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İSF is expected to attract 150,000 additional tourists to İstanbul while generating \$500 million in revenue



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Anyone fortunate enough to live in İstanbul knows that one of its greatest delights is the glorious Bosphorus



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İSF SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

MARCH 20, 2011 WWW.TODAYSZAMAN.COM



## İSF TO LURE TOURISTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

İstanbul, the only metropolis in the world situated on two continents, is likely to increase its appeal to people around the globe by starting the İSF

İstanbul has launched its first shopping festival, the İstanbul Shopping Fest (İSF), which kicked off on March 18 and will run for 40 days through April 26.

With this massive event, İstanbul aims to revitalize retail trade by revealing all the lively colors of the city through lively celebrations and entertainment. The festival is spread over both the European and the Anatolian sides of the city - - Abdi İpekçi Street in Nişantaşı, Beyoğlu's İstiklal Street, Bakırköy's İstasyon Street, historic Sultanahmet Square, Bağdat Street, Kadıköy's

Bahariye Street and dozens of shopping malls along with the historic Grand Bazaar. All these places will be full of spectacular shows, concerts, parties, huge discounts on products and much more until 2:00 a.m. every day. Famous Turkish singers and performers including Anadolu Ateşi, Mercan Dede and Ceza joined whirling dervishes in an evening performance on Saturday at Taksim Square. Burhan Öçal, Bora Uzer, Pamela and Ozan Doğulu entertained visitors with live performances on Abdi İpekçi Street the same day. **By YASİN BABACAN** CONTINUED ON PAGE 04

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## From the editor

Bringing thousands of visitors from all around the world together to share the fun and entertainment of budget shopping in İstanbul, unquestionably one of the world's greatest cities, the İstanbul Shopping Fest (İSF) makes a long-time dream come true. The İSF, which will take place between March 18 and April 26, will once again put the city, along with all of its invaluable assets including history, culture and entertainment, in the spotlight.

Visitors will be able to enjoy shopping from the newest collections at discounted prices in shopping malls and stores, which will stay open with colorful activities until late in the evening. The entertainment will continue for 40 days with street festivals, concerts, shows, parties, contests and fashion shows as the festival's enthusiastic spirit takes over the city.

With this week's 16-page supplement, to be followed by three more supplements in the coming weeks, Today's Zaman hopes to give readers an insight into this massive event. We believe that with the synergy created in its first year, the İSF will prove to be successful and continue to host more and more visitors in the years to come. Don't forget to follow the events schedule for special opportunities and entertaining activities, and most important of all, do enjoy İstanbul at its most beautiful, in spring!

Ergin Hava

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**MORE EMPLOYMENT:** United Brands Association (BMD) President Yılmaz Yılmaz says they expect the İstanbul Shopping Festival (İSF) to make an encouraging contribution of around 50,000 jobs, mostly temporary, in İstanbul.



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**PEARLS OF THE BOSPORUS:** Visitors can gaze out on İstanbul's wonderful wooden yalis in envy from the decks of the many Bosphorus excursion boats.

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**HAIL THE NEW:** As with everything else in life, changes in fashion continue at full speed. What did we see in the 2010 seasons, and what will influence our color choices in 2011?

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# İSF to lure tourists from around the world

The timing of the festival between March 18 and April 26 coincides with religious holidays such as Nevruz and Easter, usually a time when many people go on vacation



**➤** CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1  
A spectacular grand opening was held on March 18 in Sultanahmet Square, while a parade proceeded down İstiklal Street with 600 musicians entertaining shoppers in Beyoğlu. Retailers and artists designed new looks for the streets and store windows around the city.

People have the opportunity to participate in several competitions; participants can send text messages to nominate the best-designed store window, and one person will win a luxurious apartment from the Turkish construction company Sinpaş. Moreover, for every TL 40 spent using a credit card, people will get a ticket, and among these participants 20 lucky people will be the winner of a Renault car. For tourists the excitement during the İSF will be doubled as they will have the privilege of tax-free shopping as well as discounts of up to 30 percent, hence making İstanbul even more appealing.

Even if the İSF is considered a retail event, several institutions such as the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the İstanbul Governor's Office, the İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality, Turkish Exporters Assembly (TİM), the Turkish Council of Shopping Centers (AYD), the Trade Council of Shopping Centers and Retailers (AMPD) and the United Brands Association (BMD) have joined forces work to make İstanbul's first shopping fest an annual tourism event. Considering that Germany attracts over 2 million tourists to its Oktoberfest, which lasts for only two weeks, experts point out that İstanbul could possibly exceed this number if hotels, travel agents and other players in the sector contribute to this goal.

