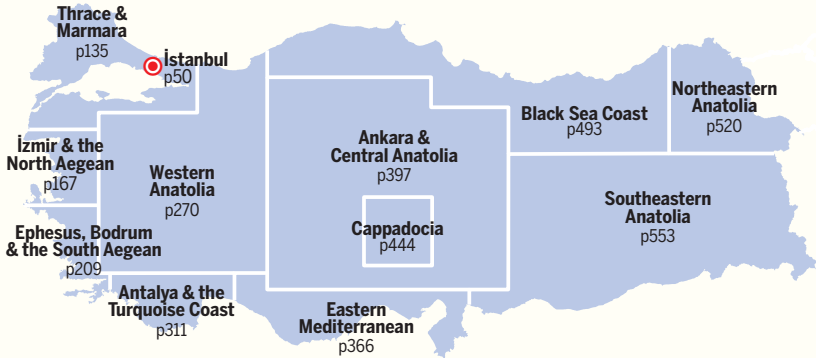


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THIS EDITION WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED BY

James Bainbridge

**Brett Atkinson, Chris Deliso, Steve Fallon,
Will Gourlay, Jessica Lee, Virginia Maxwell, Tom Spurling**

Turkey



Top Experiences >



itineraries

Whether you've got six days or 60, these itineraries provide a starting point for the trip of a lifetime. Want more inspiration? Head online to lonelyplanet.com/thorntree to chat with other travellers.



10 Days to Two Weeks Classic Turkey

Most first-time visitors to Turkey arrive with two ancient names on their lips: **İstanbul** and **Ephesus**. You'll need at least three days in **İstanbul** to even scrape the surface of its millennia of history. The top three sights are the Aya Sofya, Topkapı Palace and the Blue Mosque, but there's a sultan's treasury of other sights and activities, including a cruise up the Bosphorus to the Black Sea, nightlife around the heaving İstiklal Caddesi, and the Grand Bazaar's 2000-plus shops. From **İstanbul** you can head straight to **İzmir** – a laid-back coastal city near Ephesus with Aegean vistas and Levantine architecture. If you'd like to see a bit more on the way, take a bus from Bandırma to **Çanakkale**, a lively student town with sweeping views across the Dardanelles, and pay a visit to the **Gallipoli Peninsula**. An afternoon tour of the poignant battlefields is a memorable experience. From **Çanakkale**, it's a bus ride to tumbledown **Ayvalık**, and then a dolmuş from there to **Behramkale**, where you can climb to the Temple of Athena. Finish by taking a bus from Ayvalık to **İzmir**, and then on to **Selçuk**, where you can organise a taxi or tour to glorious **Ephesus**, the best-preserved classical city in the eastern Mediterranean.



Three to Four Weeks Cappadocia Express

Travellers are often confronted with a tough choice when deciding where to go in Turkey after İstanbul: Cappadocia or the southwestern coast. If you feel drawn to the former's fairy-tale landscape, there are a few worthwhile stops en route across Anatolia. After following the **İstanbul** leg of the Classic Turkey itinerary, hop on a ferry across the Sea of Marmara to **Bursa**. The city does a good line in Ottoman mosques and mausoleums, İskender kebabs and Karagöz shadow puppets in the Kapalı Çarşı (Covered Market); and nearby, a cable car climbs to **Uludağ's** ski resort. Head north to **İzmit**, where the city's proud Ottoman tile-making heritage is on display between its Roman-Byzantine walls.

Next, bus it to Ankara or, with more time, detour along the top of Turkey to **Safranbolu**. This Ottoman town, with half-timbered houses among rocky bluffs, is a wonderful introduction to rural Anatolian life. To have your kebab and eat it, you can see a little of the Turkish coast by taking a further 2½-hour detour to the Black Sea town of **Amasra**, with its castle and fish restaurants.

Ankara, the Turkish capital, is no match for that show-stealer on the Bosphorus, but two key sights here give an insight into Turkish history, ancient and modern: the Anıt Kabir, Atatürk's hilltop mausoleum, and the Museum of Anatolian Civilisations, a restored 15th-century *bedesten* (covered market) packed with finds from the surrounding steppe. Tying in with the latter, a detour east takes in the isolated, evocative ruins of **Hattuşa**, which was the Hittite capital in the late Bronze age.

