



Northeastern Anatolia

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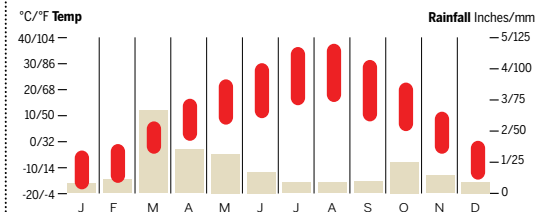
Why Go?

If you've a soft spot for far-flung outposts, it's time to discover Turkey's greatest secret. Despite its wealth of attractions, northeastern Anatolia remains largely untouched by even the domestic tourist circuit, and its glorious landscapes are refreshingly coach-party free. Particularly outside the Turkish summer holidays, you may have precipitous gorges and expansive steppe, muscular mountains and highland pastures to yourself. No wonder the region is prime territory for trekking (make a beeline for the Kaçkar Mountains and Mt Ararat), white-water rafting and skiing.

Culturally, the ruins of Ani and Işhak Paşa Palace are famously romantic, and numerous secluded treasures recall once-flourishing ancient civilisations. Palaces, castles, Georgian churches, Armenian monuments and Ottoman humpback bridges all stand in splendid isolation. For urban vibes, Kars is a laid-back city with a Russian aesthetic – a staging post in this region of open spaces, mountain solitude and moody skies above the steppe.

When to Go

Erzurum



May Vivid hues and scents as the steppe blossoms, and spring warmth awakens mountain pastures.

Jun–Sep Hike and raft around the Kaçkar Mountains, scale Mt Ararat, catch festivals.

Dec–Apr Ski at Palandöken and Sarıkamış resorts, cross-country ski in the Kaçkar.

ERZURUM & AROUND

Erzurum

📍 0442 / POP 395,000 / ELEV 1853M

Lovers of architecture will be in paradise in Erzurum, where fantastic Seljuk, Saltuk and

Mongol mosques and *medreses* (seminaries) line the main drag. Take it all in from atop the citadel, with mountains and steppe forming a heavenly backdrop to the jumble of billboards and minarets.

Erzurum is not a city resting on its considerable laurels of historical signifi-



Northeastern Anatolia Highlights

- 1 Lose yourself in the past glories of **Ani** (p561), a former Armenian capital strewn across the steppe.
- 2 Trek over 3000m in the **Kaçkar Mountains** (p542), or tackle day walks from nearby serene villages like Barhal and Yaylalar.
- 3 Experience Hemşin culture and cuisine in the **Fırtına Valley's** (p548).
- 4 Cruise the **yaylalar** (mountain pastures; p552) east of Artvin, land of pine forests and emerald slopes.
- 5 Hit the summit of **Mt Ararat** (5137m; p568), Turkey's highest mountain.
- 6 Hang out in distinctive **Kars** (p556) and discover Georgian and Armenian ruins nearby.
- 7 Meet the Kurds in **Doğubayazıt** (p565) and explore sights like Ishak Paşa Palace.
- 8 Test your mettle on a white-water run down the **Çoruh River** (p544).
- 9 Rip up some powder at **Palandöken** (p542) ski resort.