

# Turkey

East or West? It's a never-ending debate. Turkey has one foot in Europe and one foot in Asia. It was the first Muslim former-Ottoman land to establish a republic and achieve democracy, and the first to look Westward, to Europe and North America, for cultural models. This probably explains why it has so many contradictions – secular, but Muslim; conservative, but innovative; epicurean, but austere; traditional, but modernising; open to the world, but staunchly patriotic. The wonder is that, rather than clashing, these disparate forces exert a fascinating appeal.

There's so much for travellers to bite into here: sun-drenched coastal resorts, eye-popping scenery, more classical ruins than Greece or Italy, vibrant nightlife, plus plush hotels, atmospheric pensions and excellent restaurants – all affordably priced. And, if you're a sweet tooth, you've reached paradise.

With its diverse landscapes, Turkey should also suit those seeking outdoor pursuits. Pant up Mt Ararat, Turkey's highest mountain; if you dare, paraglide over a turquoise lagoon; cruise on a wooden yacht along the southern coast; hike amid 'fairy chimneys'; sea-kayak over a sunken city; and take in a flight in a hot-air balloon over Cappadocia (Kapadokya). Then recharge your batteries in a steamy *hamam* (bathhouse) – the perfect antidote to a long, active day.

Once you've had your fill of the sybaritic delights of the western and southern coasts, head for central and eastern Anatolia. Here you'll feel a 'last frontier' atmosphere and a mounting sense of exoticism and adventure.

Perhaps the deepest impression is made by the Turks themselves. They are fabulously hospitable, and what will probably linger longest in the memory of most travellers is a warm-hearted *hoş geldiniz* (welcome).

And remember: you'll never go wrong in a country that has the best baklava in the world.

## FAST FACTS

- **Area** 779,452 sq km
- **Capital** Ankara
- **Country code** ☎ 90
- **Language** Turkish
- **Money** New Turkish Lira (YTL); US\$1 = YTL1.36; €1 = YTL1.60
- **Official name** Türkiye Cumhuriyeti (Turkish Republic)
- **Population** 68 million



## HIGHLIGHTS

- **Old İstanbul** (p566) Whether you want to haggle like a pro in the Grand Bazaar or behold architectural treasures, you'll leave Turkey's pulsating metropolis with everlasting memories.
- **Mt Nemrut** (p626) The 'thrones of the gods' offer awesome views over the Taurus range at sunset or sunrise.
- **Göreme Open-Air Museum** (p611) One of Turkey's World Heritage sites, this cluster of rock-hewn churches and dwellings is set amidst lunar landscapes.
- **Blue cruise** (p597) Those wanting to experience an idyllic sailing excursion should take in a four-day cruise from Fethiye to Olympos.
- **Anı** (p620) Give the well-trodden path a miss and soak up the former glory of this ancient Armenian capital located at the Armenian border.

## CLIMATE & WHEN TO GO

The Aegean and Mediterranean coasts have mild, rainy winters and hot, dry summers. The Anatolian plateau can be boiling hot (although less humid than the coast) in summer and freezing in winter. The Black Sea coast is mild and wet in summer, chilly and wet in winter. Mountainous eastern Turkey is icy cold and snowy in winter, and only pleasantly warm in high summer.

Spring (late April to May) and autumn (late September to October) are the best times to visit; the weather is warm and dry, and there are few tourists. In the high season (July to mid-September) it can be suffocatingly hot and clammy, and major tourist destinations are crowded and overpriced.

Also see Climate Charts p643.

## HISTORY

### Early Anatolian Civilisations

The greatest of the early civilisations of Anatolia (Asian Turkey) was that of the Hittites, a force to be reckoned with from 2000 to 1200 BC. Their capital was at Hattuşus, north of Ankara.

After the collapse of the Hittite empire, Anatolia splintered into several small states and it wasn't until the Graeco-Roman period that parts of the country were reunited. Later, Christianity spread through Anatolia, carried by the apostle Paul, a native of Tarsus (near Adana).

