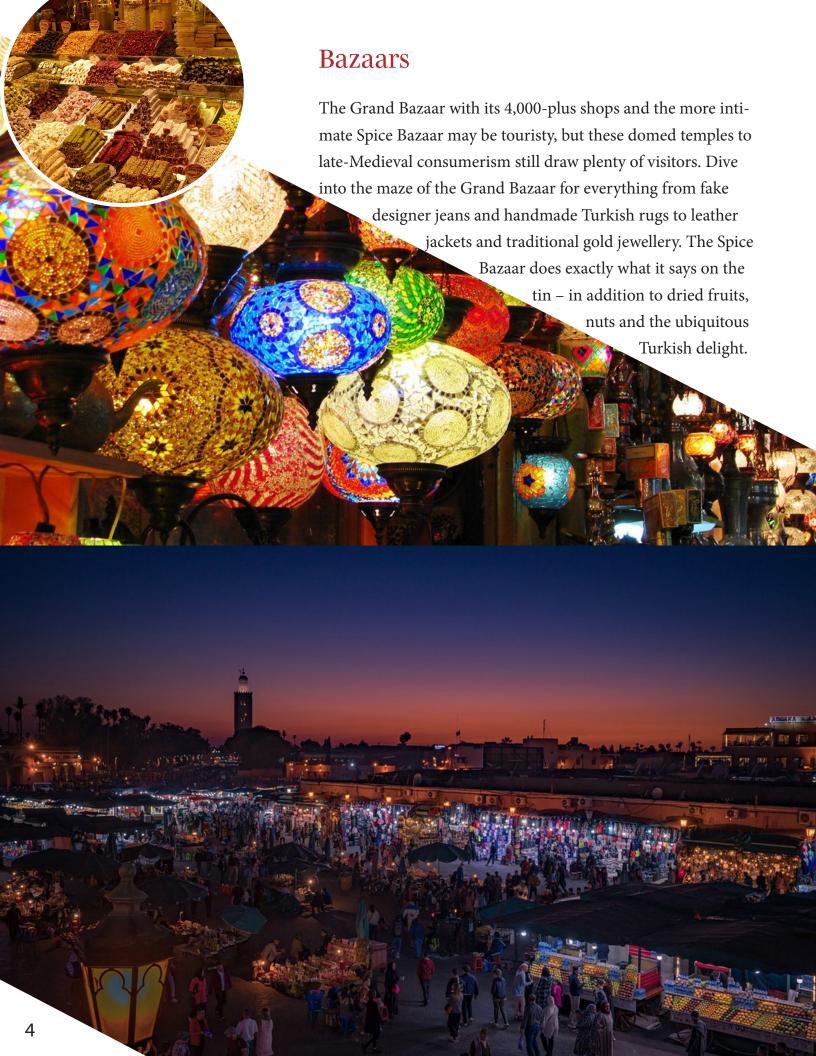


Walk through neighbourhoods virtually untouched by tourism, past hole-inthe-wall restaurants, smoky tea shops and cottage gardens in the wall moat. Key sights include the Church of St Saviour in Chora (Kariye Museum), famed for its mosaics, the beautiful Ottoman Mihrimah mosque and the for-







Hagia Sophia and Blue Mosque

Over a thousand years of history separates these two monumental and iconic buildings, rising proudly some 500 metres (1,640 feet) apart in the heart of Sultanahmet. Start with the Hagia Sophia, or Church of the Holy Wisdom, built in 527 at the behest of Justinian (an important emperor of the Byzantine Empire).

Today a museum, it is one of the world's truly great buildings, with its awe-inspiring central dome and gold mosaic-covered interior. A short stroll across a green and fountain-adorned square brings you to the domed Blue Mosque (Sultanahmet Camii), built deliberately opposite the Hagia Sophia to emulate the wonders of the earlier structure. It gets its name from the largely blue Iznik tiles, over 20,000 of them, that adorn its interior.

