUVEAU HERITAGE IN BEYOĞLU

Explore the architectural legacy of late Ottoman Belle Époque apartments in Beyoğlu on this immersive urban walk. Elegant façades and refined details reveal a period shaped by multicultural residents, artistic exchange, and cosmopolitan life.

 CULTURE EXPERIENCE

GOODTRAVEL
ALLIANCE 

ISTANBUL, TURKIYE

Through guided storytelling and street-level observation, the experience examines urban transformation while highlighting enduring heritage elements that continue to define the district. Designed for cultural explorers, this walk offers a thoughtful encounter with memory, architecture, and Istanbul's layered identity.



GOOD TO KNOW

Duration: 4 Hrs

Type of activity: Urban walk, cultural exploration

Accessibility information available: Yes

RECOGNITIONS

 GTE SCAN: **81%**



Making contributions to the local economy



Empowering local people or communities

CONTACT US

<https://hikeandsail.com/>

operasyon@hikeandsail.com

gokhan@hikeandsail.com

+90 5322640429 / +90 5555853781



ISTANBUL

Istanbul Unfiltered: The Unspoilt Neighbourhood Series

*Crafted for the traveller who understands that true luxury lies in the authentic. The **Unspoilt Neighbourhood Series** leaves the tourist trail behind to immerse you in the real city—where the ferries dictate the rhythm of the day and tradition breathes life into every corner.*

Here, luxury is the privilege of living at a different pace. The experience unfolds through:

- *Rooted flavours: Follow the scent of freshly roasted beans, savour century-old recipes in a local esnaf lokantası, and taste the seasonal delicacies that only true Istanbulites know.*
- *Unpretentious wellbeing: Pause time in a neighbourhood hamam, entirely removed from the crowds, indulging in a ritual that remains an intimate pillar of daily culture.*
- *The art of the bespoke: Discover the magic behind the counter. From conversing with a tailor or woodworker in their modest ateliers, to browsing independent spice sellers and bookshops where quality and human connection matter far more than window dressing.*

Slow down and awaken your senses.

By walking these lesser-trodden streets, you not only discover the purest essence of Istanbul, but you also help sustain the families and artisans who keep its vibrant soul alive.

For the location of all Good Travel Experiences, see the web version in <https://goodtravel.guide/istanbul>.



**GOOD TRAVEL
EXPERIENCE GUIDE**

www.goodtravel.guide

UNSPOILT ISTANBUL — EYÜP

SACRED LANDSCAPES AND LIVING TRADITION

Experience Eyüp as a living spiritual and cultural landscape. Arriving by public transport, this guided walk explores the Eyüp Sultan Mosque and its surrounding historic cemeteries, interpreting symbolism, calligraphy, and layered memory.

 CULTURE EXPERIENCE

GOODTRAVEL
ALLIANCE 

ISTANBUL, TURKIYE

The journey continues with a hands-on Ebru marbling workshop, connecting artistic expression with spiritual philosophy. With optional panoramic views over the Golden Horn, this experience offers a reflective encounter with faith, heritage, and continuity.



GOOD TO KNOW

Duration: 5 Hrs

Type of activity: Urban walk, cultural exploration

Accessibility information available: Yes

RECOGNITIONS

 GTE SCAN: **82%**



Making contributions to the local economy



Empowering local people or communities

CONTACT US

<https://hikeandsail.com/>

operasyon@hikeandsail.com

gokhan@hikeandsail.com

+90 5322640429 / +90 5555853781



UNSPOILT ISTANBUL — SÜLEYMANIYE

IMPERIAL ARCHITECTURE AND NEIGHBORHOOD CONTINUITY

Discover Süleymaniye, where monumental Ottoman design meets lived tradition. The walk begins at the Süleymaniye Mosque complex, exploring its architectural mastery, külliye system, and sweeping views over the Golden Horn.

 CULTURE EXPERIENCE

GOODTRAVEL
ALLIANCE 

ISTANBUL, TURKIYE

Beyond the grand monument, surrounding streets reveal workshops, tea houses, and small traders who sustain neighborhood life. This walking experience connects imperial heritage with human-scale continuity, offering cultural depth away from crowded historic routes.



GOOD TO KNOW

Duration: 5 Hrs

Type of activity: Urban walk, cultural exploration

Accessibility information available: Yes



RECOGNITIONS

 GTE SCAN: **89%**



Making contributions to the local economy



Empowering local people or communities



CONTACT US

<https://hikeandsail.com/>

operasyon@hikeandsail.com

gokhan@hikeandsail.com

+90 5322640429 / +90 5555853781



UNSPOILT ISTANBUL — ÜSKÜDAR

WATERFRONT HERITAGE AND CULINARY CULTURE

Arrive in Üsküdar by ferry and explore a district where architecture, devotion, and everyday life intertwine. This guided walk passes historic mosques, lively market streets, and traditional waterfront spaces that shape the neighborhood's identity.