## HOW MUCH?

- **Cup of tea in a carpet shop** free
- **Bus fare from İstanbul to Ankara** €15
- **Airfare from İstanbul to Van** €80
- **Smoking a nargileh** €3
- **Entry to ancient sites** €1.25 to €10

## LONELY PLANET INDEX

- **Litre of petrol** €1.40
- **1.5L of bottled water** €0.30
- **Bottle of Efes beer** €1
- **Souvenir T-shirt** €4
- **Simit** €0.20

## Rome, then Byzantium

In AD 330 the Roman emperor Constantine founded a new imperial city at Byzantium (İstanbul). Renamed Constantinople, this strategic city became the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire and was the centre of the Byzantine Empire for 1000 years. During the European Dark Ages, the Byzantine Empire kept alive the flame of Western culture, although it was occasionally threatened by the powerful empires to the east (Persians, Arabs, Turks) and west (the Christian powers of Europe).

## The Coming of the Turks – Seljuks & Ottomans

The beginning of the Byzantine Empire's decline came with the arrival of the Seljuk Turks and their defeat of the Byzantine forces at Manzikert, near Lake Van, in August 1071. The Seljuks overran most of Anatolia and established a provincial capital at Konya. Their domains included modern-day Turkey, Iran and Iraq.

With significantly reduced territory, the Byzantines endeavoured to protect Constantinople and reclaim Anatolia, but the Fourth Crusade (1202–04), part of a series of crusades ostensibly formed to save eastern Christendom from the Muslims, proved disastrous for them when a combined Venetian and Crusader force took and plundered Constantinople. The Byzantines eventually regained the ravaged city in 1261.

A Mongol invasion of the late 1200s put an end to Seljuk power, but small Turkish



states soon arose in western Anatolia. One, headed by Osman (1258–1326), grew into the Ottoman Empire, and in 1453 Constantinople finally fell to the Ottoman sultan Mehmet the Conqueror (Mehmet Fatih).

A century later, under Süleyman the Magnificent, the Ottoman Empire reached the peak of its power, spreading deep into Europe, Asia and North Africa. Ottoman success was based on military expansion. When the march westward was stalled at Vienna in 1683, the rot set in and by the 19th century the great European powers had begun to covet the Ottomans' vast domains.

Nationalist ideas swept through Europe after the French Revolution, and in 1829 the Greeks won their independence from the Ottomans, followed by the Serbs, the Romanians and the Bulgarians. In 1913, the Ottomans lost Albania and Macedonia, the last of their European lands.

## The Republic

The Turks emerged from WWI stripped of their last non-Turkish provinces: Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia (Iraq) and Arabia. Most of Anatolia itself was to be parcelled out to the victorious Europeans, leaving the Turks virtually nothing.

At this low point, Mustafa Kemal, the father of modern Turkey, took over. Atatürk, as he was later called, made his name by repelling the Anzacs in their heroic attempt to capture Gallipoli. Rallying the tattered remnants of the Turkish army, he pushed the last of the weak Ottoman rulers aside and outmanoeuvred the Allied forces in the War of Independence, which the Turks finally won in 1923 by pushing the invading Greeks into the sea at Smyrna (İzmir). In the ensuing population exchange, over a million Greeks left Turkey and nearly half a million Turks moved in. The two countries were left with grievances that have festered for more than 80 years.

After renegotiation of the WWI treaties, a new Turkish Republic, reduced to Anatolia and part of Thrace, was born. Atatürk then embarked on a rapid modernisation programme, establishing a secular democracy, introducing the Latin script and European dress, and adopting equal rights for women – at least in theory. The capital was also moved from İstanbul to Ankara. Such sweeping changes did not come easily and

some of the battles (eg over women's head coverings) are still being fought today.

