

Choosing a Restaurant

The restaurants in this guide have been selected for their good value, exceptional food, or interesting location. These listings highlight some of the factors that may influence your choice, such as whether you can opt to eat outdoors or if the venue offers live music. Entries are alphabetical within each price category.

PRICE CATEGORIES

Price categories include a three-course meal for one, and all unavoidable extras including service and tax.

- Ⓢ under US\$20
- ⓈⓈ US\$20–\$30
- ⓈⓈⓈ US\$30–\$40
- ⓈⓈⓈⓈ US\$40–\$50
- ⓈⓈⓈⓈⓈ Over US\$50

SERAGLIO POINT

Sultanahmet Fish House



Prof Kasim İsmail Gürkan Caddesi 14, Sultanahmet, 34110 Tel (0212) 527 44 41

Map 3 E4

A casual, low-key choice for good fish and meze at reasonable prices. The set lunch of fish soup, salad and the fish of the day is a particularly good deal. There is also a non-seafood choice of kebabs and casseroles. Antique lamps and colourful textiles add to the atmosphere. Alcohol is served.

Faros Restaurant



Hudavendigâr Caddesi 5, Sultanahmet, 34110 Tel (0212) 514 98 28

Map 3 E3

The restaurant at the Faros Hotel serves well prepared Turkish food, including a good selection of dishes for vegetarians, in a friendly atmosphere that often features music and dancing. The *mahmudiye* (grilled chicken breast accompanied by rice flavoured with almonds, cinnamon, currants and honey) is a speciality. Alcohol is served.

Konyalı

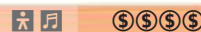


Topkapı Palace, Sultanahmet, 34110 Tel (0212) 513 96 96

Map 3 F3

This gastronomic landmark has been in business for four decades, serving appetizing mezes, meats, salads and fish. There is an award-winning à la carte menu. Located within the Topkapı Palace, it has commanding views of the Bosphorus. Try the elegant "afternoon tea" menu. Konyalı is open for lunch only and closed on Tuesdays.

Sarnıç



Soğukçeşme Sokak, Sultanahmet, 34110 Tel (0212) 512 42 91

Map 3 E4 (5 F3)

Converted from a Byzantine cistern with lofty columns and a domed ceiling, Sarnıç is dimly lit by wrought-iron chandeliers and candles and has an impressive fireplace. Piano music is often played in the evenings. The menu has variety but diners come here more for the atmosphere than the top cuisine.

SULTANAHMET

Backpackers Restaurant



Yeni Akbiyık Caddesi 14/1, Sultanahmet, 34400 Tel (0212) 638 55 86

Map 3 E5 (5 E5)

Simple, upbeat snacks are served here with the accent more on wines and beer than food. This is very much a cheerful and informal budget gathering place. People congregate to drink, eat hearty snacks, swap travel stories and plan their next journey. Backpackers is a great staging post in the budget area of Sultanahmet.

Café Camille



Babiali Caddesi 8, Cağaloğlu, 34110 Tel (0212) 527 81 77

Map 3 D4 (5 D3)

This small café, with its industrious, bustling kitchen, is the place to grab a cup of coffee or a foaming cappuccino and home-made cakes. Simple lunches with quiche, omelettes and salads are popular. They serve delicious fresh fruit juices and milk shakes. The service is brisk and friendly.

Doy-Doy



Şifa Hamamı Sokak 13, Sultanahmet, 34110 Tel (0212) 517 15 88

Map 3 D5 (5 D5)

An impressive selection of soups, kebabs, *pide* (flat bread) in abundance, colourful salads, vegetarian dishes and rich desserts is on offer here. Everything is prepared very authentically. Doy-Doy is a cheerful venue with great prices but alcohol is not served. The rooftop terrace is perfect in summer with inviting views and sea breezes.

Group Restaurant



Şehit Mehmet Paşa Yokuşu 4, Sultanahmet, 34110 Tel (0212) 517 47 00

Map 3 D5 (5 D5)

Part gift shop, part café and restaurant, this is a magnet for tourists and is always bustling. The coffee and sticky pastries are popular but more substantial fare is also served. Grills, salads and stews are on the menu and served in generous portions at reasonable prices. Alcohol is available.

Sofa Café*Mimar Mehmet Ağa Caddesi 32, Sultanahmet, 34122 Tel (0212) 458 36 30***Map 3 E5 (5 E4)**

Casual and comfortable, Sofa Café offers a break from the hordes of tourists in Sultanahmet. It serves up straightforward Turkish fare such as *alinazik* (puréed aubergine with yoghurt and minced meat) or kebabs, helped down with a cold Efes beer or a glass of local wine.

Sultanahmet Köftecisi*Divanyolu Caddesi 12A, Sultanahmet, 34110 Tel (0212) 520 05 66***Map 3 E4 (5 E4)**

Almost an institution in Sultanahmet, this restaurant has been going since the 1920s and turns out simple, trademark dishes such as *köfte* (meatballs), *piyaz* (beans in sauce) and *pilav* (rice). Locals crowd in here for lunch and queues mean there is no lingering.

Amedros*Hoca Rüstem Sokak 7, Sultanahmet, 34400 Tel (0212) 522 83 56***Map 3 E4**

This Western-style bistro serves both Turkish and international fare, including Ottoman specialities such as *testi kebab* (a savoury mix of lamb and vegetables cooked inside a clay pot). The friendly service and stylish, airy interior make for an enjoyable dining experience. Alcohol is served.

Khorasani*Divanyolu Caddesi, Ticarethane Sokak 39–41, Sultanahmet, 34110 Tel (0212) 519 59 59***Map 3 E4**

A cut above the usual kebab shop, this attractive restaurant offers dishes from the southern regions of Gaziantep and Antakya, including a reasonable number of vegetarian options. A wood fire allows for outdoor dining in the winter and there is occasional musical entertainment.

Valide Sultan Konak*Kutlugün Sokak 1, Sultanahmet, 34110 Tel (0212) 638 06 00***Map 3 E4 (5 E4)**

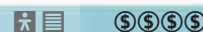
The semicircular rooftop restaurant of the Valide Sultan Konağı Hotel (see p186) commands stunning views of the sea and historic surrounding area. Menus are well balanced with meat, vegetables, meze, kebabs and stews. The stuffed vegetables are particularly creative and taste as good as they look. They also serve seafood and pizzas.

