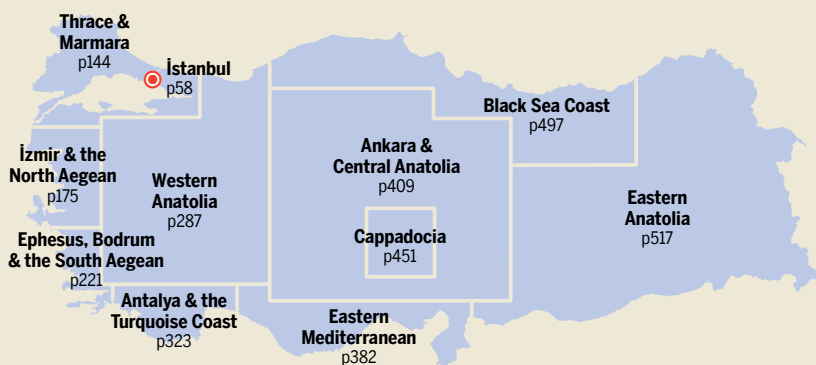


On the Road





Istanbul

POP 14.6 MILLION

Includes ➔

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Antiochia (p118)
- ➔ Çiya Sofrası (p121)
- ➔ Develi Baklava (p116)
- ➔ Eleos (p120)
- ➔ Hayvore (p117)

Best Places to Sleep

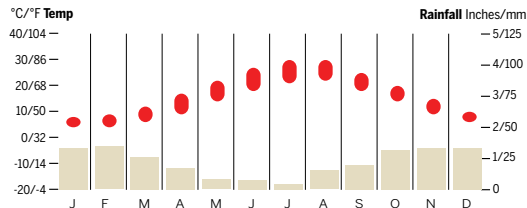
- ➔ Hotel Empress Zoe (p111)
- ➔ Hotel Ibrahim Pasha (p111)
- ➔ Karaköy Rooms (p113)
- ➔ Louis Appartements (p113)
- ➔ Marmara Guesthouse (p110)

Why Go?

Some ancient cities are the sum of their monuments. But others, such as İstanbul, factor a lot more into the equation. Here, you can visit Byzantine churches and Ottoman mosques in the morning, shop in chic boutiques during the afternoon and party at bars and clubs throughout the night. In the space of a few minutes you can hear the evocative strains of the call to prayer issuing from the Old City's tapering minarets, the sonorous horn of a crowded commuter ferry crossing between Europe and Asia, and the strident cries of a street hawker selling fresh seasonal produce. Put simply, this marvellous metropolis is an exercise in sensory seduction like no other.

Ask locals to describe what they love about İstanbul and they'll shrug, give a small smile and say merely that there is no other place like it. Spend a few days here, and you'll know exactly what they mean.

When to Go



Apr Sunshine and balmy breezes usher in the colourful İstanbul Tulip Festival.

Jun & Jul Venues around town host high-profile classical, jazz and contemporary music festivals.

Sep Heat disperses and locals enjoy the season for *lüler* (bluefish), a favourite local fish.