

Istanbul Airport is the biggest of the two international airports in the city; the other is Sabiha Gokcen. From the very first, I was impressed how it combines Turkey history with the modern elements. It is recorded that over 120 million passengers have been served in the airport since the early of 2018. This number highlights how great the airport is including great facilities and services.

Firstly, it can be tending and confusing to have to navigate through Istanbul Airport due to its large area. It has two terminals, which are integrated to operate like two different airports in one location. Once you get organized, navigating the process becomes surprisingly easy to understand.

If your plan is to spend in Istanbul several hours or start the Turkish journey, here is how to get to Istanbul Airport.

So, let's get going!

Getting Ready for Turkey: Why Planning Ahead is Key

Before I let you know about Istanbul Airport, you should be well-prepared when you travel to Turkey. Yes!

Here are some things that you should do before you go to Turkey to ease the process of your journey:

- **Check in Online:** Even the online check-ins are missing, most of the airlines provide the facility of online check-ins. Choose your preference seats in advance and avoid the hassles of doing it at the airport.
- **Arrive Early for Baggage Drop-off:** Waiting times sometimes may be long especially if it is during rush hour. Do not be late and make sure that you have enough time to bring your luggage to your accommodation place.
- **Keep Your Baggage Sticker:** Identification sticker is very essential especially if your luggage got lost or separated from you. Don't let it erode or go to waste, use the lesson I got from it, keep it safe.
- **Shop Duty-Free at Istanbul Airport:** Do not bring more bags through security by shopping for anything that is duty-free after the flight.
- **Be at the Airport Early:** For international flights, arrive early enough and this should be not less than 3 hours to the time of departure. Arrive at the gate at least forty five minutes to an hour before the aircraft is scheduled to depart.

So by following these tips, you are well prepared for a great tour to Turkey without any hassle.

Istanbul Airport: A Global Gateway

Istanbul Airport, located in Turkey, is a modern, busy airport that opened in 2018. It's designed to handle a huge number of passengers each year – as many as 150 million! This airport is located where Europe, Asia, and Africa meet, making it a great place for airlines and travelers.

The airport has a massive terminal, covering over 1.4 million square meters. You can find many things there, including shops, restaurants, lounges, and even hotels. It's designed to be efficient and easy to use, making your travel experience smooth. You can also easily get to and from the city center by bus, train, or taxi.

In just a few years, Istanbul Airport has become one of the busiest airports in the world. In 2023, over 76 million people traveled through it. This makes it the second-busiest airport in Europe and the sixth-busiest worldwide for international passengers. This shows how successful it has been in attracting airlines and travelers from all over the world.

Expert Tips for Smooth Journey through Istanbul Airport Immigration

Getting through Istanbul Airport immigration is easy. Just follow the signs that are in both English and Turkish.

There are two lines: one for Turkish citizens and one for visitors. If you're a visitor, a police officer will check your passport quickly. Then, an immigration officer will scan your passport and take a photo of you.

If you have an eVisa, the officer will see it on their computer. If you have a visa from the Turkish Embassy, they will check the sticker in your passport. If you're traveling with someone else, the officer will know.

When everything is okay, the officer will stamp your passport. That's it! You're ready to go.

What You'll Need for Immigration

Below is the list of required documents and information for immigration procedures:

Passport

Make sure your passport is valid for at least six months after you plan to come back home. If it's about to expire, you'll need to renew it.

Blank Pages

It is advisable for you to make sure that there is at least one page that is blank in the passport especially if you are the type that travels frequently. Some immigration officers will require a surface area where to imprint your entry and exit information.

Visa

If the country you plan visit requires you to have a visa, ensure that it is genuine or you carry a hard copy of an e-Visa. You can normally download this on to your phone.

Travel Itinerary

Prepare to provide information on where you will sleep as well as what the specific activities experienced during the trip. This information can assist the immigration officers to know why you are visiting or rather where you are coming from.

