



Ankara & Central Anatolia

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Konak Konya Mutfağı (p459)
- ➔ Sema Hanımın Yeri (p453)
- ➔ Somatçı (p459)
- ➔ Balıkcıköy (p425)

Best Places to Stay

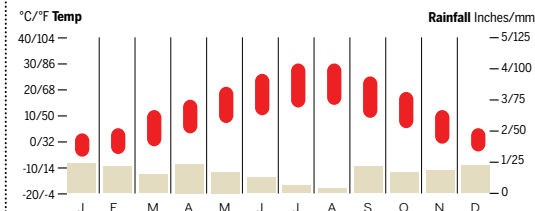
- ➔ Gordion Hotel (p423)
- ➔ Imren Lokum Konak (p432)
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- ➔ Derviş Otel (p458)

Why Go?

Somewhere between the cracks in the Hittite ruins, the fissures in the Phrygian burial mounds and the scratches in the Seljuk caravanserais, the mythical, mighty Turks raced across this highland desert steppe with big ideas and bigger swords. Nearby, Alexander the Great cut the Gordian knot, King Midas displayed his deft golden touch and Julius Caesar came, saw and conquered. It was also in this part of Turkey where the whirling dervishes first twizzled like human spinning tops and it was here that Atatürk forged his secular revolution along dusty Roman roads that all lead to Ankara, an underrated capital city and geopolitical centre. Further north through the nation's fruitbowl, in Safranbolu and Amasya, 'Ottomania' is still in full swing. Here wealthy weekenders sip çay with time-rich locals who preside over dark timber mansions. Central Anatolia is the meeting point between the fabled past and the prosperous present – a sojourn here will enlighten and enchant.

When to Go

Ankara



May–Jun Fruit harvest: cherries the size of a baby's fist; apricots sweeter than a baby's face.

Jun Summer storms light up the twin Ottoman towns of Safranbolu and Amasya.

Dec The Mevlâna Festival in Konya is a Sufi spectacular of extraordinary human spirit.



Ankara & Central Anatolia Highlights

- 1 Turning back the clocks among the cobblestones and creaky timber-framed mansions in Ottomanised **Safranbolu** (p429).
- 2 Pondering the **Pontic tombs** (p444) that poke out from cliffs in ancient Amasya.
- 3 Joining the cafe-hopping crowd in Ankara's trendy

Kızılay and **Kavaklıdere** neighbourhoods, then discovering Turkey's roots at the **Museum of Anatolian Civilisations** (p417).

- 4 Hitting the hills at **Hattuşa** (p438) to explore ancient Turkish history.
- 5 Visiting the ex-lodge of the whirling dervishes and paying

homage to Rumi at Konya's **Mevlâna Museum** (p454).

- 6 Marvelling at the blue-tiled magnificence of the *medreses* and mosques of **Sivas** (p451).
- 7 Exploring the rock-cut tombs and chapels and relishing the rural vibe of **Gökyurt** (p462): the little Cappadocia.