 CULTURE EXPERIENCE

GOODTRAVEL
ALLIANCE 

ISTANBUL, TURKIYE

Along the way, taste seasonal specialties from local bakeries and vendors, discovering how food reflects memory and community. Blending culture and cuisine, the experience offers an authentic glimpse into Istanbul's daily rhythms.



CONTACT US

<https://hikeandsail.com/>

operasyon@hikeandsail.com

gokhan@hikeandsail.com

+90 5322640429 / +90 5555853781

GOOD TO KNOW

Duration: 5 Hrs

Type of activity: Urban walk, cultural exploration

Accessibility information available: Yes

RECOGNITIONS

 GTE SCAN: **82%**



Making contributions to the local economy



Empowering local people or communities



UNSPOILT ISTANBUL — YELDEĞİRMENİ

CREATIVE HERITAGE AND WATERFRONT LIFE IN KADIKÖY

Reach Yeldeğirmeni by ferry and explore one of Istanbul's most dynamic residential districts. This guided urban walk reveals Art Nouveau façades, early reinforced concrete buildings, and layers of architectural history shaped by waterfront life.



CULTURE EXPERIENCE

GOODTRAVEL
ALLIANCE

ISTANBUL, TURKIYE

As you walk through streets marked by creative regeneration, discover independent studios, contemporary street art, and neighborhood cafés that preserve a strong sense of community. Blending architecture, creativity, and local identity, this experience offers a thoughtful alternative to mass tourism in the city.



CONTACT US

<https://hikeandsail.com/>

operasyon@hikeandsail.com

gokhan@hikeandsail.com

+90 5322640429 / +90 5555853781



GOOD TO KNOW

Duration: 5 Hrs

Type of activity: Urban walk, cultural exploration

Accessibility information available: Yes

RECOGNITIONS



GTE SCAN: **88%**



Making contributions
to the local economy



Empowering local
people or communities



ISTANBUL

Community Experience & Cultural Immersion



For the location of all Good Travel Experiences, see the web version in <https://goodtravel.guide/istanbul>.



GOOD TRAVEL EXPERIENCE GUIDE

www.goodtravel.guide

MARKETS & TRADE ROUTES

MULTICULTURAL FOOD HERITAGE IN ISTANBUL'S HISTORIC MARKETS

Trace Istanbul's flavors back to the trade routes that shaped them on this guided market walk through historic streets influenced by maritime and overland commerce. Discover how migration, exchange, and diverse communities built the city's rich and layered food culture.

 CULTURE EXPERIENCE

GOODTRAVEL
ALLIANCE 

ISTANBUL, TURKIYE

Curated tastings are paid directly to small vendors, ensuring authentic encounters without commission-based stops. Along the way, stories of supply chains, seasonality, and street-level social life transform a simple market visit into a meaningful cultural experience—ideal for food lovers seeking depth behind every bite.



CONTACT US

<https://hikeandsail.com/>

operasyon@hikeandsail.com
gokhan@hikeandsail.com

+90 5322640429 / +90 5555853781

GOOD TO KNOW

Duration: 6 Hrs

Type of activity: Gastronomy, cultural exploration

Accessibility information available: Yes

RECOGNITIONS GTE SCAN: 78%



Making contributions to the local economy



Empowering local people or communities



SINAN THE GREAT'S ARCHITECTURAL LEGACY

OTTOMAN MOSQUE ARCHITECTURE BEYOND THE MAIN ROUTES

Explore the architectural genius of Mimar Sinan through a sustainable, public-transport-based journey across Istanbul. Visiting selected mosques from different phases of his career, this experience reveals his mastery of light, geometry, proportion, and structural innovation.

 CULTURE EXPERIENCE

GOODTRAVEL
ALLIANCE 

ISTANBUL, TURKIYE

Through guided interpretation, participants gain insight into how engineering and aesthetics shaped some of the most influential religious spaces of the Ottoman world.

Designed as a responsible urban exploration, the experience supports respectful visitation of living mosques while offering cultural depth beyond conventional sightseeing routes.



CONTACT US

<https://hikeandsail.com/>

operasyon@hikeandsail.com

gokhan@hikeandsail.com

+90 5322640429 / +90 5555853781

GOOD TO KNOW

Duration: 5 Hrs

Type of activity: Architecture, cultural exploration

Accessibility information available: Yes

RECOGNITIONS

 GTE SCAN: **82%**



Making contributions to the local economy



Empowering local people or communities



ARTS & CRAFTS

AUTHENTIC SHOPPING AND ARTISAN TRADITIONS IN ISTANBUL'S OLD CITY

Discover Istanbul's Old City through a tour that highlights authentic, locally made arts and crafts. Designed for travelers seeking genuine pieces at fair prices, this experience goes beyond the usual shopping stops.

