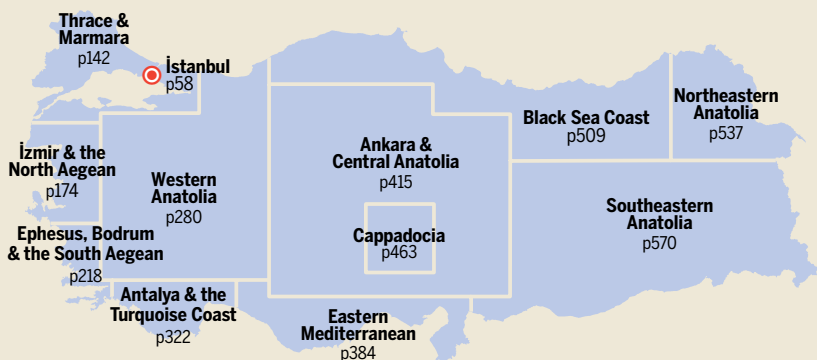




# Turkey



THIS EDITION WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED BY

**James Bainbridge,**

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AYA SOFYA (P65),  
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# Itineraries



10  
DAYS

## Classic Turkey

Most first-time visitors to Turkey arrive with two ancient names on their lips: **İstanbul** and **Ephesus**. This journey across the Sea of Marmara and down the Aegean coast covers both.

You'll need at least three days in **İstanbul** to even scratch 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, nightlife around İstiklal Caddesi, and the Grand Bazaar.

From **İstanbul**, instead of schlepping out to the city's main otogar (bus station), hop on a ferry to **Bandırma**. From there, you can take the train straight down to **Selçuk** (for **Ephesus**) via **İzmir**, but it's more interesting to catch a bus to **Çanakkale**, a lively student town on the Dardanelles. A tour of the nearby **Gallipoli Peninsula's** poignant WWI battlefields is a memorable experience. From **Çanakkale**, it's a 3¼-hour bus ride to **Ayvalık**, with its tumbledown old Greek quarter and fish restaurants. Finally, another bus ride (via **İzmir**) reaches **Selçuk**, a pleasantly rustic town and the base for visiting glorious **Ephesus**, the best-preserved classical city in the eastern Mediterranean.





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**Top:** Ulu Camii (p286), Bursa

**Bottom:** Anit Kabir (p419), Ankara



## Cappadocia Meander

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, recently proclaimed a World Heritage Site, does a good line in Ottoman mosques and mausoleums, İskender kebabs and Karagöz shadow puppets; and nearby, the world's longest gondola climbs to **Uludağ's** ski resort. Head north to lakeside **İznik**, its Ottoman tile-making heritage on display between Roman-Byzantine walls.

Next, bus it to **Ankara**, the Turkish capital. The city 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 – base yourself in a cave hotel in **Göreme**, the travellers' hang-out surrounded by valleys of fairy chimneys. The famous rock formations line the roads to sights including Göreme Open-Air Museum's rock-cut frescoed churches and the Byzantine underground cities at Kaymaklı and Derinkuyu. Among the hot-air balloon trips, valley walks and horse riding, schedule some time to just sit and appreciate the fantastical landscape in çay-drinking villages such as **Mustafapaşa**.

Fly straight back to İstanbul or, if you have enough time and a penchant for Anatolia's mountains and steppe, continue by bus. Stop in **Konya** for lunch and tour the turquoise-domed Mevlâna Museum, containing the tomb of the Mevlâna (whirling dervish) order's 13th-century founder, en route to **Eğirdir**. Lakeside Eğirdir, with its road-connected island and crumbling old Greek quarter ringed by beaches and the Taurus Mountains, is a serene base for walking sections of the **St Paul Trail**. Again, you can fly back to İstanbul from here, but vibrant **Eskişehir** is a worthwhile stop-off, with its student-driven nightlife, river gondola rides and picturesque old town.





