



Turkey

Includes →

Istanbul	1151
Gallipoli (Gelibolu)	
Peninsula	1162
Pamukkale	1167
Fethiye	1168
Olympos & Çıralı	1171
Ankara	1174
Göreme	1175

Best Places to Eat

- ▶ Antiochia (p1160)
- ▶ Ayşa (p1165)
- ▶ Bi Lokma (p1171)
- ▶ Ocakbaşı Restoran (p1177)
- ▶ Vanilla (p1173)

Best Places to Stay

- ▶ Pera Palace Hotel (p1157)
- ▶ Hotel Empress Zoe (p1157)
- ▶ El Vino Hotel (p1168)
- ▶ Hotel Unique (p1169)
- ▶ Koza Cave Hotel (p1176)

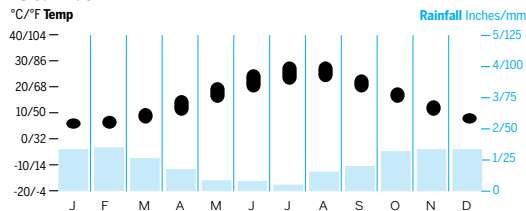
Why Go?

Turkey walks the tightrope between Europe and Asia with ease. Its cities pack in towering minarets and spice-trading bazaars but also offer buzzing, modern street life. Out in the countryside, this country's reputation as a bridge between continents is laid bare. Its expansive steppes and craggy mountain slopes are scattered with the remnants of once-mighty empires. Lycian ruins peek from the undergrowth across the Mediterranean coast, the Roman era's pomp stretches out before you in Ephesus, while the swirling rock valleys of Cappadocia hide Byzantine monastery complexes whittled out by early Christian ascetics.

Of course, if you just want to sloth on a prime piece of beach, Turkey has you covered. But when you've brushed off the sand, this land where east meets west and the ancient merges seamlessly with the contemporary is a fascinating mosaic of culture, history and visceral natural splendour.

When to Go

Istanbul



Apr & May Istanbul is a colourful kaleidoscope of tulips and it's prime hiking time on the coast.

Jun–Aug Summer temperatures sizzle and the Mediterranean resorts are in full swing.

Sep & Oct Plenty of crisp clear-sky days but the crowds have dispersed.

İSTANBUL

📍 EUROPEAN SIDE 0212 / 📍 ASIAN SIDE 0216 / POP 14.6 MILLION

Former capital of both the Byzantine and Ottoman empires, İstanbul manages to doff its cap to its grand past while stridently forging a vibrant, modern path. Stately mosques, opulent palaces and elaborately decorated domed churches cram into the Old City quarter while the hilly streets of Beyoğlu host state-of-the-art museums and art galleries, chic boutiques and funky cafes. Hop on a commuter ferry to cross between Europe and Asia. Haggle your heart out in the Grand Bazaar. Join the gregarious crowds bar-hopping in the alleys off İstiklal Caddesi. This marvellous metropolis is a showcase of Turkey at its most energetic, innovative and cosmopolitan.

The Bosphorus strait, between the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara, divides Europe from Asia. On its western shore, European İstanbul is further divided by the Golden Horn (Haliç) into the Old City in the south-west and Beyoğlu in the northeast.

👁️ Sights

👁️ Sultanahmet & Around

The Sultanahmet area is the centre of the Old City, a World Heritage site jam-packed with wonderful historic sights.

★ Aya Sofya

MUSEUM

(Hagia Sophia; Map p1158; 📍 0212-522 0989, 0212-522 1750; <http://ayasofyamuzesi.gov.tr/en>; Aya Sofya Meydanı 1; adult/child under 12yr ₺40/free; ☀️ 9am-7pm Tue-Sun mid-Apr-mid-Oct, to 5pm mid-Oct-mid-Apr, last entry 1hr before closing; 🚪 Sultanahmet) There are many important monuments in İstanbul, but this venerable

structure – which was commissioned by the great Byzantine emperor Justinian, consecrated as a church in 537, converted to a mosque by Mehmet the Conqueror in 1453 and declared a museum by Atatürk in 1935 – surpasses the rest due to its innovative architectural form, rich history, religious importance and extraordinary beauty.

★ Topkapı Palace

PALACE

(Topkapı Sarayı; Map p1158; 📍 0212-512 0480; www.topkapisarayi.gov.tr; Babühümayun Caddesi; palace adult/child under 12yr ₺40/free, Harem adult/child under 6yr ₺25/free; ☀️ 9am-6.45pm Wed-Mon mid-Apr-Oct, to 4.45pm Nov-mid-Apr, last entry 45min before closing; 🚪 Sultanahmet) Topkapı is the subject of more colourful stories than most of the world's museums put together. Libidinous sultans, ambitious courtiers, beautiful concubines and scheming eunuchs lived and worked here between the 15th and 19th centuries when it was the court of the Ottoman Empire. A visit to the palace's opulent pavilions, jewel-filled Treasury and sprawling Harem gives a fascinating glimpse into their lives.

Grand Bazaar

MARKET

(Kapalı Çarşı, Covered Market; Map p1158; www.kapalicarsi.org.tr; ☀️ 8.30am-7pm Mon-Sat, last entry 6pm; 🚪 Beyazıt Kapalıçarşı) The colourful and chaotic Grand Bazaar is the heart of İstanbul's Old City and has been so for centuries. Starting as a small vaulted *bedesten* (warehouse) built by order of Mehmet the Conqueror in 1461, it grew to cover a vast area as lanes between the *bedesten*, neighbouring shops and *hans* (caravanserais) were roofed and the market assumed the sprawling, labyrinthine form that it retains today.

ITINERARIES

One Week

Spend two days exploring **İstanbul** then head south to laid-back Selçuk and the grandiose ruins of **Ephesus**. After a two-night stop, catch a flight from nearby İzmir to the wacky fairy-chimney countryside of **Cappadocia**.

Two Weeks

Follow the one-week itinerary to **Selçuk** then scoot to the Aegean coast for a day or two of chichi beach action in **Bodrum**. Next, trail south along the coast to **Fethiye**, for boat-trip fun and discovering the ghost village in nearby Kayaköy; or **Kaş**, to explore Kekova's submerged ruins. Move onto **Antalya** to crane your neck at Aspendos' theatre and traipse through the old-district streets, before bussing it across the steppe to **Cappadocia** for cave-hotel quirkiness and hot-air ballooning.