

SHOPPING IN ISTANBUL

Istanbul's shops and markets, crowded and noisy at most times of the day and year, sell a colourful mixture of goods from all over the world. The city's most famous shopping centre is the Grand Bazaar and there are many other bazaars and markets to browse around (*see pp214-15*). Turkey is a centre of textile production, and Istanbul has a wealth of carpet and fashion shops. If you prefer to do all your



Contemporary glass vase

shopping under one roof, head for one of the city's modern shopping malls which offer a variety of international and Turkish brand goods. Wherever you shop, be wary of imitations of famous brand products – even if they appear to be of a high standard and the salesman maintains that they are authentic. Be prepared to bargain where required: it is an important part of a shopping trip.



Brightly decorated candle lanterns in the Grand Bazaar

OPENING HOURS

Shops are open, in general, from 9am to 8pm Monday to Saturday; open-air markets from 8am onwards. Large shops and department stores open slightly later in the morning. The Grand Bazaar and Spice Bazaar open their gates at 8:30am and close at 7pm. Big shopping malls open from 10am to 10pm seven days a

week. Shops do not close for lunch, although a few small shops may close briefly at prayer times, especially for the midday prayers on Fridays. Most shops close for the religious holidays of Şeker Bayramı and Kurban Bayramı, but remain open on national holidays (*see pp44-7*).

HOW TO PAY

Most shops that cater to tourists will be happy to accept foreign currency. If you can pay in cash, you can usually get a discount. Exchange rates are often displayed in shops and also appear in daily newspapers.

Credit cards are widely accepted (except in markets and smaller shops) and most vendors do not charge a commission. Resist any attempts to make you pay a small compensatory commission. It is not unusual to be asked to draw the money out from a bank on your card. Very few shops

now accept travellers' cheques. Cash and haggling are expected in the markets and bazaars. Start by offering half the asking price. In rural markets merchants may accept foreign currency.

VAT EXEMPTION

If you spend at least 118 TL in one shop, you can claim back VAT (known as KDV in Turkey), which is 18 per cent. More than 2,200 retail outlets display the Tax Free Shopping logo. The retailer will give you a Global Refund Cheque, which you should then present to the customs officials with your invoices and purchases for a cash refund when leaving Turkey.



Fezes for sale on a street stall

SIZES AND MEASURES

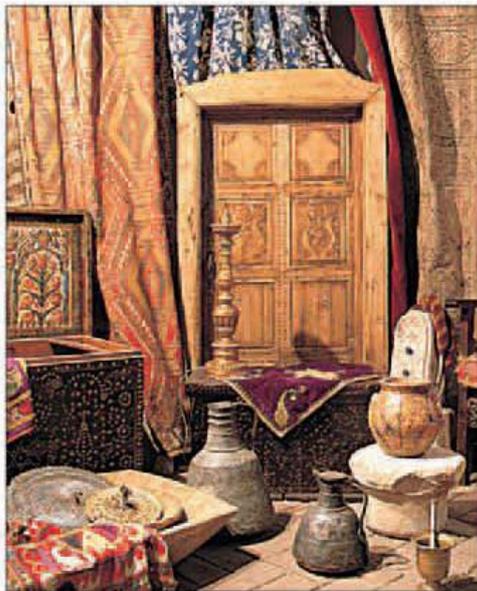
Turkey uses continental European sizes for clothes and shoes. Food and drink are sold in metric measures. This book has a conversion chart on page 227.

BUYING ANTIQUES

Before purchasing antique items, it is important to know what can and cannot be taken out of Turkey. The rule is that objects which are over 100 years old may be exported only when a certificate stating their age and granting permission to remove them from the country has been issued by the relevant



Turkish delight and boiled sweets, sold by weight at market stalls



Antiques shop in Çukurcuma

authority. Museums issue these certificates, as does the Ministry of Culture in Ankara, who will also undertake to authenticate the correct age and value of an object, if necessary. The shopkeeper from whom you bought your goods will often know which museum will be authorizing your purchases for export. In theory, a seller should already

have registered with a museum all goods for sale that are over 100 years old. In practice, sellers usually only seek permission after a particular item has been sold. In the past, antiques could be removed from Turkey without a certificate. Although this has changed, the export of antiques is not forbidden, as some believe. If the proper authorities permit your purchase to be

exported, you can either take it with you or send it home, whether or not it is over 100 years old. Do take note, however, that taking antiques out of Turkey without proper permission is regarded as smuggling, and is a punishable offence.

