

Blue Mosque is one of the prominent & historic sites of tourist attraction in the country of Turkey. It is also called Sultanahmet Camii in Turkish language.

The reason behind its name Blue Mosque, it has a feature of blue tiles that adorn the inner part of the walls. This masjid was constructed between 1609 and 1616 by Sultan Ahmed I.

Still being a mosque, the Blue mosque is an important attraction site for tourists. But, of course, it must be noted that it is still an active mosque or at least a part of it.

Thus, if you intend to visit, there is the possibility that you have to wait for sometime when the prayers are going on.

Well, this article will be on Blue Mosque and tell you everything you need to know about it.

So, let me begin with the details of its history.

## **The Blue Mosque History**

The Blue Mosque, located in Istanbul, is a beautiful example of Ottoman architecture. It was built in the early 1600s by Sultan Ahmed I. Unlike other mosques of that time, which were often funded by war spoils, Sultan Ahmed I used his own money to build this grand mosque.

Many people questioned the Sultan's decision to construct such a large mosque during a peaceful time. However, Sultan Ahmed I wanted the Blue Mosque to represent hope and progress for the Ottoman Empire. He wanted to show that even in peaceful times, the empire could grow and prosper.

Construction of the mosque was started in 1609 and the founder Sultan Ahmed I personally put the first stone. The mosque was built on the former palace of the Byzantine Empire and that is why it is one of the historical places. Even today the architects kept records of the procedure of constructing the building which is still preserved in the Topkapı Palace Library.

Interior of the building is stunning with the presence of many magnificent mosaics and tiles in the blue mosque. The blue title used to qualify this Mosque originated from the blue Iznik tiles from the exterior and interior especially on the walls and the roof. The one that may attract the particular attention inside of the mosque is the Sultan's private balcony or hünkâr mahfil.

As you have seen, the Blue Mosque encountered a lot of problems and was however completed in 1617. Having become a rather original vision of sultan Ahmed I, it remains an artwork of the incredible skill of the Ottomans. Currently the Blue Mosque is one of the major tourist attractions and a mosque where millions of Muslims flock to offer their prayers. It is still one fascinating wonder that has remained a shock to visitors, or a symbol of history and culture of the Ottoman Empire.

## **The Architecture of Blue Mosque Istanbul**

This Mosque is a blend of two architectural styles. Ottoman architects were known for building stunning mosques, and the Blue Mosque took inspiration from these designs. It also borrowed ideas from the nearby Hagia Sophia, a famous Byzantine church. Finished in 1617, the Blue Mosque is the last great mosque of the Ottoman Empire's classical era.

### **A Sea of Blue Tiles**

Inside the Blue Mosque, you'll see something truly special. Over 20,000 handmade ceramic tiles cover the lower walls and piers. These tiles were made in Iznik, a city known for its pottery. Each tile shows one of over 50 different tulip designs. The tiles on the lower level are more traditional, while those higher up have bright flowers, fruits, and cypress trees. Skilled craftsmen made each tile, and some were even supervised by well-known potters like Kasap Hacı and Baris Efendi.

But there's more to the story. As work on the mosque continued, the cost of tiles went up, and their quality dropped a bit. This is why some colors may look faded, and the glaze isn't as shiny on the higher levels. Some tiles on the back balcony wall were actually reused from the Topkapi Palace after a fire!

### **Light and Inspiration**

Besides the blue tiles, natural light adds to the mosque's beauty. More than 200 stained-glass windows with detailed designs let in soft light. You might even notice ostrich eggs hanging from the chandeliers! These weren't just for decoration. The Ottomans believed the eggs kept spiders away, preventing webs inside the mosque.

The walls have verses from the Quran, many written by Seyyid Kasim Gubari, a famous

calligrapher. The many windows make the large space feel even bigger. Some windows are real, and others are just for decoration. The colored glass in these windows was a gift from the rulers of Venice to the Sultan. Unfortunately, many of the original windows have been replaced with modern ones.

## **A Place for Prayer and Reflection**

The most important part of the mosque is the mihrab, a niche that shows the direction of Mecca, the holy city for Muslims. The mihrab is made of beautifully carved marble, with a niche and calligraphy panels above it. The mihrab is surrounded by more beautiful ceramic tiles, making it a special place for prayer.

Next to the mihrab is the minber, a raised platform where the Imam, the religious leader, gives sermons. The mosque's design makes sure everyone can see and hear the Imam, even when the mosque is full.

## **A Royal Touch**

In the southeast corner, there is a special platform with a balcony and two small rooms. This area was for the Sultan and his family. The platform even became the headquarters for a high official during an important event in 1826!

## **A Grand Entrance**

Outside the mosque, there is a large courtyard. The design of this area is similar to the Suleymaniye Mosque, another famous site in Istanbul. The courtyard is nearly as big as the mosque and has a hexagonal fountain in the center. The grand but narrow entrance gate is unique, with a special meaning. A heavy chain used to hang above it, and only the Sultan could enter the courtyard on horseback. He had to lower his head to avoid the chain, a reminder of humility before God.

