lonely plonet Hotels & Hostels

Want more Sleeping recommendations than we could ever pack into this little of book? Craving more detail — including extended reviews and photographs? Want to read reviews by other travellers and be able to post your own? Just make your way over to **lonelyplanet.com/hotels** and check out our thorough list of independent reviews, then reserve your room simply and securely.

SLEEPING

top picks

- Four Seasons Hotel Istanbul (p199) Top luxury hotel
- Hotel Empress Zoe (p200) Top Ottoman boutique hotel
- Hotel Nomade (p201) Top budget boutique hotel
- Hotel Peninsula (p202) Top cheap sleep
- İstanbul Holiday Apartments (p206) Top apartments
- Tria Hotel İstanbul (p200) Top mid-range option
- Hotel Şebnem (p201) Top value for money
- Eklektik Guest House (p206) Top gay-friendly sleep
- Leb-i Derya Richmond (at the Richmond Hotel; p176) Top hotel bar

SLEEPING

BOOK ACCOMMODATION ONLINE

For more accommodation reviews and recommendations by Lonely Planet authors, check out the online booking service at www.lonelvplanet.com. You'll find the true, insider lowdown on the best places to stay. Reviews are thorough and independent. Best of all, vou can book online.

Accommodation Styles

Every possible accommodation style is available in İstanbul. You can live like a sultan in a world-class luxury hotel, doss in an anonymous hostel dorm or relax in a simple but stylish boutique establishment. We've labelled each hotel's type next to its name to help you in your choice. By 'Ottoman Boutique Hotel' we mean a small-to-medium-sized hotel, usually but not always in an old building, that places great emphasis on décor (usually with Ottoman or Anatolian touches) and friendly service. By 'Boutique Hotel' we mean a stylish modern hotel with great service and amenities. The 'Hotel' tag alone means that the place would be at home in any international city, and doesn't make any real gestures to traditional Turkish decoration or services. With the exception of the hostels listed,

toes, cucumber and tea or coffee). Exceptions to these norms are noted in the reviews. Keep in mind that the appearance of a hotel's lobby doesn't always reflect the quality of its rooms. Look at several rooms if possible. If you're not impressed with the first one you are shown, ask 'Başka var mi?' ('Are there others?').

all hotels reviewed offer rooms with en suite

bathroom. The prices we've given include

breakfast, usually of the Turkish variety (fresh

bread, jams, sheep's milk cheese, olives, toma-

Room Rates

You can bag a mattress on a roof terrace for as little as €7 per night or splurge on the Presidential Suite at the Four Seasons Hotel for €3000. Most of us will opt for something between the two.

A double room in an Ottoman Boutique hotel in Sultanahmet will cost from €45 to €280; you'll pay a bit more to sleep on the

other side of the Galata Bridge and lots more to luxuriate on the Bosphorus.

All prices in this book have been cited in euros, are high season prices and include the 18% KDV (value-added tax). During the low season (October-April, but not the Christmas period) you should be able to negotiate a discount of at least 20% on the room price. Be warned that during the Formula 1 Grand Prix (May) prices often skyrocket.

If booking direct, ask if the hotel will give you a discount for a cash payment (this will usually be 10%), whether a pick-up from the airport is included (it often is if you stay more than three nights) and whether discounts are offered for extended stays. Many of the luxury hotels offer special packages; ask when you make reservations.

We recommend that you refrain from booking accommodation at the airport hotel booking desks, as you'll inevitably pay a premium. If you arrive at the airport and have no accommodation booked, the Tourist Information Office ((>) 24 hr) is usually happy to let you use its phone to call one of the hotels reviewed in this chapter and see if a room is available.

SULTANAHMET

The Sultan Ahmet Camii, more commonly known as the Blue Mosque, gives its name to the quarter surrounding it. This is the heart of Old İstanbul and the city's premier sightseeing area, so the hotels here, and in the adjoining neighbourhoods to the east (Cankurtaran), west (Küçük Aya Sofya) and north (Binbirdirek), are supremely convenient. The area's only drawbacks are the number of carpet touts around and the lack of decent places to eat and drink.

Akbıyık Caddesi in Cankurtaran is the backpacker hub, home to thumping bars and

PRICE GUIDE

For a double room: €€€ over €300 per night €€ €51 to €300 per night € under €50 per night

drunken carousing by night and street cafés by day. Other streets in the area are low key. Küçük Aya Sofya is a charming, old-fashioned and quiet area, just downhill from the southwestern end of the Hippodrome; while just uphill and to the west, Binbirdirek is a quiet residential district named after the Byzantine cistern of that name.

Every imaginable hotel type can be found around this neighbourhood: the city's best luxury hotel (the Four Seasons); innumerable boutique Ottoman hotels decorated in a pleasing style that we've dubbed 'Cankurtaran Modern'; comfortable but relatively characterless midrange options; and a host of budget choices, including most of the city's hostels. Almost every place has a roof terrace with views of the Blue Mosque, Aya Sofya and/or the Sea of Marmara.

FOUR SEASONS HOTEL ISTANBUL Luxury Hotel €€€ Map p50

212-638 8200; www.fshr.com; Tevkifhane Sokak 1, Cankurtaran; s €330-510, d €360-530; 🔀 🔀 😐 🕭 ; 🗵 Sultanahmet

This used to be the infamous Sultanahmet prison (remember Midnight Express?), and boy oh boy, we couldn't imagine anything better than being forced to do some serious time here these days. A regular entry in 'Best Hotel in the World' lists, this place oozes quality and comfort. Rooms are country club-elegant, with king-sized beds, enormous marble bathrooms and antiquestyle work desks. Location is ideal – the hotel is literally in the shadow of the Blue Mosque and Aya Sofya – but the fact that an extension is currently being built at the rear of the hotel site (on top of an important archaeological site – how on earth was that approved?!) means that building noise could be a slight problem until 2010. Breakfast costs an extra €30.

