ARTTOURS PRIVATE TOUR (ART-A3)
Haghia Sophia, Blue Mosque, Hippodrom, Obelisk, Basilica Cistern

9.00 am-16.00 pm pick-up from hotel
Private vehicle - Toyota Land Cruser - Chrysler Voyager or similar
Only with driver + basic support or we can supply professional guide.
Max 4 people/vehicle - min two persons
You can select your restaurant or we can recommend

PRICE: To be given, including, transfers, museum entrance, tips, parking fee according to with/without guide. %10 discount over 10 persons

HAGIA SOPHIA MUSEUM

Hagia Sophia, the Church of the Holy Wisdom, is considered the most magnificent Church of all times and one of the wonders of the world remained until now.

Apart from its architecture and historical background, its Byzantine mosaics have been attracting visitors for centuries. Hagia Sophia served as a church for 916 years. The current building was originally constructed as a church between A.D. 532 and 537 on the orders of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian, and was in fact the third Church of the Holy Wisdom to occupy the site (the previous two had both been destroyed by riots). It was designed by two architects, Isidore of Miletus and Anthemius of Tralles. The Church contained a large collection of holy relics and featured, among other things, a 50 foot (15 m) silver iconostasis. It was the patriarchal church of the Patriarch of Constantinople and the religious focal point of the Eastern Orthodox Church for nearly 1000 years.

In 1453, Constantinople was conquered by the Ottoman Turks and Sultan Mehmed II ordered the building to be converted into the Ayasofya Mosque. The bells, altar, iconostasis, and sacrificial vessels were removed, and many of the mosaics were eventually plastered over. The Islamic features — such as the mihrab, the minbar, and the four minarets outside — were added over the course of its history under the Ottomans. It remained as a mosque until 1935, when it was converted into a museum by the Republic of Turkey.
Ahmet Khan I who is the 14th Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, acceded at the age of 14 and reigned for 14 years had the Sultanahmet Mosque built facing Saint Sophia in the quarter called by his name. Sultanahmet Mosque is a masterpiece built with the understanding of Architect Sinan in the 17th century.

Architect Mehmet Ağa, after he was admitted to the sedefkarlık (inlaying of mother-of-pearl) and architecture department of the palace in 1569-1570, he found himself in a new world and he worked as an apprentice and thereafter, a master-builder under the supervision of Great Architect Sinan Agha for just 21 years. After Great Sinan’s death, he became the Chief Architect. Having become the Chief Architect, his first work was the reparation of the Kaaba and installation of its famous golden gutters.

Facing Hagia Sophia, at the other end of the Sultanahmet Square is the Blue Mosque. This mosque was built by Sultan Ahmet I during 1609-1616 in the square carrying his name in Istanbul. It is the only mosque in Turkey with six minarets. The central dome is 43 m in height and is 33.4 m in diameter. 260 windows surround the mosque. Due to its beautiful blue, green and white tiles inside Foreigners have named it the “Blue Mosque”.
HIPPODROME

In the Byzantine period the Hippodrome was the center of all activity. Hippodrome was where the inhabitants of the city flocked and mingled in a huge crowd. Rebellions were plotted; emperors toppled from their thrones were punished. The new emperor, for whom the same fate may have been in store, was applauded. Septimius Severus had started the construction during the Roman period, when the city was being founded.

In the middle of the square was a line along which various monuments were erected, referred to as the "spina" that endowed it with the richness of a museum. The biggest of these monuments, of which three remain today, is an obelisk carved from a single piece of pink granite mounted on a console. This had been erected by the Egyptian pharaoh Tutmosis III in his own name 1500 years before, in Egypt. This magnificent piece of granite, which is covered with hieroglyphs describing the glory and victories of the pharaoh, was brought to Istanbul in the 4th century.

BASILICA CISTERN (YEREBATAN SARNICI)

Located in the hearth of old Istanbul, Basilica Cistern, or better known as Yerebatan Sarayi, is one of the architectural beauties that survived to our age from the early period of Eastern Roman Empire. Emperor Justinianus built this imposing underground cistern in the 6th Century, during the glory of Eastern Roman Empire. Yerebatan Cistern was constructed to meet the water requirements of the Grand Palace and was called "Basilica Cistern" at the time. Yerebatan Cistern is 143m long and 65m wide and covers an area of 9800 sq. meters. The cistern is supported by 336 massive marble columns, each being 9m high. The Cistern can be used privately as a cocktail venue.