Van cats and Kangal dogs have recently been included in this category.

HOW TO BARGAIN

In up-market shops in Istanbul, bargaining is rarely practised. However, you will probably do most of your shopping in the Grand Bazaar and the shops located in or around the old city (Sultanahmet and Beyazıt). In these places haggling is a necessity, otherwise you may be cheated. Elsewhere you can try making an offer but it may be refused.

Bazaar shopkeepers, characterized by their abrasive insistence, expect you to bargain. Always take your time and decide where to buy after visiting a few shops selling similar goods. The procedure is as follows:

- You will often be invited inside and offered a cup of tea. Feel free to accept, as this is the customary introduction to any kind of exchange and will not oblige you to buy.
- Do not feel pressurized if the shopkeeper turns the shop upside down to show you his stock – this is normal practice and most salesmen are proud of their goods.
- If you are seriously interested in any item, be brave enough to offer half the price you are asked.
- Take no notice if the shopkeeper looks offended and



Haggling over the price of a rug

refuses, but raise the price slightly, aiming to pay a little more than half the original offer. If that price is really unacceptable to the owner he will stop bargaining over the item and turn your attention to other goods in the shop.

SHOPPING MALLS AND DEPARTMENT STORES

Istanbul's modern shopping malls are popular for their entertainment as well as their shopping facilities. They have multiscreen cinemas, food courts selling fast food and chic cafés, and hundreds of shops.

Akmerkez in Etiler is an ultra-modern skyscraper where leading Turkish fashion companies and outlets for famous international names can be found. **Forum**, in Bayrampaşa, houses 265 stores, an aquarium and a technology court in a landscape of boulevards, avenues and piazzas. **Galleria**, next to the yacht marina in Ataköy, offers a wide range of well-known clothes stores, including a branch of the French department store, Printemps, and an ice rink (see p222). **Kanyon**, in Levent, boasts 160 stores, a cinema, gourmet restaurants and a fitness centre. The mall is anchored by a Harvey Nichols.



International names alongside Turkish shops in Akmerkez

SEASONAL SALES

Clothes shops are the main places for seasonal sales (*indirim*), although department stores and a number of speciality shops also have them. They begin in June or July and continue to the end of September. The winter sales start as soon as New Year shopping is over in early January and continue until mid-April. There are no sales in bazaars – every day of the year offers bargains depending on your haggling skills.

Where to Shop in Istanbul



Caviar in the Spice Bazaar

Istanbul is home to a vast range of shops and bazaars. Often shops selling particular items are clustered together, competing for custom. The Grand Bazaar (see pp98–9) is a centre for carpets and kilims, gold jewellery and leather jackets, as well as every type of handicraft and souvenir. Nişantaşı and İstiklal Caddesi on the European side, and Bağdat Caddesi on the Asian side, have a good range of clothes and shoe shops. The best choices for food are the Spice Bazaar (see p88) and the Galatasaray Fish Market (see p215).

CARPETS AND KILIMS

One of the best places to buy carpets and kilims in Istanbul is in the Grand Bazaar (see pp98–9), where **Şişko Osman** has a good range of carpets. **Nakkas** offers a range of quality carpets and kilims in a huge variety of sizes, colours and patterns. The **Cavalry Bazaar** (see p71) has many kilim shops, and **Hazal Hali**, in Ortaköy, is run by a wonderfully professional lady who knows the history of almost all of the carpets.

FABRICS

As well as rugs, colourful fabrics in traditional designs from all over Turkey and Central Asia are widely sold. **Sivaslı Yazmacısı** sells village textiles, crocheted headscarves and embroidered cloths.



Brightly coloured Central Asian *suzani* wall hangings

Centrally located behind the Blue Mosque, **Khaftan** offers a wide selection of traditional Ottoman textiles. The antiques dealer **Aslı Günşiray** sells both original Ottoman and reproduction embroidered cloths.

