

# The Ottomans | Court Life

'The harem was a sacred and private place and entry was not permitted by anyone but the staff.'

In Enderun, there were kiosks and coastal palaces. At the entrance was the Arz Odası (audience hall), where the sultans welcomed ambassadors, viziers and other high-ranking officials. The harem was a sacred and private place and entry was not permitted by anyone but the staff. It was under the control of the sultan's mother, or Valide Sultan. She lived there along with the sultan's children, his favourites, and his concubines (called ikbal and odalisque). Although they all lived in material luxury none of them were allowed to sit next to the sultan or go out of the palace without his permission.



**Name:**  
Topkapı Palace

**Dynasty:**  
Construction began in hegira 9th century / AD 15th century, during the reign of Sultan Mehmed II (his second reign: AH 855–86 / AD 1451–81); the last addition was made under Sultan Abdülmecid I ['Abd al-Majid] (r. AH 1255–77 / AD 1839–61) in hegira 13th century / AD 19th century Ottoman

**Details:**  
Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Türkiye

**Justification:**  
Built to commemorate the re-conquest of Baghdad, this beautiful kiosk has a gorgeous view of the Golden Horn.

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**Name:**  
Kaftan

**Dynasty:**  
Second half of hegira 10th / AD 16th century Ottoman

**Details:**  
Topkapı Palace Museum  
Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Türkiye

**Justification:**  
This exquisite kaftan belonged to Prince Bayezid, son of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent.

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**Name:**  
Kaftan

**Dynasty:**  
Late hegira 10th century / AD 16th century Ottoman

**Details:**  
Victoria and Albert Museum  
London, England, United Kingdom

**Justification:**  
A kaftan such as this would have been worn by an Ottoman prince.

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**Name:**  
Chimneypiece

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira 1143 / AD 1730–31 Ottoman

**Details:**  
Victoria and Albert Museum  
London, England, United Kingdom

**Justification:**  
A tiled fireplace from the study in the palace of the vizier, Fuad Pasha.

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**Name:**  
Rosewater bottle

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira last quarter of the 10th century / AD 16th century Ottoman

**Details:**  
Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts  
Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Türkiye

**Justification:**  
Bottles like this one were used for serving rosewater at gatherings and ceremonies.

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**Name:**  
Ewer and basin set

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira 1286 / AD 1870 Ottoman

**Details:**  
Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts  
Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Türkiye

**Justification:**  
A gilded ewer donated to the tomb of the Queen Mother, Pertevniyal.

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