Since Atatürk's death in 1939, Turkey has experienced three military coups and considerable political turbulence. During the 1980s and '90s it was also racked by the conflict with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK; led by Abdullah Öcalan), which aimed to create a Kurdish state in Turkey's southeast corner. This conflict led to an estimated 36,000 deaths and huge population shifts; it also wreaked havoc on the economy.

## Turkey Today

The elections of November 2002 marked a dramatic turning point in modern Turkish history. The year-old Islamic Justice & Development Party (AKP) were victorious and the AKP's leader, the charismatic ex-mayor of İstanbul, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, became prime minister in 2003. With much determination he tackled the issues that were undermining Turkey. Inflation? Not completely curbed, but down to around 12% – almost a miracle. Growth? Up at around 5% per annum. The Armenian tragedy (the mass deportation and slaughter of hundreds of thousands of Armenians in eastern Turkey in 1915, which was consistently denied by the successive Turkish governments)? Still an impasse, but a bit less of a taboo. Kurdish separatism? Almost tamed, as the Kurdish minority have been granted greater cultural rights (the once-banned Kurdish New Year Festival of Nevruz is now a general holiday and the Turkish government started the first state broadcasts in Kurdish in 2004). And as Erdoğan strives to steer Turkey into the EU, many reforms are being brought in to meet EU criteria. There's still a long way to go, but Turkey is undeniably changing. The reward for these endeavours is that Turkey finally started on the long, obstacle-laden road to EU membership in December 2004. According to even the most optimistic experts, however, Turkey won't be granted full membership before 2020.

## THE CULTURE

As a result of Atatürk's reforms, republican Turkey has largely adapted to a modern Westernised lifestyle, at least on the surface. But making sense of this country could keep visitors intrigued for months. The Turks' mentality reflects the geographical patterns

of their country – one foot in Europe, one foot in Asia. This constant sway between two cultures can be really disconcerting. In İstanbul, İzmir, Antalya and coastal resorts, you'd be forgiven for thinking you're in Europe. Here, you will not feel much need to adapt in order to fit in. In smaller towns and villages, however, you may find people warier and more conservative.

The Turks have an acute sense of pride and honour. They are fiercely proud of their history and their heroes, especially Atatürk, whose portrait and statues are ubiquitous in the country. It's also a country where formality and politeness are all important. If asked 'how is Turkey?', answer '*çok güzel*' (excellent).

The last trait that encompasses the national psyche is family – the extended family still plays a key role in Turkey.

## SPORT

Football (soccer) is a national obsession and barely a day goes by without a match on TV. To soak up the atmosphere of the real thing, try to get a ticket for one of the three İstanbul biggies: Galatasaray, Fenerbahçe or Beşiktaş.

More-unusual sports include camel and oil wrestling. The main camel-wrestling bouts take place near Selçuk and Kuşadası from January to March, with oil wrestling near Edirne in June.

## RELIGION

Turkey is 98% Muslim, overwhelmingly Sunni, with small groups of Shiites and larger groups of Alevis mainly in the east. The religious practices of Sunnis and Alevis differ markedly.

Turkey espouses a more relaxed version of Islam than many other countries in the Middle East; for instance, many men drink alcohol. But almost no-one touches pork, and many women still wear headscarves.

İstanbul still has a tiny Jewish community. There's also a small but rapidly declining community of Assyrian Orthodox Christians in the southeast.

## ARTS Literature

The most famous Turkish novelists are Yaşar Kemal, who has been nominated for the Nobel prize for literature on numerous occasions, and the journalist Orhan Pamuk.

Kemal's novels – *The Wind from the Plains*, *Salman the Solitary* and *Memed, My Hawk* among them – take traditional Turkish farming or working-class life as their subject matter. Pamuk's award-winning *Snow* was set in the remote town of Kars. Other well-known writers include Elif Şafak (*Flea Palace*) and Latife Tekin (*Tales from the Garbage Hills*).