 CULTURE EXPERIENCE

GOODTRAVEL
ALLIANCE 

ISTANBUL, TURKIYE

Visitors explore artisan hubs like the Bazaar of Istanbul Arts and TKHV (Foundation for the Promotion of Turkish Culture), where traditional crafts such as calligraphy, marbling, miniatures, ceramics, embroidery, and doll-making come to life. The journey also includes the famous Grand Bazaar and Nur-u Osmaniye district, renowned for exquisite rugs and jewelry.



GOOD TO KNOW

Duration: 6 Hrs

Type of activity: Shopping Tour

Accessibility information available: N/A

RECOGNITIONS



GTE SCAN: **88%**



Making contributions to the local economy



Empowering local people or communities

CONTACT US

<https://hikeandsail.com/>

operasyon@hikeandsail.com

gokhan@hikeandsail.com

+90 5322640429 / +90 5555853781



A DAY IN OVACIK VILLAGE

COMMUNITY-BASED CULTURAL AND NATURE EXPERIENCE IN OVACIK VILLAGE

Spend a day in Ovacik Village, where oak forests, fresh air, and local traditions create a peaceful escape into rural life. This experience blends nature, culture, and sustainability in a way that feels both authentic and restorative.

  NATURE & CULTURE EXPERIENCE

GOODTRAVEL
ALLIANCE 

ISTANBUL, TURKIYE

Guided by locals, visitors enjoy light hikes, traditional food workshops, and farm-to-table meals that highlight village flavors and seasonal produce. Guests can learn hands-on cooking techniques like pasta making, jam preserving, and pickling, while connecting with villagers who share their crafts and way of life. Perfect for families, couples, or small groups, the day offers a meaningful balance of outdoor exploration, cultural immersion, and slow-travel tranquility in one of Türkiye's most scenic rural landscapes.



CONTACT US

<https://hikeandsail.com/>

operasyon@hikeandsail.com

gokhan@hikeandsail.com

+90 5322640429 / +90 5555853781



GOOD TO KNOW

Duration: 10 Hrs

Type of activity: Community-Based

Accessibility information available: Yes



RECOGNITIONS

 GTE SCAN: **89%**



Making contributions to the local economy

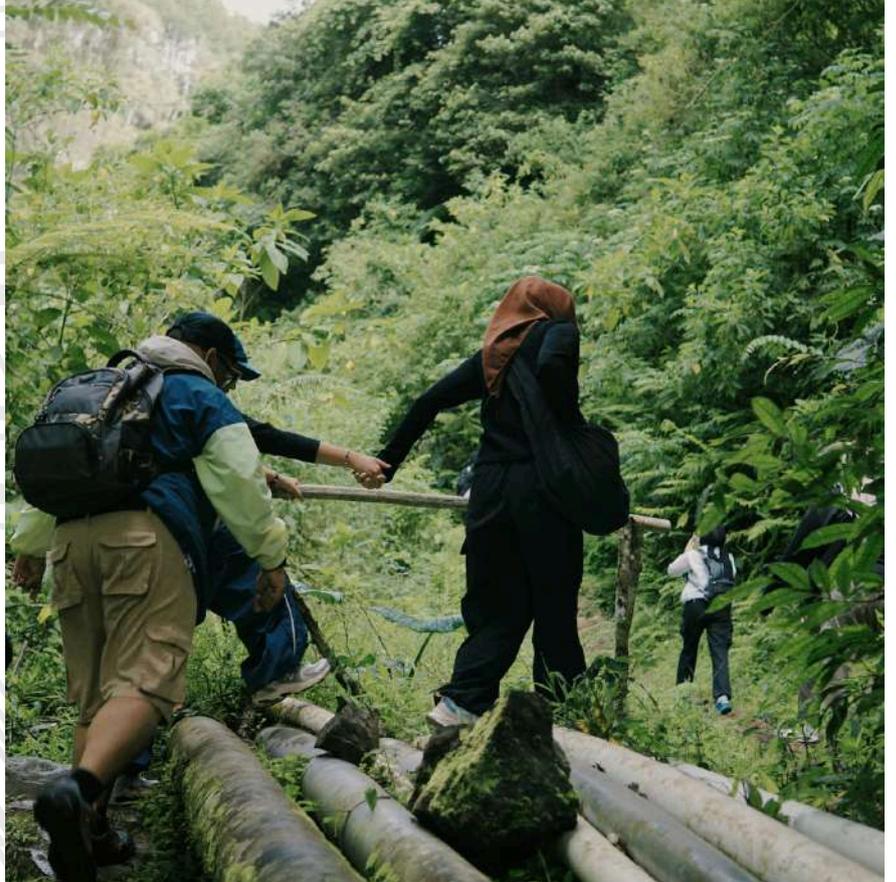


Empowering local people or communities



ISTANBUL

Nature and Culture Hikes - Active Outdoors



For the location of all Good Travel Experiences, see the web version in <https://goodtravel.guide/istanbul>.