## Making İstanbul a world brand

Organizers say they expect to attract thousands of tourists to the fest, aiming to lure 1.5 million visitors by 2015. The timing of the festival between March 18 and April 26 will coincide with religious holidays such as Nevruz and Easter, during which time many people go on vacation. "Different cultures and religions will blend during the fest," said Ertuğrul Günay,

minister of culture and tourism. Another important factor is that political tensions and instability in Tunisia and Egypt will influence many tourists to select İstanbul as an alternative vacation destination. Other countries from where the organizers expect tourists to come for the fest are Russia, Iran, Azerbaijan, Saudi Arabia, Greece, Romania, Syria and Iraq.

AMPD President Mehmet Nane said in a previous statement that they want to focus not just on İstanbul's history and tourism but also on its shopping malls and entertainment sector. He noted that the İSF board has met 150 times so far to make the İSF a spectacular annual event. "We would like to make İstanbul a capital of the world. We will make a dream come true with this event," he said. BMD Chairman Yılmaz Yılmaz noted that their goal is to make İstanbul "a world famous brand."

AYD President Hakan Kodal noted they expect consumers to spend about \$1.8 billion during the fest, adding that they would like to increase this amount by a factor of 10 within 10 years' time. "We don't see this event [İSF] as an ordinary event for one year. We have plans for the next 10 years," Kodal said in a statement to the Anatolia news agency.

TİM President Mehmet Büyükeksi said in an earlier statement that the retail sector is "highly important" for increasing Turkey's competitiveness. "The government has a goal of reaching \$500 billion in exports by 2023. We need to introduce Turkish retailers to other countries to make this happen. Therefore, the İSF will be an important factor in introducing both İstanbul and our organizations to the rest of the world," he noted.

İstanbul, the only metropolis in the world that is situated on two continents, is likely to increase its appeal to people around the world by starting this annual shopping fest. Without any doubt, the city will host many people from across the globe during the İSF, not only for shopping, but also for its historic sites, the Bosphorus, cultural activities and much more. Experts all indicate that the main idea behind organizing the İSF is to advertise the mega city to the rest of the world, thereby attracting more tourists in the future.



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## QUICK FACTS ABOUT İSTANBUL SHOPPING FEST

- The İSF board invested a total of TL 50 million for the first year of this enormous event.
- The İSF board expects a spike in visitors from the Middle East to the İSF as the renowned Turkish actor Kivanç Tatlıtuğ, whose popularity in the region has risen thanks to a recent soap opera, has become the face of the 40-day event.
- The İSF board carried out promotions in 83 countries, coordinating with the Ministry of Tourism and national flag carrier Turkish Airlines (THY).
- The aim is to attract a total of 1.5 million tourists to Istanbul for İSF 2015.
- The İSF board sees the annual Dubai Shopping Fest as its major rival and aims to overtake the event within a few years.



■ Visitors can find necessary details on the official İSF website [www.istshopfest.com](http://www.istshopfest.com). Additionally, further information can be found on [facebook.com/istshopfest](https://www.facebook.com/istshopfest), [twitter.com/istshopfest](https://twitter.com/istshopfest) and [foursquare.com/istshopfest](https://www.foursquare.com/istshopfest).

■ İstanbul is going to choose its best window dresser with a contest sponsored by the İSF board. The winning design will be awarded an apartment.

■ Famous Turkish show group Anadolu Ateşi, along with singers Mercan Dede and Ceza, joined whirling dervishes in an evening performance on Saturday at Taksim Square. Also, Burhan Öçal, Bora Uzer, Pamela and Ozan Doğulu entertained visitors with live performances on Abdi İpekçi Street the same day.



AMPD President  
Mehmet Nane

PHOTO □ TODAY'S ZAMAN, MEHMET YAMAN

# İSF to bring 150K tourists, \$500 mln additional revenue

İstanbul is hailing its first shopping festival, İstanbul Shopping Fest (İSF), which will run for 40 days between March 18 and April 26, with much excitement and expectations of substantial benefits to the city's economy from this gigantic event.

Numbers indicate that İSF will not only be a festival in terms of entertainment and events but also will benefit many organizations, adding significantly to their coffers with an expected increase in the number of visitors to the city.