The Blue Mosque is a stunning piece of Ottoman architecture, blending tradition and innovation. It's a place for worship, reflection, and a symbol of Istanbul's rich history.

## What to See Here?

The Blue Mosque is a breathtaking architectural gem located in Istanbul, Turkey. It's famous for several unique features that make it a must-see for visitors.

### 1. The Six Minarets

One thing that sets the Blue Mosque apart is its six minarets. Usually, only the Kaaba in Mecca has six minarets. When the Blue Mosque was built, Sultan Ahmet I wanted to honor the Kaaba, so he added a sixth minaret to his own mosque.

### 2. The Humble Entrance

As you enter the mosque's courtyard, you'll notice a heavy iron cord hanging above the entrance. This cord was a reminder to the sultan, who would enter on horseback, to bow his head and show respect for the sacred space. It's a simple gesture that symbolizes humility and reverence.

### 3. The Blue Tiles

Inside the Blue Mosque, you'll be amazed by the breathtaking beauty. The walls are covered in thousands of Iznik tiles, each one a masterpiece of craftsmanship. The tiles feature intricate patterns of tulips, flowers, fruits, and cypresses, creating a stunning sea of blue.

### 4. The Perfect Acoustics

The Blue Mosque is also known for its incredible acoustics. The way the marble is used in the construction of the mosque creates a unique sound that enhances the experience of prayer and contemplation.

### 5. A Symbol of Istanbul

The Blue Mosque is more than just a beautiful building; it's a symbol of Istanbul and Turkish culture. It's a place where people from all walks of life come together to pray, learn, and appreciate the beauty of Islamic art and architecture.

## Things to Know Before Visiting the Blue Mosque

There are basic factors that you need to consider before visiting Blue Mosque; the prayer time, time when the mosque is open to the public, and DOs and Don'ts during your visit.

### Prayer Times

Muslims pray five times each day Muslims bow in different directions five times each day. These prayers are reminders of faith having only good memories and visions of God. The Ezan or the call of the prayer is made from the tall structures on the mosque which are referred to as minarets.

Here's a breakdown of the prayer times (these are subject to slight variations depending on the date):

- **Fajr (Dawn):** Around sunrise, usually between 4:30 AM and 5:30 AM.
- **Dhuhr (Noon):** Around midday, usually between 12:30 PM and 1:30 PM.
- **Asr (Afternoon):** Between midday and sunset, usually between 3:30 PM and 4:30 PM.
- **Maghrib (Sunset):** Just after sunset, usually between 6:00 PM and 7:00 PM.
- **Isha (Night):** Before nightfall, usually between 7:30 PM and 8:30 PM.

### Important Etiquette

To make sure your visit goes smoothly and respectfully, keep these points in mind:

- **Check the Opening Hours: Check the Opening Hours:** The Blue Mosque is usually open from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. It closes for about 90 minutes during each prayer time.
- **Plan Your Visit Carefully:** Do not go during two times of the day as this is the time of prayer and sometimes they close earlier especially on Friday for the weekly group prayer. It is advisable to check the latest prayer times in the internet before going there.
- **Dress Modestly:** Men and women should dress decently. On their part, males should avoid wearing short wears by putting on trousers and shirts that have sleeves. They have to have cover their shoulders, legs and hairs. Such items as scarves that can be used to cover the head are provided at the door incase one needs them.
- **Show Respect:** The Blue Mosque is religious building. This means that when in a place of worship one should speak softly, refrain from using bright lights when taking pictures and avoid using gesturing or looking directly at the worshipers.

## Inside the Mosque

When you enter the mosque, take off your shoes and put them in the plastic bags provided. This helps keep the carpeted prayer hall clean. Once inside, take a moment to look at the beautiful tiles and calligraphy decorating the walls.

Photography is allowed, but be careful not to disturb those who are praying, and avoid using flash. When you leave, place the used plastic bags in the bins provided and return any borrowed headscarves.

## Donations

While donations aren't required, they are appreciated. These contributions help maintain the mosque and keep it beautiful. You will receive a receipt for your donation.

By following these guidelines, you can enjoy a respectful and meaningful visit to the Blue Mosque, appreciating its beauty while honoring its religious importanc

## FAQs

## **Why does the Blue Mosque have six minarets?**

There are two main stories about why the Blue Mosque has six minarets. One story says that the sultan wanted golden minarets, but the architect misunderstood and built six minarets instead. Another, less likely story, suggests that the architect thought golden minarets were too expensive and decided to build six regular ones.

## **Why was the Blue Mosque built?**

The Blue Mosque was built in the early 1600s by Sultan Ahmet I. The sultan wanted to show the world that the Ottoman Empire was still strong and powerful, especially after losing some battles to the Persians. Mehmed Agha was the main architect, and the mosque was completed in 1616.

## **Why is the Blue Mosque important in Islam?**

The Blue Mosque has been a place of worship for Muslims for over 400 years. It represents the power and achievements of the Ottoman Empire. Muslims consider the Blue Mosque a very important religious site. It is also a popular place for tourists to visit.