GOOD TRAVEL
EXPERIENCE GUIDE

www.goodtravel.guide

ISTANBUL

Nature and Culture Hikes - Active Outdoors

The Prince Island Hiking routes

The Princes' Islands Walking Routes were designed to invite you to discover, on foot, the layered cultural heritage, natural beauty, tree-lined streets, and flower-filled forest paths of the islands.

Our Commitment to Sustainable Tourism

As part of our sustainability efforts, we ask for your support in minimizing the impact of visitor density on the islands' fragile ecosystems and tranquil way of life.

Please Help Us Protect the Islands

To ensure tourism remains sustainable and natural areas are safeguarded, we kindly ask you to:

- *Avoid any behavior that may harm trees, flowers, wildlife, and natural habitats.*
- *Respect the quiet and calm character of the islands.*
- *Reduce your carbon footprint by avoiding unnecessary plastic packaging and disposing of waste responsibly in recycling stations.*
- *Remember that the islands are home to local residents — please act considerately toward both the community and fellow visitors.*



PRINCE ISLANDS HIKING ROUTES, BÜYÜKADA

NATURE AND CULTURE TRAILS ACROSS ISTANBUL'S ISLAND GEMS

The Prince Islands Walking Routes invite visitors to explore the tree-lined streets, forest trails, and rich cultural heritage of these iconic islands. Long a source of inspiration for poets, writers, and artists, the islands reveal their beauty step by step—through blooming wildflowers, monumental trees, and views steeped in history.

  NATURE & CULTURE EXPERIENCE

GOODTRAVEL
ALLIANCE 

ISTANBUL, TURKIYE

Created through a collaboration between guides, local institutions, and the municipality, the project aims to balance tourism with sustainability. Visitors are encouraged to respect the tranquility of the islands, reduce waste, and support efforts to protect biodiversity. By walking the routes consciously, travelers not only discover a unique cultural landscape but also help preserve it for generations to come.



CONTACT US

<https://hikeandsail.com/>

operasyon@hikeandsail.com
gokhan@hikeandsail.com

+90 5322640429 / +90 5555853781



GOOD TO KNOW

Duration: 10 Hrs

Type of activity: Guided & Self-guided navigable hiking routes

Accessibility information available: N/A



RECOGNITIONS

 GTE SCAN: **82%**



Making contributions to the local economy



Empowering local people or communities



HIKING THE PRINCE ISLANDS: HEYBELIADA

A SUSTAINABLE ISLAND ESCAPE IN ISTANBUL

Just a short ferry ride from Istanbul, Heybeliada offers a peaceful, car-free retreat where pine forests meet the Marmara Sea. This guided hiking experience follows historic walking paths across shaded hills and scenic coastal viewpoints, revealing the island's tranquil natural beauty.

  NATURE & CULTURE EXPERIENCE

GOODTRAVEL
ALLIANCE 

ISTANBUL, TURKIYE

Along the way, visitors discover the layered heritage of Greek Orthodox communities, maritime traditions, and its legacy as a summer retreat. Blending nature, architecture, and storytelling, the experience creates a balanced rhythm of movement and reflection—an ideal sustainable escape for couples, corporate groups, and nature enthusiasts seeking calm within reach of the city.



CONTACT US

<https://hikeandsail.com/>

operasyon@hikeandsail.com

gokhan@hikeandsail.com

+90 5322640429 / +90 5555853781

GOOD TO KNOW

Duration: 7 Hrs

Type of activity: Guided & Self-guided navigable hiking routes

Accessibility information available: Yes

RECOGNITIONS

 GTE SCAN: **82%**



Making contributions to the local economy



Empowering local people or communities



HIKING THE PRINCE ISLANDS: BURGAZADA

A TRANQUIL CULTURAL AND NATURE ESCAPE FROM ISTANBUL

Reach Burgazada by ferry and step into one of the Princes' Islands' most peaceful settings. This guided hike follows quiet coastal paths and gentle hillside trails, offering a slower rhythm far from the intensity of the city.

  NATURE & CULTURE EXPERIENCE

GOODTRAVEL
ALLIANCE 

ISTANBUL, TURKIYE

Along the way, visitors explore the island's literary legacy, minority heritage, and maritime traditions. Wooden houses, small churches, and sea-facing viewpoints reveal Burgazada's intimate character. Designed as a low-impact experience—no cars, no rush—the hike blends nature, storytelling, and reflection, creating a meaningful escape for couples, corporate groups, and nature enthusiasts within easy reach of Istanbul.