YESIL EV Map p50 Ottoman Boutique Hotel €€ 212-517 6785; www.istanbulyesilev.com; Kabasakal Caddesi 5, Cankurtaran; s €160, d €220-280; 🔀 🛄 ; 🖲 Sultanahmet

This place has either a proud history or a lot to answer for - it depends on your point of view. The model for hundreds of Ottoman boutique hotels across Turkey, it has been one of the city's most famous places to sleep since it opened in 1984. Brass beds and chintz furnishings feature, as do cramped bathrooms. Despite adoring its idyllic rear courtyard, overall we prefer the slightly cheaper Ayasofya Konakları (p204), which was restored and is run by the same organisation.

HOTEL ARMADA Map p50

Hotel €€ 212-455 4455; www.armadahotel.com.tr; Ahırkapı Sokak 24, Cankurtaran; r standard/superior €295/354; 🔀 🔀 🛄 🕭 ; 🖲 Sultanahmet Fresh flowers and a pond full of tortoises greet guests when they check in to this comfortable hotel. Rooms feature pale green furnishings and are very well equipped; superior ones come with a sea view. Though the location – very near the Cankurtaran suburban train station and a few steps from the Bosphorus shore - isn't great, it's only a 10-minute walk uphill to Sultanahmet. The hotel's major selling point is the Teras Restaurant (p158), with its wonderful view and very pleasant surrounds. Check the website for special offers,

IBRAHIM PASA OTELI

as room rates can vary wildly.

Map p50 Ottoman Boutique Hotel €€ 212-518 0394; www.ibrahimpasha.com; Terzihane Sokak 5, Binbirdirek; s/d €135/190;

🕅 🔀 🛄 ; 🖲 Sultanahmet The owners of this small designer hotel just off the Hippodrome have managed to straddle the divide between sleek modernist and antique Ottoman with great success. Parquet floors, crisp white linen, marble bathrooms and gold mirrors make the smallish, well-equipped rooms distinctive, and the building's common areas ooze class. After enjoying the excellent breakfast, served in a downstairs kitchen with stainless-steel bench and olive-green walls, guests often have to be encouraged to leave the building – the alternative option of sinking into one of the foyer lounge's leather couches and enjoying a guiet read is just too tempting. It's worth paying for one of the four deluxe rooms, as the 12 standard ones are verging on being too expensive for what they offer.

DERSAADET OTELİ Map p50

Ottoman Boutique Hotel €€

212-458 0760; www.dersaadethotel.com; Kapıağası Sokak 5, Küçük Aya Sofya; r €105-110; 🕺 🕄 ; 🖲 Sultanahmet

Roughly translated, the name of this hotel means 'The Place of Happiness' in Turkish,

SARI KONAK OTELİ

are extremely high.

Map p50

212-638 6258; www.istanbulhotelsarikonak
 .com; Mimar Mehmet Ağa Caddesi 42-46, Cankurtaran; r standard/deluxe €89/129, ste €149-219;
 X 2 □; Q Sultanahmet

Ottoman Boutique Hotel €€

and we're confident that guests will be

more than happy with this comfortable

stored Ottoman wooden house, the inte-

rior features exquisitely painted ceilings

and custom-designed wooden furniture

throughout. Rooms, which have four-star

scheme that gives a sense of luxury. Those

with sea views cost a little bit extra. There's

a lift, a roof terrace with Sea of Marmara

and Blue Mosque views, and a charming

breakfast café. Best of all, levels of service

amenities, are extremely comfortable,

sporting a gold and russet-red colour

mid-sized hotel. In a painstakingly re-

The type of place that could fit just as easily in Washington as in this city of sultans, the Sarı Konak is a truly classy joint. The spacious deluxe rooms are beautifully decorated with soothing colour schemes, top-notch linens and attractive prints, embroideries and etchings on the walls; try and snaffle number 303, which is pretty as a picture. The standard rooms are considerably smaller, but are just as attractive, and the suites are total knockouts - perfect for families. Guests enjoy relaxing on the roof terrace with its Sea of Marmara and Blue Mosque views, but seem to be equally partial to hanging out in the downstairs lounge and courtyard.

HOTEL EMPRESS ZOE Map p50 Ottoman Boutique Hotel €€

Named after the feisty Byzantine Empress whose portrait adorns the gallery at Aya Sofya, this fabulous place is owned and managed by American Ann Nevens and her sister Cristina, who really know their stuff when it comes to running a hotel. The prototype for 'Cankurtaran Modern', the now almost ubiquitous decorative style utilised in myriad Sultanahmet boutique hotels, the Empress Zoe is unusual in that it is constantly being changed and improved – hence the recent opening of the stylish Maison Zoe and Villa Zoe garden suites (€225 to €250). These join the Chez Zoe garden suites (€150 to €200) in overlooking a gorgeous flower-filled garden where breakfast is served. Equally fabulous is Room 42, which has a private terrace and views over the Sea of Marmara (€135). All rooms are individually and charmingly decorated, and although some rooms in the main building are tiny, these are available at discounted rates (s/d €60/70). The rooftop loungeterrace has excellent views.

HOTEL TURKOMAN

Map p50 Ottoman Boutique Hotel €€ ☎ 212-516 2956; www.turkomanhotel.com;

Asmalı Çeşme Sokak 2, Binbirdirek; s €79, d €99-139; 🕄 🔲 ; 🗵 Sultanahmet

You'll feel as if you've booked into a private club when you walk into the Turkoman. In a fantastic position up the hill a few steps off the Hippodrome, this renovated 19thcentury building features rooms that are simply but tastefully decorated with kilims, reproduction antique furniture and brass beds. Ask for room 4A, which has a balcony and Blue Mosque view. The roof terrace has good views.

