

[WHERE IN İSTANBUL]

# My Perfect Day

## Which of İstanbul's historical sites impresses you?

The most impressive historical landmark in İstanbul is Hagia Sophia. I am always fascinated by the fact that in a city like İstanbul, which experienced frequent earthquakes throughout its history, this colossal building built 1,500 years ago is still standing today. For me, Hagia Sophia is the greatest time-tested masterpiece of engineering.



## What are some of your favourite streets and neighbourhoods?

İstanbul's streets are crowded, colourful places, ideal for people-watching – but the heavy car traffic can be a challenge. That's why many İstanbulites, myself included, enjoy the more silent and peaceful neighbourhoods of İstanbul. One of my most favourite neighbourhoods is Kuzguncuk on the Asian side. Still, I also really enjoy the crowded streets of Kadıköy because of its cultural richness. Yeah, I am a fan of the Asian side!

## Where do you enjoy eating Turkish and Ottoman cuisine?

My favourite Turkish restaurants are Asitâne in Edirnekapi, Nar in Nuruosmaniye, Asude in Kuzguncuk and Nakkaş Kebap in Nakkaştepe. The meyhanes also still hold a very important place in my life. And to get down to basics, I'm a big fan of mercimek çorbası (lentil soup) and İskender kebab!



## Serhan Güngör

(Professional Tour Guide  
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Born in Ankara, Serhan studied English at TED Ankara College and received his BSc in Political Science and Public Administration from the Middle East Technical University (METU), Ankara. He furthered his studies with Ottoman History at İstanbul's Bogazici University, and received his Master's degree in Historical Geography from İstanbul University. In 1997, Serhan was certified as an official tour guide and has since been guiding cultural group tours as well as special-interest private tours in İstanbul and all over Turkey.

Besides introducing his beloved Turkey to foreign visitors, Serhan has been leading Turkish travellers abroad to more than 40 countries. His areas of expertise include cultural history, art, architecture, archaeology and military history. In the two decades of his career, Serhan's guest-list has included presidents, prime ministers, official delegations, university professors, corporate leaders, and celebrities including Meryl Streep, Dan Brown and Rick Stein.

## Where do you like to do your shopping?

I am a humble collector of Turkish carpets and kilims. For this art, my favourite places are Punto Hali and Nur Hali in Nuruosmaniye. I am truly proud of my friend Mr. Sevan Bıcağcı, one of Turkey's famous jewellery designers. I always enjoy the vibrant atmosphere of the Grand Bazaar. For fashion or textile shopping, out of İstanbul's 100 or so shopping malls, I always prefer those that have a metro station nearby.

## What are some of your favourite galleries and museums?

I am eagerly awaiting the reopening of my beloved İstanbul Archaeological Museums after their renovation. They are an oasis of culture and history in İstanbul's most beautiful setting. I also like the permanent collection and setting of the Sabancı Museum, as well as the visiting its exhibitions. I also love to follow the exhibitions of Pera Museum and Salt Galata. My other favourite, the Rahmi Koç Industrial Museum, always happily reminds me that "the difference between men and boys, is the price of their toys".



## What would you do for a quintessentially 'İstanbul' kind of day?

What makes İstanbul İstanbul is the Bosphorus. The most special day would be an afternoon where you'd rent a private yacht with a group of friends and spend couple of hours on the Bosphorus, cruising by those exquisite waterfront mansions, palaces and medieval castles. During the summer, you can even drop the anchor for a while and swim on the northern end of the Bosphorus. Then in the early evening, disembark at one of the many fish restaurants and enjoy rakı and fish, combined with a vast spread of delicious mezes, great conversation, and one of the most beguiling urban views in the world. What else could one ask for in life?