CONTACT US

<https://hikeandsail.com/>

operasyon@hikeandsail.com

gokhan@hikeandsail.com

+90 5322640429 / +90 5555853781



GOOD TO KNOW

Duration: 7 Hrs

Type of activity: Guided & Self-guided navigable hiking routes

Accessibility information available: Yes



RECOGNITIONS

 GTE SCAN: 82%



Making contributions to the local economy



Empowering local people or communities



HIKING THE PRINCE ISLANDS: KINALIADA

GEOLOGY, RESILIENCE, AND OPEN SEA VIEWS NEAR ISTANBUL

Arrive by ferry to Kinaliada, the most geologically distinctive of the Princes' Islands. This guided hike explores its open hillsides, sparse vegetation, and sweeping views of the Marmara Sea, offering a landscape unlike any other in the archipelago.

  NATURE & CULTURE EXPERIENCE

GOODTRAVEL
ALLIANCE 

ISTANBUL, TURKIYE

Along the route, visitors learn how limited natural resources shaped settlement patterns, minority communities, and historic quarry activity. Blending landscape interpretation with cultural storytelling, the experience reveals themes of adaptation and resilience in a maritime setting. Free from cars and mass tourism infrastructure, Kinaliada offers a quiet yet powerful outdoor escape just minutes from central Istanbul.



CONTACT US

<https://hikeandsail.com/>

operasyon@hikeandsail.com
gokhan@hikeandsail.com

+90 5322640429 / +90 5555853781

GOOD TO KNOW

Duration: 7 Hrs

Type of activity: Guided & Self-guided navigable hiking routes

Accessibility information available: Yes



RECOGNITIONS

 GTE SCAN: **82%**



Making contributions to the local economy



Empowering local people or communities



AYDOS BIODIVERSITY WALK

PROTECTING ISTANBUL'S ENDEMIC SNOWDROP

Discover Istanbul's lesser-known natural heritage on a seasonal winter walk to Aydos Hill. Guided by an expert interpreter, participants follow forest trails to observe the rare endemic Istanbul snowdrop (*Galanthus plicatus* subsp. *byzantinus*) and other seasonal species in their native habitat.

  NATURE & CULTURE EXPERIENCE

GOODTRAVEL
ALLIANCE 

ISTANBUL, TURKIYE

Along clearly defined low-impact routes, guests learn about urban ecological pressures, habitat sensitivity, and conservation efforts. Designed as a strictly observational small-group experience, the walk protects fragile flora while offering meaningful insight into Istanbul's biodiversity—revealing a living landscape beyond the city's historic monuments.



GOOD TO KNOW

Duration: 6 Hrs

Type of activity: Hiking, nature exploration

Accessibility information available: Yes



RECOGNITIONS  GTE SCAN: **82%**



Making contributions
to the local economy



CONTACT US

<https://hikeandsail.com/>

operasyon@hikeandsail.com

gokhan@hikeandsail.com

+90 5322640429 / +90 5555853781



ISTANBUL

Hands-on Workshops



For the location of all Good Travel Experiences, see the web version in <https://goodtravel.guide/istanbul>.



**GOOD TRAVEL
EXPERIENCE GUIDE**

www.goodtravel.guide

CRAFTS IN ÇUKURCUMA

HISTORIC PRODUCTION AND CONTEMPORARY CERAMIC ART

Explore Istanbul through its craft traditions and creative neighborhoods. The experience begins at Tophane-i Amire, a historic complex once central to the city's production and materials culture. From there, a guided walk through Tophane and Cihangir reveals studios, workshops, and architectural details that shape the area's living creative ecosystem.

 CULTURE EXPERIENCE

GOODTRAVEL
ALLIANCE 

ISTANBUL, TURKIYE

The journey concludes with a hands-on ceramic workshop led by a local artisan, where participants engage with clay as both material and cultural expression. Designed for small groups, this experience connects heritage with contemporary practice, offering a creative and grounded perspective on Istanbul beyond its iconic monuments.



GOOD TO KNOW

Duration: 6 Hrs

Type of activity: Hands-on, cultural exploration

Accessibility information available: Yes



RECOGNITIONS

 GTE SCAN: **81%**



Making contributions to the local economy



Empowering local people or communities



CONTACT US

<https://hikeandsail.com/>

operasyon@hikeandsail.com

gokhan@hikeandsail.com

+90 5322640429 / +90 5555853781



FROM MANUSCRIPT TO WATER

OTTOMAN BOOK ARTS AND LIVING MARBLING TRADITION

This immersive experience traces the journey of ebru from Ottoman manuscripts to contemporary artistic practice. It begins with a guided museum visit exploring calligraphy, bindings, and the refined visual culture of book arts, revealing how marbling enhanced and framed written works.

 CULTURE EXPERIENCE

GOODTRAVEL
ALLIANCE 

ISTANBUL, TURKIYE

The experience continues in a local studio with a hands-on workshop led by a master artisan. Participants learn traditional tools, natural pigments, and techniques that allow colors to float and transform on water before transferring their design onto paper. Conducted in small groups and at a contemplative pace, the workshop preserves the meditative spirit of the craft while offering a personal and meaningful cultural encounter in Istanbul.