TRIA HOTEL İSTANBULMap p50Ottoman Boutique Hotel €€

212-518 4518; www.triahotelistanbul.com; Turbiyik Sokak 7, Cankurtaran; standard s/d €75/95, deluxe s/d €100/120; 🔀 🔀 🛄 ; 👿 Sultanahmet The old adage that handsome is as handsome does certainly applies to the Tria. This totally terrific hotel opened in 2007 and has already built a formidable reputation for its service and style. Extremely comfortable rooms offer tea-and-coffee making equipment, satellite TV, work desk and large bed; all are attractively decorated with polished floorboards, silk curtains, embroidered bedspreads and objets d'art. There's a comfortable lounge on the ground floor and a wonderful roof terrace furnished with cane armchairs and huge umbrellas - a perfect spot to view the Sea of Marmara, Aya Sofya and the Blue Mosque.

HOTEL DAPHNE Map p50 Hotel €€

this small hotel is particularly notable for its lovely roof terrace, which has great Sea of Marmara views. Rooms have a pretty décor in shades of burnished orange and emerald green – ask for one with a sea view. Bathrooms are large (with baths), which is a definite plus, but some of the air-con units can be noisy – ask to check this out before you unpack.

HOTEL ARARAT Map p50

 Map p50
 Ottoman Boutique Hotel €€

 ② 212-516 0411; www.ararathotel.com; Torun

 Sokak 3, Cankurtaran; r €75-95, ste €110;

 ※ ※ ◎; ⑤ Sultanahmet

Another hotel decorated by Nikos Papadakis, who did such an inspired job with the initial rooms at the Empress Zoe (opposite), the Ararat is tiny, but its charming host Haydar Sarigul and cosy rooftop terrace-bar in the shadow of the Blue Mosque make it a popular choice. Dark wooden floors, textile bedspreads and clever space-enhancing mirrors are the decorative hallmarks; quality linen and homemade *börek* (savoury pastry) for breakfast are quality touches. It's not worth paying the extra euros for a view, particularly as the two terrace rooms are the smallest in the hotel.

Mega style and budget pricing don't often go together, but the Nomade bucks the trend. A few years ago the owners brought in French designer Dan Beranger to give the place a total overhaul and all we can say is 'ooh la la'. Just a few steps off busy Divan Yolu, the hotel's 16 small rooms and three suites are très, très chic, with great bathrooms, stylish bedlinen and satellite TV. With one of the best roof-terrace bars in town (smack-bang in front of Aya Sofya) and a Philippe Stark feel, this place is about as hip as Sultanahmet gets.

HOTEL UYAN İSTANBUL Map p50 Ottoman Boutique Hotel €€

☐ 212-518 9255; www.uyanhotel.com; Utangaç
 Sokak 25, Cankurtaran; s €50, d standard/deluxe
 €99/130; ∑ ∑ □; ∑ Sultanahmet
 The Uyan is in a close race with the Tria
 Hotel (opposite), Tan Otel (p204) and Ottoman
 Hotel Imperial (p204) for the title of best new

midrange addition to the Old City's sleeping scene. Like its competitors, it offers comfortable and attractive rooms with a good range of amenities and high levels of service. The extremely elegant décor nods towards the Ottoman style, but never goes over the top – everyone will feel comfortable here. The view from the spacious roof terrace is one of the best in the area.

ARTEFES HOTEL

A large wooden house adorned with flower-filled window boxes, the Artefes is almost a prototype of a safe midrange accommodation choice. It offers clean, sundrenched rooms featuring amenities such as satellite TV and hairdryer. The foyer and roof terrace are impressive and the location is blissfully quiet.

HOTEL ŞEBNEM Map p50

Ottoman Boutique Hotel €€

Simplicity is the rule at the Şebnem, and it works a treat. Run by a wonderfully friendly young team, its rooms have rosepink walls, wooden floors and extremely comfortable canopy beds. Stylish linen and framed Ottoman prints provide a touch of class. The large terrace upstairs has views over the Sea of Marmara (as do the more expensive double rooms), and the downstairs rooms, though a tad dark, have a private courtyard garden. All of this, plus one of the best breakfast spreads in Sultanahmet, mean that this place is hard to beat.

HOTEL POEM Map p50

Ottoman Boutique Hotel €€

ⓐ 212-638 9744; www.hotelpoem.com; Terbiyik Sokak 12; s/d €45/70; ゑ ඔ; @ Sultanahmet Many guests end up waxing lyrical about their stays in this cute hotel. Rooms are named after poems by well-known Turkish poets, and the tranquil rear garden is a perfect spot to linger over an anthology and a glass of tea. Book into the 'All of a Sudden' room (€130) and you'll be able to sit **SLEEPING SULTANAHMET**

HOTEL HALI Map p50

terrace with good views.

212-516 2170; www.halihotel.com; Klodfarer Caddesi 20, Çemberlitaş; s/d €45/70; Sultanahmet

on a private balcony looking towards the

(€130) and you'll appreciate its large win-

dows, sea views and king-sized bed. Other

rooms are on the small side and lack style, but they're clean and have amenities such

as satellite TV and hairdryer. There's also a

Princes' Islands; score 'Listening to Istanbul'

All the rugs in Turkey couldn't hide this hotel's institutional feel. That said, it's worth considering due to its roof terrace, which has amazing views, its huge bathrooms and its quiet position. Third- and 4th-floor rooms have views of the Sea of Marmara and Aya Sofya.

HOTEL ALP GUESTHOUSE

Map p50 Ottoman Boutique Hotel €€ 212-517 7067; www.alpguesthouse.com; Adliye Sokak 4, Cankurtaran; s/d/f €45/65/90; Image: Solid state of the state of th

The Alp lives up to its location in Sultanahmet's premier small-hotel enclave, offering a range of attractive and well-equipped rooms at reasonable prices. Rooms have four-poster beds with white linen and gold hangings, wooden floorboards scattered with rugs, and extras such as satellite TV and work desks. The spacious front rooms are the pick of the bunch (ask for 301 or 401) because though some rear rooms have sea views, they also look onto the minaret of a local mosque, meaning that earlymorning noise can be a problem. The roof terrace is lovely, with great sea views and comfortable indoor and outdoor set-ups.