Ahırkapı Lokanta*Armada Hotel, Ahır Kapı Sokak, Sultanahmet, 34110 Tel (0212) 638 13 70***Map 3 F3 (5 F5)**

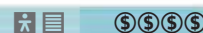
This restaurant has the atmosphere of a 1930s Turkish tavern and live *fasıl* music. In keeping with the decor, the cuisine is typically Turkish with a variety of delicious mezes and main dishes, such as *yoğurtlu yaprak dolması* (minced meat in vine leaves with yoghurt). The rooftop terrace boasts views over Sultanahmet.

Djazzu*İncili Çavuş Çikmazi 5–7, Sultanahmet, 34110 Tel (0212) 512 22 42***Map 3 E4 (5 E4)**

A classy but unpretentious restaurant serving high-quality international fare crafted by a French-trained Japanese chef. This friendly establishment draws a lively mix of diners in the evenings to enjoy dishes ranging from sushi to spaghetti and kebabs. Outdoor seating in summer and a cosy fireplace in winter make Djazzu popular year-round.

Balıkçı Sabahattin*Seyt Hasankuyu Sokak 1, Sultanahmet, 34110 Tel (0212) 458 18 24***Map 3 E3 (5 F5)**

Everything works well at this delightful fish restaurant. They have a long and delicious menu, having been in business since 1927. The fish and seafood are mouthwatering and other creative dishes include spicy squash with yoghurt. Recommended for smart service and consistently good food.

Kathisma*Yeni Akbıyık Caddesidesi 26, Sultanahmet, 34400 Tel (0212) 518 97 10***Map 3 E5 (5 C3)**

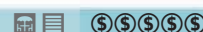
This stylish restaurant takes its name from the Byzantine emperor's lodge which once overlooked the Hippodrome (see p80). Turkish dishes include *mücver* (fried courgettes), *fırında kuzu* (roast lamb) and some typical and delicious desserts such as *sakızlı sutlaç* (rice pudding with gum mastic).

Rumeli Café*Ticaretane Sokak 8, Sultanahmet, 34110 Tel (0212) 512 00 08***Map 3 E4 (5 D3)**

This is a delightfully atmospheric restaurant just off the busy Divanyolu. Housed in an old printing factory, the Rumeli has a strong Greek flavour to it as well as Mediterranean aromas. Vegetarian dishes are popular and specialities include grilled lamb with various sauces. Tomatoes, herbs and yoghurt feature in many dishes.

Seasons Restaurant*Tevkifhane Sokak 1, Sultanahmet, 34110 Tel (0212) 402 30 00***Map 3 E5**

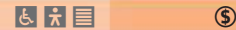
The opulent Four Seasons Hotel (see p187) has a restaurant that is just as luxurious. It serves Mediterranean cuisine with some Asian influences in an attractive dining room and in the courtyard garden. Try one of the Friday evening wine tastings featuring local wines with cheeses, breads and fruit, or drop by on weekends for a lavish afternoon tea.

Giritli Restoran*Keresteci Hakkı Sokak 8, Ahır Kapı Sokak, Sultanahmet, 34122 Tel (0212) 458 22 70***Map 3 E5 (5 F5)**

The multi-course set menu is the only option at this Cretan-style restaurant, but it offers a rich variety of hot and cold starters, as well as expertly prepared fish, served with unlimited local beer, wine or rakı (an anise-flavoured spirit). The walled garden and elegant dining room provide a setting to match the food.

BAZAAR QUARTER

Akdeniz Restaurant

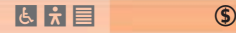


Mustafa Kemalpaşa Caddesi 48, Aksaray, 36420 **Tel** (0212) 458 13 00

Map 2 A4

This is an unassuming, mid-range *lokanta* (traditional restaurant) serving a large range of appetizers, kebabs, *lahmacun* (thin-crust crepe), *pide* (flat bread) and pizzas. The specialty is tandoor lamb. Ask for a table away from the TV screen if you prefer peace and quiet with meals. Alcohol is available.

Havuzlu



Gani Çelebi Sokak 3, Grand Bazaar, Beyazıt, 36420 **Tel** (0212) 527 33 46

Map 3 C4 (4 B3)

Havuzlu is where you head when hunger interrupts a shopping spree. It is a small restaurant serving honest local food. Everything is cooked freshly. The soups, *dolma* (stuffed vine leaves) and different kinds of kebabs and grills are great snacks. Havuzlu means "with pool" and is named for the bubbling fountain found inside.

İskender Saray



Atatürk Bulvarı 116, Aksaray, 36420 **Tel** (0212) 520 34 04

Map 2 A3

This classic restaurant serves döner kebabs and signature dishes include *İskender kebab* (döner meat on bread with a rich sauce) and *saç kavurma* (lamb and vegetables flambéed at the table). The white table cloths and cheerful, friendly staff lend a professional touch. They do a handy takeaway service. No alcohol is served.

Karaca



Gazi Sinan Paşa Sokak, Vezir Han 1/A, Nuruosmaniye, 36420 **Tel** (0212) 512 90 94

Map 3 D4 (4 C3)

This large restaurant is part of an authentic Ottoman caravanserai. Diners eat very well here and dishes such as *pazı dolması* (stuffed chard) and *islîm kebabı* (lamb with aubergine) are hearty and filling. Save room for the calorific *kabak tatlısı* (pumpkin pudding). The clientele includes shopkeepers from the Grand Bazaar.

Özbolu Kebab House



Hoca Paşa Sokak 33, Sirkeci, 34430 **Tel** (0212) 522 46 63

Map 2 E3 (5 D2)

In a street of budget kebaberies, this one stands out with an amazing choice of hot and cold dishes. The grills, stews, seasonal fish and puddings are hearty, fresh and delicious. Succulent and juicy kebabs are the dish of the house. The atmosphere here is cheerful. Sour cherry juice and soft drinks are available instead of alcohol.

