

TransAnatolie 3402: Roxana: 5 Day Cultural Tour in Istanbul Turkey: Cultural Heritage Tour to Turkey: Explore Istanbul - The Capital of 5 Civilisations: 4 Star (or 5 star)

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Day 1: Arrival in Istanbul.

Sightseeing city tour, dinner and overnight at the 4 star Armada Hotel. [i](#)

Day 2: Istanbul

In the morning, discovery of the Golden Horn and of the Pierre Loti area. Visits to Ottoman Imperial Cemetery and Eyüp Mosque. Walks along the Roman-Byzantine city walls and visit the Chora Church and Mihrimah Sultan Mosque.

The great Mosque of Eyüp lies outside the city walls, near the Golden Horn, at the supposed place where Eyüp, the standard bearer of the Prophet Mohammed, died in the Islamic assault on Constantinople in 670 A.D. The first mosque built after the Ottoman conquest of the city, this greatly venerated shrine attracts many pilgrims.

The Kariye Museum (Chora Church), the 11th century church of "St. Savior" in Chora, is, after St. Sophia, the most important Byzantine monument in Istanbul. Unremarkable in its architecture, inside, the walls are decorated with superb 14th century frescoes and mosaics. Illustrating scenes from the life of Christ and the Virgin Mary, these brilliantly coloured paintings embody the vigour of Byzantine art. Restored wooden houses in the area surrounding the church offer tea and coffee in a relaxed, atmosphere far removed from the city's hectic pace.

Walls of glass fill the four immense arches that support the central dome at the Mihrimah Sultan Mosque inside the Edirne gate of the old city walls. One hundred and sixty-one windows illuminate this mosque, built by Sinan for Mihrimah Sultana, the daughter of Süleyman the Magnificent in 1555.

Lunch is next to the Roman Circus in a well known Turkish-Greek restaurant.

Afternoon: We visit Aya Sophia (Hagia Sophie) and Topkapi Palace Museums and end up at the Grand Bazaar. Free dinner and overnight at the hotel.

The Basilica of St. Sophia, now called the Ayasofya Museum, is unquestionably one of the finest buildings of all time. Built by Constantine the Great and reconstructed by Justinian in the 6th century, its immense dome rises 55 meters above the ground and its diameter spans 31 meters. You should linger here to absorb the building's majestic serenity and to admire the fine Byzantine mosaics.

On a spot of land at the confluence of the Bosphorus, the Golden Horn and the Marmara Sea, stands Topkapi Palace, a maze of buildings at the center of the Ottoman Empire between the 15th and 19th centuries. In these opulent surroundings the sultans and their court lived and governed. A magnificent wooded garden fills the outer, or first, court. To the right of the second court, shaded by cypress and plane trees, stand the palace kitchens, now galleries exhibiting the imperial collections of crystal, silver and Chinese porcelain. To the left, the Harem, the secluded quarters of the wives, concubines and children of the sultan, charms visitors with echoes of a centuries old intrigue.

Today, the third court holds the Hall of Audience, the Library of Ahmet III, an exhibition of imperial costumes worn by the sultans and their families, the famous jewels of the treasury and a priceless collection of miniatures from medieval manuscripts. In the center of this innermost sanctuary, the Pavilion of the Holy Mantle enshrines the relics of the Prophet Mohammed brought to Istanbul when the Ottomans assumed the caliphate of Islam

The cascading domes and four slender minarets of Süleymaniye Mosque dominate the skyline on the Golden Horn's west bank. Considered the most beautiful of all imperial mosques in Istanbul, it was built between 1550 and 1557 by

Sinan, the renowned architect of the Ottoman golden age. On the crest of a hill, the building is conspicuous by its great size, which the four minarets that rise from each corner of the courtyard emphasize. Inside, the mihrab (prayer niche) and the mimber (pulpit) are of finely carved white marble; fine stained glass windows color the incoming streams of light. It was in the gardens of this complex that Süleyman and his wife Hürrem Sultan, Roxelane, had their mausolea built, and near here also that Sinan built his own tomb. The mosque complex also includes four medrese, or theological schools, a school of medicine, a caravanserai, a Turkish bath, and a kitchen and hospice for the poor.

We dine at Istanbul By Night at Kumkapi and overnight at the 4 star hotel with high QoS. [i](#)

Day 3: Istanbul

In the morning, visit the Hippodrome, Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum located at the Ibrahim Pascha Palace, as well as the Ethnographical Museum in Istanbul. Not to forget to explore the Master Piece Blue Mosque.

The dark stone building that houses the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art was built in 1524 by Ibrahim Pasa; Grand Vizier to Süleyman the Magnificent, as his residence. It was the grandest private residence ever built in the Ottoman Empire. Today, it houses a superb collection of ceramics, metalwork miniatures, calligraphy, textiles, and woodwork as well as some of the oldest carpets in the world.