JEWELLERY

Istanbul's substantial gold market centres on Kalpakçılar Bası Caddesi in the Grand Bazaar. Here gold jewellery is sold by weight, with a modest sum added for craftsmanship, which is generally of good quality. The daily price of gold is displayed in the shop windows. Other shops in the Grand Bazaar sell silver jewellery, and pieces inlaid with precious stones.

Urart stocks collections of unique gold and silver jewellery inspired by the designs of ancient civilizations. **Antikart** specializes in restored antique silver jewellery made by Kurds and nomads in eastern Turkey.

LEATHER

Turkish leatherwear, while not always of the best quality hides, is durable, of good craftsmanship and reasonably priced. The Grand Bazaar is full of shops selling leather goods. **B B Store**, for example, offers a good range of ready-to-wear and made-to-order garments.

Meb Deri sells designer handbags and small leather goods, and **Desa** has classic and fashionable designs.

ANTIQUES AND BOOKS

The best area for antiques is Çukurcuma (see p107), in the backstreets of Beyoğlu. Shops worth a visit are **Aslı Günşiray**, **Antikhane** and **Antikarnas** for their Turkish, Islamic and Western stock. A vast array of Ottoman antique brassware, furniture and pottery, including Turkish coffee cups and vases, are sold in the Grand Bazaar.

The antiquarian bookshops, such as **Librairie de Pera** sell old postcards and prints. One of the very best shops for new books is **Galeri Kayseri**, which sells a wide selection of English-language titles.

HANDICRAFTS AND SOUVENIRS

All types of Turkish arts and crafts can be found in the Grand Bazaar. Ideal gifts and



Icons for sale in the Grand Bazaar

souvenirs include embroidered hats, waistcoats and slippers, mother-of-pearl inlaid jewellery boxes, meerscham pipes in the shape of heads, prayer beads made from semi-precious stones, alabaster ornaments, blue-eye charms to guard

against the evil eye, nargiles (bubble pipes) and reproductions of icons. At the **Istanbul Crafts Centre** (see p76), watch the traditional art of calligraphy being practised. **Rölyef** in Beyoğlu, the **Book Bazaar** (see p94), **Artrium** and **Sofa** also sell antique and reproduction calligraphy, as well as *ebru* (marbled paintings) and reproductions of Ottoman miniature paintings.

POTTERY, METAL AND GLASSWARE

Hundreds of shops in the Grand Bazaar are stocked with traditional ceramics, including many pieces decorated with exquisite blue-and-white İznik designs (see p161). Other types of pottery come from Kütahya – distinguished by its free style of decoration – and Çanakkale (see p170) – which uses more modern designs,

often in yellows and greens. To purchase a modern piece of Kütahya ware, visit **Mudo Pera** which stocks a collection by Sitki Usta, a master of Kütahya pottery. Most museum shops also have a good range of pottery for sale, including reproduction pieces. The Grand Bazaar and the Cavalry Bazaar (see p215) are centres of the copper and brass trade and offer a huge selection to the browsing visitor. For glassware, **Paşabahçe**, the largest glass manufacturer

in Turkey, creates delicate *çeşmibülbül* vases (decorated with blue and gold stripes) and Beykoz-style ware (with gilded decoration).

FOOD, DRINK, HERBS AND SPICES

The spice bazaar (see p88) is the place to buy nuts (especially pistachios) and dried fruits, herbs and spices, jams and the many types of herbal tea produced in Turkey. These include sage

(*adaçayı*), linden (*iblamur*) and camomile (*papatya*). However, other foods can be bought here as well, including such luxuries as caviar. Another place with a wide variety of good quality herbs, jams, teas and spices is the Galatasaray Fish Market.

Several shops specialize in particular foods. **Şekerci Hacı Bekir** is renowned for its delectable Turkish delight and baklava. Also popular is **Bebek Badem Ezmesi**, on the Bosphorus, widely acclaimed for its pistachio and almond fondants. Over the course of more than a century in business, **Kurukahveci Mehmet Efendi** (see p86) has become the best known producer of Turkish coffee. The quintessential Turkish spirit, raki (see p197), can be bought in any grocery store.



