

Exploring heritage through the eyes of the locals

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The Organization of World Heritage Cities (OWHC) connects with more than 300 cities having on their territory a site inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

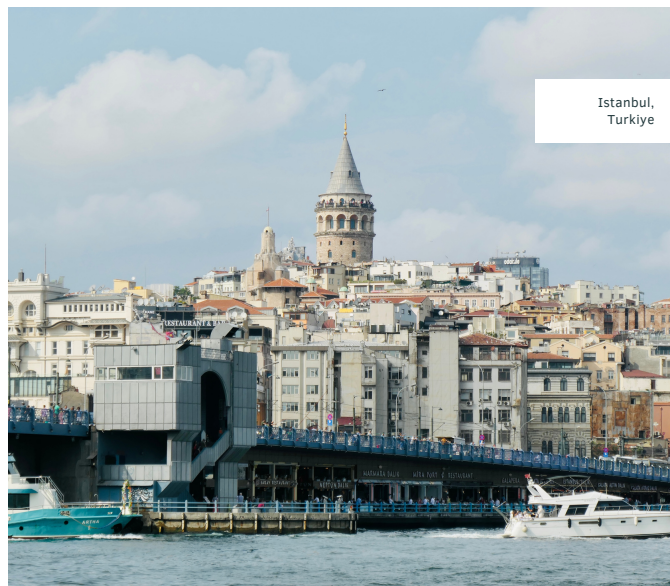
These are the 5 that we visited!



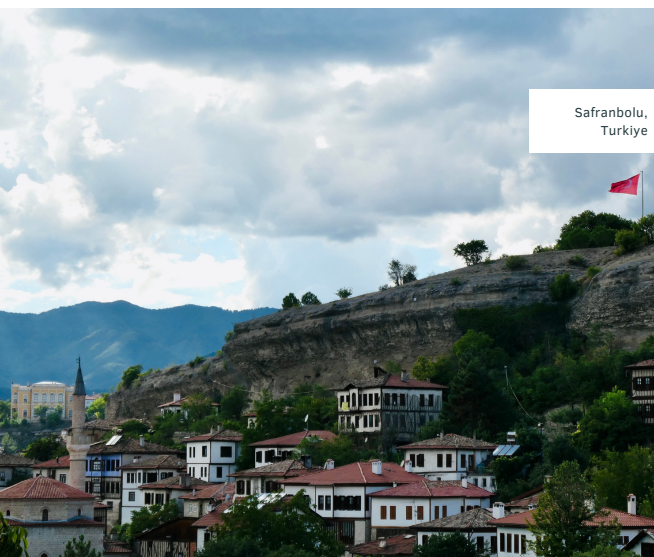
Regensburg,
Germany



Augsburg,
Germany



Istanbul,
Turkiye



Safranbolu,
Turkiye



Kandy,
Sri Lanka



Regensburg, Germany

A city that impresses visitors with its well-preserved medieval city center, which contains numerous historic buildings and structures. It has a rich cultural and architectural heritage and is a prime example of a medieval European city.

Our first visit was to the picturesque Regensburg, where we were given a special tour by the World Heritage coordinator, **Monika Göttler**, along with our local companion Richard, Amadej's Bavarian friend who made sure we sampled all the local delights.

Regensburg is actually "the only authentically preserved large medieval city in Germany" evident from the lovely medieval architecture of this important trading town.





Augsburg, Germany

An illustration of development, beauty, and sustainability, Augsburg's water management system is unmatched in the world. Due to its ongoing usage and expansion, it had a significant impact on both the technological advancements of the industrial revolution and Renaissance waterworks.

On the main square, we first took a moment to unwind by playing lottery scratch cards and getting acquainted with the local coffee scene.

However, the city's stunning main square or its coffee are not the reasons it is a UNESCO Heritage site. Its water management system is to blame. Water is probably one of the city's most prominent elements. It can be found on practically every street in the old town, giving it a fresh, colourful, and breezy feel even on the hot summer days when we visited.





Istanbul, Turkey

Famed for its cultural and architectural legacy, especially outstanding examples of Islamic architecture, the city's many old buildings and structures are recognized for their cultural and historical significance.

Our trip to Istanbul in 2022 was unlike any other time we had been to our favourite city in the world. An enormous rush of tourists flooded the city after the COVID limitations were almost entirely abolished, sharply increasing hotel and restaurant costs as well as taxi fares. As our friends have confirmed, this makes life challenging for the residents when combined with the severe inflation.





Amadej also caught a cold, which made the situation worse, so we had to move slowly and stay away from the congested tourist spots.

Nonetheless, we had a great time exploring the city's many different aspects of heritage. First and foremost, we enjoyed the long walk from the Galata Tower through the Grand Bazaar to the Sultanahmet historical quarter. There, we tried to imagine what life was like at the Ottoman Court. With its numerous mosques, fountains, and palace complexes, it served as a link between two continents and a wide range of nationalities, cultures, cuisines, religions, and ideas.



Safranbolu, Turkey

While the residents continue to reside there as they did in the past, Safranbolu boasts with its well-preserved Ottoman-era homes and buildings, which are significant examples of classic Ottoman architecture and urban planning.

Considered "Turkey's best-preserved Ottoman village", Safranbolu charmed us with a Silk Road caravanserai, and a few nearby mosques and bazaars. Surprisingly, it has few foreign tourists and even locals who deal with tourists rarely speak English, despite being roughly halfway between Istanbul and Ankara.

We explored the history and nature of the area and sampled many local delicacies like manti with walnuts, and Safranbolu pide. The best treat was the coffee at the Safranbolu Coffee Museum, which offered a variety of historically inspired regional coffees.





Kandy, Sri Lanka

Set amidst rolling hills with the iconic Temple of the Tooth dominating the scenic lake, it was Sri Lanka's cultural and religious capital dating back to the 14th century and the country's last stronghold until European colonial powers overthrew the Kandyan rulers.

We came to Kandy completely unprepared - after we found out that the hotel we booked at the coast of Sri Lanka was a scam, we just took a train to this place nestled in the hills in the centre of the island.

The chaotic street, thousands of noisy crows and cunning Tuk Tuk drivers are juxtaposed against the serene lake and holy temples full of monks. It's a place which it is hard to make sense of.