## Cinema

Several Turkish directors have won worldwide recognition, most notably the late Yılmaz Güney, whose *Yol* (The Road), *Duvar* (The Wall) and *Sürü* (The Herd) have all been released with English subtitles. Following in Güney's footsteps, Nuri Bilge Ceylan has made *Uzak* (Distant), which probes the lives of village migrants in the big city.

## Music

Turkey's home-grown pop industry is one of its big success stories. After a few days in the country, you'll no doubt be familiar with the biggest stars, such as Sezen Aksu, Tarkan, Hakan Peker, Sibel Can and Mustafa Sandal. Famous Kurdish singers with a harder-hitting message include Diyar, Ferhat Tunç and Aynur Doğan.

Arabesk is another popular style of music, which has an Arabic spin. You'll probably hear or see the hugely successful Kurdish singer İbrahim Tatlıses.

## Architecture

The history of architecture in Turkey encompasses everything from Hittite stonework and grand Graeco-Roman temples to the most modern tower-blocks in İstanbul, but perhaps the most distinctively Turkish styles were those developed by the Seljuks and Ottomans. The Seljuks endowed Turkey with a legacy of magnificent mosques and *medreses* (seminaries), distinguished by their elaborate entrances. The Ottomans also left many magnificent mosques and *medreses*, as well as many more fine wood-and-stone houses.

## Carpets

Turkey is famous for its beautiful carpets and kilims (woven rugs). It's thought that hand-woven carpet-making techniques were introduced to Anatolia by the Seljuks in the 12th century. Traditionally, village women wove carpets for their own family's use, or for their dowry; these days, many carpets are made to

the dictates of the market, but still incorporate traditional symbols and patterns.

## ENVIRONMENT

### The Land

The Dardanelles, the Sea of Marmara and the Bosphorus divide Turkey into Asian and European parts, but Eastern Thrace (European Turkey) makes up only 3% of the 779,452-sq-km land area. The remaining 97% is Anatolia, a vast plateau rising eastward towards the Caucasus mountains. With 7000km of coastline, snowcapped mountains, rolling steppes, vast lakes and broad rivers, Turkey is geographically very diverse.

### Environmental Issues

Turkey's embryonic environmental movement is making slow progress, and you may well be shocked by the amount of discarded litter and ugly concrete buildings (or, worse still, half-finished buildings) disfiguring the west in particular.

Over the last few years the largest environmental ding-dongs have been over big dam projects. One such scheme, which would have drowned the historic town of Hasankeyf in southeastern Turkey, has thankfully been derailed, but other valleys are scheduled to vanish for the sake of a dam.

On the plus side, Turkey is slowly acquiring an interest in reclaiming its architectural heritage. Fine restoration and new buildings have gone up in Sultanahmet and in other historic places.

There's a branch of **Greenpeace Mediterranean** (Map pp564-5; ☎ 0212-292 7620; fax 292 7622; Tarlabası Caddesi 60) in İstanbul.

### FOOD

Not without reason is Turkish food regarded as one of the world's greatest cuisines. Kebabs (kebabs) are, of course, the mainstay of restaurant meals; you'll find *lokantas* (restaurants) that sell a wide range of kebabs everywhere. Try the ubiquitous *durum döner kebab* – lamb packed on a revolving spit, sliced off and rolled up in pide bread. Laid on pide bread, topped with tomato sauce and browned butter and with yogurt on the side, döner kebab becomes *İskender kebab*, primarily a lunchtime delicacy. Equally ubiquitous are *köfte* (meatballs).

For a quick, cheap fill you could hardly do better than a Turkish pizza, a freshly

cooked pide topped with cheese, egg or meat. Alternatively, *lahmacun* is a paper-thin Arabic pizza topped with chopped onion, lamb and tomato sauce. One of the best snacks is *simit*, a small ring of bread decorated with sesame seeds.

Fish dishes, although excellent, are often expensive – always check the price before ordering.

