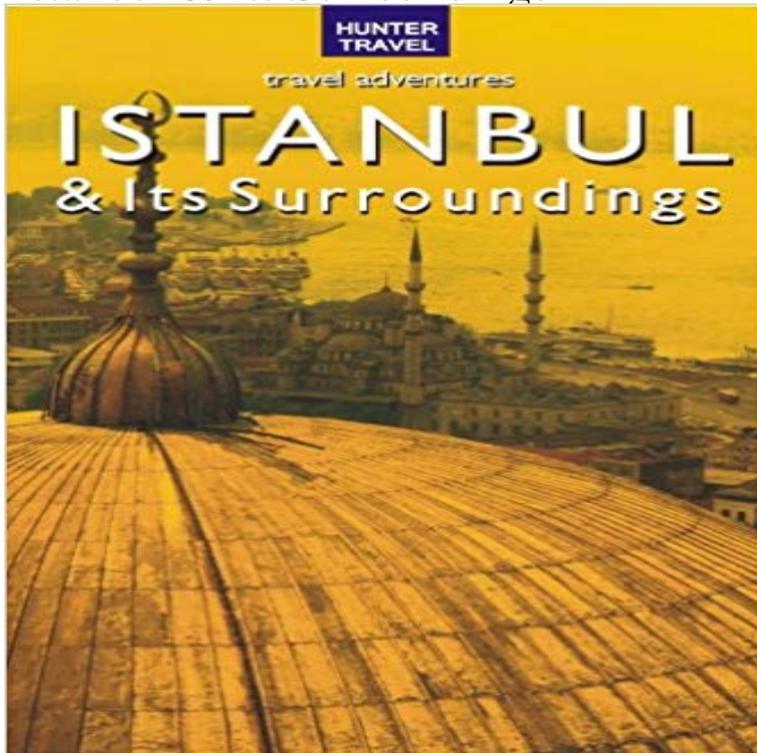


Istanbul & Its Surroundings



The second you land in Istanbul two things hit you: how vast it is and how chaotic. The cauldron of noise builds in the morning with the first call to prayer. As the city springs to life, ferries and tankers weave their way across the Bosphorus Strait from Asia to Europe and traffic chokes the streets. Hundreds of fishermen line the Galata Bridge in search of their daily catch to sell in cafes nestled below, while seagulls swoop and squall. At the end of the bridge, locals crush into the dark passageways at Eminonus spice market and along the warrens of the Grand Bazaar for another day of haggling. Turkey is so diverse it could almost be described as a continent rather than a country. In the west, mountains and pine forests frame a staggeringly beautiful coastline. The central steppe has the peculiar rock churches and underground cities of Cappadocia and the cosmopolitan capital of Ankara. In the east, there are biblical rivers, a fabled mountain and haunting cities and palaces. Then, there is the magnetism of Istanbul. Turkey's location straddles Asia and Europe. The three great Empires that ruled the country for thousands of years left a legacy of enchanting cultures and more ancient sites than even Italy or Greece can boast. Major areas dealt with in the guide include Istanbul, Thrace and Marmara, the Aegean Coast, the Mediterranean Coast, Central Anatolia, Cappadocia, the Black Sea Coast. Covered in detail for each area are where to stay, where to eat, shopping, sightseeing and adventures, both cultural and physical from walking in the footsteps of St. Paul to joining in the local festivals, from yoga and Turkish baths to art classes and cooking courses. This guide combines in-depth text information with color maps & photos on almost every page. Existing guides are largely text-only or mostly graphics and lacking the practical details travelers need. Excellent guide. If, like me, you are a bit

tired of the ethnocentric social commentary that seems to come with certain well known guidebooks then you could do worse than try this one. Simple to use, well written and accurate, I found it invaluable and couldnt fault any of its recommendations nor descriptions. -- Yurt (Amazon reviewer) Trade has, for the past 2,500 years, been the lifeblood of Istanbul. The citys location made it a prominent trading route and its inhabitants cling to that tradition. In Istanbul, it seems everyone is trying to sell you something, from the street peddlers offering fake perfume and shoe shines to markets with their elaborate displays of fish, nuts and Turkish sweets. The history and geography of Istanbul promise a taste of the exotic. Every corner throws up a relic of the Byzantium or Ottoman empires and as much as modern Istanbul tries to shake it off, the flavor of the East is everywhere. Istanbul is almost drowning from the weight of its archeological treasures. But it is so much more than just a history lesson. Its waterways, music, parks, food and people create an exhilarating piece of theatre. It is no surprise that Istanbul has been chosen as the European Capital of Culture in 2010. This guide includes the extensive introductory section on Turkey as a whole from our complete Adventure Guide to Turkey (644 pages in print), as well as the chapters on Istanbul and the surrounding area.

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