

ISTANBUL, THE CITY WITH INTERNATIONAL CHARACTER



Twenty years ago, Istanbul attracted mainly wondering adventurers and culture enthusiasts whose sense of comfort and safety was outplayed by sheer fascination. However, this city has transformed into a dynamic cultural hotspot booming with tourists.

Istanbul has always been on the crossroads of cultures; it is a place where the East meets the West and for centuries has fascinated historians and culture enthusiasts alike. Istanbul suffered greatly in history and in the early 1990s was far away from a tourist-friendly destination. However, **the last two decades brought prosperity and acclaim**. According to a recent study by Brookings Institution and LSE Cities project, **Istanbul is the 'most dynamic city of 2010'**.

The city seems more like a country with its unusually international character and a surprisingly young population. Many people come here to gain a few years of professional experience before traveling on or settling in the country. **The country's economy is spectacular as between 2009 and 2010 it grew by 5.5% and employment rose by 7.3% over the same time period**. Economists and investors turn their eyes on the city and local community as the hospitality sector grows.

The city is prospering and local arts movement follows the same trend. The Istanbul Biennial is a great asset to the international art community; Sotheby's are setting up their shop there; many galleries are planning to open up branches in Istanbul and a group of rich Turkish patrons keen to support art is also growing strong.

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