For vegetarians, a meal of meze (hors d'oeuvre) can be an excellent way to ensure a varied diet. Most restaurants will be able to rustle up at least *beyaz peynir* (white sheep's-milk cheese), *sebze çorbası* (vegetable soup), *börek* (flaky pastry stuffed with white cheese and parsley), *kuru fasulye* (beans) and *patlıcan tava* (fried aubergine).

For dessert, try *fırın sütlaç* (baked rice pudding), *aşure* ('Noah's Ark' pudding, made from up to 40 different ingredients), *baklava* (honey-soaked flaky pastry stuffed with walnuts or pistachios), *kadayıf* (shredded wheat with nuts in honey) and *dondurma* (ice cream).

The famously chewy sweet called *lokum* (Turkish delight) has been made here since the 18th century; there's not a bus station in the country that doesn't sell it.

For more information on Turkish cuisine, look out for Lonely Planet's *World Food Turkey* guide. Also see p84.

### DRINK

The national hot drink is *çay* (tea). It is served in tiny tulip-shaped glasses with copious quantities of sugar. If you're offered a tiny cup of traditional Turkish *kahve* (coffee), order it *sade* (no sugar), *orta* (medium sweet) or *çok şekerli* (very sweet). But these days Nescafé is fast replacing *kahve*. In tourist areas it usually comes *sütlü* (with milk).

The Turkish liquor of choice is raki, a fiery aniseed drink like the Greek ouzo or Arab arak; do as the Turks do and cut it by half with water if you don't want to suffer ill effects. Turkish *şarap* (wine), both red and white, is improving in quality and is well worth the occasional splurge. You can buy Tuborg or Efes Pilsen beers everywhere, although outside the resorts you may need to find a Tekel store (the state-owned alcoholic-beverage and tobacco company) to buy wine.

*Ayran* is a yogurt drink, made by whipping up yogurt with water and salt. Bottled water

is sold everywhere, as are all sorts of packaged fruit juices and canned soft drinks.

## İSTANBUL

Asian side ☎ 0216 / European side ☎ 0212 / pop 16 million

Be prepared to run out of superlatives. İstanbul is a feast for the eyes and the senses. Some have started to dub it the 'Barcelona of the East', and no wonder. Turkey's most charismatic metropolis is bursting with energy and has an unrivalled appetite for life. There's a *movida* here, similar in many respects to that jolly mood that characterised Barcelona in the 1980s. Sure, all the monuments you could possibly dream of – lofty palaces, labyrinthine bazaars, outstanding mosques, historic *hamams* (bathhouses) – await your visit, but there's more to İstanbul than Topkapı Palace, Aya Sofya and the Blue Mosque. Sure, history is achingly prominent here but fast-modernising İstanbul is much more than an open-air museum or a heritage city. It exudes vitality and bristles with countless trendy eateries, atmosphere-laden taverns, fashionable shops, upscale discos and smart venues of all kinds. Powered by the sheer zest and vitality of its inhabitants, İstanbul is one of the most energising cities in the world.

### HISTORY

Late in the 2nd century, the Roman Empire conquered the small city-state of Byzantium, which was renamed Constantinople after Emperor Constantine moved his capital there in AD 330.

The city walls kept out barbarians for centuries while the western part of the Roman Empire collapsed before invasions of Goths, Vandals and Huns. When Constantinople fell for the first time it was to the misguided Fourth Crusade in 1204.

In 1453, after a long, bitter siege, Mehmet the Conqueror marched to Aya Sofya (also known as Hagia Sofia or Sancta Sophia) and converted the church into a mosque.

As capital of the Ottoman Empire, the city experienced a new golden age. During the glittering reign of Süleyman the Magnificent (1520–66), the city was graced with many beautiful new buildings. Occupied by Allied forces after WWI, it came to be

thought of as the decadent capital of the sultans, just as Atatürk's armies were shaping a new republican state.