Sefa Lokantası



Nuruosmaniye Caddesi, Cağaloğlu, 34110 **Tel** (0212) 520 06 70

Map 3 D4 (4 C3)

Eat like the locals do at this small, no frills "ev yemek lokantası" (home-cooking restaurant) that is popular with shopkeepers and other workers at the nearby Grand Bazaar. Portions of freshly made stews, kebabs and vegetable dishes are generous and reasonably priced. No alcohol is served.

Borsa Lokanta



Yalı Köşkü Caddesi, Yalı Köşkü Han 60, Sirkeci, 36420 **Tel** (0212) 511 80 79

Map 3 D2 (5 D1)

There are two eateries here, a fast-food, self-service one on the ground floor and a more formal (but still casual) one on the level above. Borsa Lokanta has many branches in Istanbul. One of their trademark recipes is *beğendili kebabı* (meat with a creamy aubergine sauce). The service is extremely competent. Alcohol is served.

Hamdi Restaurant



Kalçın Sokak 17, Eminönü, 34110 **Tel** (0212) 528 03 90

Map 3 D2 (4 C1)

The main draw at this popular restaurant, located behind the Spice Bazaar, is the spectacular view over the Golden Horn from the upper floors. The wide variety of well-prepared kebabs and exceptionally tasty *baklava* make a delicious accompaniment to the views. Alcohol is served.

Dârüzziyafe



Şifahane Caddesi 6, Süleymaniye, 36420 **Tel** (0212) 511 84 14 or (0212) 511 84 15

Map 4 A1 (2 B2)

The former kitchens of the Süleymaniye Mosque (see pp90–91) house this excellent restaurant, serving unusual and elaborate Ottoman dishes. The nourishing house soup is made with spinach, vegetables and meat. Mezes are available. For dessert, try *keşkül* (milk pudding with pistachios and almonds). It is best to reserve. No alcohol served.

BEYOĞLU

Falafel House



Şehit Muhtar Caddesi 19/1A, Beyoğlu, 34437 **Tel** (0212) 253 77 30

Map 7 E3

Simple, cheap and well-prepared, the *falafel*, *hummus*, *tabouleh* and other Middle Eastern fare on offer at this tiny restaurant is surprisingly hard to find in Istanbul. Service is friendly and indoor seating offers the opportunity to see the chefs at work. There are also outdoor tables set amid the cobblestones. No alcohol served.

ÖzkonakAkarsu Yokuşu Sokak 46B, Cihangir, 34433 **Tel** (0212) 249 13 07**Map** 7 E5

Istanbul's celebrity journalists, writers and fashion models flock here for the freshly cooked, honest stews, *pilavs* (rice dishes), salads and baked puddings. Some come just for the tastiest *tavuk göğsü* (milk pudding made with shredded chicken breast) in the city. This is mainly a lunch-time spot with speedy service. Alcohol is not served.

SmyrnaAkarsu Caddesi 29, Cihangir, 34430 **Tel** (0212) 244 24 66**Map** 7 E5

A former antiques shop in Cihangir has been transformed into a café and restaurant. The small tables across the bar are an ideal place to enjoy a coffee while reading newspapers. Past the bar, you enter a hall with high windows. Cihangir is a district well liked by expats living in Istanbul, and many of Smyrna's customers are foreigners.

ZencefilKurabiye Sokak 8A, Taksim, 34430 **Tel** (0212) 243 82 34**Map** 7 E4

This is one of the premier vegetarian restaurants in Istanbul. Daily specials are marked on a blackboard. Everything is fresh and wholesome and the service is skillful. Baked vegetable dishes, home-made breads, soups and herb teas do not disappoint. There are also delicious desserts available. Alcohol is served.

Ara CaféTosbağ Sokak 8A, Galatasaray, 34433 **Tel** (0212) 245 41 05**Map** 7 D4

With its large, lively patio area and charming, multi-level interior, this is a popular place for whiling away the afternoon, sipping a coffee or enjoying a salad or heartier fare. The traditional Turkish buffet breakfast is delicious. Photographs by acclaimed Turkish photographer Ara Güler adorn the walls and placemats. No alcohol is served.

Chez VousCezayir Sokak 21, Galatasaray, 34430 **Tel** (0212) 245 95 32**Map** 7 D4

Part of the rebirth and design revolution sweeping most of Beyoğlu, this small café (part of a restored period mansion) clings to the steep steps of trend-setting French Street. Light snacks and salads are served. The service is rushed and the table wines are expensive, but trendy Chez Vous is great for fun.

CuppaYeni Yuva Sokak 22/A, Cihangir, 80090 **Tel** (0212) 249 57 24**Map** 7 E5

If sightseeing around Istanbul has you craving for nourishment, head to Cuppa for a shot of wheatgrass juice. This friendly outpost can fix you up with a freshly squeezed pomegranate juice or a selection of fruit smoothies. The menu includes purported anti-ageing and cramp-beating concoctions, and a mix-and-match Turkish breakfast.

FiccinKallavi Sokak 13/1, Beyoğlu, 34433 **Tel** (0212) 293 37 86**Map** 7 D4

Tucked away Ficcin is a popular choice for *meyhane*-style food (and a beer or *rakı*) without the Nevzade crowds and craziness. The Circassian-influenced dishes put a spin on traditional meze fare, with the namesake meat pie and plump *mantı* (Turkish ravioli) especially recommended. Lively *fasıl* music drifts in from the restaurant across the street.

Gani GaniKudu Sokak 13, Taksim, 34433 **Tel** (0212) 244 84 01**Map** 7 E4

Turkish favourites are served in traditional style at this relaxed restaurant where diners eat at low tables while luxuriating on colourful cushions. Popular dishes include *mantı* (Turkish ravioli with yoghurt sauce), *pide* (Turkish pizza) and the decadent cheese-stuffed, honey-drenched, cream-topped dessert *künefe*. No alcohol is served.

