



Izmir & the North Aegean

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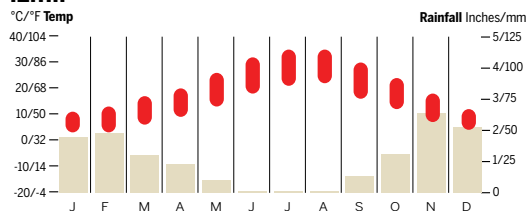
Why Go?

This relatively short stretch of coast is first and foremost a magnet for holidaymakers. Beaches along the Ege Deniz (Aegean Sea), including the Biga Peninsula, are superb (and often empty), while on the Çeşme Peninsula, Alaçatı offers world-class windsurfing. At the same time, this region is a colossus for history buffs. The hilltop ruins of Pergamum and Assos are breathtaking sites of antiquity, while others lie hidden along peninsulas inhabited by descendants of the Turkmen nomads. İzmir, Turkey's third-largest city, is a buzzing, Euro-centric metropolis with an attractive bazaar and seafront *kordon* (promenade) and a fair few ancient sites of its own.

No matter where you go in this region, the Greek influence is inescapable. Many towns experienced the great population exchange of the early 20th century and today, in places like Ayvalık and on the island of Bozcaada, the architecture, music and food seem like bittersweet echoes from across the sea.

When to Go

İzmir



May Windsurf or cruise in a *gület* (traditional yacht) on the Çeşme Peninsula before the crowds descend.

Jul The International İzmir Festival brings music and dance to the region.

Sep Annual wine festival takes place on the tiny viticultural Aegean island of Bozcaada.



Izmir & the North Aegean Highlights

1 Ferry over to idyllic **Bozcaada** (p176) to lounge on the beach and indulge in fine local wine and dining.

2 Take a cable car to the Acropolis at **Bergama** (Pergamum; p189), one of the country's finest ancient sites.

3 Wander the crumbling,

atmospheric back streets of the old town in **Ayvalık** (p183).

4 Climb the cobbled streets of **Behramkale** (Assos; p179) to the Temple of Athena and its glorious sea views.

5 Enjoy the seafront *kordon* (promenade) restaurants and the nightlife of **Izmir's Alsancak district** (p201).

6 Windsurf by day and party by night in **Alaçatı** (p214), the glamour town of the Çeşme Peninsula.

7 Motor around the **Biga Peninsula** (p181), with its ruins, villages and beaches.

8 Journey to **Manisa** (p210) for its mosques, museums and 'power paste'.