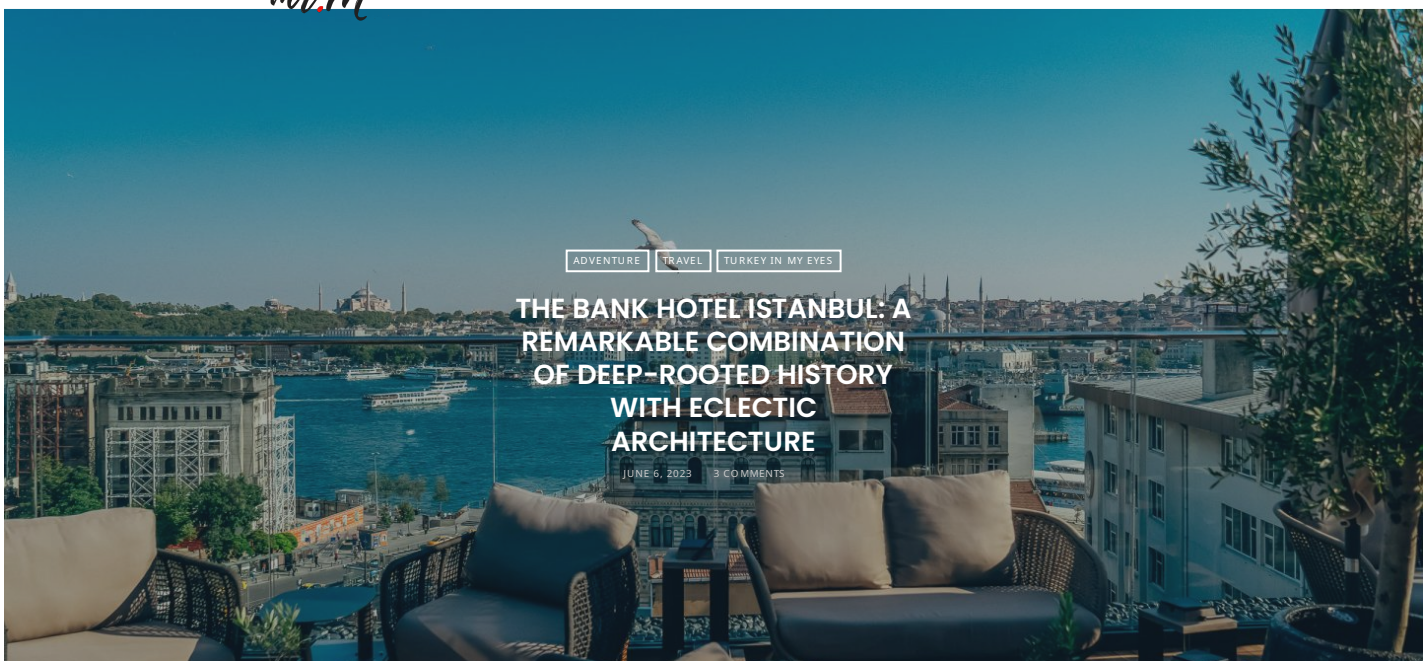

ADVENTURE | TRAVEL | TURKEY IN MY EYES

THE BANK HOTEL ISTANBUL: A REMARKABLE COMBINATION OF DEEP-ROOTED HISTORY WITH ECLECTIC ARCHITECTURE

JUNE 6, 2023 | 3 COMMENTS

My dear travelers and lovers of unusual trips, welcome to a new post on the Mr.M blog. People who have been following the Mr.M blog for years know that traveling is my passion and an integral part of my job, and it is always necessary to have reliable partners. During my last visit to the imperial city on two continents, I accepted the invitation of an interesting hotel that represents an extraordinary combination of deep-rooted history with eclectic architecture – ***The Bank Hotel Istanbul***.

The story of this hotel began in the famous street in Istanbul – Bankalar Caddesi (Banks Street), where The Bank Hotel Istanbul is located. This is no ordinary street because it hides a rich and unusual history. Once known as Voyvoda Street, it has always played a central role in Galata's life. The importance of this axis, which was formed as a road together with the inner city walls of Galata, can be recognized as the building of the Parliament of Genoa Palazzo del Comune and the square Piazza Market.

I'm Marko – An economist, fashion hedonist, pasionate traveller & big child at hearth! I hope you can join me on my fashion journey!