HOTEL SULTAN'S INN Map p50 Ottoman

Map p50 Ottoman Boutique Hotel €€ © 212-638 2562; www.sultansinn.com; Mustafa

Paşa Sokak 50, Küçük Aya Sofya; s €35-70, d €50-100; 🕅 🔀 ; 🗊 Sultanahmet

One of a growing number of good-value, reasonably stylish hotels in the Küçük Aya Sofya area, the Sultan's Inn is a safe if uninspired choice. The well-equipped rooms are pretty but small, and bathrooms could do with a lavish application of antimould agent. The roof terrace is home to flowerpots and plants galore; it's a lovely spot for breakfast. The owners also run the nearby Naz Wooden House and Deniz Konak hotels; rooms at these are slightly more comfortable and attractive than those on offer here (they're also a tad more expensive), but neither of their roof terraces are as impressive.

HANEDAN HOTEL

Hotel €€

Map p50 Ottoman Boutique Hotel €€ 212-516 4869; www.hanedanhotel.com; Adliye Sokak 3, Cankurtaran; s/d/f €35/55/75; Image: Solid stress of the str

Recent renovation works have endowed this small and very clean hotel with the ubiquitous 'Cankurtaran aesthetic', and it's very pleasant as a result. Pale lemon walls and polished wooden floors give the rooms a light and elegant feel, as do the white marble bathrooms (with hairdryer) and the firm beds covered with crisp white linen. The huge Byzantium Room with its Sea of Marmara views is perfect for families. A pleasant roof terrace overlooks the sea and Aya Sofya.

HOTEL PENINSULA

Map p50

212-458 6850; www.hotelpeninsula.com; Adliye Sokak 6, Cankurtaran; s/d €35/45; Sultanahmet

Ottoman Boutique Hotel €

The management of this unassuming hotel could quite possibly be the friendliest we've ever encountered. And we're talking friendly in a good, non-pushy, we-really-like-meeting-people type of way, not the hi-l'm-your-new-best-friend-please-visit-my-carpet-shop type of way. There are 12 simple but comfortable rooms that are slated for renovation in the near future, as well as a lovely terrace with sea views and comfortable hammocks. We like the break-fast room with its traditional low stools and brass tables and we love the fact that the owner's mum makes cakes, jam and yogurt for everyone's breakfast. Great value.

SIDE HOTEL & PENSION

Map p50

Hotel & Apartments €

A sprawling place that has built a reputation for providing cheap, clean and comfortable rooms, the Side has hotel rooms with TV and en suite; pension rooms with shared or private bathrooms; and fully equipped but dark apartments sleeping one to six people. The picks of the bunch are the front hotel rooms with private balcony overlooking the Blue Mosque and Aya Sofya. The rooftop garden-lounge has decent views and a welcoming atmosphere. Note that air-con costs an extra \in 10 per room per night.

ORIENT INTERNATIONAL HOSTEL Map p50 Hostel €

The Orient should only be considered if you don't care about creature comforts and are ready to party. There's a shower for every 12 guests and an array of dorms, some of which are light and relatively quiet, and others that are unpleasantly dark and have the most uncomfortable mattresses that we've ever encountered (and considering our job, that's really saying something). The cheapest option is a barracks-style 30-bed dorm. The rooftop terrace bar has fabulous views and is a good place to relax, unlike the noisy cafeteria and internet area. Private rooms are overpriced for what they offer.

MAVI GUESTHOUSE Map p50

212-517 7287; www.maviguesthouse.com;
 Kutlugün Sokak 3, Sultanahmet; dm €10-11, s €20,
 d €24-30; □ : Sultanahmet

Hostel €

Hostel €

Mavi's management is very friendly, which is just as well since some rooms at this tiny place are cramped and windowless, and all share bathrooms that could do with a thorough scrub. Mattresses on the rooftop cost ϵ 7 (including breakfast) but the best value is provided by front rooms, one of which has an Aya Sofya view. Breakfast is served downstairs or at streetside tables.

SULTAN HOSTEL Map p50

ⓐ 212-516 9260; www.sultanhostel.com; Akbıyık Sokak 21, Cankurtaran; dm €9-15, d without/with bathroom €30/36; ➢ ⓐ ; ⓐ Sultanahmet Next door to – and clearly in hot competition with – the Orient, this place is currently undergoing a staged renovation. As a result, it offers accommodation that is far more comfortable than that provided by its raffish neighbour. The freshly painted dorms have new bunk beds and good mattresses; linen is clean and crisp and towels are provided. Shared bathrooms are very clean and there are female-only dorms for those gals who want to steer clear of smelly socks. The pick of the rooms on offer is number 48, a double with lovely Sea of Marmara views and its own cubicle bathroom. Views from the terrace bar aren't as impressive as those at the Orient, but its set-up is much more relaxed and stylish. There's a 10% discount for HI cardholders.

BAHAUS GUESTHOUSE Map p50 Hostel €

When it comes to hostels, word of mouth is the most reliable gauge of guality. And this place generates great word of mouth. Friendly and knowledgeable staff run a professional operation that's miles away from the institutional feel of some of its nearby and much larger competitors. Dorms have bunks with good mattresses and curtains to provide a skerrick of privacy; some have their own bathroom and all have ceiling fans. There's one shared bathroom for every seven beds and a constant supply of lukewarm water. Top marks go to the rooftop terrace, with its sea view, beanbags, cheap evening meals (YTL8), beers (YTL5) and nargilehs (YTL5).

BIG APPLE HOSTEL Map p50 Hostel €

212-517 7931; www.hostelbigapple.com; Bayram Fırını Sokak 12, Cankurtaran; dm €9-12; Sultanahmet

Though a newcomer to the competitive Cankurtaran hostel scene, we reckon this wellrun place is likely to be a stayer. Dorms on the ground floor are a bit dingy, but those above are light, freshly painted and clean. There's a foyer with large-screen satellite TV and a rooftop bar with beanbags, lounges and good views where you can enjoy a nargileh (YTL6) and a cheap beer (YTL3).

