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Istanbul to woo tourists with first shopping festival



Preparations are underway in Istanbul for the country's first ever shopping festival, set to kick off in March.

The 40-day festival, designed to position the Turkish city as a major shopping and tourism destination, begins March 18 and will offer discounted items, extended hours and a range of events in venues around the city.

Traditional tourist destinations such as the Grand Bazaar and Egyptian Spice Market will host concerts, street festivals and displays such as fashion shows designed to get tourists spending, emulating the successful Dubai Shopping festival.

Some of the 90 shopping centers in Istanbul will also be open 24 hours a day, allowing even nightbirds to get their shopping fix of everything from luxury Turkish fashion brands to spices and antiques, with prizes awarded daily to visitors.

Organizers hope that the festival will grow in size to attract over 1.5 million tourists to Istanbul annually over the next four years, helping the government hit its target of 10 million tourists a year by 2015.

Dubai's festival, which has been held in the UAE at the beginning of every year since 1996, now attracts around 3 million visitors to the emirate every year and is believed to have brought in around 40 million visitors since its inception.

Turkey's major airlines have announced promotional deals for those wishing to get to the Istanbul event, which runs through April 26.

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[Turkish Airlines](#), the nation's flag carrier, is a major sponsor and will be offering promotional tickets from some countries to the event, as well as reportedly considering raising the baggage allowance for shoppers attending.

[Pegasus Airlines](#), which flies from 25 international destinations to Istanbul, is also offering low-cost tickets from several European destinations, including the UK from £59.99 (€70) and France from €59.99.



Istanbul Shopping Fest

Istanbul Shopping Fest will be organized between March 18 and April 26, 2011. Shops and shopping malls will be open till morning in several districts of Istanbul. People will be able to shop 24 hours a day in Istanbul during nearly one month. Different special prizes and "Win a Auto Every Day" campaigns are expected to attract tourists to Istanbul.

Istanbul has been a capital for shopping and trade through out the centuries housing the historic shopping centers such as Grand Bazaar, the largest covered market in the world. Another historic shopping center of Istanbul is Egyptian Market (Spice Bazaar) which is still standing and attracting people with special types of spices. There are also numerous small bazaars serving in the historic structures of Istanbul with a spiritual atmosphere. The most popular stuff in those bazaars are gold, jewelery, leather and rugs.



In addition to those, there are about 90 modern shopping centers in Istanbul such as Akmerkez in Etiler, Cevahir shopping center in Sisli and Olivium in Bakirkoy. There are also several popular shops at Taksim, Nişantaşı, Şişli, Bakırköy, Fatih, Bahariye, and Bağdat street will stage several street activities.

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During the fest, hundreds gathered to watch a different music shows and entertainment display on Taksim, Nişantaşı, Şişli, Bakırköy, Fatih, Bahariye and Bağdat streets of Istanbul. And Istanbul continues the theme of “the city that never sleeps”.

We can provide you only transport tours during the festival in Istanbul. You will be transferred to the best spots for shopping in accordance with your comments and advised for the best places. Our vehicles are private vans with air-condition and our drivers speak basic English. Our only transport shopping tours in Istanbul will certainly save your money and time !



'Istanbul Shopping Festival'



İstanbul gearing to have another mega tourist event; Annual Shopping Festival is kick started today by the Turkish tourism minister, governor and the mayor of İstanbul and the leaders of major business organizations. The event most likely to attract millions of shoppers from surrounding countries which can visit Turkey without a visa. Organizers make sure it would be a success and hoping to increase the shopping lovers year after year every year making İstanbul Shopping Festival as one premium shopping event in the world. The 2011 İstanbul Shopping Festival is expected to give much needed boost to İstanbul tourism

industry and the retail sector.

The 'Istanbul Shopping Festival' is a new and upcoming festival, which has been organised by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Between the 18th of March and 26th of April, This is the first time that this festival is being carried out in İstanbul. It is aimed to refresh the shopping tourism and to support it in a broad range of areas; from culture to arts, entertainment to food and beverages. It is ultimately planned to spread this activity throughout Turkey.

