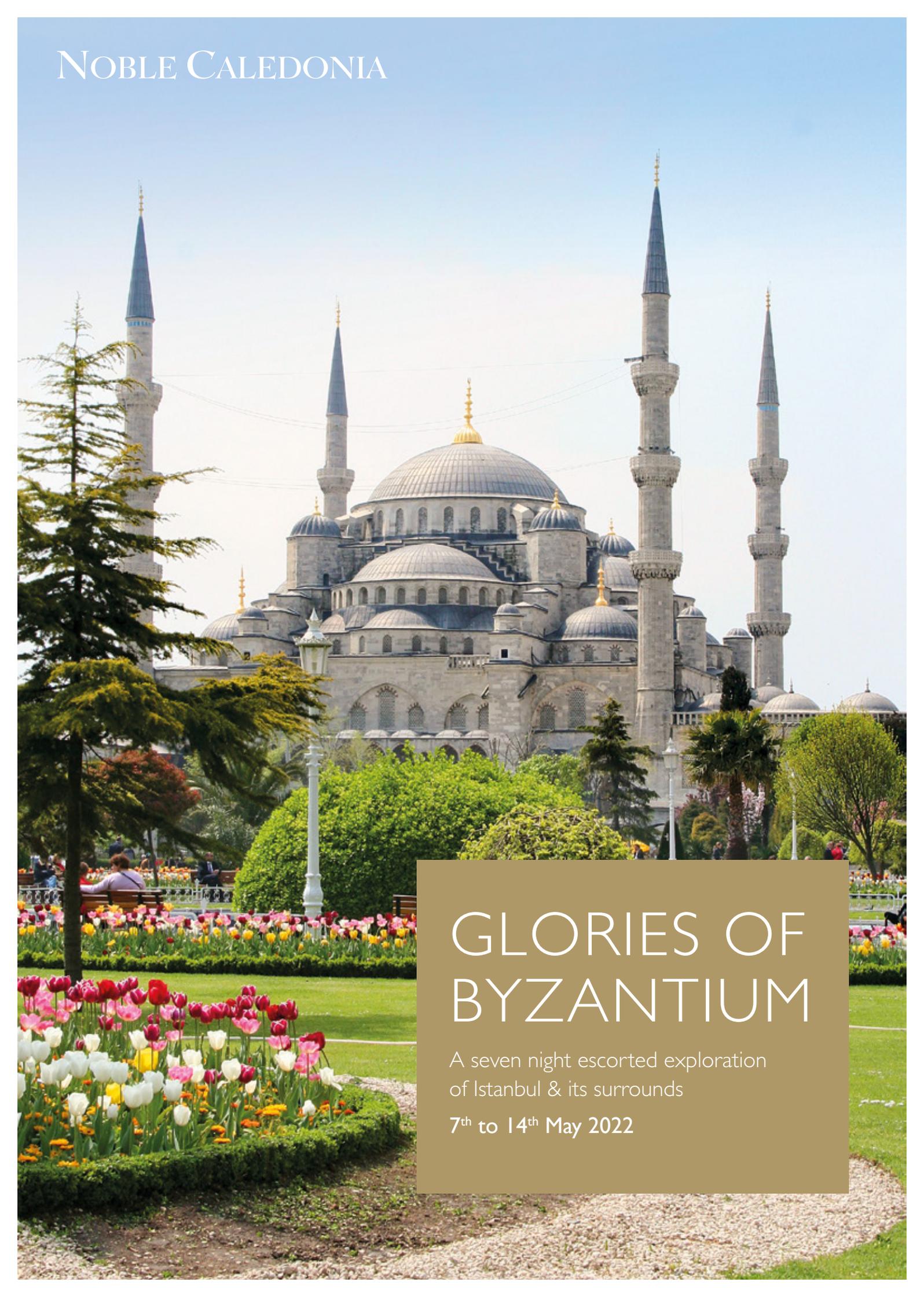


NOBLE CALEDONIA



# GLORIES OF BYZANTIUM

A seven night escorted exploration  
of Istanbul & its surrounds

7<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Hagia Sophia



Founded by the Greeks in the seventh century BC, Istanbul served as the victorious capital city for both the Byzantine Empire, when it became known as Constantinople, and the Ottoman Empire and for centuries has been a bustling metropolis. It is blessed with a magnificent natural setting on the Bosphorous Strait and, having operated voyages around the Black Sea for over twenty years, we thought it was time to devise an escorted tour which allows for more time to discover the many facets of this deeply fascinating and historically important city where East meets West.

