

Saffron & Smoke

MERTIA TAKES ISTANBUL
14-21 JUNE 2026



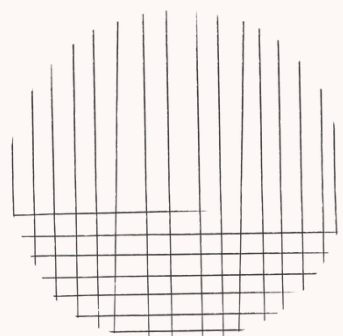


Why Saffron & Smoke?

Istanbul holds a special place in Marais's travels—a city he returns to for its depth of flavour, culture, and energy. This journey is an invitation to experience it through his lens, alongside a small group of like-minded travellers.

With long-standing ties to the city through Sina Baltutan—born and raised in Istanbul and part of the extended MERTIA story—we move beyond the expected, guided by familiarity and intent.

Chef Matt brings his appreciation for bold, expressive cuisine, while moments throughout the trip are further shaped by his good friend, Batuhan Göçmez — a Silwood School of Cookery alumnus, formerly of The Test Kitchen, now Head Chef at Beymen—adding another local layer to the experience. Batuhan also born and raised in Istanbul.

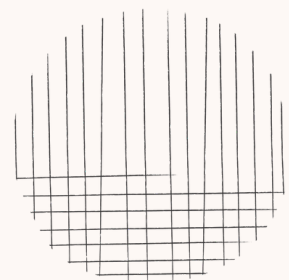


Come with us

Join the MERTIA team this June for unforgettable 7-day culinary journey through Istanbul. Kicking off with a MERTIA dinner experience, thereafter exploring local markets, street food, Michelin star Turkish restaurants and a fusion between Turkish and South African food prepared by Chef Matt and Batuhan. To the right, Matt and Bathuhan taking a break outside The Test Kitchen,

Get creative and design your own perfume, reset with authentic Turkish Hamam, and learn how to make Manti like a real Turkish Nene.

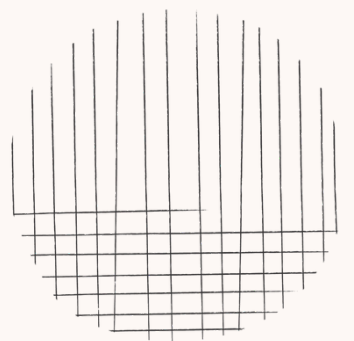
Sit back, eat and explore Istanbul, with the comfort of the MERTIA Team guiding you through Saffron & Smoke





Little hints of what to expect

- Explore the Grand Bazaar, Spice Bazaar and more
- Turkish Michelin-Starred Restaurants
- Street Food & Authentic Turkish Breakfasts
- Hagia Sofia
- Basillica Sistern
- Local Fish Market Visits
- Day trip to Anatolian Side
- Return flights from Cape Town to Istanbul
- A MERTIA Dinner Experience
- Culinary Masterclasses by Chef Matt van den Berg
- All our experiences captured by our tour photographer
- Curated Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner offerings by Chef Matt and the MERTIA Team
- Sommelier hosted wine tastings
- Turkish Coffee & Tea Tastings



Prepare for an adventure

14 to 21 June 2026

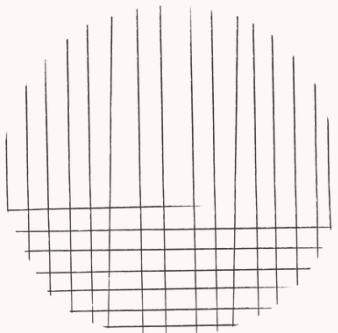
Total costs of Saffron & Smoke per person sharing is **R 115 000 all inclusive of flights, transport, accommodation, food, wine as well as all the activities listed in this information pack.**

Price is calculated based on double occupancy per room.

Single occupancy rooms are subject to availability and is **R 125 000** per person

Excluded from Saffron & Smoke

Personal Spending
Travel Insurance



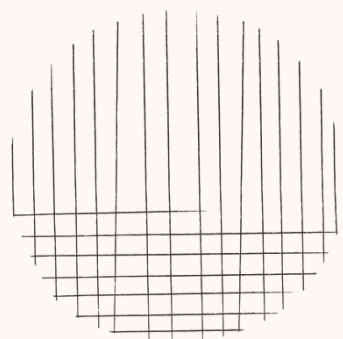


Before you pack your bags

Reservations

Bookings are only confirmed upon receipt of R50 000 per person non-refundable deposit. Payments can be made via EFT. The balance is to be settled 45 days prior to the trip.

To secure your spot email us:
istanbul@mertia.co.za



Cancellation Policy

While the MERTIA Group aims to adhere to all confirmed tour dates and itineraries, we reserve the right to make adjustments where necessary. Travellers are responsible for ensuring they have comprehensive travel and medical insurance covering the full duration of the tour.

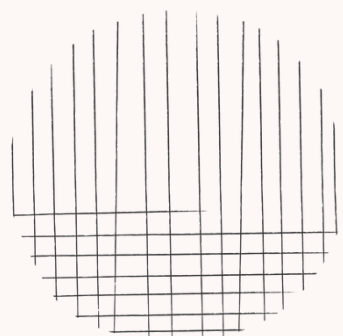
Cancellation Policy

Cancellations made 30 days prior to the tour date will receive a 50% refund.

Cancellations made less than 21 days prior to the tour date will receive a 25% refund.

All deposits are non-refundable.

If the tour is cancelled by MERTIA Group for any reason other than Force Majeure, and such cancellation is not due to any fault or negligence on your part, you will be entitled to a full refund.





FAQs

ARE THESE GUIDED TOURS?

Our time in Istanbul is thoughtfully led and personally curated. Rather than traditional guided tours, we explore the city through places Marais has discovered and returned to over the years—uncovering hidden gems, local favourites, and exceptional Turkish spots often missed.

WHAT IS INCLUDED?

All meals including beverages and wine, accommodation, ground transport, masterclasses, entrance fees, and thoughtfully curated experiences are included.

I NEED HELP WITH MY VISA APPLICATION, CAN YOU ASSIST?

While visa applications remain the responsibility of each guest, we will guide you through the process and provide all supporting documentation required, including confirmation of your accommodation for the duration of your stay.

WHAT IS THE GROUP SIZE?

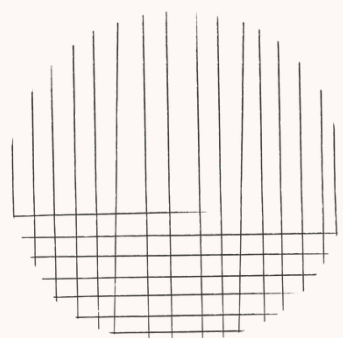
Our gatherings are intentionally small and intimate, with a maximum of 12 guests, unless otherwise specified.

WHO WILL BE HOSTING?

You will be looked after by the MERTIA team throughout your journey, with a dedicated team member accompanying the group on all outings. Marais, Carin and Matt will be traveling with the group, ensuring a considered and seamless experience throughout.

ARE YOU ABLE TO ACCOMMODATE DIETARY REQUIREMENTS?

We will always do our best to accommodate dietary requirements; however, as we collaborate with a variety of partners, this cannot be guaranteed at every experience





See You There

Email us:
istanbul@mertia.co.za