EAT
The House Café in the upmarket Ortaköy district attracts the great and the good of Istanbul with its light and airy neoclassical design. Its 16-seat private room works well for business lunches, looking out over a beautiful mosque and the Bosphorus Strait. For top-quality traditional Ottoman cuisine, head to event-ready Matbah next to the immense Hagia Sophia Museum. There’s plenty of room for large groups and a more intimate 20-seat PDR if needed. For maximum impact at night, take small groups to PeyDerPey in the Richmond Istanbul hotel – it’s got knock out views of the city.

MEET
A few minutes from the airport is the Wow Convention Center. The venue offers space for up to 6,500 people and lays claim to the largest pillarless space in Istanbul. Elsewhere, we like the contemporary Seed near Emirgan Park. So named because of its unusual shape, the venue has excellent acoustics and AV facilities. Conversely, groups can channel Istanbul’s rich history by hiring the 1,800-year-old 1001 Direk Cistern – a dramatic spot for exhibitions. Other large-scale venues of note include Haliç Congress Center, Istanbul Lütfi Kirdar and Istanbul Congress Center.

PLAY
Next door to Wow Hotel is the American-themed restaurant Choppers Point. It has four full-size bowling alleys ready for hire, or groups of up to 14 people can book into its cookery school, which specialises in traditional Ottoman cooking. On the same site as the Seed, the Sakip Sabanci Museum offers group tours of its modern art and Ottoman calligraphy collection. Lastly, you must visit Old Istanbul, home to the Blue Mosque (arguably the city’s most famous landmark), the Hagia Sophia (once a Byzantine church, now a museum), and the Topkapi Palace, the former home of generations of Ottoman sultans.

STAY
One of the most impressive hotels in the city is the five-star CVK Hotels & Resorts Park Bosphorus Hotel Istanbul. The expansive foyer says it all, with its grand Ottoman decor; the signature Corner Suite comes with butler service and views out to the Strait. The hotel is a short walk from Taksim Square and therefore on the doorstep of Istanbul’s nightlife. For something with a more intimate feel, we suggest the Eresin Crown Hotel in the historical quarter.

The property has been sympathetically built around ancient Byzantine ruins and guests will find relics on show throughout the ground floor.

HELPING HAND
Istanbul Convention & Visitors Bureau (+90 212 522 5555) offers advice and venue-finding services for event planners.