Our in-depth tour will explore Istanbul's relatively compact Old City with its outstanding architectural history including the glorious mosaics in the Byzantine sixth-century cathedral of Hagia Sophia, the Topkapi Palace and the beautiful Blue Mosque. We will stroll through the labyrinth of shops and markets in the Grand Bazaar, and the Greek and Jewish quarters, to learn more of the city's diverse cultural heritage. We will enjoy a private cruise on the breathtaking Bosphorus, from where we can admire the incredible skyline dotted with Mosques and minarets, as well as a full day tour to the idyllic Princes' Islands. A highlight for many will be our visit to the astonishing town of Edirne, once the thriving capital of the Ottoman Empire, where we will visit the great Selimiye Mosque, one of Sinan's finest.

During the course of our stay there will be ample time to explore independently or relax at the hotel and we have devised the itinerary so that you can choose where you dine on several evenings, perhaps soak up the atmosphere at one of the Bosphorus front fish restaurants or dine alfresco in one of the city's many rooftop restaurants. Difficult to convey in words, the essence of Istanbul has to be experienced and our escorted visit offers the ideal opportunity.



## THE ITINERARY

**Day 1 London to Istanbul, Turkey.** Fly by scheduled flight. Arrive in the late afternoon and transfer to the Pera Palace Hotel for a seven night stay. A welcome dinner will be held in the hotel this evening. (D)

**Day 2 Sultanahmet.** After breakfast at the hotel we start our exploration of Istanbul at the Hippodrome, the centre of civic life in the capital of

the Ottoman Empire and the site of speeches, chariot races, and riots. Next, visit the nearby Blue Mosque, named for its glorious 17th century painted tiles; and the Hagia Sophia, first a Byzantine patriarchal basilica, later an imperial mosque and today a museum. Known for its massive domed roof and colourful mosaics, this structure

is widely regarded as the world's finest example of Byzantine architecture. A short walk brings us to the Basilica Cistern, which dates back to the 6th century and is supported by 336 Corinthian columns making it one of the most magnificent covered cisterns in Istanbul. This afternoon take a walking tour of Istiklal Street, the most famous avenue in Istanbul

before returning to the hotel for an evening at leisure. (B, L)

**Day 3 Fener & Balat.** Our day begins with a visit to the Suleymaniye Mosque, the largest in the city and a masterpiece of the 16th century architect Sinan. Continue on to the small yet lavishly decorated Chora Church, which is part of a Byzantine monastery



complex (now a museum) originally built outside the city walls of Constantine the Great, and view the many frescoes and mosaics depicting the beginnings of Christianity. Later enjoy an orientation tour along the ancient walls of Istanbul and a stop at Fener Greek Quarter, visiting the Greek Patriarchate and Orthodox Church and Balat, the Jewish Quarter, which dates back to the Byzantine period. Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant, sampling fine Ottoman cuisine and spend the remainder of the afternoon exploring Istanbul independently. (B, L)

**Day 4 Princes' Islands.** There is no better way to escape the bustle of Istanbul for a day than with a visit to the idyllic Princes' Islands. Enjoy cool breezes and charming sights along the way to Buyukada, the largest island in the chain. Famous for their mild climate, lush vegetation, and ornate Ottoman houses, all the islands are unspoiled by traffic. Instead of cars there are carriages, called phaetons, which we will use to tour the island and its beautiful scenery studded with elegant mansions draped with purple bougainvillea, reminiscent of a more leisurely and graceful era. We will take lunch at one of the many fish restaurants that line the waterfront, gazing across the Asian shore of Istanbul, so close - though it feels worlds away. Returning to Sultanahmet by local boat, a short coach transfer will return us to the hotel in the late afternoon. (B, L)

**Day 5 Topkapi Palace & the Grand Bazaar.** Start the morning with a tour to the Istanbul Archaeological Museum that houses over a million ancient objects originating in all parts of the Mediterranean region. These include the Alexander sarcophagus, said to have been created for Alexander the Great; remnants of the Ishtar Gate in Babylon, and the 8th century BCE Siloam inscription from Jerusalem - among the oldest existing record of its kind written in Hebrew. Continue on to the impressive Topkapi Palace, a complex of buildings and annexes that was used as the Imperial residence of the Ottoman Sultans for nearly 400 years. Since 1924 it has been preserved as a museum, and it is noted for its beautiful shaded courtyards and elegant architecture. Enjoy a local lunch followed by a visit to the Grand Bazaar. Originally constructed in 1464, it is one of the largest covered markets in the world, comprising an amazing 4400 shops and 40 inns along 64 streets. Enjoy some free time here, perhaps sharpening your bartering skills, before returning to the hotel. (B, L)

**Day 6 Edirne.** Today we will drive to Edirne, the former capital of the Ottoman Empire, located on the European border of modern day Turkey. Sinan, the most famous architect of the Ottoman era, chose this city for the construction of the spectacular Selimiye Mosque,

nowadays a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Visit the mosque and underground Bazaar followed by lunch at a local restaurant. Afterwards we continue to the Sultan Beyazit II Mosque Complex, the largest set of religious buildings in Edirne. Besides the mosque and religious school, the complex boasts a hospital, with famously skilled surgeons, and an impressive octagonal dome. Last but not least, see the New Bridge constructed at the junction of Maritsa and Tunca rivers between 1842 and 1847. Return back to Istanbul, arriving in the evening. (B, L)

**Day 7 Beyoglu & Pera.** This morning walk to the iconic Galata Tower, built by Genoese merchants in 1303 as a watch tower to warn of approaching pirate ships.