## Eastern Delights

From the Black Sea shore to the borders of the Middle East, 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 rock face. Head along the coast and drive up the **Fırtına Valley**, with its Ottoman humpback bridges and Hemşin culture. 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 onward journey 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. Spend a couple of days in the area, where weather-beaten Armenian and Georgian churches hide in corners of the steppe. Next, head south past **Mt Ararat** (Ağrı Dağı, 5137m), Turkey's highest mountain, to **Doğubayazıt**. Perched above the predominantly Kurdish border town, **İshak Paşa Palace** surveys the plains, resembling a romantic scene from *One Thousand and One Nights*.

Continue south to **Van**, on the shore of the vast, mountain-ringed lake of the same name. Take a couple of days to see the 10th-century church on Akdamar Island in the lake, and 17th-century Hoşap Castle. Heading southwest, **Hasankeyf** is a sort of Cappadocia in miniature, set to be submerged by a dam; and honey-coloured **Mardin**, with its minarets, churches and castle, overlooks the roasting Mesopotamian plains.

Next, 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 megalomaniac 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.

4  
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, and add an extra stop in **Behramkale**, where you can survey the Aegean from an old Greek village scattered around a hilltop temple; or **Bergama**, overlooked by the vertigo-inducing theatre in Pergamum's Greco-Roman acropolis.

From Ephesus, hit the southern Aegean coast in cruise port **Kuşadası**, which offers 'PMD' day trips to the ruins of **Priene**, **Miletus** and **Didyma**. These sites, respectively two ancient port cities and a temple to Apollo, are interesting additions to an Ephesus visit. Spend a day or two eating calamari and drinking cocktails on the chichi **Bodrum Peninsula** and cross the Gulf of Gökova by ferry to the **Datça Peninsula**. With their fishing villages and rugged hinterland of forest-covered mountains, Datça and the adjoining **Bozburun Peninsula** are excellent for revving up a scooter or just putting your feet up.

Continuing along the Mediterranean coast, beautiful **Ölüdeniz** is the spot to paraglide from atop Baba Dağ (Mt Baba; 1960m) 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 in-roads into the trail will definitely top your 'next time' list.

Also on the Lycian Way, laid-back **Kaş**' pretty harbourside square buzzes nightly with friendly folk enjoying the sea breeze, views, fresh meze, and a beer or two. One of Turkey's most beguiling boat trips departs from here, taking in the sunken Lycian city at **Kekova Island**. From Kaş, it's a couple of hours to **Olympos**, famous for the naturally occurring Chimaera flames and beach tree houses.

A 1½-hour bus journey reaches the city of **Antalya**. Its Roman-Ottoman quarter, Kaleiçi, is worth a wander, against the backdrop of a jaw-dropping mountain range. Finally, drag yourself away from the beach and catch the bus north to claim your cave in **Göreme**, beatific base for a few days in Cappadocia's surreal moonscape.



## Anatolian Circle

This trip leaves out only eastern Anatolia, which is a mission in itself, and takes in both obscure gems and prime sights.

Begin with a few days among mosques, palaces and some 14 million folk in **İstanbul**, 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 fresh fish on the two harbours. Amasra is the beginning of the drive through rugged hills to **Sinop**, another pretty Black Sea port town and the birthplace of Greek philosopher Diogenes the Cynic.

Next, it's a 6½-hour bus journey via **Samsun** to **Amasya**, with its Ottoman houses, Pontic tombs and castle. Take it all in from a terrace by the Yeşilirmak River, and drink several tulip-shaped glasses of çay, before another long bus ride across the Anatolian steppe to **Cappadocia**. This enchanting land of fairy chimneys and cave churches is wholeheartedly back on the beaten track, but you can escape the tour buses by exploring the valleys on foot or horseback. Likewise, 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; and head into the **Ala Dağlar National Park** for some of Turkey's most breathtaking scenery in the Taurus Mountains (Toros Dağları).

**Konya**, its magnificent mosques recalling its stint as capital of the Seljuk sultanate of Rum, makes a convenient lunch stop en route to Eğirdir. Lakeside **Eğirdir** has views of the Taurus Mountains and little-visited local sights such as **Sagalassos**, a ruined Greco-Roman city at an altitude of 1500m. There are more impressive classical ruins at **Hierapolis**, an ancient spa city overlooking the village of **Pamukkale** from atop the travertines, a mountain of calcite shelves. Nearby **Afrodiasis**, once a Roman provincial capital, is equally incredible; you might have the 30,000-seat stadium to yourself.