Hacı Babaİstiklâl Caddesi 39, Taksim, 34430 **Tel** (0212) 244 18 86**Map** 7 E4

This busy and popular restaurant on two floors turns out the most amazing variety of tasty, colourful dishes – over 40 different hot main meals, mezes and 25 different desserts. Try the star dish, *kuzu tandır* (slow-baked lamb). The service is polished and professional, however, the decor is somewhat drab.

Konakİstiklâl Caddesi 153, Beyoğlu, 34433 **Tel** (0212) 249 14 86**Map** 7 D4

The perfect introduction to Turkish kebab culture, Konak offers a variety of well-prepared meat dishes, from the *beyti* kebab wrapped in *lavash* (flatbread) to the *İskender* kebab drenched in yoghurt and tomato sauce. The bustling restaurant also serves good *lamacun* (flatbread topped with minced meat) and *ezme* (spicy tomato dip). No alcohol is served.

Natural Grill HouseŞehit Muhtar Caddesi 30/A, Taksim, 34430 **Tel** (0212) 238 33 61**Map** 7 E3

Rustic tables and talented cooking are the appeal here. Fresh salads, grilled meats and baked vegetarian dishes are well cooked and presented. Mexican steak is one of the house specialties. The Grill House is popular with locals and also guests from the nearby hotels. Several different beers are served.

Taksimoda CaféSıraselviler Caddesi 5/A, Taksim, 34430 **Tel** (0212) 334 85 00**Map** 7 E4

You will find a wonderful variety of food at Taksimoda, including excellent pastries and afternoon tea cakes. It is part of the Taksim Hill hotel and makes a convenient meeting point and refreshment station. Service is frenetic, more often chaotic, but the well-prepared food compensates. Alcohol is served and there is a small bar.

11 Leblon

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*Asmalı Mescit Sokak 7, Tünel, 34430 Tel (0212) 252 86 36***Map 7 D5**

Best known for its appearance in the popular Turkish film *Issiz Adam*, this attractive, brick-walled Tünel restaurant dishes up a well-executed international menu of meat, fish and pasta dishes that would be a draw even without the big-screen fame. There is a good wine list and dancing later in the evening.

Asır Rest

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*Kalyoncu Kulluk Caddesi 94, Beyoğlu, 34430 Tel (0212) 297 05 57***Map 7 D4**

Asır is the kind of friendly, convivial place you hope to find on holiday. The staff are friendly and attentive and the food is outstandingly good and economical. Over 50 varieties of mezes are offered amongst many innovative dishes with fish, chicken and chick peas. Typical of *meyhane* (tavern) culture, there is live *fasıl* music in the evenings.

Cezayir Restaurant

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*Hayriye Caddesi 12, Beyoğlu, 34425 Tel (212) 245 99 80***Map 7 E4**

An attractive, high-ceilinged dining room and lounge, as well as a large garden open in the summer months, provide a smart but relaxed setting for dinner and drinks. The menu features mainly modern Mediterranean cuisine with Turkish undertones and there are fixed-price options. Alcohol is served.

Galata House

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*Galata Kulesi Sokak 15, Galata, 34420 Tel (0212) 245 18 61***Map 7 C5**

Both the location and the cuisine are unusual at this Georgian restaurant situated in a rambling old house that used to serve as the British jail in the early 1900s. The various dumpling dishes are highly recommended, and diners with a hankering for *blinis* or *borscht* will not find a better place to satisfy their craving. Alcohol is served.

Leb-i-Derya

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*Istiklâl Caddesi, Kumbaracı Yokuşu, Kumbaracı Han 115/7, Beyoğlu, 34430 Tel (0212) 293 49 89***Map 7 D5**

It is hard to beat this restaurant's marvellous view over Istanbul. Glass, wood and soft lighting are the backdrop for the abundance of appetizers and well-cooked Mediterranean-style healthy main courses, vegetable dishes and salads. There is a lively bar that attracts a dedicated happy hour crowd.

Refik

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*Asmalı Mescit Sokak, Tünel, 34430 Tel (0212) 243 28 34***Map 7 D5**

Refik is an icon of Bohemian Beyoğlu. The restaurant retains its faded plastic tablecloths and bygone era ambience. Intellectuals and media types frequent it every evening. It is an authentic *meyhane* (tavern) that favours Black Sea dishes. The mezes here are large enough for a main meal. Plenty of alcohol is served.

Yakup 2

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*Asmalı Mescit Sokak 21, Tünel, 34430 Tel (0212) 249 29 25***Map 7 D5**

Once the most popular restaurant amongst the journalistic and media elite, Yakup now caters more for groups and tourists. It is in the atmospheric and upbeat backstreets of Beyoğlu. The food is of a high quality with excellent salads, grills and impressive mezes. There are drinks of all sorts and many just come to enjoy this.

Zindan

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*Istiklâl Caddesi, Emir Nevruz Sokak, Olivya Geçida 5/5A, Beyoğlu, 34430 Tel (0212) 252 73 40***Map 7 E4**

Terracotta bricks and vaulted ceilings form the interior at Zindan. It is handy for Taksim and the cooking is classic Ottoman with intriguing variations. Stinging-nettle *börek* (pastry) is rare and tasty and they spruce up the meaty kebabs with fruit. Everything looks and tastes appetizing, and there are good wines.

Fischer

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*İnönü Caddesi 41/A, Gümüşsuyu, 34430 Tel (0212) 245 25 76***Map 7 F4**

Fisher was one of the first middle European restaurants in Istanbul. The clientele has stayed loyal after decades and dishes such as *borscht*, *schnitzel*, *pirogies* and *strudel* seem as popular today as they have always been. It is a little drab, even austere, but the owners seem reluctant to renovate or change too much of a good thing.

Gitane

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*Firzağa Mah, Cezayir Sokak 3 (French Street), Galatasaray, 34430 Tel (0212) 245 92 63***Map 7 D4**

Gitane is owned by one of Turkey's most renowned fashion designers. The extensive menu has choices for breakfast, brunch, lunch and festive dinners and there is excellent local wine on offer. The cheese platter highlights Anatolian cheeses.