Trade Council of Shopping Centers and Retailers (AMPD) President Mehmet Nane says they expect the İSF to attract 150,000 additional tourists to İstanbul during this period, underlining that preparations were finalized well ahead of time for the 40-day event. "At this time of the year İstanbul receives an average of 750,000 tourists; however, we are expecting that this number will reach 900,000 this year thanks to the İSF."

Recognizing that such prominent religious holidays as Nevruz, Passover and Easter coincide with the İSF, Nane said this will be one of the major factors driving more foreign tourists -- both those who tradi-

tionally visit İstanbul at this time of the year and others who would like to take advantage of attractive discounts -- to this city which dates back a few thousand years. İstanbul receives 7.5 million tourists on average each year. Nane says this number could be increased to 10 million within the next few years. "Our biggest goal is to make this festival a permanent one. 2011 is a turning point in this regard. ... I am sure all visitors will enjoy the advantages offered by the İSF and that it will become an annual tradition," he said.

Nane believes the event will also generate a total of \$500 million in revenue for retailers. He has faith that the promotions abroad by the Turkish Ministry of Tourism and national carrier Turkish Airlines (THY) will help attract many foreign visitors. Mentioning the ongoing unrest in the Middle East, Nane says most tourists who had planned to visit some of the centers in this region have changed their travel plans to İstanbul. "This is what we understand by looking at the current occupancy rates at hotels. Bookings have been made ahead of time, and hotels in İstanbul are full during the İSF."

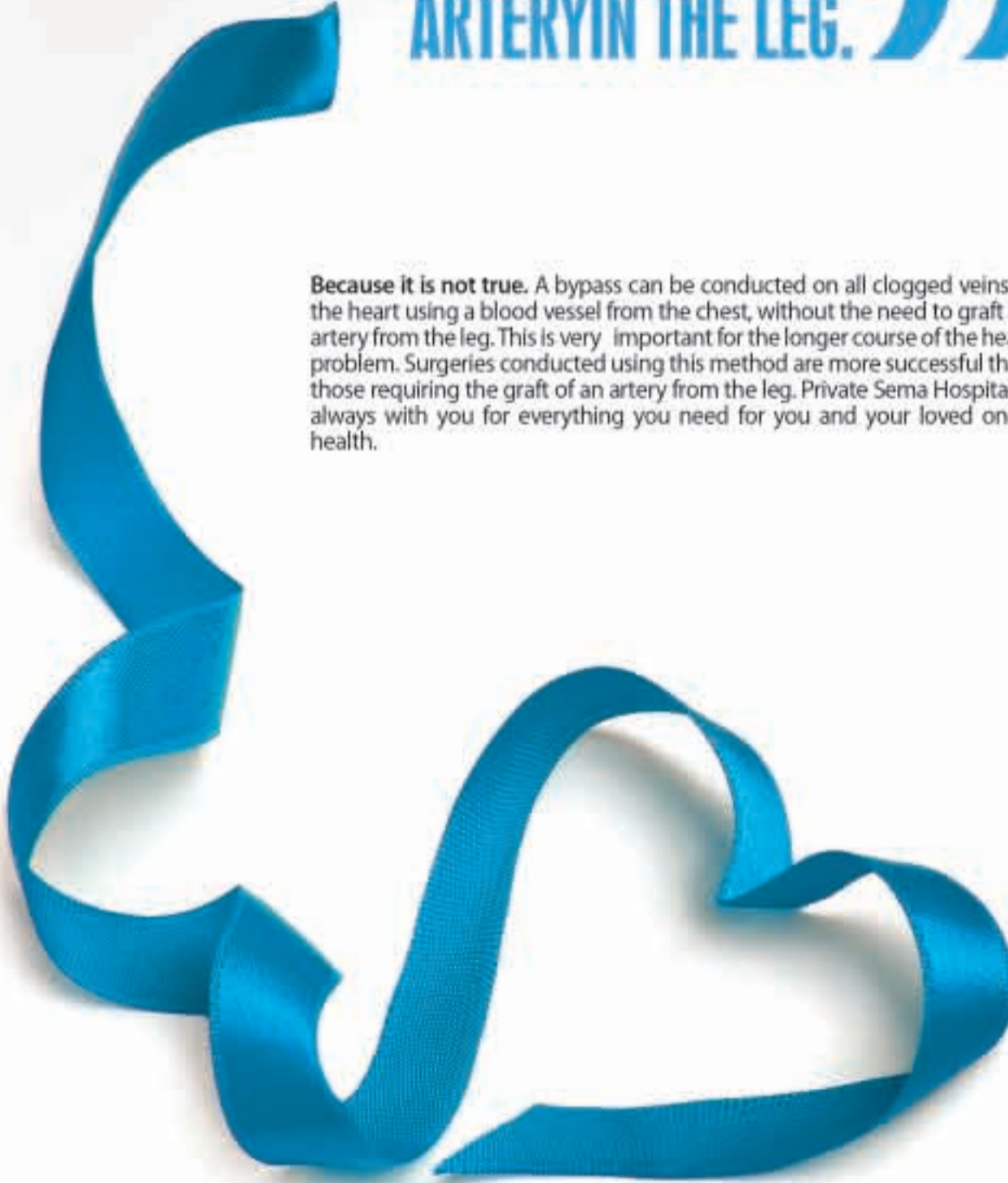
Recalling that they held the first introductory press briefing in November, Nane said 46 members of the İSF executive board have worked day and night to make sure the preparations were finished on time.