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The Genoese community (Magnifica Comunita di Peira) continued in semi-private status until 1682. In the mentioned years, European merchants developed and improved because there were various shops and banks in that area, and local Ottoman administrations were also located there. This street has retained its importance as it did in the Ottoman era. Hence, it can be understood that the street was named after the apartments and residence of the Duke, the local administrator responsible for public order in Galata. In the street below Voyvoda is Mahkeme Street, where Galata Court was located. The name Voyvoda Street was given by Evliya Çelebi, who at that time was a famous explorer in the 17th century, and the street became the center of finance and trade of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century.

The unusual meeting of Yılmaz Ulusoy Holding and the hotel building As mentioned earlier, the Bank Hotel building was built in 1867 by Antoine Tedeschi in the Neo-Renaissance style and still emphasizes the importance of the historical value of the city. It is a perfect reflection of the eclectic architectural style of the 19th century. In 2010, their property was bought by Mr. Yılmaz Ulusoy and they started a new adventure in their story that continues since the 1860s. Moreover, the hotel building was created as a combination of two buildings; The Sümerbank building and the Cemaathan building, the former community center of Neve Shalom.

The Bank Hotel Istanbul is located on Banks Street, formerly known as Voyvoda Street and is the center of jewelers and bankers. The trademark of Yılmaz Ulusoy Holding "The Bank Hotel Istanbul" is his first step in the restoration of the building, which has historical and cultural values, with the aim of keeping it alive from the past to the present. After the hotel building was bought by Mr. Yılmaz Ulusoy, the restoration works were carried out by the architect Han Tumertekin.

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The building still today reflects the identity of the region where it is located, since its creation in the 19th century. ***The Bank Hotel Istanbul*** building, which has been restored on the principle of restoring it by preserving its original condition and protecting its artistic value, continues to host its guests with its meeting rooms, historical calculators, cash registers and life experiences. Who is Mr. Yılmaz Ulusoy? Yılmaz Ulusoy, whose business life for more than half a century has been crowned with the story of a productive, this hard-working and highly positioned businessman is still in the position of Chairman of the Board of Directors of Yılmaz Ulusoy Holding A.S., which operates in many sectors, especially in the branches of tourism, shipping, energy and construction.

During my stay I had the opportunity to stay in a Deluxe King room with a usable area of 29 square meters. These rooms feature colorful ceilings, a green Carrara marble bathroom with a rain shower, specially designed furniture and lighting, a wide sofa and a motorized curtain system. Most rooms have large windows and 5 meter high ceilings. What is important to know about all room categories in this hotel:

- All rooms are designed by Sinan Kafadar in warm and organic colors, special interior decoration
- Workable ceilings and parquet floors
- The radiators are protected in their original condition
- Blackout curtains and LCD TV
- Blankets and pillows made of goose feathers
- All rooms have a work desk
- Loccitane bathroom products
- Bathrobes and slippers
- Mini bar
- Free internet
- There is a free coffee machine as well as tea making facilities.

The story of Serica restaurant is inspired by the Silk Road, which brings us traditional recipes of ancient civilizations that sprung from the Mountain of the Gods thousands of years ago and stretched to Istanbul. Although the legacy of the food culture of the Gokturks civilization, which is a nomadic and conquering society to which Turkic communities feel a sense of belonging, is very extensive, other nomadic civilizations that left a mystical gastronomic path to the Silk Road also have different storage and cooking techniques. Serica's menu was created by the famous chef Tolga Atalaj, bringing together the flavors that the Silk Road gave to the world of gastronomy. The historian of gastronomy, Ozge Samanci, is also a major contributor to the research. Every detail of the recipes that make up the menu contains emotions, tastes, smells and colors that reflect this historic giant road.

In addition to the exceptional Serica Restaurant, this hotel also has the Bank Roof Bar, located in Karakoy, one of the most beloved areas of Istanbul's history, offering its guests an unforgettable experience with signature cocktails and unique flavors with a magnificent view of the historic peninsula.

Of course, there is also the Lobby Bar & Restaurant in the warm and sophisticated aura of The Bank Istanbul Hotel, located in the center of the bohemian Karakoy, offering its guests the tastes of world cuisine and buffet breakfast options, as well as various cocktails and drinks.

The Spa at The Bank Hotel Istanbul offers modern and traditional care with a classic Turkish hammam in white marble, a fitness center, sauna, steam room and three massage and facial rooms (including a couples room). The spa is available to hotel guests and visitors by appointment.