Leave three days to explore **Cappadocia**, where there are valleys of fairy chimneys, rock-cut churches with Byzantine frescoes, underground cities and horse rides to occupy you. Schedule some time to just sit and appreciate the fantastical landscape in çay-drinking villages such as **Mustafapaşa**, with its stone-carved Greek houses and 18th-century church.

With time to spare on the return journey to İstanbul, stop in lakeside **Eğirdir**, with its crumbling old quarter ringed by beaches and mountains. In the region are the long-distance walking routes the **St Paul Trail** and **Evlîya Çelebi Way**. **Eskişehir** is a worthy final stop, with river gondola rides, cultural events, a student-driven nightlife and picturesque old town.



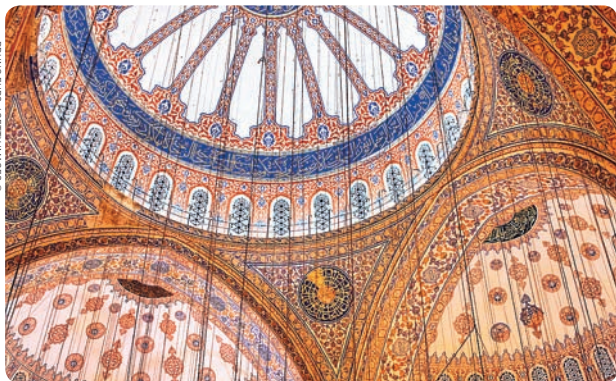
Four Weeks Eastern Delights

Turkey's little-visited eastern reaches are sweeter than *bal* (honey) for adventurous travellers. Start with a couple of days in buzzing **Trabzon**, where sights include the 13th-century Aya Sofya, then move south to visit **Sumela Monastery**, peering down on a forested valley from its rockface. Head back to Trabzon, and then drive up **Firtina Valley**, with its Ottoman humpback bridges. Circle the **Kaçkar Mountains** or tackle a multiday trek over the top to **Yusufeli**, where the Çoruh River white-water rafting is worth sampling before a dam floods the area. The drive from Yusufeli to Kars through the **Georgian Valleys** is one of Turkey's most scenic, heading over mountains, through gorges and past crumbling castles to medieval churches in hill villages.

Russian-influenced **Kars** is an intriguing city surrounded by the vast Anatolian steppe. The star attraction here is nearby **Ani**, once a thriving Armenian capital, and now a field strewn with magnificent ruins next to the border of modern Armenia. Aim to spend a couple of days in the area; longer if you'd like to find other weather-beaten ruins in the surrounding countryside. From Kars, head south past **Mt Ararat** (Ağrı Dağı, 5137m), Turkey's highest mountain, to **Doğubayazıt**. Perching above the predominantly Kurdish border town, the impossibly romantic **İshak Paşa Palace** – resembling a scene from *One Thousand and One Nights* – surveys the plains.

From Doğubayazıt, travel further south to **Van**, on the shore of a vast, mountain-ringed lake. Take a couple of days here to see the 10th-century Akdamar church, sole inhabitant of an island in Lake Van (Van Gölü), and Hoşap Castle, built by a 17th-century Kurdish chieftain, which has superb lion reliefs. Heading southwest from the church, don't miss **Hasankeyf**, a sort of Cappadocia in miniature, set to be submerged by a dam; and honey-coloured **Mardin**, with its minarets, churches and castle, overlooking the roasting Mesopotamian plains.

Turning northwest, enter the Byzantine city walls at Diyarbakır, the heartland of Kurdish culture, before climbing **Mt Nemrut** (Nemrut Dağı) to see the gigantic stone heads left by a megalomaniacal pre-Roman king – one of eastern Turkey's most famous sights. Head south to finish with a final hit of history at Şanlıurfa's Neolithic **Göbekli Tepe**, perhaps the world's first place of worship, and **Harran**, which hosted Abraham in 1900 BC and is one of the planet's oldest continuously inhabited spots.



» (above) Akdamar Kilisesi (Church of the Holy Cross; p597) on the shore of Lake Van

» (left) Interior of the Blue Mosque (p60), Istanbul



Three to Four Weeks Palm Trees & Fairy Chimneys

If you have a kind boss, you don't have to choose between Cappadocia's wavy valleys and the coast's white-sand beaches – prepare to spend many hours on buses and check out both areas. Follow the Classic Turkey itinerary, with one extra stop in **Pergamum** (en route from Ayvalık to İzmir), where you can see some of Turkey's most awe-inspiring Roman ruins and climb the hill to the Acropolis.