Şerif

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*Cumhuriyet Caddesi. 36/A Elmadağ, 34430 Tel (0212) 291 99 55***Map 7 F2**

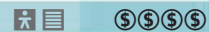
The carefully prepared menu at this very stylish up-to-the-minute café-bar cum restaurant has masterful touches. Appetizers, hamburgers and pizzas are good, and the steak, vegetable dishes, stews, fries and salads come in generous portions. Şerif has domestic wines and a well-stocked bar.

Sofyalı

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*Sofyalı Sokak 9, Tünel, Beyoğlu, 34430 Tel (0212) 245 03 62***Map 7 D5**

Tucked away in a leafy alleyway where restaurant competition is fierce, Sofyalı has delicious home-made mezes, pretty tables and a solid reputation for skillful, professional cooking. The menu is not large but quality dominates. Try the stuffed fish. Their stuffed chard creation is also legendary. Domestic wines and other alcoholic drinks are served.

Yeni Hong Kong*Dünya Sağlık Sokak 12/B, Taksim, 34430 Tel (0212) 252 42 68***Map 7 F4**

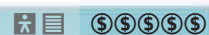
A taste of imperial China in the middle of Taksim, Yeni Hong Kong is easily recognized by its imposing pagoda-shaped entrance. Dragons, lanterns and rich trappings add to the decoration. The spicy Szechuan dishes, beef with hot pickles and delicious rice are good choices. Chinese beer and rice wines are available.

Asmalımescit Balıkçısı*Sofyalı Sokak 5/A, Tünel, 34430 Tel (0212) 251 39 39***Map 7 D5**

The pulse of Beyoğlu beats at this popular fish-only restaurant. Linen, silver service and candles add class to the stone walls and cheerful, chic atmosphere. Every kind of fresh daily catch in Istanbul is served here. Desserts are good and there is a reasonable wine list. There are monthly art exhibitions that adorn the walls.

Ayazpaşa Rus Lokantasi*İnönü Caddesi 77a, Gümüşsuyu, 34430 Tel (0212) 243 48 92***Map 7 F4**

This place near Taksim Square is the destination of choice for those who wish to indulge in a little "sari vodka". This was a favourite drink of the Russians who came to Istanbul during World War I, and it is served in cold carafes and small goblets. The waiters have been working here for years and will be happy to clarify anything on the menu.

Flamm*Sofyalı Sokak 12/1, Asmalımescit, 34430 Tel (0212) 245 76 04/05***Map 7 D5**

One of the pioneer "nouveau" restaurants, Flamm is small and intimate with a casual, friendly cocktail bar. The owner came to Istanbul from Bodrum, and imported some dishes from sunny Med-side kitchens, including ingenious ways with pasta and rice. You will want to return for the excellent honest cooking and convivial ambience.

Mikla*Marmara Pera Hotel, Meşrutiyet Caddesi 167/185, Tepebaşı, Beyoğlu, 34430 Tel (0212) 293 56 56***Map 7 D5**

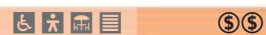
Mikla provides a magnificent dining experience – if you can get a reservation. It offers a predominantly seafood menu but unusual culinary influences mingle and the results are exquisite. There are plenty of meat dishes too. The decor is subtle and the mood dignified. There are stunning vistas from the bar at the top of the Marmara Pera Hotel.

The Panorama*Marmara Hotel, Taksim Square, Taksim, 34430 Tel (0212) 251 46 96***Map 7 E4**

This restaurant with fine views on the top floor of the Marmara Hotel was one of the first in the city to embrace international cuisine. It still deserves its original praise for creative cuisine. Visitors revel in the truly outstanding French and Italian food and authentic decor. Live jazz and dance music is played on weekends.

GREATER ISTANBUL**Beyti***Orman Sokak 8, Florya, 34710 Tel (0212) 663 29 90*

Beyti is a 60-year-old Istanbul institution and award-winning legend when it comes to meat and kebabs. There is a vast dining area, with 12 dining rooms and secluded nooks. It is crowded here for lunch and dinner and the good service matches the unerringly excellent food. Beyti kebab is the speciality. There is a good wine selection.

Çiya Kebap*Güneşlibahçe Sokak 48/B, Kadıköy 34710 Tel (0216) 336 30 13*

Turkish and foreign foodies flock to the "Çiya empire" – three restaurants on the same bustling street – for an ever-changing menu of dishes lovingly collected from all around Turkey by the owner. Unusual stews include one with meat, quince and chestnuts, and the candied walnut dessert is not to be missed. No alcohol is served.

Da Mario*Dilhayat Sokak 7, Etiler, 56730 Tel (0212) 265 15 96*

This was one of Istanbul's first Italian restaurants and is still recognized for its refined and tasty cuisine. The up-market chic decor is in harmony with the contemporary cooking. Veal is especially well prepared. There are some interesting wines. Super desserts and impeccable service round it off. Reservations are advised.

Il Piccolo*Bağdat Caddesi, Ogün Sokak 2, Caddebostan, 95230 Tel (0216) 369 64 43*

An established favourite that has been serving well-cooked dishes for many years and keeping up with trends. Located in an energetic shopping district on the Asian side, meals are served outdoors in summer and a live band plays on weekends. They have simple pizzas and pasta dishes with great sauces plus good wines and Italian cheeses.

Koşebaşı Ocakbaşı*Çamlık Sokak 15/B, Levent, Tel (0212) 270 24 33***Map 7 F1**

This internationally-acclaimed prize-winning kebab restaurant has many branches around Turkey and in Istanbul. Bright and airy with absolutely delicious kebabs in the tradition of eastern Turkey. They prepare *künefe* (a rich angel hair dessert baked with cheese) better than anybody in Istanbul.

Zeyrekhane*Sinanağa Mahallesi, İbadethane Arkası Sokak 10, Zeyrek, Fatih, 35600 Tel (0212) 532 27 78* **Map 2 B2**

This café for tasty snacks and light meals is combined with a restaurant in a restored Ottoman building. The cool, leafy outdoor courtyard is used in summer. The main restaurant succeeds spectacularly with traditional Ottoman recipes. Alcohol is served. It is best to make a booking for an evening meal.