The Bank Hotel Istanbul represents the pearl of the Marriott International hotel design brand with a rich history and an example of eclectic architecture. This hotel is located in the immediate vicinity of Galata Tower, Galata Bridge and the famous Taksim Square.

Taksim Square located in the Beyoglu area (Beyoglu) in the European part of Istanbul is a major tourist and recreational area known for its restaurants, shops and hotels. It is considered the heart of modern Istanbul, with the central station of the Istanbul Metro network.

Do you perhaps know where the word Taksim comes from? The word Taksim means “division” or “distribution” in Arabic. Taksim Square was originally where the main waters from the north of Istanbul collected and branched off to other parts of the city (hence the name.) This use was established for the area by Sultan Mahmud I. The square takes its name from an Ottoman-era stone reservoir that located on one side of the square.

Today, Taksim is a cultural center with numerous places for entertainment and relaxation, that part of Istanbul never sleeps!

Istiklal Caddesi (Independence Avenue) historically known as Pera Grand Avenue in Beyoglu (Pera) historical district, is a 1.4 kilometer long avenue, a famous pedestrian street and one of the most famous streets in Istanbul. It got its modern name after the proclamation of the Republic on October 29, 1923, Istiklal (Independence) in commemoration of Turkey's triumph in the War of Independence. The street starts at the northern end of Galata at Tunel Square and goes to Taksim Square. This street features buildings from the late Ottoman era, mostly from the 19th and early 20th centuries in a variety of styles, including Neo-Classical, Neo-Gothic, Renaissance Revival, Beaux-Arts, Art Nouveau, and the first Turkish national architecture.

There are also several Art Deco buildings from the early years of the Turkish Republic, as well as a number of more recent examples of modern architecture. This street used to be mostly residential blocks, but today most of it is now occupied by boutiques, music stores, art galleries, cinemas, theaters, libraries, cafes, pubs, night clubs with live music, hotels, historic patisserie, chocolate bars, restaurants and a growing number international chains of well-known stores. There is even a branch of Madame Tussauds Istanbul on this street.

The Galata Tower (Turkish: Galata Kulesi), officially the Galata Tower Museum, is an old Genoese tower in the Galata section of the Beyoğlu district of Istanbul, Turkey. Built as an observation tower at the highest point of the (lost) walls of Galata, the tower is now an exhibition space and museum and a symbol of Beyoglu and Istanbul.

During the Byzantine period, Emperor Justinian ordered a tower to be erected in what was to become Galata. This tower was destroyed during the Fourth Crusade in 1204. In 1267, a Genoese colony was founded in the Galata part of Constantinople. It was surrounded by walls, and the Galata Tower was first built on their highest point as the Romanesque Christ Tower in 1348 during the expansion of the colony. At that time, the Galata Tower, at 67 meters, was the tallest building in the city. After the Turkish conquest of Constantinople in 1453, the Genoese colony was abolished and the walls demolished. The tower was allowed to survive and was turned into a prison.

There is a legend that in 1638 Hezarfen Ahmed Çelebi allegedly tied his wings and made the first intercontinental flight from the roof of the Galata Tower, landing in Dogancılar Meidanı in Uskudar on the Asian side of the city, a story of dubious authenticity told by the Ottoman travel writer Evliya Çelebi. From 1717, the Ottomans used the tower for fire protection (on the old Istanbul side of the city, the Beyazit Tower had the same function). In 2020, the Galata Tower was restored and then reopened as a museum. The tower is mainly popular for the 360-degree view of Istanbul from the observation deck.