Afterwards we will venture into Istanbul's famous Spice Market to enjoy the sounds and smells before heading out on a private cruise on the Bosphorous. Heading north and following the European shore we will pass Dolmabahce and Yildiz Palaces and sail as far as the Rumeli Fortress before crossing to the Asian side and returning past Beylerbeyi Palace. Returning to Karakoy Pier, we take the historic underground funicular train up to Beyoglu to return to our hotel. This evening enjoy a farewell reception and dinner to celebrate the end of our glorious week in Istanbul. (B, L, D)

**Day 8 Istanbul to London.** After breakfast transfer to the airport for our return scheduled direct flight to London. (B)

### PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

Room	Price
Deluxe Golden Horn View	£2995
Deluxe Golden Horn View for sole use	£3595

**PRICE INCLUDES:** Economy class scheduled air travel • Seven nights at the Pera Palace Hotel • Meals as indicated (B-Breakfast, L-Lunch, D-Dinner) • Wine, beer and soft drinks with included meals • Excursions as described • Gratuities • Noble Caledonia Tour Manager • English-speaking local guide • Transfers • Entrance fees.

**Not Included:** Travel insurance, visa.

**Group Size:** We are restricting the group size to just 25 participants.

**NB.** Some of the excursions will include extended periods of walking including steps and over uneven terrain. We therefore do not recommend this tour for those with walking difficulties.



The hotel entrance



Deluxe room



Agatha Restaurant

## PERA PALACE HOTEL

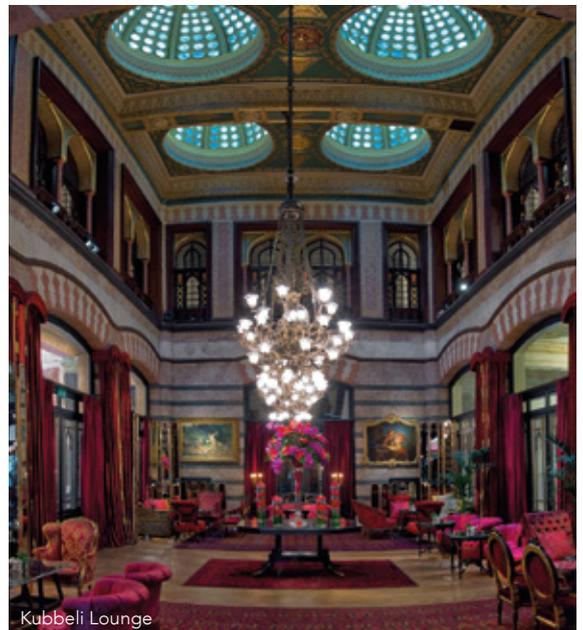
The Pera Palace Hotel was established in 1892 by the French-Ottoman architect Alexander Vallaury to accommodate travellers arriving on his Orient Express train from Paris, and it has accommodated many distinguished guests including Ernest Hemmingway, Agatha Christie and Greta Garbo. Designed in Neoclassical, Art Nouveau and oriental styles, the hotel offers stunning views of the Golden Horn and is ideally located in the historic Pera district within walking distance of the famous Istiklal Street.

### Your Room

The hotel features 115 rooms and suites and combines 19th century elegance, such as high ceilings, chandeliers and Neoclassical furniture, with modern luxury and comfort. We will be accommodated in the spacious deluxe rooms which offer 30 square metres and views over the Golden Horn. The facilities include a king size bed, which can be configured as twin or double, and marble bathroom with a walk-in shower or shower over bathtub. For your comfort, the rooms also provide a safe, air-conditioning, ironing facilities, complimentary Wi-Fi and a 49" flat screen cable TV.

### Your Space

The hotel facilities include an indoor pool and Jacuzzi, a well-equipped fitness studio and a luxurious spa with three rooms devoted to treatments, a marble-clad Turkish hammam and a sauna. Dining options include the Agatha Restaurant featuring inventive dishes of French, Italian and Turkish cuisine in a fine dining setting. Guests can also enjoy an English Afternoon Tea at the Kubbeli Saloon Tea Lounge and the Orient Bar serves a selection of wine and cocktails throughout the evening.



Kubbeli Lounge



Lobby



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Our current booking conditions apply to all reservations and are available on request.  
Cover image: The Blue Mosque.