From Denizli (near Pamukkale), it's just a few hours' journey by bus or train to **Selçuk**, base for visiting **Ephesus**. From Selçuk, you can fly back to İstanbul from nearby **İzmir**, or continue overland via our Classic Turkey itinerary.



### Steve Fallon

**Izmir & the North Aegean, Black Sea Coast** With a house in Kalkan on the Turquoise Coast, Steve considers Turkey to be a second home. This assignment took him pretty far from said home, however, starting at the eastern-most end of the Black Sea Coast (with a quick foray into delightful Georgia) and continuing down the North Aegean coastline to Turkey's greatest city: Izmir. OK ... Türkçe'yi hala mağara adamı gibi konuşuyor (he still speaks Turkish like a caveman), but no Turk has called him Fred – yet.

Read more about Steve at:  
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### Will Gourlay

Will has been leaving his home base of Melbourne on regular Turkish forays for over 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. Will

wrote the following Understand chapters: Turkey Today, History, Architecture, Arts and People.



### Jessica Lee

**Antalya & the Turquoise Coast, Eastern Mediterranean, Cappadocia** After four years leading adventure-tours around Turkey, Jessica moved here to live. Between writing, she battles Turkish verbs and tries to restore a village home. This edition of *Turkey* saw her hiking between Lycian splendour on the Turquoise coast, hunting down early Christian remnants in the eastern Mediterranean, and scrambling up cliffs to hidden rock-cut churches in

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### Virginia Maxwell

**Istanbul, Thrace & Marmara** Although based in Australia, Virginia spends much of her year researching guidebooks in the Mediterranean region. Of these, Turkey is unquestionably her favourite. As well as working on the previous five editions of this country guide, she is also the author of Lonely Planet's *Istanbul* city and pocket guides, and she 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. For this edition of *Turkey* Virginia also wrote the Eat & Drink Like a Local and Turkish Table chapters.



## 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 Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Beijing and Delhi, 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



### James Bainbridge

**Coordinating Author: Ephesus, Bodrum & the South Aegean; Western**

**Anatolia** Coordinating this guide four times, various media assignments and extra-curricular wanderings have taken James to most of Turkey's far-flung regions. He lived in Istanbul (Cihangir to be exact) while coordinating a previous edition of this book and learnt to love suffixes on a Turkish-language course. For this edition, discovering western Turkey's dramatic classical ruins and exploring

the various peninsulas jutting into the Aegean showed him yet another side of this multifaceted and endlessly intriguing country. When he's not roaming the Anatolian steppe, James works as a travel writer and tour guide in Cape Town, South Africa. Visit James' website at [www.jamesbainbridge.net](http://www.jamesbainbridge.net). James also wrote most of the Plan Your Trip chapters, the Understand Environment essay and Survival Guide chapters this edition.

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### Brett Atkinson

**Northeastern Anatolia, Southeastern Anatolia** Since first visiting Turkey in 1985, Brett has returned regularly to one of his favourite countries. For his fourth Lonely Planet trip to Turkey, he explored the Kurdish heartland of southeastern Anatolia. After 15 years Brett returned to fascinating northeastern destinations like Kars, Ani and the Kaçkar Mountains. Brett is based in Auckland, New Zealand and has covered around 50 countries as a guidebook author and travel and food writer. See [www.brett-atkinson.net](http://www.brett-atkinson.net) for his most recent work and upcoming travels.



### Stuart Butler

**Ankara & Central Anatolia** Stuart has travelled widely across Turkey, particularly in the east and southeast of the country and the greater Middle East region. His travels for Lonely Planet, and a wide variety of magazines, have taken him beyond Turkey to the shores of the Arctic, the deserts of Asia and the forests of Africa. Stuart lives on the beaches of southwest France with his wife and two young children. His website is [www.stuartbutlerjournalist.com](http://www.stuartbutlerjournalist.com).

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OVER MORE  
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