



GS1 IN EUROPE REGIONAL FORUM ATTENDEE GUIDE



ISTANBUL, TÜRKİYE
12 - 15 OCTOBER 2026 | HYBRID EVENT

WELCOME TO ISTANBUL

The GS1 in Europe Regional Forum is a hybrid event taking place from 12 to 15 October 2026 at the Conrad Istanbul Bosphorus in Beşiktaş, Istanbul, Türkiye.

The main sessions begin on Monday, 12 October, with lunch at 12:45.

This attendee guide provides practical orientation, tailored itineraries around the Forum schedule, sightseeing highlights, neighborhood walks, culinary recommendations, nearby dining options, and shopping advice for the GS1 in Europe Regional Forum 2026.



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1 EVENT VENUE & GEOGRAPHICAL ORIENTATION

VENUE SETTING

The GS1 in Europe Regional Forum 2026 takes place from 12 to 15 October 2026 at the Conrad Istanbul Bosphorus in Beşiktaş. Istanbul is uniquely situated across two continents—Europe and Asia—separated by the Bosphorus strait, a natural channel connecting the Black Sea to the Sea of Marmara.

CITY STRUCTURE

On the European side, the city is divided by the Golden Horn waterway into two key sectors: the Historic Peninsula (Sultanahmet, Eminönü, and the Grand Bazaar) to the south, and Beyoğlu, Galata, Karaköy, and Beşiktaş to the north, where the Conrad hotel is situated. The Asian side (Kadıköy, Üsküdar, Moda) lies directly across the Bosphorus and is easily accessible via a short ferry ride.

VENUE PROXIMITY & TRANSPORT HUBS

The Conrad Istanbul Bosphorus sits on the European shore of the Bosphorus between Dolmabahçe Palace and Ortaköy. Key transit points in close proximity include:

Beşiktaş Ferry Pier: A 10-minute walk from the hotel, offering direct sea routes to Kadıköy and Üsküdar on the Asian side.

Kabataş Tram Terminus (T1 Line): Approximately 15 minutes walk from the hotel, providing direct access to Sultanahmet and the Historic Peninsula.

Adjacent Landmarks: Dolmabahçe Palace and Yıldız Park are located immediately next door to the hotel grounds.

2 FIRST-TIME VISITOR SIGHTSEEING HIGHLIGHTS

First-time attendees should prioritize the Historic Peninsula (Sultanahmet), a Bosphorus cruise, and an evening exploring Galata and Beyoğlu. Most major sites in Sultanahmet are walkable once reached via the T1 tram line from Kabataş.

MAJOR HISTORIC PENINSULA LANDMARKS

Sight	Description & Significance	Time Needed	Foreign Ticket	Closed Days	Insider Tip
Hagia Sophia	6th-century Byzantine cathedral, now a mosque; upper galleries & mosaics open to tourists.	1-1.5 h	€25	Opens 09:00 (pauses at prayer times)	Go at opening (09:00). Note dome restoration scaffolding.
Blue Mosque (Sultan Ahmed)	Six-minaret Ottoman mosque with famous blue İznik interior tiles.	30-45 min	Free	Closed during prayer times	Dress modestly; hair scarves provided for women.
Topkapı Palace	Ottoman sultans' imperial residence, Harem, Treasury & Bosphorus terraces.	2.5-3 h	€55 (incl. Harem)	Tuesday	Arrive at 09:00 opening; visit the Harem section first.
Basilica Cistern	6th-century underground Byzantine water reservoir with Medusa-head columns.	45 min	~€24	Open daily	Excellent stop during rain or late afternoon.
Grand Bazaar	4,000 historic shops under one roof operating continuously since 1461.	1-2 h	Free	Sunday	Haggling expected; enter via Nuruosmaniye Gate.
Spice Bazaar (Mısır Çarşısı)	Historic market for spices, Turkish delight, teas, and dried fruit.	45 min	Free	Open daily	Pair with visit to Rüstem Paşa Mosque next door.
Süleymaniye Mosque	Architect Sinan's masterpiece crowning Istanbul's highest hill.	45 min	Free	Closed during prayer times	Terrace behind mosque offers superb skyline views.
Bosphorus Cruise	Sightseeing along the strait featuring palaces, fortresses, and yalı mansions.	1.5-2 h	Public Şehir Hatları short tour is cheap	Daily schedules	Take late-afternoon departure for sunset views.
Galata Tower & İstiklal Ave.	Medieval Genoese tower overlooking pedestrian boulevard down to Karaköy.	2-3 h	Tower ~€32	Open daily	Ride historic red tram on İstiklal Avenue.