Describing the İSF as a "communal project," Nane says: "This has become a project for all İstanbulites. We will all take part in this project whether we are an ordinary retailer or a customer." The average amount of money a foreign visitor spends during his/her stay in İstanbul -- excluding hotel and food expenses -- is \$420. A large part of this money goes to shopping in the city. This number could be increased to \$1,000. He added that all sectors, from electronics to construction equipment, and all restaurants and food chains will be offering special discounts during the İSF. Noting that there are similar examples to İSF abroad, Nane said: "Germany's Oktoberfest, a 16-day event, for instance ... attracts 2 million tourists. İstanbul stands out not only for its unique historic and touristic assets but also for its energetic city life and international lifestyle. So, I believe the city deserves no less than others do." **İstanbul Today's Zaman**

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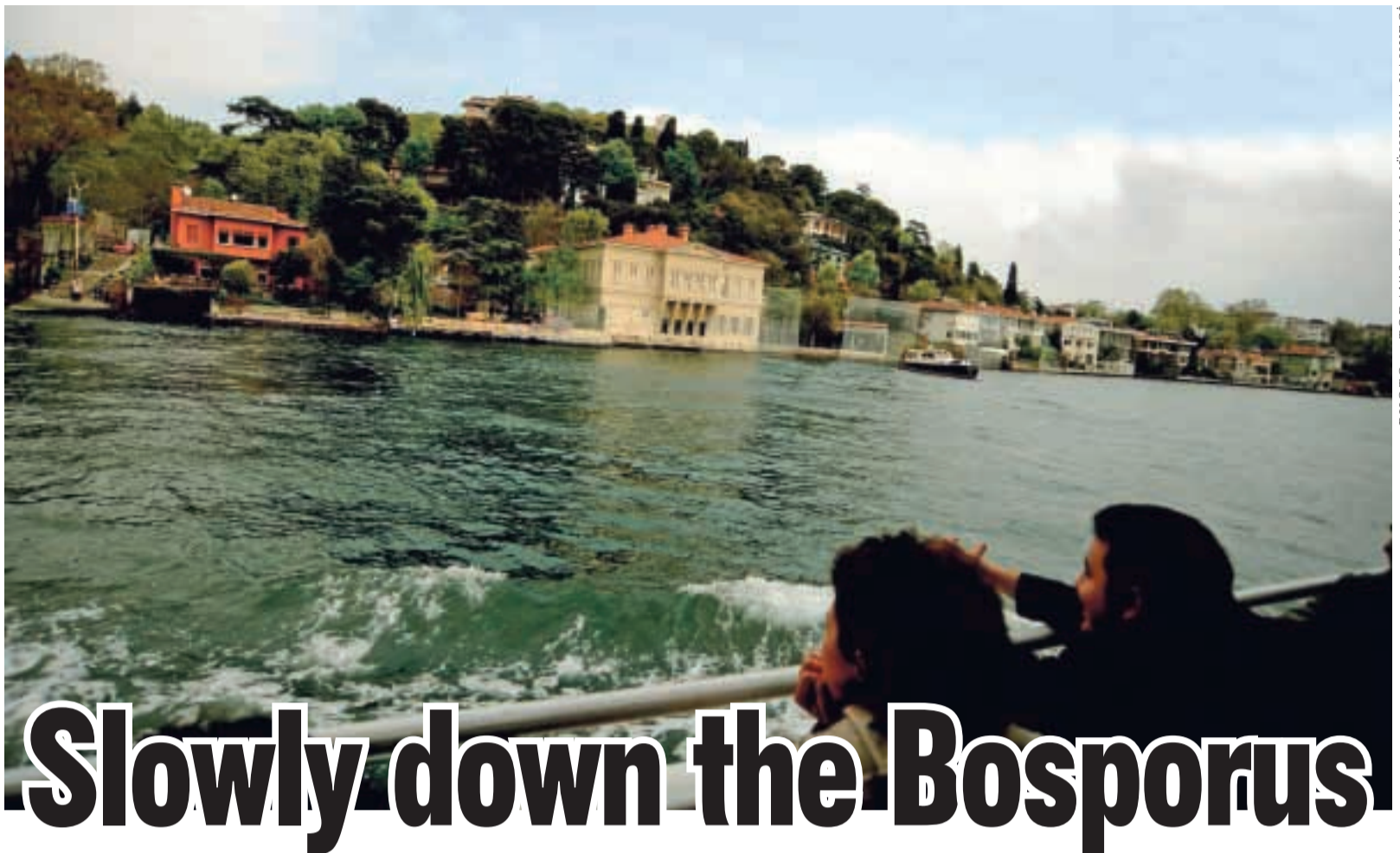