Language Tip: Of course, it's never a bad idea to know a few words and phrases in the local language, however, English today remains the universal language of airport around the globe. You will also not have a problem getting through immigration officials and the airport's staff and crew.

Claiming Your Bags: What Happens After Landing

After passing through passport control, proceed to the baggage claim area. A moving walkway will lead you directly to the duty-free shops.

Tip: Rent a luggage trolley for a small deposit of 30 Lira (approximately \$1). You can pay with cash or card. To retrieve your deposit, return the trolley and scan your ticket at the designated machine.

Trolley machines are located near each baggage conveyor belt. Once you have a trolley, locate your suitcase's belt number on the information screen.

Follow the signs to the corresponding belt and retrieve your luggage.

Lost Luggage? Here's How to Report It

If your luggage fails to appear at the baggage claim after a reasonable wait (30-40 minutes), follow these steps to report it:

Seek Assistance:

Proceed to the information desk or the airline's designated lost luggage office.

Provide Details:

Furnish the following information:

- Passport details
- Boarding pass and departure date
- Baggage sticker
- Accommodation and home address
- Contact information

Complete the Report:

Fill out the required forms and submit them to the airline representative.

Note: The process may take some time, so be patient. If you have questions, don't hesitate to ask for clarification.

Tip: When traveling with companions, consider dividing your belongings between multiple suitcases to minimize the impact of lost luggage.

Customs Check: What to Declare

Upon arrival, proceed to the ground floor. If you have items to declare, follow the red tunnel. Otherwise, continue through the green tunnel.

Getting a Local SIM Card

After customs, turn right. You'll find several local mobile data providers, such as Turk Telecom and Vodacom.

Turk Telecom offers affordable plans. Choose a plan, provide your passport, and the staff will help you set up your SIM card.

Exchanging Currency and Finding ATMs

You can exchange currency or withdraw cash from an ATM at the airport. However, you'll find

better exchange rates in the city.

Customs Check: What to Declare

Upon arrival, proceed to the ground floor. If you have items to declare, follow the red tunnel. Otherwise, continue through the green tunnel.

Getting a Local SIM Card

After customs, turn right. You'll find several local mobile data providers, such as Turk Telecom and Vodacom.

Turk Telecom offers affordable plans. Choose a plan, provide your passport, and the staff will help you set up your SIM card.

Exchanging Currency and Finding ATMs

Local currency can be purchased at the airport or take money at the ATM as soon as possible. Although, you can get the best exchange rates in the city .

Tip: Learn about the Turkish Lira and think of changing some amount of money before the flight for small things.

How to Travel from the Airport

Istanbul's new airport is located about 30 miles outside the city center, in the Arnavutköy district. There are a few options to consider:

Option# 1: Taxi

On moving around there is a local means of transportation that is easily accessible from the airport, and this is the taxi. It has a good and more direct way of commuting but traffic can be a really deciding factor for the time.

The journey takes approximately 50minutes and it's a little over 350 Lira which is equivalent

to € 19 or \$20. Local yellow taxis are the cheapest while Blue premium taxi service will cost 15% higher. Yellow taxis are;

Black luxury taxis are twice costly as yellow taxis.

It's important to be cautious when taking a taxi in Istanbul. Only use official taxis that have a "TAKSi" sign on top. Avoid unofficial taxis, as they may overcharge you.

Using Taxi Apps

If you don't like to walk, you can also order a taxi application. Yes, there many taxi service s available like Uber, but these are a little costlier compared to normal taxis.

If you prefer something a little more localized, then you would do well to try this BiTaksi application. This one will also enable a user to call a standard taxi service at the regular fare of an ordinary taxi. To top it up, you can make payment using a Credit Card without inconveniences. However, be aware that the app can sometimes lag.

Option# 2: Bus

Two main bus companies serve Istanbul's city center: Havaist and IETT.