Akdeniz Hatay Sofrası*Ahmediye Caddesi 44/A, Fatih, 34093 Tel (0212) 531 33 33* **Map 1 B4**

This large, friendly restaurant offers delicious southeastern Turkish offerings, including juicy metre-long kebabs studded with pistachios, and succulent lamb with rice cooked inside a salt shell that is cracked at the table. The warm hummus with *pastırma* (Turkish pastrami) is also a rare treat. No alcohol served.

Cercis Murat*Yazmacı Tahir Sokak 22, Suadiye, 34740 Tel (0216) 410 92 22*

Impeccable service and presentation add to the treat of enjoying Mardin-style delicacies in Istanbul. Try the silver platter of a dozen or more salads, dips and other mezes, each with their own distinctive flavour, or the tandoori-cooked lamb. A bit of a trek for anyone staying on the European side, but reachable by ferry. Alcohol is served.

Develi*Gümüsyüzük Sokak 7, Samatya, Kocamustafapaşa, 35420 Tel (0212) 529 08 33*

It is no exaggeration to say that you have not really eaten a kebab until you have tucked into a Develi one. Kebabs here are prepared in unusual ways and the quality keeps getting better. The service is slick and all the touches that make dining a great experience are found here. Develi easily tops the kebab charts.

Hünkar*Akdeniz Caddesi 21, Fatih, 35600 Tel (0212) 621 64 33* **Map 1 C4**

This family-run restaurant has an admirable record for serving tasty Turkish food, including delightful and little known Ottoman dishes. The walls are decorated with jars of bright pickled fruits and a small fountain sits in the midst of diners. *Börek*s (stuffed pastry parcels), *köfte* (meatballs), *pilavs* (rice dishes) and salads are well prepared and served.

Sedef*Fevziyaş Caddesi 19, Fatih, 35600 Tel (212) 532 82 33* **Map 1 C3**

This is a bright and spacious restaurant that prides itself on its meat dishes. Grilled meats are the most popular but do not overlook the delicious vegetable stews. The chef does great things with hamburgers and, of course, kebabs. Children's portions are available. Like most establishments in the Fatih area, alcohol is not served.

Uludağ Et Lokantası*Istanbul Caddesi 12, Florya, 34710 Tel (0212) 624 95 90*

One of several well respected kebaberies in Istanbul, this one also serves up its own local kebab specialty. The restaurant is on the waterfront, not far from the airport, and has space for over 1,000 guests. Come here for a typical Turkish evening and unfailingly good food. The service is smart and the wines reasonable.

Asitane*Kariye Hotel, Kariye Camii Sokak 18, Edirnekapi, 38100 Tel (0212) 635 79 97* **Map 1 B1**

This is an outstanding eatery specializing in Ottoman cuisine. They serve some rare and obscure recipes inspired by records found in the Topkapı Palace. Steaks, fish and creative rice dishes are also on offer. Save room for the filling desserts. Asitane is highly recommended.

Denizkızı*Çakmaktaşı Sokak 3/5, Kumkapı, 28601 Tel (0212) 518 86 59* **Map 2 C5**

The cobbled streets of the old fishing neighbourhood of Kumkapı are dense with fish restaurants and *meyhanes* (traditional taverns). Denizkızı (which means mermaid) is one of these in a lively district. Diners select fish from the tank and the chef will fry, grill or steam it for you with vegetables. There are tables outdoors in summer.

Doğa Balık*Akarsu Caddesi 46, Cihangir, Taksim, 34433 Tel (0212) 293 91 44* **Map 7 E5**

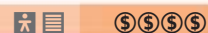
This is a highly regarded fish restaurant in an attractive area. Everything is friendly and comfortable here. Mezes are freshly prepared and colourful, and there is a daily set menu available. The salads are masterful. Domestic wines are available but rakı goes best with the many fish selections.

Hacıbey*Teşvikiye Caddesi 156/B, Teşvikiye, 80400 Tel (0212) 231 71 34* **Map 8 A2**

A bright and modern restaurant on two floors, Hacıbey caters to shoppers and ladies who lunch in Istanbul's shopping district. Try the succulent and substantial Bursa kebab, which has butter, tomato sauce and is topped with yoghurt. All grills are done over traditional charcoal. It is great fun here but can be very loud.

La Maison*Müvezzi Caddesi 63, Beşiktaş, 82500 Tel (0212) 227 42 63* **Map 9 D3**

This is a thoroughly reliable and no-nonsense restaurant with a studious attitude to classical French cooking, enhanced by splendid vistas over the Bosphorus to the Asian side. La Maison is just as popular for power lunches as it is for receptions and intimate dining. It is hugely popular, so a reservation is essential.

Mezzaluna

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*Abdi İpekçi Caddesi 38/1, Nişantaşı, 80400 Tel (0212) 231 31 42***Map 8 A3**

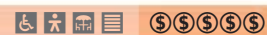
Mezzaluna attracts shoppers and strollers at lunch and a serious social set in the evenings. With branches in other Turkish cities also, they cater for the upwardly mobile who crave well-cooked continental dishes. The accent is on Italian cooking and the mussels are first rate. Finish a refined meal with a potent grappa.

Café du Levant

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Rahmi M. Koç Museum, Hasköy Caddesi 27, Hasköy, 69800 Tel (0212) 369 66 07

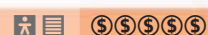
Long before others, Café du Levant initiated the trend for serving gourmet food in a museum setting. The standards have not changed over the years and this is one of the most efficient restaurants in Istanbul. It is not cheap but it is worth paying for this calibre of inspired cooking, with Turkish touches and global influences.

Halat Restaurant

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Rahmi M. Koç Museum, Hasköy Caddesi 27, Hasköy, 69800 Tel (0212) 369 66 16

Halat Restaurant boasts French cooking with whimsical Mediterranean touches and flavours. The steak is a top choice and the separate dessert menu features flamboyant, highly original masterpieces. This restaurant offers memorable dining with the Golden Horn lapping below its terrace.

Şans

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Hacı Adil Caddesi 6, Aralık, Levent Tel (0212) 280 38 38

Visitors to Şans love the cozy atmosphere and restful garden. Şans, in fact, leaves nothing to chance and is an award-winning restaurant serving crisp Mediterranean dishes. The menu changes frequently but favourites such as spinach roots endure. The outstanding wine list is selected from around the world.