IMPORTANT VISITOR GUIDELINES

Ticketing & Currency Advisory: Prices in Istanbul fluctuate due to currency exchange updates; treat figures as indicative. The official Museum Pass Istanbul (~€120) covers Topkapı Palace and Archaeology Museums, but excludes Hagia Sophia, Basilica Cistern, Dolmabahçe Palace, and Galata Tower.

Mosque Etiquette: Shoulders and knees must be covered. Shoes must be removed before entering carpeted areas. Women must cover their heads (scarves provided at main entrances). Avoid visiting during the five daily prayer times, particularly Friday midday (12:00-14:00).

3 SECOND VISIT HIGHLIGHTS & NEIGHBOURHOOD EXPLORATIONS

For returning visitors or those with free hours between forum sessions, several outstanding cultural sites and vibrant neighbourhoods are located adjacent to the venue or across the Bosphorus.

DIRECTLY ADJACENT TO THE VENUE (BEŞİKTAŞ & ORTAKÖY)

Dolmabahçe Palace: 19th-century waterfront sultans' palace featuring a 4.5-tonne crystal chandelier. Located 10 minutes walk from the Conrad hotel. Closed Mondays; entrance approx. €50.

Yıldız Park: Expansive wooded imperial park situated directly behind the hotel, featuring Malta and Şale pavilions for morning tea or walks.

Ortaköy Waterfront: Iconic waterside Ortaköy Mosque framed by the Bosphorus Bridge. Popular at dusk; famous for local kumpir (stuffed baked potatoes).

CULTURAL GEMS & DISTRICT WALKS

Byzantine & Ottoman Architecture: Chora (Kariye) Mosque (reopened May 2024; world-renowned Byzantine mosaics; €20 entry), Rüstem Paşa Mosque (covered wall-to-wall in exquisite İznik tiles above spice market shops), Istanbul Archaeology Museums (home of the Alexander Sarcophagus next to Topkapı), and the 5th-century Theodosian Land Walls.

Atmospheric District Walks: Balat & Fener (colorful historic houses, cafes, Ecumenical Patriarchate, Bulgarian St. Stephen Iron Church), Eyüp & Pierre Loti Hill (panoramic tea garden above Golden Horn via cable car), Cihangir & Çukurcuma (bohemian antique quarters), and Karaköy & Galataport (redeveloped waterfront featuring the Renzo Piano-designed Istanbul Modern museum).

Asian Shore Highlights: Take a 20-minute ferry from Beşiktaş pier to Kadıköy for the vibrant food market on Güneşli Bahçe Street and a seaside promenade in Moda. Additional highlights include Üsküdar (Mimar Sinan waterfront mosques & restored Maiden's Tower) and Kuzguncuk (charming village quarter with church, mosque, and synagogue standing side-by-side).

Upper Bosphorus & Day Excursions: Explore waterfront Ottoman mansions (yalı) in Arnavutköy and Bebek, Mehmed II's 1452 fortress at Rumeli Hisarı, or take a 1.5-hour ferry to the car-free Princes' Islands (Büyükada) for bicycle rides and waterfront dining.

4 CULINARY GUIDE: DINING & LOCAL SPECIALTIES

Turkish gastronomy emphasizes seasonal ingredients, rich breakfast spreads, street food culture, and traditional meze dinners by the Bosphorus.

ICONIC DISHES & CULINARY TRADITIONS

Turkish Breakfast (Kahvaltı): An elaborate spread featuring artisanal cheeses, olives, bal-kaymak (clotted cream with honey), eggs with sucuk, warm bread, and endless Turkish tea.

Simit: Traditional sesame-crust bread ring sold from street carts; ideal pairing with tea during ferry crossings.

Balık Ekmek: Classic grilled fish sandwich served fresh at Eminönü or Karaköy piers.

Kebabs & Pide: Regional specialties including İskender, Adana, and Beyti kebabs; pide is traditional boat-shaped flatbread with savory toppings.

Meze & Rakı: Selection of cold and hot appetizer plates paired with the anise-flavored spirit rakı, customarily followed by fresh seasonal fish.

Desserts & Beverages: Pistachio baklava, warm künefe cheese pastry, sütlaç (rice pudding), Turkish coffee, salep, and fresh pomegranate juice.