After **Ephesus**, take a day trip from your base at Selçuk to the travertines and ruins of **Hierapolis** at Pamukkale. The brilliant white terraces can be dizzying in the midday sun, but swimming among submerged marble columns in the Antique Pool will restore your cool. Nearby **Afrodiasis** is at least as impressive and less crowded – the only other people among the soaring colonnades might be archaeologists.

Returning to the coast, head along the chichi **Bodrum Peninsula** or the **Datça and Bozburun Peninsulas**, where the mountain towns and fishing villages are best explored by scooter. Continuing southeast, beautiful **Ölüdeniz** is the spot to paraglide over the Mediterranean or lie low on a beach towel. You're now within kicking distance of the 509km-long Lycian Way. Hike for a day through superb countryside to overnight in heavenly **Faralya**, overlooking Butterfly Valley; further inroads into the trail will definitely top your 'next time' list.

Continuing along the coast, have a pit stop at laid-back **Kaş**, its pretty harbourside square alive nightly with the hum of friendly folk enjoying the breeze, views, Mediterranean dishes and a beer or two. One of Turkey's most beguiling boat trips departs from here, taking in the sunken Byzantine city at **Kekova Island**. From Kaş, it's a couple of hours to **Olympos**, where you can spend a few days unwinding at the beach tree houses.

From Olympos, head onwards to **Antalya**. Its Roman-Ottoman quarter, Kaleiçi, is worth a wander; set against the backdrop of a jaw-dropping mountain range. Next, drag yourself away from the beach and catch the bus north to claim your cave in **Göreme**. This travellers' hang-out is the most popular base in Cappadocia, a surreal moonscape dotted with tuff cones, where you can easily spend three days or more. The famous formations line the roads to sights including the rock-cut frescoed churches of Göreme Open-Air Museum and the Byzantine underground cities at Kaymaklı and Derinkuyu.



Four Weeks Anatolian Circle

This trip leaves out only eastern Anatolia, which is a mission in itself, and takes in obscure gems as well as prime sights. Begin in **Edirne**, home to the Selimiye Camii; the 16th-century mosque is the finest work of the great Mimar Sinan. After Edirne, spend a few days among more mosques, palaces and some 14 million folk in **Istanbul**, former capital of the Ottoman and Byzantine empires. Next, head east to **Safranbolu**, with its winding streets of Ottoman mansions, before turning north to **Amasra**, where Turkish holidaymakers wander the Byzantine castle and eat in fish restaurants on the two harbours. The Black Sea port town is the beginning of the drive through rugged hills to **Sinop**, birthplace of the Greek philosopher Diogenes the Cynic.

From Sinop, take a bus via Samsun to **Amasya** and spend a couple of days appreciating its Ottoman houses, Pontic tombs and castle. Heading further south through Sivas, detour up a mountain valley to **Divriği**, an Alevi town that offers a taste of eastern Anatolia. Here you'll find the 800-year-old Unesco-protected Ulu Camii and hospital complex, which has stone doorways with intricate carvings.

The next stop, **Cappadocia**, is wholeheartedly back on the beaten track. Spend about three days here and, instead of joining the rest on a tour bus or hot-air balloon, explore the fairy chimneys and cave churches by walking or horse riding. Göreme and Ürgüp are the usual bases, but you could stay in a less-touristy village such as **Ortahisar**, with its craggy castle.

South of central Cappadocia, see rock-cut churches without the crowds in **Soğanlı**, where Byzantine monastic settlements occupy two valleys. If you really want to get away from it all, head into the **Ala Dağlar National Park** for some of Turkey's most breathtaking scenery in the Taurus Mountains (Toros Dağları).

You're now fit for the journey across the hazy plains to **Konya**, a convenient stop en route to the Mediterranean and the birthplace of the Mevlâna (whirling dervish) order. The turquoise-domed Mevlâna Museum, containing the tomb of the order's 13th-century founder, is an enduring symbol of Turkey.

When you glimpse the glittering Med, follow the coastal part of the Palm Trees and Fairy Chimneys itinerary. You won't have time to stop everywhere if you want to sunbathe and hit the hamam – Seljuk Sefa Hamamı in **Antalya** is a good one – so pick some highlights, such as the ruins at **Kekova Island**, **Ephesus** and **Pergamum**.

