

THE ANSWER

Take the M11 metro from the station beneath the terminal to Gayrettepe - TRY 46.20 on an anonymous Istanbulkart, about 35 minutes - then change to the M2 inside the same station complex for Taksim, four stops further on.

The M11 is the only traffic-proof way off the European side of the airport, and it costs roughly one fiftieth of a metered taxi to the same destination.

Tight budget? Skip the TRY 165 card and tap a bank card, but you pay TRY 65 a ride instead of TRY 46.20 - about 40% more. Heavy bags or a late landing? The Havaist coach to Taksim runs 24 hours and puts your case in the hold.

EVERY WAY OUT — REAL PRICES

M11 metro to Gayrettepe, then the M2 *BEST FOR MOST* TRY 46.20

The M11 station is inside the terminal - follow the Metro signs down to level -2. Trains run roughly 06:00 to 00:00 and take about 35 minutes to Gayrettepe, where the M2 continues to Sisli, Osmanbey and Taksim without leaving the station. The Istanbulkart full fare is TRY 46.20. The M11 is priced by distance rather than at the flat city rate: the gate deducts the line's maximum fare when you tap in and refunds the difference at the exit only on cards personalised with a Turkish ID or residence-permit number, so a visitor's anonymous card pays the full fare.

Havaist coach to Taksim, Sultanahmet or Aksaray TRY 426-TRY 470

Havaist is the airport's official coach brand and the main routes run 24 hours. Coaches leave from floor -2 of the terminal, with Taksim at platform 16, Sultanahmet at 11, Aksaray at 12 and Kadikoy at 14. Expect 80-110 minutes to the European-side hubs depending on traffic, with luggage in the hold. Havaist does not publish its fare table on its website - the prices are shown in its app and at the desk - so treat TRY 426-470 per person to Taksim as the reported range and confirm at the desk. Payment is by contactless card, Istanbulkart or the Havaist app.

Istanbulkart, or a one-pass electronic ticket TRY 165 card, TRY 65 a ride

The anonymous Istanbulkart costs about TRY 165 with no credit on it and is sold at the machines by the metro station entrance; it is the only way to get the TRY 46.20 fare. The single-use electronic ticket from the same machines is TRY 65 for one ride, TRY 120 for two, TRY 185 for three, TRY 230 for four, TRY 275 for five and TRY 530 for ten. One card can pay for a whole group, since the fare is deducted per tap.

Taxi from the official rank TRY 1,650-TRY 2,200 to Taksim

The citywide meter, set by UKOME and in force since 20 July 2026, is TRY 71.94 to start plus TRY 47.92 per kilometre with a TRY 230 minimum on a standard yellow taxi. Taksim and Sisli are about 42 km, roughly TRY 1,650-2,200, and Sultanahmet about 45 km at TRY 1,750-2,300; bridge and motorway tolls are added on top. There is no separate night tariff - the same meter runs around the clock.

Pre-booked private transfer from about EUR 44 per vehicle

Fixed-price transfers from Istanbul Airport start at roughly EUR 44 for a car carrying up to six passengers, with the driver meeting you in arrivals. Against a TRY 1,650-2,200 taxi the arithmetic only works for groups, but the price is locked before you fly and does not move with traffic or surge.

THE TRAPS — WALK PAST THESE

A bank card or single ticket costs TRY 65, not TRY 46.20

The Istanbulkart fare is TRY 46.20; tapping a contactless bank card, or buying a one-pass electronic ticket from the machine, costs TRY 65. On a return trip that is TRY 37.60 more - and the TRY 165 card pays for itself within about nine rides. Transfer discounts are also limited to cards personalised with a Turkish ID or residence-permit number, so a visitor's card pays the full fare on every leg. **Do this:** buy the Istanbulkart at the machines by the metro entrance rather than tapping a bank card

On the M11 the gate takes the maximum fare on entry

The M11 and the Marmaray are priced by distance, so the turnstile deducts the line's maximum fare when you tap in and refunds the difference when you tap out. The refund reaches cards personalised with a Turkish ID or residence-permit number - an anonymous visitor card gets nothing back, which is how a TRY 38-47 ride can end up costing the full maximum. It also means you must tap out even if the barriers are open. **Do this:** tap out at Gayrettepe and expect an anonymous card to be charged the full fare

Havaist is not HAVABUS, and the two serve different airports

Havaist is the official coach brand for Istanbul Airport (IST) and runs from hava.ist; HAVABUS is a separate company serving Sabiha Gokcen (SAW) on the Asian side and runs from havabus.com. Buy the wrong one and you have paid for a coach that leaves from an airport 90 km away. The two names are one letter apart and both are sold online. **Do this:** match the operator to your airport before buying - Havaist for IST, HAVABUS for SAW

The metro stops around midnight

The M11 runs about 06:00 to 00:00. Land at 01:00 and the cheap option is simply gone, leaving the Havaist coach on its 24-hour routes or a taxi at the metered rate. The metro is also the wrong plan for a tight onward connection, since the M2 change at Gayrettepe adds 20-40 minutes. **Do this:** check your landing time against the last metro and keep the 24-hour coach as the fallback

Tolls are added to the taxi meter, and the flat-fare habit does not apply

The meter is TRY 71.94 plus TRY 47.92 per kilometre with a TRY 230 minimum, and bridge, tunnel and motorway tolls are charged on top - the driver pays them and adds them to your total. There is no airport flat fare and no night surcharge; the same meter applies at 3am as at 3pm. Anyone offering a fixed price inside the terminal is setting their own. **Do this:** use the official rank, insist on the meter, and expect tolls to appear separately

KNOW BEFORE YOU WALK

- Buy and top up the Istanbulkart at the machines beside the M11 station entrance inside the terminal, before you go through the barriers.
- Every M11 train runs to Gayrettepe, so there is no wrong direction to board on the way into the city.
- At Gayrettepe the M2 is inside the same station complex - no street exit - and Taksim is four stops on from there.
- Havaist coaches leave from floor -2 of the terminal: Taksim platform 16, Sultanahmet 11, Aksaray 12, Sabiha Gokcen 13, Kadikoy 14.
- The M11 fare is distance-based, so the ride from the airport costs less than the maximum the gate takes - the refund only arrives if you tap out.

Metro and ticket prices verified October 2026 against Metro Istanbul's own fare page (metro.istanbul/SeferDurumlari/BiletUcretleri): Istanbulkart full fare TRY 46.20, one-pass electronic ticket TRY 65, two-pass TRY 120, three-pass TRY 185, four-pass TRY 230, five-pass TRY 275, ten-pass TRY 530, Mavi Kart full 180-pass TRY 3,628. The TRY 46.20 full fare and the TRY 65 single ticket are the tariff in force since 20 July 2026 under IBB council decision 813 of 17 July 2026. Taxi figures are the UKOME tariff effective 20 July 2026 as published by the IBB transport authority: TRY 71.94 opening, TRY 47.92 per kilometre, TRY 230 minimum, tolls extra, no night tariff; the TRY 1,650-2,200 to Taksim and TRY 1,750-2,300 to Sultanahmet are distance-based estimates rather than published fares. Two figures could not be taken from an operator price list in this run and are stated as reported: the anonymous Istanbulkart card fee of about TRY 165, and the Havaist coach fare of TRY 426-470 to Taksim - Havaist publishes its fare schedule in its app and at its desk rather than on hava.ist, which shows routes and times only. The M11 refund rule for personalised cards and the fact that the gate takes the line maximum on entry are reported by the operator's tariff notes and transport guides. M11 operating hours of roughly 06:00-00:00 are reported, not published as a table.

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