PHOTO © TODAY'S ZAMAN, MÜHENNA KAHVECI

# Slowly down the Bosphorus

PAT YALE İSTANBUL

Anyone fortunate enough to live in İstanbul knows that one of its greatest delights is the glorious Bosphorus, the strait that meanders through the city and divides the European side from the Asian one.

It goes almost without saying that landing a Bosphorus view is the sine qua non of wealthy house hunters and of restaurateurs with an eye to the money. Even today when there are far fewer of the wonderful wooden yalis (waterside mansions) than there used to be, the Bosphorus is still lined with properties that sell for eye-watering sums of money, right up there in the real estate premier league with the most expensive homes in London and New York.

Visitors to the city may only be able to dream of seeing behind their elegant facades, but they can gaze out on them in envy from the decks of the many Bosphorus excursion boats.

Those in a hurry may have to make do with one of the shorter cruises operated out of Eminönü by private companies. But for the real McCoy it's best to set aside enough time for one of the longer cruises operated daily by İstanbul Ferry Lines (İDO). They too leave from Eminönü, although you'll need to give the pushy private ticket touts the slip if you want to use them.

There are many wonderful things about a leisurely Bosphorus cruise. In the first place you get to see the city free of the smog, noise and traffic jams. Secondly, you get to see it as it was originally viewed by those who built the yalis and palaces along its shores -- since there was no coast road in the 19th century, people had to move between the various Bosphorus villages (as they were then) using a fleet of public and private boats. Thirdly, you get to observe the wildlife that haunts the water -- most obviously the seagulls who dive enthusiastically to snatch the pieces of simit tossed to them, but also the flocks of tiny shearwaters that skim the water, and the cormorants who spread their wings on every available resting post, then dive for any fish foolish enough to swim by. The luckiest passengers of all even get to glimpse the pods of dolphins that have returned to the Bosphorus since its waters were cleaned up.

To make the most of your trip, get to the landing stage early so that you can grab one of the seats on deck or by the windows. The excitement starts almost immediately as the boat pulls away from the jetty, leaving the

Galata Bridge and its ever-present anglers behind and sauntering past Sarayburnu (Seraglio Point), the place where Byzantine history really began. High up on the hillside through the greenery of Gülhane Park you'll see the tower and chimneys of Topkapı Palace with, behind them, the four soaring minarets of Hagia Sophia (Aya Sofya), the Emperor Justinian's great sixth-century church turned 15th-century mosque.

Beyond Sarayburnu the ferries swivel left and start their journey north towards the Black Sea. Looking towards the Asian shore you'll see the pretty little Maiden's Tower, frequently rebuilt over the centuries and subject to a fairly predictable story involving an imprisoned princess, a basket of fruit and a lethal hidden snake. For some time to come the waters around it will continue to be littered with the paraphernalia of building work for the delayed Marmaray Project, which will eventually provide an underwater tunnel to link up Europe and Asia.