➤ Every listing is recommended by our authors, and their favourite places are listed first

➤ Look out for these icons:



Our author's top recommendation



A green or sustainable option



No payment required

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**Steve Fallon**

Antalya & the Turquoise Coast With a house in Kalkan, Steve treats Turkey like a second home. And this assignment kept him pretty much in his own backyard (Lycia) from the riverine turtle town of Dalyan to pulsating Antalya, capital of Turkey's Mediterranean coast. OK, OK...*Türkçe'yi hala mağara adamı gibi konuşuyor* (he still speaks Turkish like a caveman), but no Turk has called him Tarzan – yet.

**Will Gourlay**

History, Architecture, Arts, People A serial visitor to Turkey, Will has been leaving his home base of Melbourne on regular Turkish forays for more than 20 years. As a backpacker, English teacher and writer he has explored all corners of Anatolia, the more remote the better. His most recent trips have been with his wife and children in tow, although they usually stay on the beach while he rummages around in the backwoods or takes the train into Iran. He is currently researching a

PhD on Turkish politics and society.

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Ankara & Central Anatolia, Cappadocia Jessica spent four years traversing the breadth of Turkey as a tour leader. In late 2011 she returned here to live and this edition saw her researching the Seljuk splendour and Hittite ruins of central Anatolia and the surreal scenery of Cappadocia. Jessica has authored several guidebooks to Middle Eastern destinations and her travel writing has appeared in publications including the *Independent*, the *Daily Telegraph* and *Wanderlust*.

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İstanbul, Turkish Table Although based in Australia, Virginia spends much of her year researching guidebooks in the Mediterranean countries. Of these, Turkey is unquestionably her favourite. As well as working on the previous four editions of this country guide, she is also the author of Lonely Planet's *İstanbul* city and pocket guides and writes about the city for a host of international magazines and websites. Virginia usually travels with partner Peter and son Max, who have grown

to love Turkey as much as she does.

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**Tom Spurling**

Thrace & Marmara, İzmir & the North Aegean Tom Spurling lives in Perth with his wife Lucy and their two children, Oliver and Poppy. He has worked in five continents for Lonely Planet and this is his 3rd edition of *Turkey*. When not travelling he teaches high-school English and is currently completing a Masters in International Education Policy. Advice for first-time travellers to Turkey? Çay, hamam, çay. Repeat daily.



OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Melbourne, London and Oakland, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

OUR WRITERS



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Coordinating Author, Black Sea Coast, Northeastern Anatolia, Turkey Today, Plan, Survival Guide Coordinating this guide for the third time, media

assignments and extracurricular wanderings have taken James to most of Turkey's far-flung regions. He lived in İstanbul (Cihangir to be exact) while coordinating the previous edition of this book, and learnt to love suffixes while studying a Turkish-language course. For this edition, discovering northeastern

Anatolia's mountains and steppe, ruins and Caucasian ambience showed him yet another side of this multifaceted and endlessly intriguing country. When he's not venturing to Kaçkar yaylalar (high-altitude pastures) or tucking into Black Sea cuisine, he lives in Cape Town, South Africa. Visit James' website at www.jamesbainbridge.net.

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Brett Atkinson

Eastern Mediterranean, Southeastern Anatolia Since first visiting Turkey in 1985, Brett has returned regularly to one of his favourite countries. For his third Lonely Planet trip to Turkey, he explored the Kurdish heartland of southeastern Anatolia and reignited an interest in archaeology while travelling along the stunning Mediterranean coast. Brett is based in Auckland, New Zealand, and has covered more than 40 countries as a guidebook author and travel and food writer. See

www.brett-atkinson.net for what he's been eating recently and where he's travelling to next.



Chris Deliso

Ephesus, Bodrum & the South Aegean, Western Anatolia Chris first experienced İstanbul's total sensory overload in 1999, during an Oxford MPhil dedicated to Turkey's Byzantine incarnation. Since then he's travelled widely throughout Turkey, from the Iran–Iraq border area and the lush Black Sea coast to semi-tropical Aegean beaches in the west. Having developed a deep affection for this ever-surprising country, Chris was delighted to return to western Anatolia and

the South Aegean for this book. He also writes about nearby Greece, Bulgaria, Romania and Macedonia for Lonely Planet.

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