The countdown for the festival, which was actually organised as a result of the experiences gained in the ITO's (Istanbul Trade Chamber's) Shopping Fest, which has now been running for the past 3 years, has already begun. The details of 'Istanbul Shopping Festival ' is announced today with a press conference attended by Turkish Culture & Tourism Minister Ertugrul Gunay. Festival has a budget of 50 million dollars.

The Mayor of İstanbul Kadir Topbaş said he will dispatch all the sources of the city for the festival. He also wishes to have 40 couples from different countries to get married in İstanbul sponsored by the festival organisers. He promises to officiate the wedding ceremonies personally.

Another of Festival's main sponsor Turkish Airlines boss Hamdi Topçu said that they will have special fares and considering to increase the baggage allowance of the shoppers during the festival..

The 40 day long shopping event will attract millions of bargain hunters from across the globe who will win all kind of prizes including a brand new car every day during festival. Tourists can enjoy tax free shopping as well as heavy discounts on a wide range of items including jewelry, perfumes, textiles, handicrafts and electronics items as shops and malls try to outdo each other in sales. The İSF is also known for its colorful events ranging from music to street performances offering wholesome family entertainment.

İstanbul Shopping Festival will be a celebration time for shopping lovers who thronged to this charming and scintillating city from across the globe. One can shop for the imported items like watches, perfumes, jewelry by leading world-renowned brands at a discount of 5 % to 50 %. The discounted rates are not the only attraction of İstanbul Shopping Festival, as you can win fabulous free gifts, bargain offers and raffle tickets. İstanbul has rapidly emerged as the tourist capital of the World and a very busy shopping Center for the surrounding countries. With a population of 14 million people, İstanbul has over 90 brand new shopping centers and many street venues. Topping all that having the world biggest and oldest shopping center Grand Bazaar, İstanbul is very well suited for the task in hand.





Besides the shopping, a number of entertaining events take place at colorful İSF for children as well as grown ups. You can participate with your family in all kind of shows arranged by the city and it's people. Dining is also a major attraction of İSF where gourmets can satisfy their taste buds from delicious Turkish cuisine and from all corners of the world.

İstanbul Shopping Festival is not all about bargained shopping, but it also organizes a wide range of special events. With so much to offer, İstanbul Shopping Festival 2011 promises to be a truly memorable shopping experience for you and your loved ones.

Shopping in Istanbul

Istanbul has been a top choice for shoppers for more than 1,500 years and is famous for its handmade rugs and carpets, clothing, antique silver and jewellery, semi-precious stones, spices, sweets and - , footwear and accessories.

Markets:

Grand Bazaar in Beyazit is one of Istanbul's greatest tourism attractions, even if you do not intend to buy anything. New and antique jewellery, inlaid woodwork furniture, textiles and embroidery, metalware and more can all be found beneath its covered alleyways. Like its more famous neighbour the Grand Bazaar, the Spice Bazaar in Eminonu is worth a special trip. It smells marvellous, and looks marvellous too, with stalls piled high with olives, dried fruits and nuts, herbs, and mounds of bright-coloured spices and gorgeous sweetmeats.



Shopping centres:

There are about 90 large shopping malls in Istanbul's suburbs, such as Galleria, in Atakoy Akmerkez, in

Etiler; and Kanyon, in the Levent district.

Key Areas:

Sultanahmet, Istanbul's prime tourist area, is awash with shops selling authentic antiques and handicrafts. These, however, are outnumbered by an even vaster number of establishments selling well made cheap imitations. Brand names such as Gucci, Armani and Hugo Boss can be found in all shopping centers and major shopping venues like Nisantasi, Bağdat caddesi and İstiklal caddesi.

Opening times:

Official opening hours for shopping in Istanbul are Monday to Saturday 0900-1800. In summer, many shops, especially those in tourist areas, remain open until around 2100.

Tax Info:

Foreign visitors may be eligible for a refund of value added tax on purchases at some specially designated tourist shops. A special invoice is issued, which must be presented for a refund at your airport or port of departure.