Then we visit the sixth century Byzantine cistern known as the Yerebatan Sarnici. Three hundred and thirty-six massive Corinthian columns support the immense chamber's fine brick vaulting.

Walking along the Sultan Ahmet Square we arrive in the famous Blue Mosque. Facing St. Sophia stands the supremely elegant, six-minaret, imperial Sultanahmet Mosque. Built between 1609 and 1616 by the architect Mehmet, the building is more familiarly known as the Blue Mosque because its interior gleams with a magnificent paneling of blue and white Iznik tiles. During the summer months an evening light and sound show both entertain and inform.

Before lunch we become familiar with Turkish Cultural Products: carpets and kilims, jewellery and leather. Delicious lunch is at the Mesopotamian restaurant.

Afternoon: visit the Egyptian and Second-hand markets. We then fully enjoy the wonderful Bosphorus Cruise between two continents Asia and Europe,

A stay in Istanbul is not complete without the traditional and unforgettable boat excursion up the Bosphorus, the winding strait that separates Europe and Asia. Its shores offer a delightful mixture of past and present, grand splendor and simple beauty. Modern hotels stand next to yali (shorefront wooden villas), marble palaces abut rustic stone fortresses, and elegant compounds neighbour small fishing villages. During the journey, you pass in front of the magnificent Dolmabahçe Palace; farther along rise the green parks and imperial pavilions of Yildiz Palace. On the edge of this park, on the coast, stands Çiragan Palace, now restored as a grand hotel. Refurbished in 1874 by Sultan Abdülaziz, it stretches for 300 meters along the Bosphorus shore, its ornate marble facades reflecting the swiftly moving water. In Ortaköy, the next stop, artists gather every Sunday to exhibit their works in a streetside gallery. The variety of people create a lively scene; sample a delicious bite from one of the street vendors. In Ortaköy, there is a church, mosque and a synagogue that have existed side by side for hundreds of years - a tribute to Turkish secularism and tolerance. Overshadowing Istanbul's traditional architecture is the Bosphorus Bridge, one of the world's largest suspension bridges linking Europe and Asia.

We finally dine and enjoy the night at our 4 star hotel with high QoS. [i](#)

Day 4: Istanbul

Morning: visit the Cistern-Basilica, Istanbul Archaeological Museum and Oriental Antiques Museum in Cinili Kosk. Then cruise on the Bosphorus via the suspension bridge to have lunch in the Asian part of Istanbul; the Fenerbahce area.

The Archaeological Museums are found just inside the first court of Topkapi Palace. Included among the displays are the celebrated Alexander Sarcophagus among its treasures of antiquity.

The Museum of the Ancient Orient displays artifacts from the Sumerian, Babylonian, Assyrian, Hatti and Hittite civilizations. Originally built as a kösk or pavilion by Mehmet the Conqueror in the 15th century, the Çinili Kösk, which houses the Museum of Turkish Ceramics, contains beautiful Iznik wares from the 16th century and fine examples of Seljuk and Ottoman pottery and tiles

Afternoon: discovery of the Beylerbeyi Ottoman Imperial Palace. Walk up to the Camlica Hill: higher point of the city: Back to Europe in the hotel. Free dinner and evening.

In the 19th century, Sultan Abdülaziz built the Beylerbeyi Palace, a fantasy in white marble amid magnolia filled gardens, on the Bosphorus's Asian Shore. Used as the Sultan's summer residence, it was offered to the most distinguished foreign dignitaries during their visits. Empress Eugenie of France was among its residents. [i](#)

Day 5: Istanbul

Breakfast. Free trade according to flights schedule. Possibility of optional visits. Transfer to the airport. [i](#)

Price

- For Pricing Click [List of TransAnatolie Turkey Tours, Services and Pricing](#) or
- Contac Us: [Contact Information for TransAnatolie Tour](#)

Optional evening activities

- Special Dinner with show at the Caravanserai Night Club at Galata Tower or at the Orient House Istanbul.
- Turkish Belly Dance [i](#)

Optional visits

- Dolmabahce Palace
- Free Lunch in Mata Hari area in Galatasaray
- Visits Beyoglu, Galatasaray [i](#)

Rates include

- 5 days/4 nights

- Accommodations in 4 star hotels, 4 nights with BB (full pension)
- Transportation in Turkey
- Lunches in traditional restaurants
- All admission fees for museums and sites mentioned
- Services of Professional Certified Guide [i](#)

Rates exclude

- Return Flights Europe/Istanbul/Europe
- Insurance, Airport tax
- Drinks and tips [i](#)

Links

- Istanbul,
- Byzantium,
- Ottoman Empire
- Museums [i](#)

Roxelana

Roxelana, Roxolana, Roxelane, Rossa, Ruziac, known also by her Turkish name of Hürrem (or Khourrem or Karima), meaning "the cheerful one", (c. 1510 - April 18, 1558) was the Ukrainian ("Ruthenian" in the terminology of the day) and only legal wife of the Ottoman sultan Süleyman the Magnificent² of the Ottoman Empire. Sixteenth century sources are silent as to her maiden name, but much later Ukrainian and Polish traditions, especially Ukrainian folk traditions first recorded in the nineteenth century, give it as Anastasia (diminutive: Nastia) or Aleksandra Lisovska. [i](#)