When the Turkish Republic was proclaimed in 1923, Ankara became the new capital. Nevertheless, İstanbul remains the centre for business, finance, journalism and the arts.

### ORIENTATION

The Bosphorus strait, between the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara, divides Europe from Asia. On its western shore, European İstanbul is further divided by the Golden Horn (Haliç) into Old İstanbul in the south and Beyoğlu in the north.

The International İstanbul Bus Station is at Esenler, about 10km west of the city.

Sultanahmet is the heart of Old İstanbul and boasts many of the city's most famous sites. The adjoining area, with hotels to suit all budgets, is actually called Cankurtaran, although if you say 'Sultanahmet' most people will understand where you mean.

North of Sultanahmet, on the Golden Horn, is Sirkeci Railway Station, terminus for European train services. Ferries for Üsküdar, the Princes' Islands and the Bosphorus leave from nearby Eminönü, the bustling waterfront.

Across the Galata Bridge (Galata Köprüsü) from Eminönü is Karaköy, where cruise ships dock. Ferries also depart from Karaköy for Kadıköy and Haydarpaşa on the Asian shore.

Beyoğlu, on the northern side of the Golden Horn, was once the 'new', or 'European', city. The Tünel (an underground railway) runs uphill from Karaköy to the southern end of Beyoğlu's pedestrianised main street, İstiklal Caddesi. A tram runs all the way to Taksim Sq, at the north end of the street, and the heart of 'modern' İstanbul; it's home to many luxury hotels and airline offices.