GOOD TO KNOW

Duration: 6 Hrs

Type of activity: Hands-on, cultural exploration

Accessibility information available: Yes



RECOGNITIONS

 GTE SCAN: **88%**



Making contributions to the local economy



Empowering local people or communities



CONTACT US

<https://hikeandsail.com/>

operasyon@hikeandsail.com

gokhan@hikeandsail.com

+90 5322640429 / +90 5555853781



GREAT PALACE MOSAICS MUSEUM

BYZANTINE HERITAGE AND LIVING CRAFTSMANSHIP

Discover the artistic legacy of Byzantine Istanbul at the Great Palace Mosaics Museum, home to remarkable floor mosaics that once adorned imperial spaces. Guided interpretation reveals scenes of daily life, mythology, and refined craftsmanship, offering insight into the symbolism and techniques behind this extraordinary archaeological treasure.

 CULTURE EXPERIENCE

GOODTRAVEL
ALLIANCE 

ISTANBUL, TURKIYE

The experience continues with a hands-on mosaic workshop led by a local artisan. Participants learn traditional methods of shaping and placing tesserae, creating their own small mosaic inspired by ancient practice. Blending museum heritage with living craft, this immersive activity offers cultural depth, creativity, and meaningful engagement with Istanbul's artistic past.



CONTACT US

<https://hikeandsail.com/>

operasyon@hikeandsail.com

gokhan@hikeandsail.com

+90 5322640429 / +90 5555853781

GOOD TO KNOW

Duration: 6 Hrs

Type of activity: Hands-on, cultural exploration

Accessibility information available: Yes

RECOGNITIONS

 GTE SCAN: **75%**



Making contributions to the local economy



Empowering local people or communities



WOODCRAFT AND URBAN MEMORY

WOODCRAFT AND URBAN MEMORY

Discover Istanbul's layered identity through the material culture of wood. The experience begins with a guided walk in Balat and along the Golden Horn, where wooden façades and historic streets reveal how craftsmanship shaped domestic life, maritime traditions, and architectural expression across communities.

 CULTURE EXPERIENCE

GOODTRAVEL
ALLIANCE 

ISTANBUL, TURKIYE

The journey continues in a local woodcarving studio, where participants meet a practicing artisan and learn traditional hand tools and carving techniques. In a small-group, hands-on session, guests carve a simple motif inspired by their walk, focusing on process and observation. Connecting architecture, memory, and craftsmanship, this experience offers a meaningful and creative alternative to passive sightseeing.



GOOD TO KNOW

Duration: 6 Hrs

Type of activity: Hands-on, cultural exploration

Accessibility information available: Yes

RECOGNITIONS

 GTE SCAN: **77%**



Making contributions to the local economy



Empowering local people or communities

CONTACT US

<https://hikeandsail.com/>

operasyon@hikeandsail.com

gokhan@hikeandsail.com

+90 5322640429 / +90 5555853781



ÜSKÜDAR SACRED WATER EXPERIENCE

ARCHITECTURE, RITUAL, AND LIVING TRADITION

Discover renewal in Üsküdar through a journey that connects sacred architecture, philanthropy, and everyday practice. Arriving by ferry, the experience begins at Mihrimah Sultan Mosque, where guided interpretation reveals how the vakif system intertwined religion, social welfare, and water infrastructure.

 CULTURE EXPERIENCE

GOODTRAVEL
ALLIANCE 

ISTANBUL, TURKIYE

After a light tasting inspired by local culinary traditions, the journey continues to a functioning neighborhood hammam for a traditional cleansing ritual. Blending tangible heritage—architecture and engineering—with intangible heritage—ritual, flow, and community life—this immersive experience offers an authentic perspective on continuity and renewal in Istanbul.



CONTACT US

<https://hikeandsail.com/>

operasyon@hikeandsail.com

gokhan@hikeandsail.com

+90 5322640429 / +90 5555853781



GOOD TO KNOW

Duration: 5 Hrs

Type of activity: Turkish bath experience, water culture

Accessibility information available: Yes



RECOGNITIONS

 GTE SCAN: **82%**



Making contributions to the local economy



Empowering local people or communities



Practical Information

How does a Top 10 sight become a delight?

Istanbul's historic core is compact, walkable, and well connected by trams, metro, and ferries. With a bit of planning, you can experience the city's most popular attractions while avoiding crowds, traffic, and unnecessary emissions.

1. Sultanahmet: Hagia Sophia, Blue Mosque, Basilica Cistern, Topkapı Palace

- Arrive at opening time (usually 09:00).
- Take Tram T1 to Sultanahmet and explore on foot.
- Visit Topkapı Palace after 15:30 for quieter courtyards.

