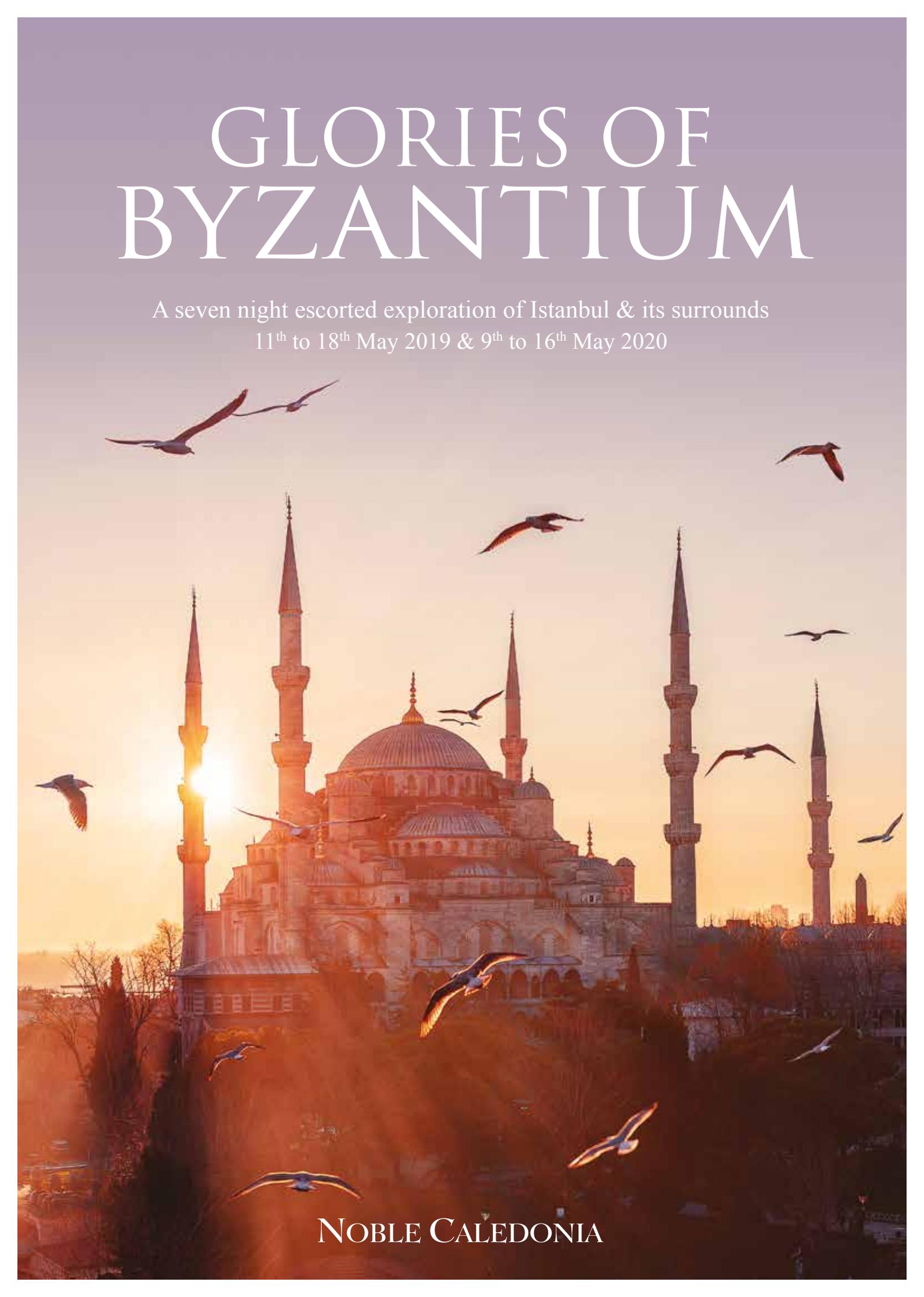
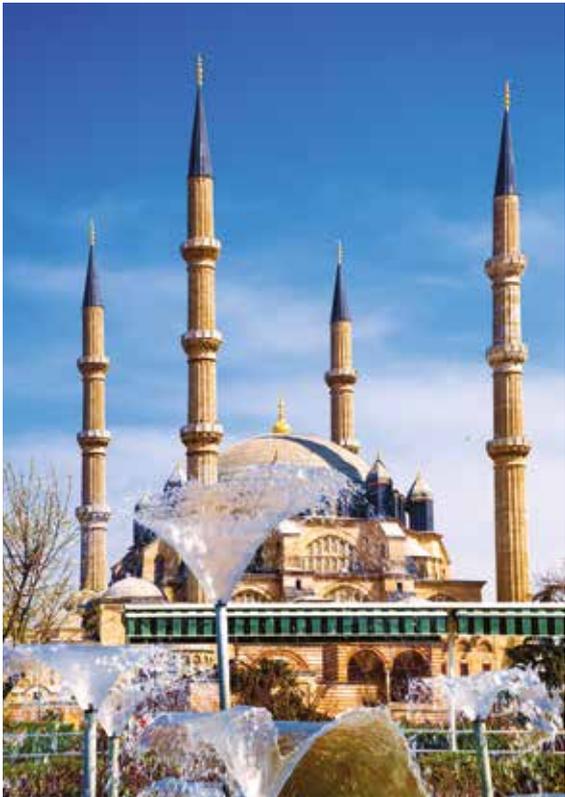