THE BOSPHORUS**à la Turka**

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*Hazine Sokak 8, Ortaköy, 34349 Tel (0212) 258 79 24***Map 9 F3**

Tucked away on a side street near Ortaköy mosque, à la Turka is a modest but attractive restaurant. It serves mostly classic Turkish dishes done to perfection. Particularly good are the dolma (stuffed vine leaves), and the chef uses herbs very creatively. It is recommended as a reliable favourite.

Çınaraltı

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*İskele Meydanı 44, Ortaköy, European Side Tel (0212) 261 46 16***Map 9 F3**

This is one of the cluster of restaurants on the picturesque waterfront in Ortaköy. Freshly prepared, colourful mezes, salads, meat and fish are all smartly served. The tables are close together and they pack in trendy customers, particularly at weekends. Try elsewhere if you are looking for a more romantic or intimate dining experience.

Abracadabra

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İskelenin Çapraz 50/1, Arnavutköy, 34275 Tel (0212) 358 60 87

Located in a funky, old multi-storey house along the Bosphorus in the relaxed Arnavutköy neighbourhood, this stylish restaurant offers a wide-ranging menu of fusion dishes with an emphasis on seasonal, local and organic ingredients, which is a rarity in Istanbul. Quirky desserts include curried banana mousse. Alcohol is served.

House Café

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*Salhane Sokak 1, Ortaköy, 34349 Tel (0212) 227-26 99***Map 9 F3**

There are no restaurants that epitomize Istanbul's dynamic revival quite like this one. The colourful salads, snacks and main courses are excellent and the funky decor is amazing, especially the ornately carved bar and octopus chandeliers. It is a magnet for celebrities and always busy.

Pafuli

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Kuruçeşme Caddesi 116, Kuruçeşme, European Side. Tel (0212) 263 66 38

In business for over two decades, Pafuli has indoor and outdoor tables. Fish and seafood, such as shrimp and squid, are freshly cooked and the superb Black Sea dishes are first rate. *Mihlama* (corn bread), *hamsi* (anchovy) and cheese dishes are legendary. There is an extensive menu and wine list.

Picante

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İskele Caddesi, Salhane Sok 2, Ortaköy, 34349 Tel (0212) 236 17 35

This hip, chic eatery serves an array of Latin American, Tex-Mex and Colombian dishes. It is particularly renowned for its delicious fajitas and potent margaritas. The original Picante opened in Bodrum in 1993; this Ortaköy branch is located in one of the neighbourhood's most beautiful buildings, and offers splendid views over the Bosphorus.

Deniz Restaurant

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Kefeliköy Caddesi 23, Kefeliköy, European Side Tel (0212) 262 04 07

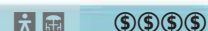
Located on the seafront, Deniz Restaurant follows seaside trends in offering excellent fresh fish and seafood specialities. This is an ideal place to enjoy a meal by the Bosphorus (outdoors in summer) with smart, knowledgeable service. It is well patronized by locals and reservations are recommended.

Feriye

Çırağan Caddesi 40, Ortaköy, European Side **Tel** (0212) 227 22 16

Map 9 E3

This smart waterfront restaurant housed in a 19th-century Ottoman building boasts a spectacular view and attentive but unobtrusive service. Grilled fish with saffron, octopus with cinnamon, and pistachio-stuffed chicken are among the specialities. There is also a decadent weekend brunch. A good selection of wines is available by the glass.

Hidiv Kasrı

Hidiv Yolu 32, Çubuklu, Asian side **Tel** (0216) 413 96 44

Perched high on a hill with sweeping vistas of the straits, this former palace stands in the midst of a beautiful park. There is a large, formal restaurant that keeps up Turkish culinary traditions, while the terrace is open for buffet brunches on weekends. Come here for the view and sea breezes. No alcohol is served.

Kız Kulesi

Leander's Tower, off Üsküdar ferry pier, Asian Side **Tel** (0216) 342 47 47

Map 10 A3

Located just offshore from Üsküdar on its own little islet in the Bosphorus, this old building is a self-service cafeteria during the day, and it rebounds spectacularly at night with a full-service restaurant, gourmet food and live music. Bookings for the restaurant and ferry service are advised.

Konak

İstinye Caddesi 23-25, Emirgan, European Side **Tel** (0212) 32 65 00/01

This restored wooden mansion house is set on three floors on the water's edge. There is a comprehensive selection of meat, salad and international favourites, but fish is the dish of choice. There is alfresco dining under umbrellas on the breezy terrace in summer. The wines are unremarkable but the sea air and talented cooking compensate.

Kordon

Kuleli Caddesi 51, Çengelköy, Asian Side **Tel** (0216) 321 04 75

This romantic restaurant is located in a smart and cleverly modernized warehouse. Seafood dishes are artistically presented and there is a fine selection of fresh fish daily. People come for the tempting food as much as for the stunning views of Istanbul's European shores. There is outdoor dining in summer.

Sardunya Fındıklı Restaurant

Meclisi Mebusan Caddesi 22, Salıpazarı, Fındıklı, European Side **Tel** (0212) 249 10 92

Map 7 F4

The accent here is on regional Italian cuisine with some unusual international classics. Outdoor dining on the terrace is available in summer. The staff have a thoroughly professional attitude to their wines. A highly successful twin establishment is in Gayrettepe.

A'jia

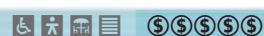
A'jia Hotel, Kanlıca, Asian Side **Tel** (0216) 413 93 53

Remote from the urban crush, this beautiful restaurant is part of a hotel of the same name in a refurbished *yalı* on the Asian shore of the Bosphorus. The design is starkly minimalist and clinical but the food superb. Dishes draw on classic Italian recipes and new Mediterranean cooking with subtle flavours and colours. Reservations are advised.

Changa

Sakıp Sabancı Caddesi 22, Emirgan, European Side **Tel** (0212) 323 09 01

One of Istanbul's top dining experiences, Changa is located in a stunning setting at the Bosphorus-side Sakıp Sabancı Museum. Its lush garden and award-winning decor combine with a perfectly executed menu of fusion dishes, such as wasabi and salmon tortellini, and duck confit with pomegranates and raisins. Alcohol is served.