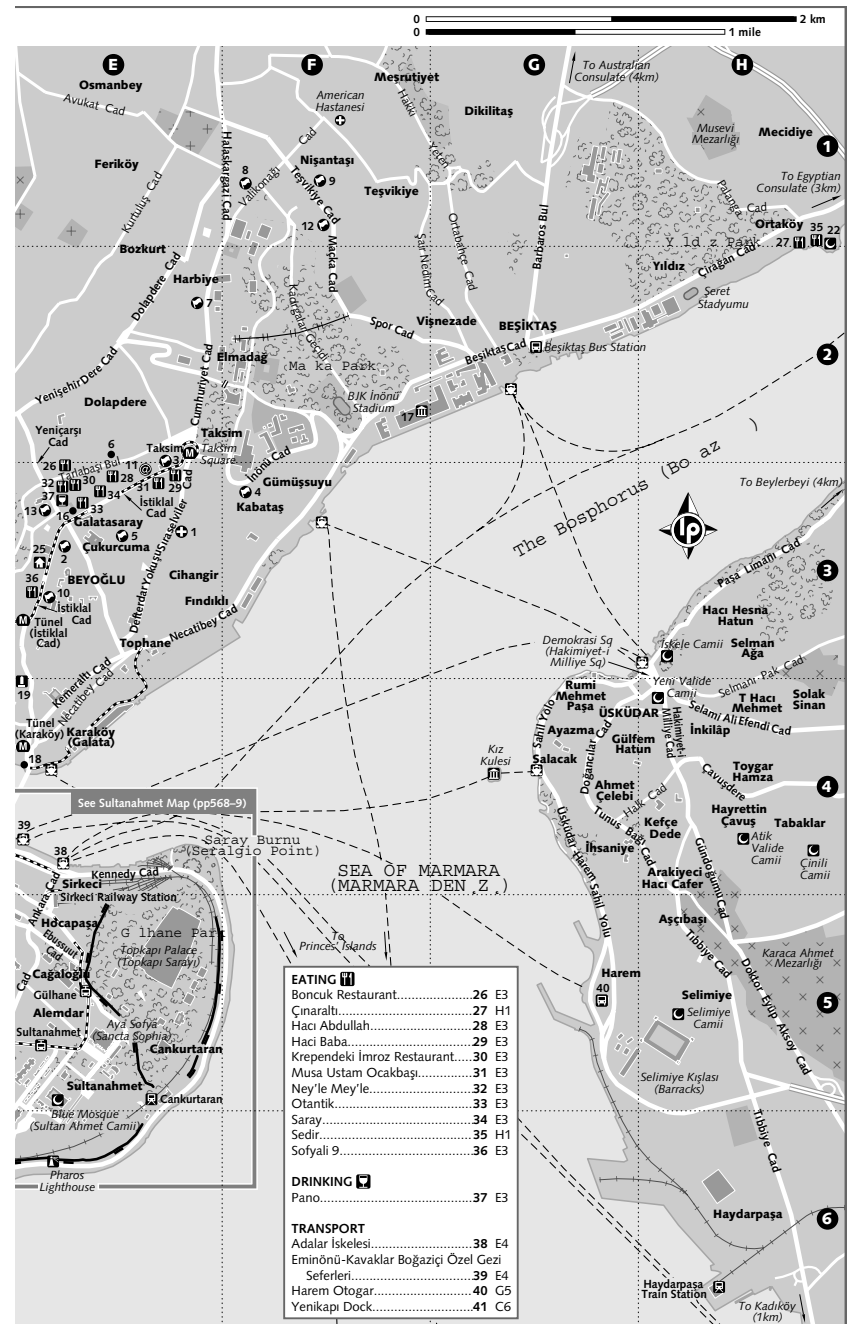
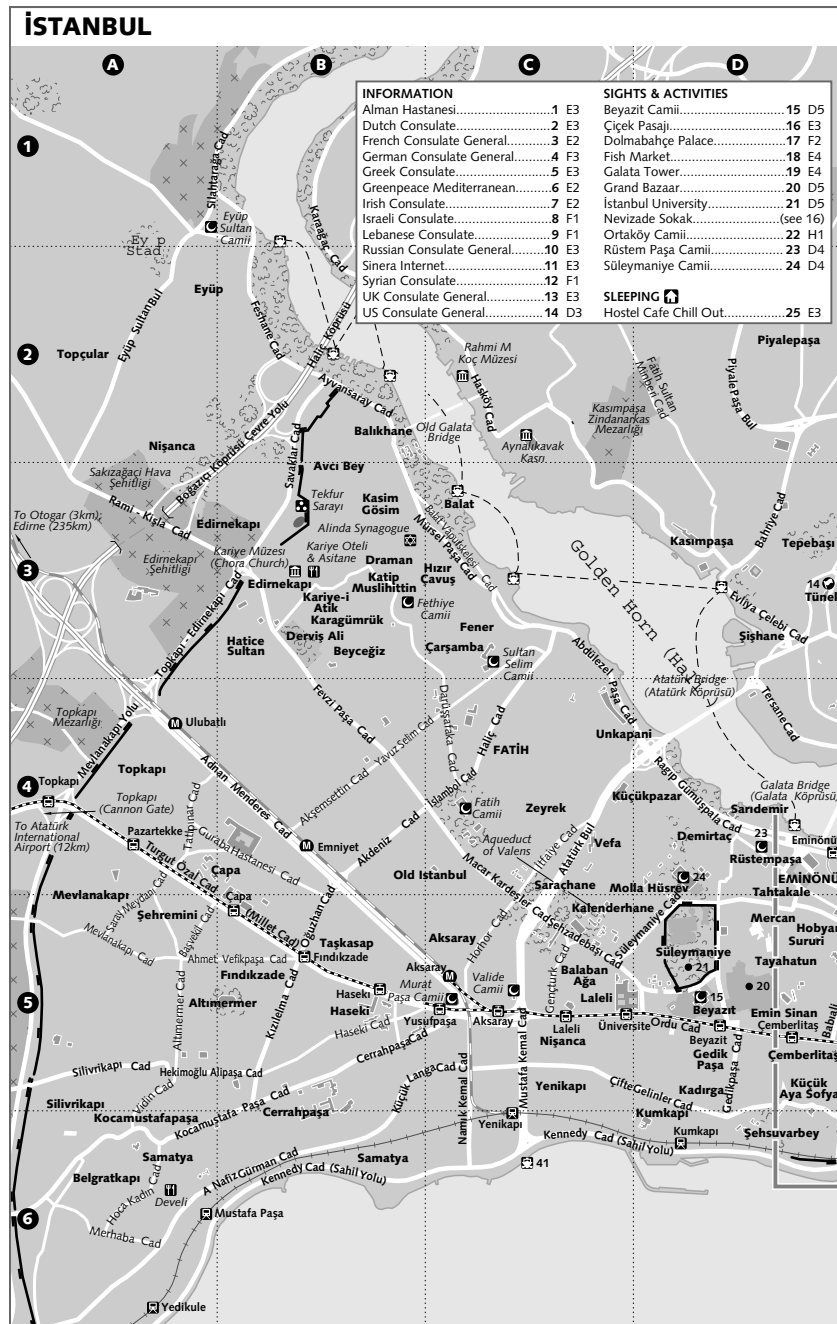
On the Asian side, Haydarpaşa station is the terminus for trains to Anatolia, Syria and Iran. There's an intercity otogar (bus station) at Harem, a 10-minute taxi ride north.