GLORIES OF BYZANTIUM

A seven night escorted exploration of Istanbul & its surrounds
11th to 18th May 2019 & 9th to 16th May 2020

A photograph of the Blue Mosque in Istanbul at sunset. The mosque's large central dome and several minarets are silhouetted against a warm, golden sky. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a lens flare effect. Numerous seagulls are captured in flight, scattered across the sky. The foreground shows some trees and the lower part of the mosque's structure.

NOBLE CALEDONIA



Selimiye Mosque, Edirne



Rumeli Fortress and the Bosphorus Bridge



Horse-drawn Phaeton, Buyukada, Princess Islands



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 Bosphorus 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 Princess 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 Marmara Pera Hotel for a seven night stay. A welcome dinner will be held in the hotel this evening.

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. Lunch is taken at a local restaurant before returning to the hotel for an afternoon and evening at leisure.

Day 3 Fener and Balat. Our day begins with 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. 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



Hagia Sophia



Spice Market



Interior of the Blue Mosque Galata Tower

the Great, and view the many frescoes and mosaics depicting the beginnings of Christianity. Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant, sampling fine Ottoman cuisine before driving to the Suleymaniye Mosque, the largest in the city and a masterpiece of the 16th century architect Sinan. Spend the remainder of the afternoon exploring Istanbul independently.

Day 4 Princess Islands. There is no better way to escape the bustle of Istanbul for a day than with a visit to the idyllic Princess 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.

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



Topkapi Palace

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.

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. After lunch at a local restaurant, visit the Semiz Ali Pasa Bazaar, also the work of Sinan. Completed in 1589, it is a long tunnel-like building with shops on both sides. 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.

Day 7 Beyoglu & Pera. This morning venture into Istanbul's famous Spice Market to enjoy the sounds and smells before heading out on a private cruise on the Bosphorus. 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 for lunch, before walking down to the iconic Galata Tower, built by Genoese merchants in 1303 as a watch tower to warn of approaching pirate ships. This afternoon take a walking tour of Istiklal street, the most famous avenue in Istanbul. This 1.8-mile-long pedestrian avenue is the heart of the entertainment and shopping district of Beyoglu, which dead-ends at Taksim Square. This evening enjoy a farewell reception and dinner to celebrate the end of our glorious week in Istanbul.

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

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

	2019	2020
Twin:	£2475	£2575
Single:	£2995	£3095

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

PRICE INCLUDES: Economy class scheduled air travel • Seven nights at the Marmara Pera Hotel in a Superior Sea View Room with breakfast daily • Six lunches and two dinners as indicated • Wine, beer and soft drinks with included meals • Excursions as described • Gratuities • Tour Manager • English-speaking local guide • Transfers • Entrance fees.
Not Included: Travel insurance, visa.

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.



View from the rooftop Mikla Bar



Mikla Restaurant

MARMARA PERA HOTEL

Located in a fantastic elevated position in the historic Pera District, close to the shopping and entertainment hub of Istiklal Street, the Marmara Pera Hotel is the ideal starting point from which to discover the fascinating city of Istanbul. Its rooftop pool area offers stunning views over the Bosphorus and Sultanahmet, whilst its proximity to both Taksim Square and the Old City make it a convenient base for independent exploration. We will be accommodated in the stylish and comfortable Superior Sea View Rooms.

Your Accommodation

The Superior Sea View Rooms average 22 square metres and offer wonderful views of the Bosphorus. The rooms feature a chic bedroom dresser, large working desk and armchair, and sliding wardrobes or wall wardrobe rails. The en-suite bathrooms offer a walk-in shower or bathtub with overhead shower and a vanity unit. The facilities include 24 hour in-room dining, complimentary Wi-Fi, telephone, hairdryer, mini bar, tea and coffee making facilities, satellite TV and a safe. The rooms are non-smoking.

Your Space

The hotel facilities include a rooftop pool with comfortable sun loungers offering amazing city views as well as a gym and fitness centre. Dining options include the Marmara Café, renowned for its handmade chocolates, pastries and delicious food, and which offers a welcome break from the hustle and bustle of the Beyoğlu district. There is also the Mikla Restaurant with its rooftop setting and magical views over the city which stretch to the Hagia Sophia and the Topkapi Palace. The restaurant has an urban, stylish design of chrome 50s and 70s furniture and a stunning wooden rail-sleepers bar. The dishes feature on the menu combine quality locally sourced ingredients with masterful cooking techniques.



Rooftop Pool



Superior Sea View Room



Hotel Exterior



Marmara Cafe



NOBLE CALEDONIA

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Our current booking conditions apply to all reservations and are available on request.
 Cover image: The Blue Mosque, (Sultanahmet Camii), Istanbul