İskele Çengelköy

Wharf No. 10, Çengelköyü, Asian Side **Tel** (0216) 321 55 06

The indoor restaurant has a nautical theme but it is more fun to eat on the pretty outdoor terrace or garden in summer. The sea air and fishing village atmosphere complement the excellent fresh fish choices and seafood and everything is beautifully cooked, as expected at this popular venue. The service is polished and the wines reasonable.

Les Ambassadeurs

Bebek Hotel, Cevdet Paşa Caddesi 34, Bebek, European side **Tel** (0212) 358 15 65

Diners pay for the sea air and waterfront view but Les Ambassadeurs has a well-chosen menu and abundance of typically Turkish and international dishes. There are also a few Russian dishes on the menu and accompanying vodka. Bebek is a small village along the sea shore, so dining here is an intimate, neighbourhood experience.

Poseidon

Cevdetpaşa Caddesi 58, Bebek, European Side **Tel** (0212) 287 95 31

Poseidon boasts a dream location on a wooden terrace jutting out over the Bosphorus with geraniums and charming tables. There is an extensive Turkish and transnational menu but the staff encourage diners to order fish dishes. The fish chowder is sublime but can come with a large price tag so beware.

Süreyya

İstinye Caddesi 26, İstinye, European Side **Tel** (0212) 277 58 86

Originally established by a Russian immigrant, this restaurant is one of the premier landmarks along the Bosphorus, overlooking the pretty bay at İstinye. Its name comes from the original master chef and some of his recipes still feature on the menu. Caviar blinis, chicken Kiev and beef Stroganoff go down well with lemon vodka.

Ta Nhcia

Köybaşı Caddesi 89, Yeniköy, 34430 Tel (0212) 245 93 66

This successful gourmet Greek restaurant serves dazzling Mediterranean creations that combine the best of Greek and Turkish cookery. The decor, presentation and signature touches make this a real treasure. Fish is recommended and the lamb dishes redefine gourmet tastes. There is an extensive wine list and Greek music after hours.

Urcan

Kireçburnu Caddesi 13, Tarabya, European Side Tel (0212) 262 00 24

Urcan is a neighbourly Bosphorus landmark on the European side, best known for its wonderful seafood dishes. The service is polished and the staff are always eager to please. The chef is wonderfully skilled and the creations are stylish, colourful and generous. This is a satisfying dining experience.

BEYOND ISTANBUL**Doyum Pide ve Kebap Restaurant**

Cumhuriyet Meydanı 13, Çanakkale, 17100 Tel (0286) 217 48 10

Pide (flat bread) with various baked toppings and döner kebabs are very serious business here. Simple, delicious and filling foods, on which Turkey practically runs, are cooked to perfection with enormous pride and traditional skill. No alcohol is served. If you cannot actually eat here, ask them to make up a tasty takeaway.

Kebapçı Iskender

Ünlü Caddesi 7, Bursa, 16020 Tel (0224) 221 46 15

A local landmark and one of the oldest kebab restaurants in Bursa, everybody comes here and all are welcomed almost like family. The restaurant is known for kebabs and they serve nothing else. Try the *patlıcan kebabı* (aubergine kebab) for the most satisfying main course. No alcohol is served.

Kitap Evi

Burç üstü 21, Tophane, Bursa, 16020 Tel (0224) 225 41 60

Kitap Evi is the ideal place to eat when in Bursa. They combine a culture centre with a reading room, bookstore and café. There are always papers to read, coffee to sip, friends to meet, and plenty of well-prepared snacks and cakes on hand when hunger strikes. The atmosphere here is great.

Yalova Liman Restaurant

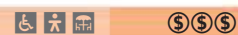
Gümrük Sokak 7, Çanakkale, 17100 Tel (0286) 217 10 45

Overlooking the harbour in Çanakkale, this restaurant brims with character. It is popular with locals who come for the stews and soups for lunch and then fill the place for more formal grills, fish and steaks in the evening. Alcohol is served and they have a separate bar area below ground. Yalova Liman is recommended for great dining.

Yusuf Restaurant

Kültür Parkı içinde, Bursa, 16020 Tel (0224) 234 49 54

As with many of Bursa's restaurants, this one has been around a long time. They serve some of the city's best food and locals flock here for the tandır lamb (lamb cooked in a charcoal pit). The huge choice of mezes, grills and vegetarian food keeps the place packed. Tables spill over into the garden in summer. Alcohol is available.

Çamlık Motel

Sahil Yolu, İznik Tel (0224) 757 13 62

İznik is beautiful with lakes and mountains and wonderful undiscovered gems begging to be explored. Çamlık Motel is one gem that you may want to keep all to yourself. It is a tranquil and simple countrified retreat with a secluded garden. The local speciality, *İnegöl köfte* (meatballs) will tempt you to return.

Çanakkale Balık Restaurant

Opposite the Piri Reis fountain, Çanakkale, 17100 Tel (0286) 218 04 41/42

Located near the university campus, this is one of the premier local venues to enjoy excellent fish. The *ahtapot şış* (octopus kebab) is one of the dining highlights. Meze choices and salads are vast but try to leave room for traditional desserts, such as quince and pumpkin compote. Alcohol is served. This is a highly recommended eatery.

Lalezar

Karaağaç Yolu, Edirne Tel (0284) 213 06 00

This is one of the most pleasant places in Edirne. It is a little way out of town but, after visiting local sights, there is nothing better than to sit here on the banks of the Meriç River and enjoy one of their fine dishes. Try to get a waterside table. Food is not exotic but the meze, kebabs and main courses are well cooked and served.

Leonardo Restaurant

Köyüçü Sokak 32, Polonezköy Tel (0216) 432 30 82

Leonardo has been going for years and seems to become ever more popular. There is a wonderful garden and also picnic areas and a small swimming pool. The food combines French and Austrian cuisine. They do a generous open buffet brunch on weekends. It gets very crowded because it is so close to the city centre.