Back on the European shore the ferry meanders past Tophane, the site of the old arsenal and the redundant warehouse that has become home to the İstanbul Modern art gallery. Shortly afterwards you'll see the elaborate white building that houses the Dolmabahçe Palace to which the sultans retreated in the middle of the 19th century as they struggled to modernize/Westernize their administrations. Whereas the old Topkapı Palace had been a cluster of anonymously designed chambers and pavilions grouped round a set of courtyards, Dolmabahçe was more solidly palatial, the handiwork of Garabet and Nikogos Balyan, scions of a family of prolific Turkish-Armenian architects.

As the ferry continues northwards you'll spot two of the city's finest hotels, the Four Seasons İstanbul at the Bosphorus and the Çırağan Palace Kempinski, staring out towards it. Shortly afterwards the Bosphorus Bridge looms up ahead of you. Erected in 1973, it provides a vital lifeline for the city, although convenience for commuters was bought at the price of imposing traffic noise virtually on top of the graceful Ortaköy Mosque on the European shore and the elegant Dolmabahçe Palace-in-miniature that is Beylerbeyi Palace on the Asian shore. Both these buildings were further works of the Balyan family:

Nikogos designed the mosque in 1854-1855, while Sarkis designed the palace in 1865.

Beyond the Bosphorus Bridge you start to feel the city falling away from you even though both shores of the strait are still completely built up. On the European shore you will sail past Kuruçeşme, a popular nightlife center, and Arnavutköy, where a lineup of delightful wooden yalis hints at what was lost as fire wrote off some old buildings and others were torn down to make way for modern blocks of flats. On the Asian shore, meanwhile, you won't be able to miss the fairy-tale towers of the Kuleli Military School, one of whose pupils was İrfan Orga, who went on to write the wonderful "Portrait of a Turkish Family."

Beyond Arnavutköy the Bosphorus narrows, and two castles jut up on the skyline. The older of the two is Anadolu Hisarı on the Asian side, which has suffered the indignity of being sliced in two by the modern shore road. Bigger and far more impressive is Rumeli Hisarı, built by Sultan Mehmed II in 1452 and completely restored in 1952 to commemorate its 500th anniversary. Right beside it looms the second Bosphorus bridge, which went up in 1988 and was named, not altogether surprisingly, the Fatih Sultan Mehmet Bridge.

As the ferry continues its slow journey northwards, it passes on the European shore two wonderful and under-visited private museums, the Sakıp Sabancı, which plays host to many of the city's blockbuster exhibitions, and the Sadberk Hanım, which houses permanent collections of archaeology and ethnography. The ferries come to the end of their run at Rumeli Kavığı, a small settlement with a cluster of fish restaurants, before shimmying across to Anadolu Kavığı on the Asian shore, which is little more than fish restaurants. Energetic passengers can disembark here and stride uphill to inspect the remains of Yoros Castle, which was built by the Byzantines. From here you can gaze north towards the Black Sea, a vista that looks set to be drastically altered now that the go-ahead has been given for a third Bosphorus bridge between sleepy little Garipçe on the European shore and Poyrazköy, a beach resort named after the chilly wind that whips through it in winter, on the Asian shore.

**Visitors to İstanbul may only be able to dream of seeing behind its wonderful wooden yalis' facades, but they can gaze out on them in envy from the decks of the many Bosphorus excursion boats**



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## 2011: Out with the old, in with the new?

**REYHAN YAZICI KIZILAĞAÇ\***

As with everything else in life, changes in fashion continue at full speed. What did we see in the 2010 seasons, and what will influence our color choices in 2011? What will skirt lengths be, and will collections by labels famous around the world continue to surprise us this season?

With designers now preparing for 2012, collections for 2011 have already taken their places in shop windows around you. And all of a sudden those jackets, skirts, glasses and coats you thought you couldn't do without just yesterday are about to go out of circulation because the world of fashion has already stuck a label on them, saying "out of fashion now." Let's take a look at what is to come in the new seasons of 2011.

First of all, those "nightmarish" years we know as the '80s did make a comeback in 2010. Jackets with enormous shoulder pads and epaulets, shiny tights, harem-style pants and leather jackets all marked 2010's fashion trends. As for 2011 though, it appears it will be leaving behind those crazy and rebellious looks from the '80s and instead re-enliven some elegant and chic cuts from the 1970s this time around. Smaller collars, lined cuts and jacket models that feature unique buttons are just some of the details that attract notice this coming season.