TOPKAPI PALACE & AROUND

There aren't too many hotels in this area. Fortunately, the two below – one near Gülhane **SLEEPING TOPKAPI PALACE & AROUND**

Park and the other close to the Spice Bazaar are both sound choices.

AYASOFYA KONAKLARI

Ottoman Boutique Hotel €€ Map p63 212-513 3660; www.ayasofyakonaklari.com; Soğukcesme Sokak; s €85-100, d €110-130, ste

€190; 🔀 🛄 ; 🖲 Gülhane If you're keen to play out Ottoman fantasies, come here. A row of 19th-century wooden houses occupying an entire cobbled street abutting Topkapi Palace (Topkapi Sarayı; p62), Ayasofya Konakları is about as authentic as the Ottoman boutique hotel comes and it's picturesque to boot. Choose from a total of 52 rooms, all of which are charmingly decorated with brass beds, and enjoy the most glamorous breakfast in town, served in a glass conservatory complete with chandeliers.

KONUK EVİ Map p63 Ottoman Boutique Hotel €€

212-513 3660; www.ayasofyapensions.com; Soğukcesme Sokak: s €85-100, d €110-130; 🕄 🛄 ; **G** Gülhane

Part of the Ayasofya Konakları (above), this annex set in a spectacular private garden overlooking the Caferağa Medresesi (p73) is even more impressive than its parent. Rooms are large and extremely elegant, with parquet floors, luxurious rugs and velvet-upholstered furniture. The building itself is a replica of a large Ottoman house that was on this site, so it has all the mod cons as well as more than its fair share of period charm. The foyer features gilt mirrors and a grand piano. An undeniably classy option.

KYBELE HOTEL

Map p63 Ottoman Boutique Hotel €€ a 212-511 7766; www.kybelehotel.com; Yerebatan Caddesi 35, Alemdar: s €70-80, d €90-120; 🔀 🛄 ; 🖲 Sultanahmet

The gilded exterior of this small hotel

(peacock blue with loads of gold) reflects the décor inside, which features hundreds of coloured lights, wooden floors covered in rugs, and antique furniture and curios. Run by three brothers in a personable and professional style, it's got bucketloads of charm and lots of added extras, including a great café and bar, a charming rear garden patio and a library for guests. The location near Aya Sofya is central, and the rooms, which feature cute marble bathrooms, are smallish but comfortable. Trv

OTTOMAN HOTEL IMPERIAL

corker.

and score room number 201, which is a

Ottoman Boutique Hotel €€

Map p63 212-513 6150/1; www.ottomanhotelimperial .com; Caferiye Sokak 6/1; standard s/d €89/109, superior s/d €129/149; 🕅 🕄 🛄 ; 🗊 Gülhane This recently opened four-star hotel is in a wonderful location just outside the walls of Topkapı Palace (Topkapı Sarayı; p62). Once the city's main youth hostel, the building has been extensively renovated and features large rooms decorated with Ottomanstyle ceramics, textiles and ebru (traditional Turkish marbling). Comfort and amenity levels are high, and some rooms have Aya Sofya views (try and snaffle number 406). There's a lift, a lovely rear garden with restaurant and bar, and excellent levels of service.

TAN OTEL Map p63 Boutique Hotel €€

🕿 212-520 9130; www.tanhotel.com; Dr Emin Paşa Sokak 20, Alemdar: s/d/ste €80/99/139; 🔀 🕄 🛄 ; **G** Sultanahmet

Run by an enthusiastic brother-and-sister team, this newly opened hotel off Divan Yolu is a showcase of understated style and high-level service. Everything here is brand spanking new and generously sized the beds in some rooms are so large we can only describe them as Sheikh-sized. Bathrooms are excellent (all have Jacuzzis) and are so clean they gleam. There's even a terrace bar sporting excellent views of the Blue Mosque, Aya Sofya and the Sea of Marmara.

WORLD PARK HOTEL Map p63 Hotel €€

212-527 6767; www.worldparkhotel.com; Hamidiye Caddesi 64, Eminönü; s/d/ste €199/229/369; 🗙 🕄 🔲 🔊 🔄 ; 🗟 Sirkeci

Occupying the architecturally significant 4 Vakif Han (p92), this recently opened fivestar hotel conversion is a mass of contradictions. The 'Kullive' rooms are massive and wonderfully full of light, whereas the 'Atrium' rooms are relatively small and dark - bizarrely, there's no difference in price. And the architects have done an absolutely wonderful job renovating the grand foyer, but have totally missed the opportunity to capitalise on what could have been a fabulous top-floor terrace, instead offering a bland and unwelcoming function room-cum-buffet restaurant

area. We like the pool, hamam and fitness centre in the basement, though, and find the location next to the Spice Bazaar (p82) excellent.

Hotel €€

Hotel €€

HOTEL ERBOY Map p63

212-513 3750; www.erboyhotel.com; Ebussuut Caddesi 32, Sirkeci; s/d €54/64; 🕅 🕄 ; 🗊 Sirkeci The Vegas-style furniture and marble floors in its lobby are the Erboy's only attempts at glamour. The rest of the place is resolutely mom-and-pop style, with small rooms that are clean but without frills. On the plus side, the location, near Topkapı, is central and guiet, and the rooms are reasonably priced. There's a roof terrace with so-so views and a pleasant restaurant spilling into the cobbled street.

BAZAAR DISTRICT

This part of town is noisy and doesn't have the charm of the rest of Óld İstanbul, but its close proximity to the Grand Bazaar will be drawcard enough for some visitors.

