



Turkey

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Why Go?

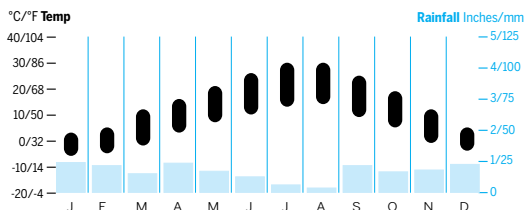
While many Turks see their country as European, Turkey packs in as many towering minarets and spice-trading bazaars as its Middle Eastern neighbours. This bridge between continents has absorbed the best of Europe and Asia. Travellers can enjoy historical hot spots, mountain outposts, expansive steppe 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 (rock formations), is unlike anywhere else on the planet. Likewise, spots like Mt Nemrut (Nemrut Dağı), 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, the meze to savour on panoramic terraces and, of course, Turkey's famous kebabs.

When to Go

Ankara



Best Places to Eat

- » Asmalı Cavit (p540)
- » Köy Evi (p586)
- » İkbal (p569)
- » Reis (p566)

Best Places to Stay

- » Hotel Ibrahim Pasha (p537)
- » Esbelli Evi (p587)
- » Hotel Villa Mahal (p567)
- » Tuvana Hotel (p573)
- » Assos Alarga (p550)

Apr–May Spring sunshine without summer crowds, apart from in Istanbul, where it is high season.

Jun–Aug Istanbul's shoulder season; music festivals and lazy summer days by the Bosphorus.

Sep–Oct Autumn walking and diving; outside of Istanbul crowds thin.

AT A GLANCE

- » **Currency** Turkish lira (TL)
- » **Languages** Turkish, Kurdish
- » **Money** ATMs widespread; credit cards accepted in cities and tourist areas
- » **Visas** On arrival

Fast Facts

- » **Area** 783,562 sq km
- » **Capital** Ankara
- » **Country code** 90
- » **Emergency** Police 155; Ambulance 112; Fire 110

Exchange Rates

Australia	A\$1	TL1.88
Canada	C\$1	TL1.77
Euro Zone	€1	TL2.32
Japan	¥100	TL1.94
New Zealand	NZ\$1	TL1.51
UK	UK£1	TL2.75
USA	US\$1	TL1.80

Set Your Budget

- » **Budget hotel room** TL80
- » **Midrange meal** TL9 to TL25
- » **Museum entry** TL5
- » **Beer** TL6

Resources

- » **Hürriyet Daily News** (www.hurriyetdailynews.com)
- » **Cornucopia** (www.cornucopia.net/blog)
- » **tulumba.com** (www.tulumba.com)

Connections

İstanbul is well connected to Europe, with two international airports. Buses leave the *otogar* (bus station) for countries including Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Italy, Macedonia, Romania and Slovenia.

Currently, the only daily train between İstanbul and Europe is the overnight Bosphorus/Balkan Express to Bucharest (Romania, 21 hours), Sofia (Bulgaria, 13 hours) and Belgrade (Serbia, 21½ hours). A suggested train route from London to İstanbul is the three-night journey via Paris, Munich, Vienna, 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 and Northern Cyprus; İstanbul with Ukraine; and Trabzon on the Black Sea coast with Russia.

ITINERARIES

One Week

Devote a few days to magical İstanbul, then cross the Sea of Marmara to Anatolia and head south to laid-back Selçuk or coastal Kuşadası, both convenient bases for visiting the marvellous ruins of Ephesus.

Two Weeks

From Ephesus, head inland to Pamukkale's shiny travertine formations, then return to the coast at the vibrant city of Antalya, with its Roman-Ottoman heritage quarter, and work your way around the glorious Teke Peninsula. Stop in Çıralı to see the eternal flame of the Chimaera, Kaş for activities and boat trips, and Patara for Turkey's longest beach. From Dalaman airport you can fly back to İstanbul and Europe.

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 swooningly succulent, *yaprak dolması* (stuffed vine leaves) are filled with subtly spiced rice and eating is social, slow and seasonal. Food is taken very seriously, 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's- or goat's-milk cheese) and melon, and *balık* (fish).