



Turkey

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Best Places to Stay

- » Marmara Guesthouse (p920)
- » Biber Evi (p932)
- » Hotel Villa Mahal (p952)
- » Tuvana Hotel (p957)
- » Kelebek Hotel & Cave Pension (p970)

Best Places to Eat

- » Cooking Alaturka (p921)
- » Balıkçı (p933)
- » Fish Market (p943)
- » Ziggy's (p974)
- » Kahvaltı Sokak (p979)

Why Go?

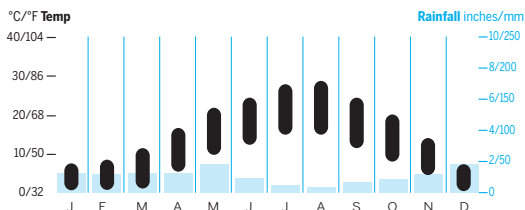
While many Turks see their country as European, Turkey packs in as many towering minarets and spice-trading bazaars as its Middle Eastern neighbours. This bridge between continents has absorbed Europe's modernism and sophistication, and Asia's culture and tradition. Travellers can enjoy historical hot spots, mountain outposts, expansive steppe and caravanserai-loads of the exotic, without forgoing comfy beds and buses.

Despite its reputation as a continental meeting point, Turkey can't be pigeonholed. Cappadocia, a dreamscape dotted with fairy chimneys, is unlike anywhere else on the planet. Likewise, spots like Mt Nemrut, littered with giant stone heads, and Olympos, where Lycian ruins peek from the undergrowth, are quintessentially Turkish mixtures of natural splendour and ancient remains.

The beaches and mountains offer enough activities to impress the fussiest Ottoman sultan. Worldly pleasures include the many historic hotels, meze to savour on panoramic terraces and, of course, Turkey's famous kebabs.

When to Go

Ankara



April–May Spring sunshine without summer crowds; tulips bloom in Istanbul.

September–October The crowds thin; autumn is perfect for walking and diving in the southwest.

December–January Ski, celebrate New Year and see Cappadocia in the snow.

AT A GLANCE

Currency Turkish lira

Language Turkish,
Kurdish

Money ATMS wide-
spread; credit cards
accepted in cities and
tourist areas

Visas Issued on arrival

Fast Facts

- » **Area** 779,452 sq km
- » **Capital** Ankara
- » **Country code** 90
- » **International access code** 00
- » **Ambulance** 112
- Fire** 110 **Police** 155

Exchange rates

Australia	A\$1	TL1.69
Canada	C\$1	TL1.64
euro	€1	TL2.25
Japan	¥100	TL1.96
New Zealand	NZ\$1	TL1.27
UK	UK£1	TL2.58
USA	US\$1	TL1.60

Set Your Budget

- » **Budget hotel room** Up to TL75
- » **Two-course dinner** Midrange TL15 to TL20
- » **Museum entrance** TL3 to TL15
- » **Beer** TL5
- » **City transport ticket** TL1 to TL

Resources

- » www.cornucopia.net
- » www.hurriyetdailynews.com
- » www.todayszaman.com

Connections

İstanbul is well connected to Europe. Buses leave the otogar (bus station) for countries including Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Macedonia, Romania and Slovenia, but trains and ferries are more romantic.

The most useful daily trains are the *Bosfor/Balkan Ekspresi* to Bucharest (Romania; with connections including Budapest, Hungary) via Dimitrovgrad (Bulgaria; with connections including Sofia, Bulgaria and Belgrade, Serbia); and the *Dostluk/Filia Express* to Thessaloniki (Greece; with connections to Athens). A suggested train route from London to İstanbul is the three-night journey via Paris, Munich, Budapest and Bucharest; see www.seat61.com/turkey for more information and other routes.

Ferries connect Turkey's Aegean and Mediterranean coasts with Greek islands, Northern Cyprus and Italy; İstanbul with Ukraine; and Trabzon on the Black Sea coast with Russia.

See p993 for more information.

ITINERARIES

One week

Devote two or three days to magical İstanbul, then head down the Aegean coast, via the Gallipoli battlefields, Ayvalık or Bergama (Pergamum), to marvel at the ruins of Ephesus.

Two weeks

From Ephesus, head inland to Pamukkale's shiny travertine formations, then return to the coast at laid-back Kaş and travel along the Mediterranean to Roman-Ottoman Antalya, checking out Olympos' tree houses en route. With more time or by skipping some of the above spots, work in a detour, on the way back to İstanbul, to Cappadocia's surreal valleys and fairy chimneys.

Essential Food & Drink

Far from the uninspiring kebabs and stuffed vine leaves you may have seen at home, Turkish food is a celebration of community and life in its home country. Kebabs are socrnningly succulent, *yaprak dolması* (stuffed vine leaves) are filled with subtly spiced rice and cuisine is social, slow and seasonal. Food is taken very seriously indeed, with delicious results that vary between regions, meaning that travelling here will constantly surprise and seduce your taste buds.

Apart from *kebabs*, classic Turkish dishes and tipples include *köfte* (meatballs), *meze*, *pide*, *lahmacun* (Arabic pizza), *gözleme* (thin savoury crepes), *mantı* (Turkish ravioli), *börek* (filled pastries), *baklava* and *çay* (tea).

Rakı (a fiery, highly alcoholic aniseed drink) is best accompanied by *meze*, especially *beyaz peynir* (ewe- or goat's-milk cheese) and melon, and *balık* (fish).

For more on food and drink, see p985.