2. Grand Bazaar & Spice Bazaar

- Best visited before 11:00 or after 16:00.
- Walk from Sultanahmet (15 minutes) or take Tram T1 to Beyazıt (Grand Bazaar) or Eminönü (Spice Bazaar).
- Avoid weekends when crowds peak.

3. Süleymaniye Mosque

- Walk uphill from the Spice Bazaar (10–12 minutes).
- Late afternoon offers calm courtyards and Golden Horn views.
- Avoid prayer times; mid-afternoon is usually quiet.

4. Galata & Karaköy: Galata Tower, Istanbul Modern, Pera Museum

- Walk across Galata Bridge from Eminönü.
- Visit Galata Tower at opening time to avoid elevator queues.
- Use the Karaköy–Tünel funicular to reduce uphill walking.
- For Istanbul Modern, take Tram T1 to Tophane; for Pera Museum, walk or use the funicular.



Practical Information

How does a Top 10 sight become a delight? (2)

5. A low-emissions plan for one day

This route minimizes emissions, avoids peak crowds, and keeps walking distances comfortable while covering Istanbul's most iconic sights.

- 09:00 Hagia Sophia & Blue Mosque
- 10:30 Basilica Cistern
- 12:00 Lunch in Sultanahmet or Gülhane
- 13:00 Spice Bazaar → walk to Süleymaniye Mosque
- 16:00 Ferry to Karaköy → Galata Tower
- 17:30 Istanbul Modern or Pera Museum
- 19:00 Dinner in Karaköy or Beyoğlu

Recommended Transport Options

- Tram T1: Connects most major historic sights.
- Metro M2: Connects to Taksim and Şişli without traffic issues.
- Ferries: The cleanest and most scenic way to cross between Europe and Asia.
- Walking: The best way to explore Sultanahmet, Eminönü, Karaköy, and Galata.



QUICK TIPS

Carry a reusable bottle; water refill points in Istanbul are common.



Where to stay?

The Editors are pleased to recommend some hotels that demonstrate environmental responsibility, architectural preservation, and meaningful connection to local communities. This curated selection reflects Istanbul's diversity — from internationally certified hotels to restored historic mansions and independent boutique properties rooted in neighborhood life.

Hotels Certified for Sustainability

The Peninsula Istanbul

- Certification: BREEAM – Excellent (BREEAM is one of the world's leading green building certification systems, assessing energy, water, materials, and indoor environmental quality)
- Address: Bankalar Caddesi No:5, Karaköy, Beyoğlu, Istanbul
- <https://www.peninsula.com/istanbul>
- Why?
 - First and only hotel in Türkiye to achieve BREEAM “Excellent”
 - Advanced energy and water efficiency systems integrated into building design
 - Rooftop herb and vegetable garden in partnership with a local urban farming initiative
 - Located within the revitalized Galataport waterfront area

The Burdock Hotel Istanbul, Autograph Collection

- Certification: Green Key Certified
- Address: Karaköy, Beyoğlu, Istanbul
- <https://www.theburdockhotel.com.tr>
- Why?
 - Energy and water efficiency measures
 - Waste reduction and responsible sourcing practices
 - Located in walkable Karaköy district

Four Points by Sheraton Istanbul Kağıthane

- Certification: Green Key Certified
- <https://www.marriott.com>
- Why?
 - Energy and water efficiency technologies
 - Waste management programme
 - Good public transport connectivity

A business-oriented hotel.

Radisson Blu Hotel, Istanbul Asia

- Certification: Green Key Certified
- <https://www.radissonhotels.com>
- Why?
 - Energy-saving systems
 - Responsible procurement policies
 - Located on Istanbul's Asian side



Where to stay?

Restored Heritage Hotels

Historic buildings given new life

Located in restored historic buildings, contributing to preserving Istanbul's architectural character.

Six Senses Kocataş Mansions – Sarıyer

- Restored Ottoman-era mansions
- <https://www.sixsenses.com>
- Why?
 - Historic waterfront mansion
 - Sustainability programmes including waste and water management
 - Farm-to-table culinary approach
 - Wellness and environmental awareness initiatives

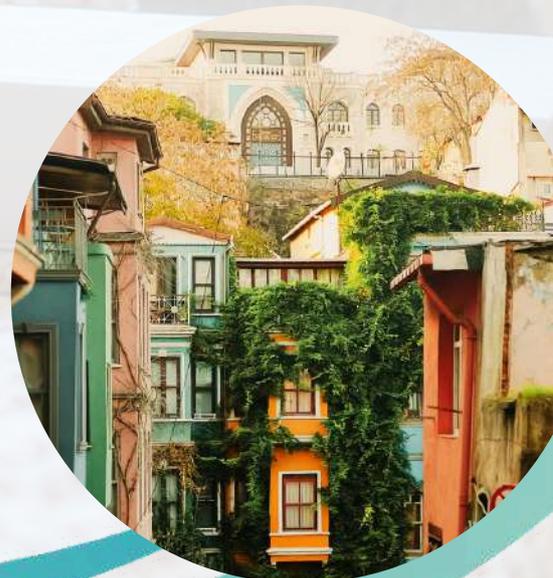
Vault Karaköy, The House Hotel

- Former Ottoman bank building in Galata
- <https://www.thehousehotel.com>
- Why?:
 - Architectural restoration in historic district
 - Walkable urban location
 - Local culinary and cultural connections

A refined heritage hotel embedded in one of Istanbul's most dynamic neighborhoods.