ESTABLISHED CULINARY INSTITUTIONS

Karaköy Gülloğlu (Karaköy): The city's legendary benchmark for authentic pistachio and walnut baklava.

Hamdi (Eminönü): Famous multi-story kebab house offering expansive views over the Golden Horn.

Pandeli (Spice Bazaar): Historic Ottoman dining room adorned with blue İznik tiles operating since 1901 above the market entrance.

Çiya Sofrası (Kadıköy): Celebrated Anatolian culinary institution serving rare regional home cooking on the Asian side.

Asmalımescit & Kumkapı: Lively pedestrian alleys lined with traditional meyhanes featuring meze and fasıl music.

5 RECOMMENDED RESTAURANTS NEAR CONRAD ISTANBUL BOSPHORUS

For convenient dining close to the forum venue, the following curated selection of restaurants features options ranging from high-quality casual dining to world-class Bosphorus fine dining, all located within 1.7 km of the Conrad hotel.

#	Restaurant	Address	Website	Rating	Distance	Price
1	Bymuzaffer Beşiktaş	Salihefendi Sk. No:2, Beşiktaş	bymuzaffer.com	4.8 ★ (876)	0.5 km	€€€
2	Aqua (Four Seasons)	Çırağan Cd. No:28,	fourseasons.com	4.3 ★ (228)	0.6 km	€€€€
3	Tuğra (Çırağan Palace)	Çırağan Cd. No:32, Beşiktaş	kempinski.com	4.5 ★ (1,018)	0.7 km	€€€€
4	Rüya İstanbult	Çırağan Palace Kempinski	ruyarestaurants.com	4.5 ★ (44)	0.7 km	€€€€
5	IST TOO (Shangri-La)	Hayrettin İskelesi Sk. No:1	shangri-la.com	4.6 ★ (hotel)	0.8 km	N/A
6	Feriye Lokantası	Çırağan Cd. No:44,	feriye.com	4.4 ★ (5,162)	1.3 km	€€€€
7	Bosfor Terrace & Grill	İskele Sk. No:22, Ortaköy	bosforterrace.com	4.6 ★ (1,558)	1.4 km	N/A
8	Meat Moot Bosphorus	Muallim Naci Cd. No:24	meatmoot.com.tr	4.7 ★ (3,018)	1.6 km	€€€€
9	Tere	İnönü Cd. No:50, Beyoğlu	tereistanbul.com	4.1 ★ (237)	1.7 km	€€€€

DINING LOGISTICS

Restaurant Logistics & Advice: Distances represent approximate straight-line measurements from Conrad Istanbul Bosphorus; walking routes involve hilly terrain in Beşiktaş. Price Guide: €€€ = Expensive, €€€€ = Very Expensive.

Operating Hours & Reservations: Advance reservations are strongly recommended for fine-dining venues (Tuğra, Aqua, Feriye, Rüya). Note that Rüya is closed on Mondays, Tere opens at 16:00, and Tuğra/Aqua serve dinner from 19:00 to 23:00.

6 ISTANBUL SHOPPING GUIDE: BAZAARS, CRAFTS & HIGH-END DISTRICTS

Istanbul offers a world-class shopping experience, blending historic bazaars and artisan workshops with ultra-luxury fashion streets and modern shopping centers. High-end shopping hubs like Nişantaşı and Zorlu Center are located just 10 to 15 minutes by taxi from the Conrad hotel.

6.1 AUTHENTIC BAZAARS, LOCAL CRAFTS & ARTISAN MAKERS

Location/Market	Best For	Visitor Notes & Highlights
Grand Bazaar (Kapalıçarşı)	Carpets & kilims, gold & silver jewellery, leather, glass lamps, ceramics, hand-woven peştemal towels.	Closed Sundays. The historic İç Bedesten at its core features antiques & silver; Kalpakçılar Street is the main jewellers' row.
Arasta Bazaar	Carpets, fine textiles, hand-painted ceramics.	Located directly behind the Blue Mosque. Smaller, calm atmosphere with less high-pressure selling.
Spice Bazaar & Eminönü Streets (Mısır Çarşısı)	Spices, loose teas, Turkish delight, dried fruit, nuts, Turkish coffee.	Ask vendors for vacuum-packing for flights. Kurukahveci Mehmet Efendi next door has roasted Turkish coffee since 1871.
Çukurcuma (Beyoğlu)	Antiques, vintage furniture, rare prints, vintage textiles.	Charming cobblestone neighborhood to explore on foot; easily combined with Orhan Pamuk's Museum of Innocence.
Kadıköy Market (Asian Side)	Local food products, specialty delis, independent boutiques.	Authentic neighborhood market where Istanbul residents actually shop for daily produce and gourmet delicacies.