Havaist buses, especially the iSt - 12, provides direct service that takes approximately 90 minutes to reach Sultanahmet. A ticket will cost 67 Lira which is equivalent to €3. 70 or \$3. 90.

IETT buses are less dense and may require interconnecting with another bus.

The bus station is located on the - 2 of the airport. You can also purchase an Istanbulkart or reload the card at the Istanbulkart terminal mainly located at bus station. This card can be used on any public transportation.

Option# 3: Metro

Want to get from Istanbul Airport to the city center fast and cheap? Take the M11 metro line. It goes straight to Sultanahmet. Just transfer at Gayrettepe Station. The trip takes about 40 minutes.

You'll need an Istanbulkart, a reusable travel card. It costs 60 Lira. A one-way trip on the M11 is only 9.90 Lira. It's a great deal!

Follow the signs with a red "U" to find the metro station. The M11 runs from 6 AM to midnight.

Option# 4: Car Rental:

If you want to explore Istanbul at your own pace, renting a car is a great way to do it! You'll have the freedom to go wherever you want, but be prepared for traffic. It might take about an hour to drive to Sultanahmet, especially during rush hour. All car rental places are on the arrivals level of the airport.

Option# 5:Private Transfers

With private transfers, you can avoid the stress of public transportation and enjoy a direct route to your destination.

Not only are private transfers convenient, but they're also flexible. You can customize your trip, choose your own departure time, and even make stops along the way to explore new places or enjoy beautiful scenery.

Plus, many hotels offer discounts on private transfers for their guests. So, before you book your trip, check with your hotel to see if you can save some money.

Tip: Download the Istanbul Airport app for real-time flight updates and information on airport facilities, city sights, and events.

Istanbul Airport Facilities

Istanbul Airport is a great place to start or end your trip. It's clean, modern, and easy to navigate. Here are some things to know before you go:

- **Getting Help:** If you need help, look for the “Danışma” signs. There are information desks where you can get directions, find wheelchair services, or ask questions in many different languages.
- **Traveling with Kids:** If you’re traveling with children, you can borrow a pram or stroller to help you get around the airport.
- **Restrooms:** There are lots of clean restrooms throughout the airport.
- **Drinking Water:** You can find free hot and cold water dispensers at many places in the airport. This is helpful because you can’t bring liquids through security.
- **Places to Stay:** If you have a long layover, you can stay at a hotel in the airport. There’s one before you go through passport control and another after you go through passport control.
- **Lost and Found:** If you lose something, you can go to the Lost and Found office.
- **Security:** You’ll need to go through security twice when you leave the airport.

Last Words

Istanbul Airport is one of the best airports in the world, showcasing Turkey’s warmth and professionalism. It offers every traveler an amazing experience with its modern technology, excellent services, and welcoming hospitality. It’s no wonder that this airport is a top choice for international visitors.

FAQs

What is the best way to get to the city from Istanbul Airport?

Public transportation is considered to be the best way to reach the city from Istanbul Airport, and that is the metro. It’s cheaper, faster and more convenient means of transport when compared to other options.

How can I stay connected while at the airport?

To access the internet when at Istanbul Airport, you can use the airport's Wi-Fi that is free or you can buy a local SIM card.

What are some must-see places in Istanbul?

Istanbul is a great city with an interesting history and most important enough – culture. Here are a few must-see places:

- **Hagia Sophia**
- **Blue Mosque**
- **Topkapi Palace**
- **Grand Bazaar**
- **Bosphorus Strait**

How can I save money on my trip to Istanbul?

Use public transport like buses and trams instead of taxis. Try local street food and small restaurants, which are cheaper than tourist spots. When shopping in markets, remember to negotiate prices, as haggling is common in Istanbul.

What is the best time to visit Istanbul?

Spring (April to June) and autumn (September to November) are the best times to visit. The weather is pleasant, with temperatures ranging from 15°C to 25°C. There are also fewer tourists during these times, so you can enjoy the city more comfortably.