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The lovely [Four Seasons Sultanahmet](#) had us for lunch and a site. This iconic hotel sits in the midst of the historical district of Istanbul and has a rooftop with views of both the Bosphorous and Hagia Sophia.

We then ventured to the Hagia Sophia for a look. This mosque doubles as a place of worship for both Christians and Muslims, and the diplomatic way in which these religious groups share is a message of peace for the world.

It was on to the Grand Bazaar rooftops...an exciting way to see all of Istanbul from an interesting and “alternative” location. James Bond was filmed here, and it’s fun to feel on top of it all!

We ended our day at the lovely [Ritz Carlton Istanbul](#) with a site and dinner.

A long and educational day of discovery in this beautiful city!

Day 2 in Istanbul began with a history lesson and tour of the Dolmabahçe Palace located right on the Bosphorous. This palace, built between 1843 and 1856, would cost the equivalent of \$1.9 billion today, and it has been the home of 6 sultans since its construction. Now a museum, it contains 285 rooms, 46 halls, 6 baths and 68 toilets 🤩.

We followed this beautiful tour with a site of the iconic [Kempinski Ciragan Palace](#), which just underwent a massive renovation of the hotel portion. It is beautiful, and we had a lovely lunch in the palace here.

Time in Istanbul is never complete without a boat ride on the Bosphorous, so we ended our afternoon doing just this...and were blessed with perfect weather as well!

Our Peninsula hotel host invited us for a site and dinner for the evening. Our stay was flawless, and the location of the hotel as well as their 25,000 square foot spa is the perfect way to relax and unwind after a day in Istanbul. The new-kid-on-the-block is magnificent, and I know we are sad to leave!

Next up...Bodrum!

On days 3 & 4, we said good-bye to Istanbul and hello to Bodrum. Sitting in its own peninsula on the Aegean Sea, Bodrum is essentially the Turkish Riviera, with its exquisite blue flag waters, luxury resorts & hotels, high-end shopping and epic international gastronomy.

Bodrum is merely a one-hour flight on [Turkish Airlines](#) from IST, and is a seasonal destination, opening in early April and closing at the end of October. The area goes from 200,000 people in the winter to more than 2 million during its peak season.

We are fortunate to be hosted by the chic [Bodrum Edition](#) boasting all sea-view rooms and 5* service. We enjoyed our afternoon exploring the hotel, and then ended our day with a site and delicious dinner at the one of the hotel’s restaurants, Kitchen, overseen by Turkish renowned Chef Osman Sezener.

A visit to Turkey is never complete without a trip to the ruins of Ephesus, so we took the next day to explore the Basilica of St. John, Mary’s House and ending with the city of Ephesus. This area dates back to the 4th c BC, and the city is divided into State life, Commercial life and Civilian life. It’s an extraordinary site to behold, and even more awe-inspiring that only 14% has been excavated to-date!

We ended our day of sight-seeing with another site and dinner [Lujo Hotel](#). This all-inclusive resort is a town within itself, with 9 restaurants, multiple bars, its own amphitheater, parties, nightlife, etc. If you can dream it, this resort has it!

Our last day in Bodrum was full of many toasts to a beautiful trip!

We began our day with a site visit and lunch at the stunning [Mandarin Oriental Bodrum](#). This resort has it all, including Chanel and Hermes boutiques on the property. Every room enjoys views of the sea, and it is the perfect place for rest and relaxation, all with the highest level of standards and service that Mandarin Oriental is known for. Our lunch was incredible, as traditional kebab was on the menu and it never disappoints!

We followed our visit with a surprise from AIDA for a cruise on the Aegean Sea in a gulet. Being on the water is the best part of this area, and the gulets can be reserved for week-long holidays. It's a hugely popular option and highly recommended.

Lastly, the inspiring owner of AIDA, Adviye Bergemann, invited us to her home for dinner. For me, the truest and most personal hospitality is when someone invites you into their home. Our meal was relaxed and fun, complete with a Turkish dance party between courses 🇹🇷.

May 5th is a holiday in Turkey to celebrate the transition from Winter to Summer. To celebrate this, we wrote a wish for the coming season and tied it to the rose bush in her yard in hopes of it coming true.

Turkey is a rich and beautiful country, not only physically in its landscape, but in the people, the culture, the religions, the food and its history. It has everything; from vibrant urban cities to the caves of Cappadocia to the cleanest waters in Bodrum and everything in between. And yes...it is SAFE!

It is always hard to say good-bye, so for now, it will just be until next time Turkey...