SOUVENIR SELECTION & BAZAAR ETIQUETTE

Popular Turkish Souvenirs to Buy: İznik-style ceramics and tiles, hand-hammered copper coffee pots, hand-woven peştemal cotton towels, organic olive-oil soaps, authentic Turkish delight (Hacı Bekir operating since 1777), glass evil-eye (nazar) talismans, and pure silk scarves.

Bazaar Bargaining & Purchasing Tips:

- **Bargaining:** Customary for carpets, jewellery, and artisan crafts, but not expected in food shops or stores with fixed price tags. Always compare items across multiple shops before settling on a price.
- **Carpets & Antiques:** Request an official certificate of origin when purchasing handmade carpets. Exporting genuine historical antiques requires an official government permit—ensure the shop arranges necessary documentation.

6.2 HIGH-END DESIGNER STREETS & LUXURY MALLS

Istanbul hosts major international fashion houses alongside prestigious Turkish luxury brands across vibrant outdoor districts and state-of-the-art shopping complexes:

Shopping Destination	What You'll Find	Proximity from Conrad Hotel
Nişantaşı (Abdi İpekçi & Teşvikiye)	Istanbul's premier designer street with flagship luxury houses, Turkish fashion designers, and upscale pavement cafés.	~10–15 min by taxi
Zorlu Center	180+ stores blending global luxury fashion and Turkish brands, alongside fine dining and a performing arts center.	~10 min by taxi
İstinye Park	The city's largest luxury mall, featuring a signature open-air boulevard lined with flagship international fashion boutiques.	~20–30 min by taxi (up Bosphorus)
Galataport (Karaköy)	Modern waterfront promenade with designer boutiques and Turkish brands, located right next to Istanbul Modern museum.	~15 min by taxi / transit
Bağdat Avenue (Asian Side)	A famous 14-km avenue lined with upmarket fashion boutiques and cafés, highly popular with local residents.	~30–45 min by taxi / ferry

TURKISH LUXURY FLAGSHIPS

When exploring Nişantaşı, Zorlu Center, or İstinye Park, look for Beymen (Türkiye's premier luxury department store for designer fashion) and Vakko (renowned internationally for fine silk scarves and couture).

7 PRACTICAL TRAVEL & LOGISTICAL INFORMATION

PUBLIC TRANSIT & TAXIS

Istanbulkart Card: Purchase an Istanbulkart (approx. €3 at airport/station kiosks). It is reusable, shareable, and valid across all trams, metro lines, buses, public ferries, and funiculars (single ride approx. €1). For taxis, use BiTaksi or Uber smartphone apps (both connect to official yellow taxis) or ensure the driver turns on the meter.

AIRPORT TRANSFERS TO CONRAD HOTEL

Istanbul Airport (IST): Taxi ride takes 45–75 minutes depending on traffic. Alternatively, take the Havaist HVIST-7 bus directly to Beşiktaş (Istanbulkart required; no cash accepted) or the M11 metro line.

Sabiha Gökçen Airport (SAW): Located on the Asian side; allow 60–90 minutes travel time by taxi to the hotel.

CURRENCY, WEATHER & ETIQUETTE

Currency & Payments: Turkish Lira (TL). Cards are accepted almost universally. Keep modest cash for bazaars, street vendors, and tips (~10% in restaurants). Use bank ATMs rather than standalone exchange machines, and select billing in Lira.

Weather & Clothing: Mid-October weather is pleasant (daytime 18–21°C, evening 12–14°C) with occasional rainfall. Pack a light jacket for Bosphorus ferry decks and comfortable walking shoes for cobblestone streets.

Time Zone: Istanbul operates on UTC+3 year-round (1 hour ahead of CEST).

Emergency Contacts: Dial 112 for Police, Ambulance, or Fire services across Türkiye.

Useful Turkish Phrases:

Merhaba (Hello)

Teşekkürler (Thank you)

Lütfen (Please)

Hesap, lütfen (The bill, please)

Ne kadar? (How much?)