HOTEL NILES Map p78

a 212-517 3239; www.hotelniles.com; Dibekli Cami Sokak 19, Beyazıt; s/d €55/65; 🕅 🕄 ; 🗊 Beyazıt Serious shoppers seduced by the prospect of bunking down close to the Grand Bazaar could do a lot worse than stay in this wellrun and reasonably priced place. Rooms are characterless but extremely clean, and there's a pleasant rooftop terrace and restaurant.

HOTEL TÜRKUAZ Map p78

212-518 1897; www.hotelturkuaz.com; Kadırga Cinci Mevdanı 36, Kumkapı; s €35, d €40-45, ste €65-80; 🕄 ; 🗐 Bevazıt

Ottoman Boutique Hotel €€

If you're the type of traveller who is happy to trade comfort for character, this eccentric place will be right up your alley. In a local neighbourhood near Küçük Aya Sofya (p57), it occupies an atmospheric 150-yearold timber mansion that once would have been the grandest place on the block but now is in urgent need of a facelift. The owners have plans to replace the antiguated bathrooms and hot-water system, sagging beds and patchy plasterwork in the near future, but are fortunately intent on retaining the crystal chandeliers, velvet curtains and ornate furniture.

GALATA & TOPHANE

In many ways, this is the best location in İstanbul. Halfway between the major sights of Old İstanbul and the main entertainment and eating strip of İstiklal Caddesi, it's rapidly building a reputation as the city's new bohemian centre, with art galleries, cafés, bars and funky boutiques starting to sprout.

ANEMON GALATA Map p103

Ottoman Boutique Hotel €€

212-293 2343; www.anemonhotels.com; cnr Galata Meydani & Büyükhendek Caddesi, Karaköy; s/d € 120/140; 🔀 🔀 🛄 ; 👰 Karaköy Small hotels don't come much better than this, particularly on this side of town. Located on the attractive new square that's been built around Galata Tower, this wooden building dates from 1842 but has been almost completely rebuilt inside. Individually decorated rooms are extremely elegant, featuring ornate painted ceilings, king-sized beds and antique-style desks. Large bathrooms have baths and marble basins. Frankly, we're not sure which of the hotel's features is the best. Is it the classically beautiful fover with its chandeliers, marble floors and luxurious rugs? Or the stylish modern bar-restaurant sheathed in glass that's been built on the rooftop? Ask for a room with a view.

GALATA RESIDENCE CAMONDO APARTMENT HOTEL Map p103

Apartments €€

212-292 4841; www.galataresidence.com; Haci Ali Sokak, Karaköy; 1-/2-bed apartments €80/120; 🔀 ; 🗊 Karaköy

Buried in the maze of narrow streets down from the Galata Tower, this historic building was built in the late 19th century to house indigent Jewish families. It's now an apartment-hotel with a Greek restaurant on the top floor and a modern annex (for the one-bedroom apartments) next door. Perfectly situated between İstiklal Caddesi and Eminönü (to find it, ask taxi drivers to drop you in front of the Yasar Bank at the corner of Voyvova Caddesi and Haracci Ali Sokak and walk up the steep stairs – the hotel is right at the top), the fully-equipped apartments are run down but comfortable, with large rooms and a reasonable amount of light. Top marks go to the daily servicing and the helpful staff. To avoid listening to

SLEEPING BAZAAR DISTRICT

renditions of Zorba the Greek late into the night, avoid the top-floor rooms. Monthly rates are available.

EKLEKTİK GUEST HOUSE Map p103

Ottoman Boutique Hotel €€ 212-243 7446; www.eklektikgalata.com;

Karaköv

Kadrıbey Cıkmazi 4, Galata; r €95-115; 🕄 🛄 ; Advertising itself as offering 'the first and

only gay accommodation in Istanbul', this gay-owned-and-managed place offers seven individually decorated rooms with TV. You can enact fantasies in the Pasha Room, chill out after a big night in the Zen Room or just feel funky in the Retro Room. There's a roof terrace for bronzing that buffed bod. It's hard to find – look for the bright pink building (geddit?) in a cul de sac.

İSTANBUL HOLIDAY APARTMENTS Apartments €€

212-251 8530; www.istanbulholidavapartments .com; per night €90-210; 🕄 ; 📵 Karaköy

Saving that holiday apartments in Istanbul are easy to find is like saying the sultans were celibate - it just ain't true. So we can say with absolute certainty that the everexpanding portfolio of apartments run by American Ann Taboroff Uysel is as unique as it is welcome. Now in locations as diverse as Galata, Cihangir, Taksim, Sisli and Besiktas, these handsome apartments in residential blocks are perfect for city sojourns of three days or more. Our favourites are the penthouse terrace and top-floor view apartments in the Glorya building near the Galata Tower, but all are impressive, having undergone guality renovations and being fitted out with washer/drier, good kitchens, CD players and satellite TVs; some have aircon and/or dishwashers and some have knock-em-dead views over the Golden Horn and Bosphorus. There's weekly maid service.

WORLD HOUSE HOSTEL Map p103 Hostel €

a 212-293 5520; www.worldhouseistanbul. com: Galipdede Caddesi 85, Tünel: dm €10-14, s/d €35/40; 🔲 🔀 ; 🗊 Karaköy

We like this place. Hostels in Istanbul are usually impersonal hulks with jungle-like atmospheres, but World House is small, friendly and calm. Best of all is the fact that it's located close to Beyoğlu's restaurant, bar and club scene, but not too

close - meaning that it's possible to grab a decent night's kip here. The enthusiastic young owners have set up a cheerful café on the ground floor and have plans to build both a terrace on the roof and a second hostel nearby. The small dorms are clean and light, and bathrooms are in plentiful supply. Avoid the private rooms they're far too expensive for what they offer.

İSTİKLAL & AROUND

If you're in town to party at the nightclubs, take advantage of the city's great restaurant and bar scene or do business, this is a good choice of location. Hotels here are more expensive and generally less impressive than their Sultanahmet alternatives, though.

