

People are Talking about

Formerly a grand avenue of embassies, schools, and churches, Istiklal Caddesi, Beyoğlu's main artery, has recently made a comeback after 50 years of neglect. Once again all of Istanbul comes to play, shop, and eat. Its two most captivating neighborhoods are Tünel and the up-and-coming Çukurcuma. At the southernmost end of Istiklal Caddesi, Tünel boasts myriad galleries and shops, as well as chic restaurants, cafés, and nightclubs. In an Italianate passageway lit up at night with torches and lanterns is KaVe, a sprawling café whose fairy-tale ambience compensates for the occasionally reluctant service (Tünel Geçidi No. 10; 90-212-252-1094). Continue along Sofyalı Sokak to find Tünel's best *meyhanes* (traditional restaurants) and galleries.

Çukurcuma requires more of a treasure-hunt mentality. Fanning off upper Istiklal Caddesi to the south, you'll find a tangle of sloping streets where galleries and Ottoman antiques shops butt up against old-school bakeries serving simits (a cross between a sesame bagel and a pretzel). Don't miss A La Turca, which feels more like the sumptuous residence of an obsessive rug collector than a carpet emporium. Owner Erkol Aksoy, an antiques dealer and the neighborhood's self-appointed mayor, will gladly offer you a glass of sherry as you explore four stories of Anatolian kilims, rugs, and ceramics (Faikpasa No. 4; 90-212-245-2933). Just around the corner is Nuran Terzioglu's Galerie Apel, which showcases the work of some of Turkey's most well-known and experimental artists (Hayriye Cad. No. 7; 90-212-292-7236). Right next door is Koyu Karve, which serves fresh orange juice and cappuccino under oversize umbrellas (Hayriye Sokak No. 5/2). Nearby, Yaman Antihan stocks everything from nineteenth-century embroidered blouses to high-quality Ottoman furniture (Faikpasa Sokak No. 41; 90-212-249-5188). To cap off your jaunt through Çukurcuma, have a bite at the Limonlu Bahçe (Lemon Garden). As you sit beneath the shade of lemon trees on charmingly mismatched furniture, you can watch Greek land turtles roam around the large garden

(Yeniçarsi Cad. No. 98; 90-212-252-1094).

Another short cab ride north will take you to the intersection of Rumeli and Tesvikiye Caddesi, the main thoroughfare of Nisantasi, where the ladies who lunch also shop. Check out Sema Paksoy's self-named jewelry shop. The nomadic Paksoy spent ten years collecting beads, gems, and jewelry from across Turkey and Central Asia. After an apprenticeship in the Grand Bazaar, she unveiled her own collection of reinterpreted vintage jewelry last year. "There



OH, THE INTERIOR OF HAGIA SOPHIA (ABOVE OF THE MOSQUE SEASON IN ISTANBUL)



are some pieces that I admire and don't touch. But sometimes I change everything," Paksoy explains (Atiye Sokak No. 9, Tesvikiye; 90-212-241-5533). Around the corner and a world away is the plush 90-year-old Portakal Art and Culture House. Here, at Istanbul's answer to Sotheby's, you can buy a sultan's portrait or illuminated edicts. But buyer beware: Ottoman antiquities are prohibited from leaving Turkey (Mim Kemal Oke Caddesi No. 19, Nisantasi; 90-212-225-3713).

For a taste of young Istanbul, head to Ortaköy. This vibrant Bosphorus enclave was once the servants' district of the neighboring Çırağan Palace (today a Kempinski Hotel). Ortaköy's pedestrian-only cobblestoned streets and glorious riverside piazza are perfect for a stroll, especially on the weekends when locals arrive for the Camden-like flea market. *travel* ▶ 537