Sumahan on the Water – Çengelköy

- Converted 19th-century Ottoman distillery
- <https://www.sumahan.com>
- Why?
 - Adaptive reuse of historic industrial building
 - Bosphorus waterfront location in residential area
 - Emphasis on local sourcing



Where to stay?

Locally Owned Boutique Hotels

Neighborhood-based, independently owned and operated

Contribute directly to Istanbul's local economy and community life.

Hotel Amira – Sultanahmet

- <https://www.hotelamira.com>
- Why?
 - Family-run operation
 - Strong guest engagement and local recommendations
 - Located in walkable historic district.

Witt Istanbul Suites – Cihangir

- <https://www.wittistanbul.com>
- Why?
 - Located in artistic Cihangir neighborhood
 - Encourages guests to explore local cafés, galleries, and shops
 - Strong neighborhood integration
 - Design-forward boutique property supporting Istanbul's creative urban ecosystem.

DeCamondo Galata Hotel

- <https://www.decamondo.com>
- Why?
 - Restored historic building
 - Located in vibrant Galata district
 - Focus on local culinary experiences



How to prepare your visit to Istanbul?

Our local host Alper Ertübey created many tips on how best to prepare your visit to Istanbul. **Pre-departure Information.**

Istanbul offers an incredible number of ways you can enjoy the city with a positive impact. This Guide gives quite some suggestions, from the 23 curated experiences to how to best enjoy some of the Top attractions, and how to get there.

If you would like to contact one of the best tour guides in advance, we recommend you to check this

Hike'n Sail webpage: <https://hikeandsail.com/our-team>.

GOOD TRAVEL EXPERIENCE GUIDE



ISTANBUL 

www.goodtravel.guide

About this Guide

This is the inaugural edition of a series of **Good Travel Experience (GTE) Guides** designed to bridge the gap between sustainable data and authentic market-ready travel.

The Good Travel Experience initiative was established in **2023 by Albert Salman** (founder of Green Destinations, the Good Travel Alliance, and the Good Travel Institute), and has since evolved through the active involvement of the Good Travel Institute team and founding **Alliance Partners** such as Riviera Maya Sostenible, Tourism Impact, and others. The Good Travel Institute (GTI) serves as the independent expert pillar of this community, providing the professional verification and training framework that underpins these guides.

Our methodology ensures that all Good Travel Experiences are evaluated by independent sustainable tourism experts based on **their positive local impact**, cultural authenticity, and environmental responsibility. To uphold the highest standards of credibility, all commercial providers featured in this guide are either already verified or certified, or are currently in the process of being verified or certified by independent auditors.

Contributors

- **GTE Concept:** Albert Salman, Elisabeth Boon, D'Arcy Dornan, Beatriz Barreal, Holger Sigmund, Alison Burgh, Victor Fernandez, and Iyad Kayali.
- **Lead Contributor to this Guide:** Alper Ertubey (Hike'n Sail Türkiye), supported by his expert team of Istanbul tour guides.
- **Editorial Team:** Albert Salman, D'Arcy Dornan, Elisabeth Boon, Ginni Ku Kinil, Tansu Karabulut, Müberra Çoban, Martha Lazidou, and Betül Armağan.
- **Design, Digital and MarCom Production:** Beatriz Barreal, Gerardo Barreal, Daniela Miranda (Website), and Amit Bhatia.

ISTANBUL

www.goodtravel.guide

Connect with us

This guide is a living document. You can find all featured experiences on our interactive digital map via the Istanbul page of the Good Travel Guide. We welcome feedback and contributions from visitors who share our passion for responsible travel. ✉ Email:

teamturkiye@gti.greendestinations.org

Relevant Links

Good Travel Guide: <https://goodtravel.guide>

Hike'n Sail Türkiye: <https://hikeandsail.com>

Good Travel Institute: <https://gti.greendestinations.org/>

Good Travel Alliance: <https://gti.greendestinations.org/alliance/>



GOOD TRAVEL EXPERIENCE GUIDE

SELECTION OF AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCES WITH POSITIVE LOCAL IMPACT



IMPORTANT NOTICE:

"The Good Travel Alliance (GTA) makes no representation, warranty or guarantee regarding the information provided in this Guide, and accepts no liability for the same."



ISTANBUL 

www.goodtravel.guide