A shocking piece of news hit the fashion world on Feb. 11 of last year, having the effect of a bomb: designer Lee Alexander McQueen, whose work had many following his every move, committed suicide in his London home. In 2010, foulards and shawls were just as popular in men's collections as they were in women's wear, and the skull print designs in scarves from McQueen's collections were tremendously popular. In 2011, it appears foulards will continue on with their popularity from the year before, but with one difference: They will mostly be in large plaid prints or small flowery designs.

Pants with extremely narrowed calves -- a style that some of us love and

others just hate -- were one of the most popular trends we saw in 2010. This style is really not suited to the Turkish physique, known for its wider hips, and yet it still managed to maintain some followers even in the Turkish fashion world. It was quite clear, though, that these "carrot top pants," as some call them, would go out of style. And in fact we see in 2011 that they are being replaced by pants with wider cut calves and sloppier, more relaxed cuts.

Warmer weather brought out many full-length, flowery dresses in 2010, a year in which we can say the dress as a piece of clothing truly experienced its golden age. In 2011 we will continue to see more dresses, and many will be sporting embroidered necklines and raglan sleeves. We will see not only digital prints but also, for example, lace over prints, as well as large flowers and delicate embroidery that lend a fairy-tale look to dresses in the coming spring and summer seasons.

Outfits worn by Michelle Obama grabbed the attention of many Americans and the whole fashion world during 2010. Mrs. Obama grabbed herself a place on the best-dressed list for her ability to look both comfortable and chic with her combinations and, in fact, she wound up becoming a style icon at the same time. Not only were the flats she often chose one of the most popular shoes of last year, they were really as fashionable as the platform heels many collections featured. There seemed to be no one left in 2010 who hadn't bought a pair of "babettes," or flats that weren't leather, plastic, colorful, buckled or simply decorated with stones. The babettes we'll see in 2011 will be more subdued in color, though, boasting earthy tones such as beige, light brown, black and ecru. They will still be flat, but in more natural colors.

And as for those sunglasses with the large frames from 2010, they are now a thing of the past!

In all, the styles we see in 2011 appear more serious, stronger, more minimal and dominant. Colors are be pink, brown, yellow tones, light grays, soft blues, beiges and greens. Look also for long, voluminous cloche skirts as one of the most popular trends for women in the coming season.

*\*Reyhan Yazıcı Kızılağaç is a fashion designer.*



One of the most notable details of 2010 was the style of cut seen in sleeves. Some of what we bid farewell to in 2011 will be those ruffles and pleats and exaggerated 'watermelon' shaped sleeves of the past year.





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For everyone who needs to "fully understand" Turkey.



A total of 42 shopping malls across İstanbul will host events during the İstanbul Shopping Fest, which will be held from March 18 to April 26. We would like to provide our readers with some important facts and details on six of these malls in our first edition.

## EVENTS OF 1st WEEK

### March 20, Sunday

#### İstiklal Street

14:00-22:00:

- Performances by street musicians and show groups

#### Abdi İpekçi Street

14:00-22:00:

- Performances by street musicians and show groups

### March 26, Saturday

#### Bağdat Street

14:00-22:00

- Performances by street musicians and show groups

17:00-21:00

- Festival cortege

#### Abdi İpekçi Street

14:00-16:00:

- Festival cortege

#### Palladium AVM

23:00-02:00

- Extended night shopping
- Power Group DJ performance

#### İstiklal Street

11:00-13:30

- Festival cortege

14:00-22:00

- Performances by street musicians and show groups

#### Abdi İpekçi Street

14:00-22:00

- Performances by street musicians and show groups

#### Akmerkez AVM

23:00-02:00

- Extended night shopping
- Power Group DJ performance

## 212 İstanbul Power Outlet

Home to 130 trendy outlet stores with brands in clothing and accessories for home and garden, İstanbul Power Outlet hosts thousands of customers every day. It was opened at the end of 2009 and is located 13 kilometers from İstanbul Atatürk Airport. The mall includes a 3,000-square-meter children's playground along with a dry cleaner, a parking lot and a movie theater. **Hours of operation:** 10:00-22:00 **Address:** Mahmutbey Merkez Mah., Taşocağı Cad., No: 5, Bağcılar



## Beylikdüzü Migros AVM

The Beylikdüzü Migros shopping mall has been serving customers since 1997. The three-story mall hosts 110 stores featuring Turkish and foreign brands. As well as stores for electronics, clothing, books, music, toys and sporting goods it hosts the largest Migros store in İstanbul. Various restaurants, movie theaters and a bowling alley are among the alternatives for those looking for a break while shopping. **Hours of operation:** 10:00-22:00 **Address:** Barış Mah., Sakarya Cad., No: 1, Beylikdüzü