Early life

According to late sixteenth century and early seventeenth century sources like the famous Polish poet, Samuel Twardowski, who actually did research on the subject in Turkey, Hürrem was born to a father who was a Ukrainian, or Ruthenian, Orthodox priest, in the town of Rohatyn which is located 68 km, south east of Lviv, a major city of Galicia which was then part of the Kingdom of Poland, today in western

Ukraine. She was captured by Crimean Tatars during one of their frequent raids into this region and taken as a slave, probably first to the Crimean city of Kaffa (Kefe in Turkish, Caffa in Italian), a major centre of the slave trade, then to Istanbul, and was selected for Süleyman's Harem. She quickly came to the attention of her master, and attracted the jealousy of her rivals. One day Süleyman's former favorite, the concubine Mahidevran, also called "Gul Bahar" (The Flower of Spring), got into a fight with Hürrem and beat her badly. Upset by this, Süleyman sent Mahidevran away from Istanbul to the provincial capital of Manisa together with her son, the heir apparent, Prince Mustafa. Thereafter, Hürrem became Süleyman's unrivalled favorite or Haseki. Many years later, probably at the instigation of Hurrem, the Sultan ordered Mustafa to be strangled. [i](#)

Marriage

Hürrem's influence over the Sultan soon became legendary; she was to bear Süleyman five children and, in an astonishing break with tradition, eventually was freed and became his legal wife. This strengthened her position in the palace and eventually led to one of her sons, Selim inheriting the empire. Hürrem also may have acted as Süleyman's advisor on other matters of state, and seems to have had an influence upon foreign affairs and international politics. Two of her letters to the Polish King Sigismund Augustus have been preserved and during her lifetime, the Ottoman Empire generally had peaceful relations with the Polish state. Some historians also believe that she may have intervened with her husband to control Crimean Tatar slave-raiding in her native land. [i](#)

Charities

Aside from her political concerns, Hürrem engaged in several major works of public buildings, from Mecca to Jerusalem, perhaps modeling her charitable foundations in part after the caliph Harun al-Rashid's consort Zubaida. Among her first foundations were a mosque, two koranic schools, a fountain, and a women's hospital near the "Women's Slave Market"

(Avret Pazary) in Istanbul. She also commissioned a bath, the Haseki Hürrem Sultan Hamamı, to serve the community of worshipers in the nearby Hagia Sophia. As well, some of her embroidery, or at least embroidery done under her supervision, has survived, examples being given in 1547 to the Shah of Iran and in 1549 to King Sigismund Augustus. [i](#)

Death

Hürrem died on April 18, 1558. She is buried in a domed mausoleum (türbe) decorated in exquisite Iznik tiles depicting the garden of paradise, perhaps in homage to her smiling and joyful nature. Her mausoleum is adjacent to Süleyman's, a separate and more somber domed structure, at the Süleymaniye Mosque.

Hürrem, or Roxelana, as she is better known in Europe, is well-known both in modern Turkey and in the West, and is the subject of many artistic works. She has inspired paintings, musical works (including Joseph Haydn's Symphony No. 63), an opera by Denys Sichynsky, a ballet, plays, and several novels written mainly in Ukrainian, but also in English, French, and German. [i](#)

Suleiman the Magnificent

Suleyman the Magnificent (Kanuni Sultan Suleyman)Suleiman I (Ottoman Turkish: سلیمان سلا Sulaymān, Turkish: Süleyman; formally Kanuni Sultan Süleyman in Turkish) (November 6, 1494 – September 5/6, 1566), was the tenth and longest-serving Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, reigning from 1520 to 1566. He is known in the West as Suleiman the Magnificent and in the Islamic world, as the Lawgiver (in Turkish Kanuni), deriving from his complete reconstruction of the Ottoman legal system. Within the empire, Suleiman was known as a fair ruler and an opponent of corruption. As well as being a capable goldsmith and distinguished poet, Suleiman was also a great patron of artists and philosophers, overseeing the golden age of the Ottoman Empire's cultural development. Suleiman was considered one of the pre-eminent rulers of 16th century Europe. Under his leadership, the Ottoman Empire became among the worlds' foremost powers. Suleiman

personally led Ottoman armies to conquer Belgrade, Rhodes, and most of Hungary, laid the Siege of Vienna, and annexed most of the Middle East and huge territories in North Africa as far west as Algeria. For a short period, Ottomans achieved naval dominance in the Mediterranean Sea, Red Sea, and Persian Gulf. The Ottoman Empire continued to expand for a century after his death...Read more [i](#)

TransAnatolie Tour: Multilingual Cultural Tour Provider and Operator.

[i](#)