MARMARA İSTANBUL Map p107

Luxurv Hotel €€€

212-251 4696; www.themarmarahotels.com; Taksim Square; s €350-400, d €400-480, ste €650-950; 🕅 🔀 💷 😰 ; 🗊 Kabataş, then funicular to Taksim

Right beside busy Taksim Square, the Marmara is an İstanbul institution, having opened to great acclaim in 1976. Its splendid views (10th floor and up) and extremely comfortable rooms make it a good choice for tourists and business people alike. Rooms are large with a classy décor enlivened with royal-blue and gold Ottoman touches. There is a rooftop restaurant and bar, as well as a gym and hamam. Breakfast costs an extra €24

MARMARA PERA Map p107

Luxurv Hotel €€

212-251 4646; www.themarmarahotels.com; Mesrutiyet Caddesi 1, Tepebası; s €225-260, d €250-285; 🕅 🔀 🛄 廃 🕭 ; 🗭 Karaköy, then funicular to Tünel

This funky little sister of the landmark hotel in Taksim Square opened in 2004 and has been a popular choice with glam globetrotters ever since. Rooms are small-ish but extremely well appointed, featuring guality touches such as a magazine selection, pillow menu and stylish white linen. Standout amenities include one of the best restaurants in the city, Mikla (p165), a rooftop pool bar with spectacular views, and a 24hour fitness centre. It's worth paying extra for a room on a higher floor with sea view.

Note that the hotel website usually has much cheaper deals on offer than the rack rates cited above.

LUSH HIP HOTEL Map p107 Boutique Hotel €€ 212-243 9595; www.lushhiphotel.com; Sıraselvıler Sokak 12, Taksim; s €182-244, d €214-278; 🔀 🕄 🔲 ; 🔅 Kabatas, then funicular to Taksim

One of a fast-sprouting crop of boutique hotels around town, this self-consciously hip place has 22 attractive rooms of varying sizes, all of which are individually decorated and presented with nice touches such as L'Occitane toiletries and CD players. There's a strong emphasis on service here – if you want a personal shopper or a limousine, you'll have no trouble getting them - and management claims that its staff possess 'a mastery of speedy problem solving'. Gosh. It's on a busy street near Taksim Square, so front rooms could be a tad noisy.

TAKSIM SQUARE HOTEL Map p107 Hotel €€

a 212-292 6440; www.taksimsguarehotel.com.tr; Sıraselviler Caddesi 15, Taksim; s/d €120/130; 🕅 🔀 ; 🗊 Kabataş, then funicular to Taksim This glass-fronted building matches the ugly Taksim surrounds, but inside you'll be pleasantly surprised by the large rooms, which feature a stylish autumn-leaf décor. Most rooms have views (Square or Bosphorus); corner rooms from the fourth floor up have views of both sides at a nice price, so request one of these. The top-floor breakfast salon is a great place to prepare for the day. In all, a bargain four-star choice.

RICHMOND HOTEL Map p107 Hotel €€

☎ 212-252 5460; www.richmondhotels.com.tr; İstiklal Caddesi 445; r €89-119, ste €199;

🕅 🔀 🛄 : 🗊 Karaköv, then funicular to Tünel Next to the palatial Russian consulate, the Richmond has a fabulous location right on the city's major boulevard. Behind its 19th-century facade, the place is modern, guite comfortable and well run. Standard rooms are comfortable if characterless, but the suites are knock outs, with modernist décor, excellent views, great workstations, Jacuzzis and plasma TVs. Best of all is the fact that one of the best bars in the city, Leb-i Derya Richmond (p176) is on the top floor, meaning that your bed will only be a short stagger away. A mainly business clientele keeps the place busy so book ahead.

TRIADA RESIDENCE Map p107 Apartments €€

212-251 0101; www.triadaresidence.com; Meselik Sokak 10, Taksim; r €60-80; 🔀 ; () Kabatas, then funicular to Taksim

Attracted by the idea of sitting in your own apartment and enjoying a meal and a bottle of wine before kicking off to a nearby club? You can do this at the Triada. These well-appointed apartments, which sleep up to three, are located in a side street off İstiklal Caddesi and are perfect for those who want to self-cater. All have small, clean kitchens and bathrooms, as well as a bedroom and sitting area with satellite TV. The best of the bunch is apartment 601, which has a huge terrace complete with BBQ, outdoor furniture and a view of Taksim Square.

HOTEL RESIDENCE Map p107 Hotel €€

212-252 7685; www.hotelresidence.com.tr; Sadri Alışık Sokak 19, off İstiklal Caddesi; s/d €44/55; 🕄 ; 🗊 Kabatas, then funicular to Taksim This place is opposite a large police station, so quests will feel extremely safe when returning from a heavy night of partying at the nearby nightclubs. It's very old-fashioned and not at all stylish, but at these prices, who's complaining? Rooms are light and have a small bathroom; most have twin beds.

BÜYÜK LONDRA OTELİ Map p107

Historic Hotel €€

Book accommodation online at lonelyplanet.com

212-245 0670; www.londrahotel.net; Meşrutiyet Caddesi 117, Tepebaşı; unrenovated s €35-100, d €50-115, renovated s €75-120, d €85-130: 🕄 : 🗊 Karaköv, then funicular to Tünel The Büyük's 'gothic house of horrors' feel may not be for everyone. Dating from the same era as the nearby Pera Palas Oteli (p110), it is looking decidedly worse for wear these days. The good news is that its run-down rooms are slowly being renovated - we'd suggest making a booking only if you are guaranteed one of these. The remaining rooms are musty and very scuffed around the edges, with tiny bathrooms and no aircon. Fortunately, you can always escape them and park yourself at a table in the wonderfully atmospheric foyer bar (p175).