## Akmerkez

Akmerkez has been a prominent shopping mall -- among İstanbul's most popular ones -- for years and is home to a number of luxury brands. With its attractive pop-up stores, energetic live performances and special events, Akmerkez keeps itself constantly vibrant and popular. Services you can find at Akmerkez range from hairdresser to locksmith, concierge, shoeshine and dry cleaning, as well as foreign currency exchange and a solarium center. **Hours of operation:** 10:00-23:00 **Address:** Nispetiye Cad., No:36, Etiler

## Carrefour İçerenköy AVM

Open since 1996 on İstanbul's Asian side, the Carrefour İçerenköy AVM was the first Carrefour shopping mall to ever be opened in Turkey. With 106 stores, the mall also hosts 28 restaurants/cafes. The enormous Carrefour SA and Bauhaus stores play an important role in making the mall a popular destination. And don't forget the go-kart track, the playground, valet parking service and the 5D movie theater. **Hours of operation:** 10:00-22:00 **Address:** Hal Binası Yanı, İçerenköy



## Ataköy Plus

Opened in 2010, Ataköy Plus Shopping Mall is located far from the crowd and the noise of the city. Its proximity to İstanbul Atatürk Airport and an 1,800-square-meter terrace overlooking the Marmara Sea offer a peaceful shopping experience for those who seek tranquility. Plus it is home to 140 stores, a movie theater and restaurants. Among the extra services are shoeshine, dry cleaning, parking lot and a pharmacy. **Hours of operation:** 10:00-22:00 **Address:** Ataköy Konakları, Adnan Kahveci Bulvarı, 6. Kısım, Ataköy



## Astoria

Standing out with its central location, Astoria is deemed as İstanbul's new celebrity destination. Located 21 kilometers from İstanbul Atatürk Airport, the seven-story shopping mall boasts the highest twin atriums in Europe. Astoria hosts 110 stores primarily focusing on clothing, accessories and footwear. A gym and a spa, not to mention the exclusive discounts and surprise gifts they offer at certain times of the year, make Astoria quite attractive. **Hours of operation:** 10:00-22:00 **Address:** Büyükdere Cad., No: 127, B Blok Kat 3, Esentepe

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## ISTANBUL

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İstanbul Shopping Festival is expected to create an additional 50,000 jobs as companies will try to attract as many visitors as they can with various events, BMD President Yılmaz says.

## FESTIVAL EXPECTED TO CREATE 50,000 TEMPORARY POSITIONS IN İSTANBUL

United Brands Association (BMD) President Yılmaz Yılmaz says they expect the İstanbul Shopping Festival (İSF) to make an encouraging contribution of around 50,000 jobs, mostly temporary, in İstanbul.

Companies, shopping malls and local administrations will need additional personnel as they try to attract as many visitors as they can with various events, Yılmaz, also the head of İSF executive board, explains.

"With a population of 14 million, İstanbul is larger than a number of countries. It will need further investments to meet the increasing demand," Yılmaz says, noting that the number of shopping malls in İstanbul, currently 93, will increase to 140 within the next four years. With such huge potential, İstanbul stands out as the most attractive shopping site in Turkey's region. "There are five shopping malls in Sofia, while Athens and Tehran have four shopping malls each, and there are only two in Damascus." Yılmaz says not only modern shopping malls but also İstanbul's historic shopping sites, including the Grand Bazaar, will serve customers during the festival.

One of the major goals of organizing İSF is to promote the city as a world-famous brand. Underlining that he is very excited about the project, he says it will be a lifetime accomplishment for him if İSF becomes a permanent event owned by İstanbul. "We are very excited and are working hard to make sure that this spirit reflects on the next generations, too. My dream is that the İSF will be held even 100 years after this first event," he said, emphasizing that the festival will contribute to the country's economy only if it is permanent.

Current developments all are in favor of the İSF, he says, adding: "We have high expectations for the festival. Foreign visitors in İstanbul spend an average of \$300 million at this time of year. We are expecting the İSF to help double this amount." He agrees with expectations that the current unrest across the Middle East will help shift the tourists to İstanbul during the festival.

Yılmaz recalled that the İSF board earlier initiated promotions in 83 countries in order to attract customers and signed contracts with some Turkish celebrities "to become the face of the İSF." *İstanbul Today's Zaman*



United Brands  
Association President  
Yılmaz Yılmaz



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