



Arriving in Istanbul

There are two airports in Istanbul. Istanbul Airport is the largest, located on the European side. The other, Sabiha Gökçen International Airport, is on the Asian side.

The first thing to do upon arriving in Turkey is to get Turkish cash, as none of the transportation options mentioned below will accept credit cards, foreign currencies or large Turkish lira notes. Make sure you have some 5, 10, 20 or maximum 50 notes handy. ATMs can be found in all airports and other hubs of public transportation.

Depending on how much you are likely to use public transport during your stay in Istanbul it is advisable to get an Istanbul Kart, which can be used on all public transport, including the boats. An Istanbul Kart costs 6 TL and can be charged with any amount for the fares at machines at all major hubs of public transport.

Taxis are either yellow or turquoise and always equipped with meters which should start counting from about 4-5 TL. Taxi drivers normally don't expect a tip, but they do appreciate a few extra lira. You can ask for a receipt (fiş), which they are obliged to give you. If you suspect the driver of overcharging you, take the number of the cab which is written with big letters on the side of the vehicle.

Arriving from Istanbul Airport

Airport Shuttle Bus: A convenient and cheap way to go downtown is to take the airport bus to Taksim, a ride of about 40 minutes. For the bus you need an Istanbul Kart, which you can buy in machines at the airport bus station. The bus currently costs 18 TL, baggage included (usually stowed separately upon embarking the bus).

Taxi: Outside the arrival hall you will find yellow taxi cars lined up – follow the signs and don't accept taxi offers on your way out. Many taxi drivers don't speak English, but understand a little. If there are no traffic jams the drive from the airport to Tünel takes about 30 minutes. Right now (May 2019) the fare is c. 120 liras. The street where the institute is located – Istiklal Caddesi, the long shopping street that stretches between Tünel and Taksim Square – is normally not accessible by car by day but there are different options where to ask the driver to stop:

- Şişhane (pronounced Shish-hane), the metro station
- Tünel meydan, the end station of the subterranean funicular from Karaköy
- Richmond Hotel, which can be reached by means of Asmalımescit sokak / Kumbaracı sokak

Arriving from Sabiha Gökçen International Airport

Since Sabiha Gökçen is located further away from the centre than Atatürk Airport, taking a taxi is much more expensive. The price can also differ a lot depending on the traffic. The ride to Tünel may easily take one hour or more, and the fare be 150-200 TL and upwards. So unless money is no object, the airport shuttle bus is to prefer. If you decide to go by taxi, ask the taxi driver to go to either Şişhane, Tünel or Hotel Richmond in the Beyoğlu district as above (“From Istanbul Airport”). Similarly, if you take bus, the end station to look for is Taksim.

Arriving by other means than plane

Istanbul’s old railway stations Sirkeci (on the European side) and Haydarpasa (on the Asian side) are currently not in use as such anymore. Trains from Greece and Bulgaria stop at Halkali on the western side of the city. From there, it is possible to take the Marmaray Metro line to Yenikapi and change there to the M2 metro line which stops at Şişhane, right next to the institute. The metro can be accessed with the Istanbul kart. Long-distance buses from Europe stop not far from Halkali, at the central “Otogar” which also has access to a metro line in the direction of Yenikapi and further on from there to Şişhane. A taxi from Halkali or Otogar to Şişhane would currently cost approximately 60-70 TL.

Finding the institute

If you have made it to Taksim, you can take the metro one station to Şişhane (M2, direction Yenikapi). The Swedish Research Institute is located inside the premises of Swedish Consulate General, next to the uppermost Metro station exit. If you prefer to walk from Taksim to the institute, you simply follow Istiklal, a walk of 15-20 minutes. Or you can take the nostalgic tramway to Tünel, using your Istanbul Kart. From Tünel Meydan or Richmond Hotel you have to walk only around 50-100 meters until you see the white, gothic-style gate of the Swedish Consulate General, located on Istiklal Caddesi 247 opposite to a big, grey Ziraat bankasi building.

Good luck! ☺