VARDAR PALACE HOTEL Map p107 Hotel €€

212-252 2888; www.vardarhotel.com; Sıraselviler Caddesi 54, Taksim: s €44-64, d €78-90: 😢 ; 🗊 Kabataş, then funicular to Taksim This old-fashioned small hotel just off Taksim Square offers excellent value for money and

SLEEPING İSTİKLAL & AROUND

so is well worth considering. Rooms at the rear are darkish and quiet, front rooms are light but face onto a noisy nightclub strip – all are very clean and come with cable TV. There's a roof terrace with great views.

YENİŞEHİR PALAS Map p107

Hotel €€

You could do a lot worse than book into one of the deluxe or renovated rooms here, which are clean, comfortable and well priced. The exterior is unprepossessing, but the interior can hold its own with most of the city's business hotels. There's an English-style pub downstairs that's often crowded with Russian guests.

TAKSİM, HARBİYE & NİŞANTAŞI

Take the metro to Osmanbey, one stop from Taksim Square (or walk 30 minutes), and you'll find the upmarket shopping districts of Harbiye and Nişantaşı, home to some of the city's best luxury hotels.

BENTLEY HOTEL Map p115 Luxury Hotel €€€

The Bentley features luxurious rooms that look as if they're straight from the pages of *Wallpaper* magazine, sleek suites for those in the mood to splurge and enough staff to cater to your every whim. If you over-indulge in the classy foyer bar, don't worry – the health club and sauna will help you recover.

SOFA HOTEL Map p115

212-368 1818; www.thesofahotel.com;
 Teşvikiye Caddesi 123, Nişantaşı; s/d €280/300, ste
 €390-1000;
 ☑ I;
 ☑ Kabataş, then funicular to Taksim, then metro to Osmanbey

Luxury Hotel €€€

The chichi Sofa Hotel has got the lot: huge rooms, pillow menus, complimentary ironing service, personalised letterhead, rain showers, a spa (with dipping pool) and a fitness room. Once coaxed out of your room, you'll be able to dine in the wellregarded TuuS restaurant, which serves artfully presented and ruinously expensive 'New Mediterranean' cuisine.

DIVAN TAKSIM SUITES Map p115 Hotel €€

a 212-254 7777; www.divan.com.tr; Cumhurivet Caddesi 49, Taksim: r €250-275; 🕄 😐 : () Kabatas, then funicular to Taksim The Divan Taksim Suites is a showcase for the Ikea aesthetic. The 14 hotel suites, all with well-equipped kitchens, feature light wooden floors and white furniture: very minimal and about as far away from 'Cankurtaran Modern' as you can get. Front suites on the 4th to 7th floors have Bosphorus views, but overlook manic Cumhuriyet Caddesi and so are very noisy - consider requesting one at the rear. All feature sitting areas, work desks and large beds. There's a downstairs breakfast room, a small gym on the roof and daily maid service.

CENTRAL PALACE Map p115 Luxury Hotel €€

212-313 4040; www.thecentralpalace.com; Lamartin Caddesi 18, Taksim; s/d €190/230; 🕅 🕄 🛄 ; 🖲 Kabatas, then funicular to Taksim This boutique hotel has been designed around a 'wellness' concept. Parquet floors feature instead of asthma-inducing carpets, therapeutic fruit juices for every possible complaint are available at the flick of a room-service switch, the restaurant food is all organic, and massage showers and Jacuzzis are installed in every bathroom. Ten rooms even have their own exercise bike. We feel healthy even thinking about checking in. The joy is that the place is not at all hippy-dippy: appointments are luxurious, all fabrics are from Vakko (İstanbul's poshest store) and the décor is opulent, with oodles of gilt and marble. The only things missing are views and alcohol service.

RIVA HOTEL Map p115

Hotel €€

One of a host of similar places around Taksim, the Riva as long been a safe albeit unsexy choice. The rooms are clean, light and roomy, with comfortable beds and a tiny bathroom. There's a bar downstairs and a welcoming breakfast room on the mezzanine. Look out for the regular promotional rates, which are half the rack rate above, that feature on its website.

BOSPHORUS NIGHTS

BESİKTAŞ & ORTAKÖY If you have cash to spare and don't mind being

If you have cash to spare and don't mind being away from the centres of Sultanahmet and Taksim Square, the suburbs along the Bosphorus could be just what you're looking for. One thing is sure: the views and hotel restaurants in this golden strip are damn fine. During research, the new Four Seasons Hotel Istanbul at the Bosphorus (www.fourseasons.com) on Çırağan Caddesi in Beşiktaş was approaching completion. Right on the water, its 166 rooms, pools and spa will no doubt be extremely impressive.

ÇIRAĞAN PALACE HOTEL KEMPINSKI Map p117 Luxury Hotel €€€

 212-326 4646; www.ciragan-palace.com;

 Çırağan Caddesi 32, Beşiktaş; r €306-810, ste €810-10,260; 20
 21
 22
 21
 22
 22
 23
 24
 24
 27
 27
 28
 28
 29
 Yıldız

Housed in a palace constructed by Sultan Abdülaziz and rebuilt as a hotel in the 1980s, most of the guest rooms in this five-star place are in a modern annexe next door. The recently renovated wedding cake-style palace holds meeting rooms, posh 'palace suites', a ballroom and restaurants. The best things about the place are its location right on the Bosphorus and its amazing infinity pool. If you've got deep pockets, opt for a sea-facing room with balcony – they're much nicer than the parkview alternatives. We're sure that Abdülaziz would have approved of the hotel boat, which ferries guests from Ataköy near the airport across the water to the hotel's private landing place, but we doubt he would have got his head around the concept of the hotel's wellness spa and hamam.

Book accommodation online at lonelyplanet.com

© Lonely Planet Publications. To make it easier for you to use, access to this chapter is not digitally restricted. In return, we think it's fair to ask you to use it for personal, non-commercial purposes only. In other words, please don't upload this chapter to a peer-to-peer site, mass email it to everyone you know, or resell it. See the terms and conditions on our site for a longer way of saying the above - 'Do the right thing with our content.'

SLEEPING TAKSİM, HARBİYE & NİŞANTAŞI