

Situated where Europe and Asia meet, Istanbul is a big city and a busy port full of mosques, markets, palaces and museums. It's not the Turkish capital - that's Ankara - but it is the country's largest city (population fifteen million). It's got a long history, too - over 2,500 years. Those are a few basic facts. What about the highlights?

One of the highlights is definitely „**Hagia Sophia**“ („Saint Sophia“ or „The Church of Holy Wisdom“). It was first built by the Roman emperor Constantine. That was in the sixth century. In those days it was a Christian church. A thousand years later, it was changed into a Muslim mosque. Then, 500 years after that, in 1935, it was made a museum. In 2020 it became a mosque again. It's full of treasures.

Another historic building is the **Topkapi Palace**. This is where Sultans of the Ottoman Empire lived for over 400 years. „Topkapi“ means 'Cannon Gate'. That's because two huge guns used to defend the palace. Now, though, visitors are welcome and what they find is a series of fascinating rooms with displays of weapons, jewels, and costumes.



Dictation

Istanbul is Turkey's largest city. It has a long history. You can visit some very old buildings. Or you can spend your money at a big market in the city center. You can also walk from Europe to Asia across a long and rather high bridge.

The **Bosporus Bridge** is 68 metres high and more than one kilometre long. The Bosporus itself is a narrow strait, 30 kilometres long, which separates Europe from Asia.

port: harbour

mosque: islamic church

definitely: sure

century: a hundred years

huge: vast, very large

defend: shield

display: presentation

weapon: arm

exhibits: things shown

attraction: interesting thing

strait: passage, canal

TRUE or FALSE?

0 Turkey is an African country. *FALSE*

1 Istanbul is the capital of Turkey.

2 Today the people of Istanbul speak mostly Greek.

3 There are many museums in Istanbul.

4 The Greek word "sophia" means "wisdom".

5 A "sultan" is a kind of king.

6 A "bazaar" is a large market.

7 Topkapi means freedom.

8 When the Romans were in Istanbul, they built Christian churches.

9 The population of Istanbul is half a million people.

10 The Bosporus separates Europe from Asia.

11 Some bridges across the Bosporus are more than 50 metres high.

12 Istanbul has a history of over 2,500 years

