

PORT REPORT

Top 5 sights in... *Istanbul*

Istanbul's Galataport cruise terminal is just 20 minutes from a host of fascinating landmarks, writes **Alice Barnes-Brown**

1 GALATA TOWER

This Rapunzel-esque tower, in the old Genoese part of Istanbul, is a 20-minute walk from the port and offers an informative insight into medieval Istanbul. Visitors start on the observation deck overlooking this cross-continental city, then descend through the floors to learn about its ancient, Byzantine, Genoese and Ottoman layers. An interactive game recreates the unpowered flight of wing-wearing inventor Hezârfen Ahmed Çelebi in the early 17th century, 270-plus years before the Wright brothers' first flight.

2 DOLMABAHÇE PALACE

With 286 rooms, the world's largest Bohemian crystal chandelier and 14 tons of gold covering the palace's ceilings, it takes hours to explore this baroque masterpiece – but leave time to stop for strong Turkish coffee at the Bosphorus-facing cafe.



3 OLD CITY

Clients can take the T1 tram across the Golden Horn and into the heart of Istanbul's old city in just 20 minutes. Galata Bridge affords breathtaking views of the many boats plying Istanbul's straits, before the tram clammers steeply uphill – past Turkish delight shops, street-food stalls and plush hotels until it reaches Sultanahmet station. Alight here for the majestic Hagia Sophia Grand Mosque, turreted Topkapı Palace and spellbinding Blue Mosque.

4

TAKSIM SQUARE

Istanbul's main square is an uphill stroll north of the dock. Home to a 1920s monument bearing a statue of Atatürk – the founder of the Turkish Republic – Taksim Square is a central point for exploring Istanbul's foodie heartland, catching a show at the Atatürk Cultural Centre or riding a retro red tram on the 'Nostalgia Tramway'.



5

TARIHI CESME HAMMAM

This Turkish bath within the luxurious Galata Hotel dates from 1720, so clients keen on pampering can enjoy time-tested Ottoman treatments without straying too far from the ship. Expect steam rooms, bubble massages and plenty of Turkish tea on offer, while single and mixed-gender facilities mean couples, solos and groups alike can enjoy the restorative atmosphere.