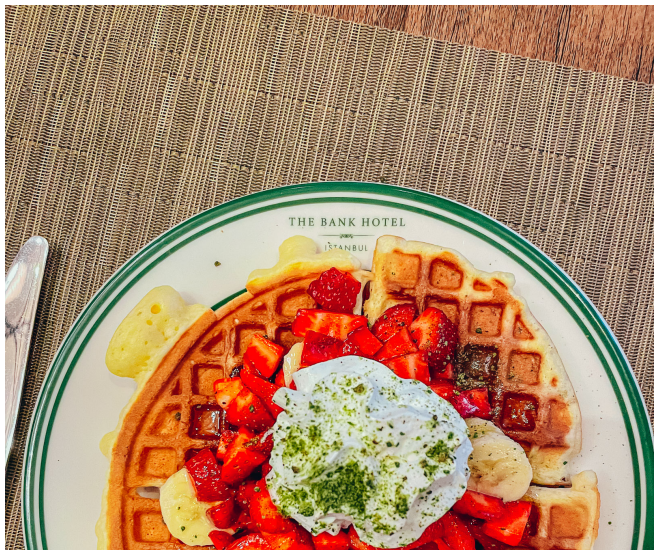
The Galata Bridge is a bridge that spans the Golden Horn in Istanbul. Especially since the end of the 19th century, the bridge appears in Turkish literature, theater, poetry and novels. The current Galata Bridge is only the latest in a series of bridges that have connected Eminonu in the Fatih district and Karakoy in Beyoglu since the early 19th century. The current bridge, the fifth in the same place, was built in 1994. The bridge was named after Galata on the northern coast of the Golden Horn.

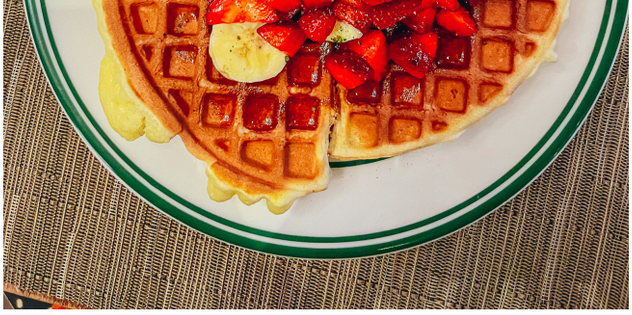
My dear travelers, we have come to the end of this special travelogue about ***The Bank Istanbul Hotel*** and I believe you will take the opportunity to stay at this hotel during your next visit to the imperial city on two continents. Today's travelogue would not be possible without the selfless help of the world's Turkish airline – ***Turkish Airlines*** and ***The Bank Istanbul Hotel***, which allowed me to feel the spirit and beauty of Turkish culture and tradition. Of course, as always, I tried my best to convey my impressions about this unusual experience from Turkey.

A person is rich in soul if he has managed to explore the world and I am glad that I always manage to find partners of my projects who help me to discover new and unusual destinations in a completely different way.

I would like to give special thanks to the staff of ***The Bank Hotel Istanbul*** for their warm welcome and hosting me in their hotel. The stay in their hotel was exceptional, a unique experience that I will remember!

I am honored to have the opportunity to work with companies that are at the very top of the tourism industry and I would like to thank ***Turkish Airlines*** and ***The Bank Hotel Istanbul*** once again for this amazing adventure and for allowing me to experience it in a very different way. I feel the beauty of this unusual Turkish culture.





How did you like my story about the unusual ***The Bank Istanbul Hotel*** and the presentation of the imperial city on two continents? Have you had the chance to visit Istanbul yet?

If you have any question, comment, suggestion or message for me you can write me below in the comments. Of course, as always, you can contact me via email or social networks, all addresses can be found on the ***CONTACT*** page. See you at the same place in a few days, with some new story!

With love from Istanbul,

Mr.M

This post is sponsored by world airline Turkish Airlines and The Bank Istanbul Hotel as well as other local partners. This post is my personal and honest review of the destination experience.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Marko

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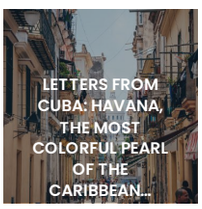

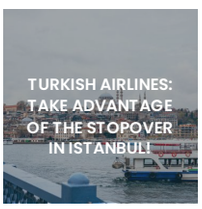

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Nicole 11 days ago

This hotel is very interesting and as far as I could see on the map, it is in a good place for anyone to explore Istanbul. How much does it cost to stay at this hotel? Are there any promotions for staying more than 4 nights?

0 Reply

Simone 9 days ago

I am planning to visit Istanbul in August and have put this hotel on my list. Next week I will book a hotel, I really like this hotel and it is definitely at the top of my list! Thank you Marko for the wonderful and detailed review! You look gorgeous as always!

0 Reply

Thomas 6 days ago

This hotel seems to me to be excellent for exploring Istanbul because I know everything I know about Istanbul from Turkish series and movies. I would like to visit Istanbul maybe at the end of this year for the New Year holidays. I'm interested in what the atmosphere is like during the New Year holidays? Can you feel the festive atmosphere?

0 Reply

mr.M

MARKO TADIC

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