



Elizabeth Banks directs and plays Bosley in the upcoming *Charlie's Angels* reboot, which filmed scenes at Istanbul's aromatic Spice Bazaar.

LUXURY LOCATION: ISTANBUL

# STAR ESCAPES

Style and culture collide in this intriguing Turkish city straddling Europe and Asia **By Suzanne Wintrob**

## STAY

Celebrities and royals flock to the spectacular Ciragan Palace Kempinski, the only Ottoman imperial palace and hotel on the Bosphorus and the city's only hotel accessible by car, yacht and helicopter. Most five-star brands have a presence, yet those who like hiding out opt for the lux boutique House Hotel Karaköy that blends ancient and modern – much like the city itself. **[I]**

## INDULGE

Wind through the alleyways of the Grand Bazaar's myriad shops for ceramics, tapestries and delectable Turkish Delight, or head to the Nisantasi district where Hugo Boss and Alexander McQueen mingle with locals like Dilek Hanif and Fey's Fato Yalin. For jewelry, take on Cate Blanchett's look in *Ocean's 8* with pieces inspired by the city's historic buildings from local designer Sevan Bicakci. At day's end, treat yourself to the full Turkish bath experience with body clay mask and relaxing bubble wash at Ayasofya Hurrem Sultan Hamam.

## What To Take



**Katerina Makriyianni Twirl Drop Gold-Tone, Silk and Turquoise Earrings**, \$529, [neta-porter.com](http://neta-porter.com)



**Smoking Robe**, \$810, [fleurdumal.com](http://fleurdumal.com)



**NYX Ultimate Edit Petite Shadow Palette in Ash**, \$12, [nyxcosmetics.ca](http://nyxcosmetics.ca)

## EXPLORE

As competing muezzins call the devout to prayer, meander through history at the spectacular Sultan Ahmed Mosque (a.k.a. the Blue Mosque, below). Then head to the splendid courtyards of 15th-century Topkapi Palace that once housed Ottoman sultans. At Hagia Sophia, one of the most popular museums in Turkey, gaze up for incredible Byzantine architecture and mosaics. And don't miss the cobblestoned Balat hood, home to delightful cafés such as 1200 Derece, where coffee and glass-blowing unite. For captivating vistas, take a cruise along the Bosphorus (Turkey's Riviera).



## TASTE

There's no shortage of street food – from Nutella on sesame-covered *simit* to *gozleme*, a pastry filled with spinach and feta. For more formal dining, Nusr-Et in the 500-year-old Grand Bazaar is world famous for steak thanks to its eccentric meme-worthy founder, Salt Bae. And Tugra Restaurant, in the Ciragan Palace, boasts a bounty of Ottoman and Turkish dishes (above). But the real delicacy is black tea, served in a tulip-shaped glass atop a small saucer and savoured any time of the day.

**TRIP TIPS** Istanbul's new airport will be the world's largest when it's fully operational • Turkish Airlines' "Flying Chefs" cook up mouth-watering meals onboard for those in business class • The tulip is Istanbul's traditional symbol and is on colourful display in the spring • At Hagia Sophia, look for resident cat Gli, an Instagram star!

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: ISTOCK; KEMPINSKI ISTANBUL; UGRA; THE UNIVERSITY OF CULTURES AND TOURISM OF TURKEY; ALLEN BERTEZOVSKI/GETTY IMAGES; ISTOCK