

Mother of the churches - Hagia Sophia

[Hagia Sophia](#) is one of several religious places in Istanbul and the most magnificent. It was built in the Sixth Century by the Emperor Justinian and is considered to be one of the largest basilicas in the Christian world. It is one of the first masterpieces of Byzantine architecture and is still seen as one of the world's most important architectural monuments.

For more than a thousand years, Hagia Sophia was the largest church in the world. Since this was such a splendid and majestic early Christian church, it housed an array of Christian artifacts, including the cross of the crucifixion, Jesus' swaddling clothes, and artifacts used in the Last Supper. Because of this, it is considered to be the mother of churches and is extremely popular with those on religious tours. The walls are covered in a variety of the finest marbles and intricate mosaics in shades of gold, green, blue, and red and which cover over 200,000 square feet of the interior.

After the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, the Ottomans converted the church into a mosque and added minarets and fountains. Hagia Sophia was used as a mosque until 1935, when it became a museum. The museum is now open everyday except Monday and visiting hours are from 9:30 to 16:30. Visitors can expect to pay 15 YTL which includes a visit to the upper gallery floor. When visiting Hagia Sophia, visitors can also tour the three mausoleums of the Sultan, a baptistery, fountains, and gardens which are all in close proximity. [Visit Turkey](#) & [Blue Mosque](#)

About the Author

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