Pickled fruits and vegetables, sold in markets and on street stalls

DIRECTORY

VAT EXEMPTION

Global Refund

Teşvikiye, Ferah Sokak 19/ A-2. **Tel** (0212) 232 11 21. www.globalrefund.com

SHOPPING MALLS

Akmerkez

Nispetiye Cad, Etiler. **Tel** (0212) 282 01 70.

Forum

Kocatepe Mahallesi, Bayrampasa. **Tel** (0212) 443 13 99.

Galleria

Sahil Yolu, Ataköy. **Tel** (0212) 559 95 60.

Kanyon

Büyükdere Cad 185, Levent. **Tel** (0212) 353 53 00.

CARPETS AND KILIMS

Hazal Hali

Mecidiye Köprüsü Sok 27-9, Ortaköy. **Map** 9 F3. **Tel** (0212) 261 72 33.

Nakkas

Nakilbent Sok 33, Sultanahmet. **Map** 3 D5 (5 D5). **Tel** (0212) 516 52 23.

Şişko Osman

Halıcılar Cad 49, Grand Bazaar. **Map** 2 C4 (4 B3). **Tel** (0212) 528 35 48.

FABRICS

Khaftan

Nakilbent Sok 32, Sultanahmet. **Map** 3 D5 (5 D5). **Tel** (0212) 458 54 25.

Sivaslı Yazmacısı

Yağlıkçılar Sok 57, Grand Bazaar. **Map** 2 C4 (4 B3). **Tel** (0212) 526 77 48.

JEWELLERY

Antikart

İstiklal Cad 207, Beyoğlu. **Map** 7 D4. **Tel** (0212) 252 44 82.

Urart

Abdi İpekçi Cad 18/1, Nişantaşı. **Map** 7 F1. **Tel** (0212) 246 71 94.

LEATHER

B B Store

Gani Çelebi Sok 4-6, Grand Bazaar. **Map** 2 C4 (4 B3). **Tel** (0212) 527 53 38.

Desa

İstiklal Cad 140, Beyoğlu. **Map** 7 D4. **Tel** (0212) 243 37 86.

Meb Deri

Abdi İpekçi Cad 14/2, Nişantaşı. **Map** 1 C1. **Tel** (0212) 225 56 80.

ANTIQUES

Antikarnas

Faik Paşa Yok 15, Çukurcuma. **Map** 7 E4. **Tel** (0212) 251 59 28.

Antikhane

Faik Paşa Yok Restohan 41, Çukurcuma. **Map** 7 E4. **Tel** (0212) 251 95 87.

Aslı Günşiray

Çukurcuma Cad 72-74, Çukurcuma. **Map** 7 E4. **Tel** (0212) 252 59 86.

BOOKS

Galeri Kayseri

Divanyolou Caddesi 11, Sultanahmet. **Map** 3 D4. **Tel** (0212) 516 3366.

Librairie de Pera

Galip Dede Cad 22, Tünel. **Map** 7 D5. **Tel** (0212) 252 30 78.

HANDICRAFTS

Atrium

9th floor, Swissôtel, Maçka. **Map** 8 A4. **Tel** (0212) 2559 02 28.

Rölyef

Emir Nevruz Sok 16, Beyoğlu. **Map** 7 D4 (4 C3). **Tel** (0212) 244 04 94.

Sofa

Nuruosmaniye Cad 42, Cağaloğlu. **Map** 3 D4 (4 C3). **Tel** (0212) 527 41 42.

POTTERY, METAL AND GLASSWARE

Mudo Pera

İstiklal Cad 401, Beyoğlu. **Map** 7 D5. **Tel** (0212) 251 86 82.

Paşabahçe

İstiklal Cad 314, Beyoğlu. **Map** 7 D5. **Tel** (0212) 244 05 44.

FOOD

Bebek Badem Ezmesi

Cevdetpaşa Cad 238/1, Bebek. **Tel** (0212) 263 59 84.

Kurukahveci

Mehmet Efendi
Tahmis Cad 66, Eminönü. **Map** 3 D2. **Tel** (0212) 511 42 62.

Şekerci Hacı Bekir

Hamidiye Cad 83, Eminönü. **Map** 3 D3. **Tel** (0212) 522 06 66.