### INFORMATION

#### Emergency

**Police** (☎ 155)

**Tourist police** (Map pp568-9; ☎ 527 4503; Yerebatan Caddesi 6, Sultanahmet)



TURKEY

TURKEY

## İSTANBUL IN...

## Two Days

Start the day by visiting the opulent **Blue Mosque** (opposite) and the venerable **Aya Sofya** (opposite). Next, explore the nearby **Basilica Cistern** (opposite). By this stage you'll probably run out of stamina, so make your way up Divan Yolu Caddesi to **Çiğdem** (p573) for a baklava fix. Suitably re-energised, you can delve into the jumble of streets of the **Grand Bazaar** (p570) and hone your bargaining skills. Later, take your weary bones to a **hamam** (p571).

The following day, kick off at **Topkapı Palace** (below), then make your way across the Galata Bridge to Beyoğlu. Amble down **İstiklal Caddesi** (p570) and soak up the ambience, before spending your evening in an atmosphere-laden *meyhane* (tavern) in **Nevizade Sokak** (p574).

## Four Days

Follow the same agenda for days one and two, then on the third day gasp at the overblown splendour in **Dolmabahçe Palace** (p570). Follow the shore road to the east and feast on fresh fish at **Çınaraltı** (p574), one of the atmospheric waterside restaurants in Ortaköy. In the afternoon, make your way back to Sultanahmet and mull over the marvels at the **Istanbul Archaeology Museum** (opposite).

Day four should see you hitching a ride on a ferry down the mighty **Bosphorus** (p571) or to the **Princes' Islands** (p572).

## Internet Access

You can check your email at several hostels and cafés in Sultanahmet and Cankurtaran. There are also lots of Internet outlets in the streets off **İstiklal Caddesi**.

**Café Turka Internet Café** (Map pp568-9; ☎ 0212-514 6551; Divan Yolu Caddesi 22/2, Sultanahmet; per hr €1.40)

**Sinera Internet** (Map pp564-5; ☎ 0212-292 6899; fax 517 7287; Mis Sokak 6/1, Beyoğlu; per hr €0.90)

## Medical Services

**Alman Hastanesi** (Map pp564-5; ☎ 293 2150; Siraselviler Caddesi 119, Taksim)

**American Hastanesi** (Map pp564-5; ☎ 311 2000; Güzelbahçe Sokak 20, Nişantaşı) About 2km northeast of Taksim Sq.

## Money

Banks with ATMs are widespread, especially along Divan Yolu and **İstiklal Caddesi**. The exchange rates offered at the airport are usually as good as those offered in town.

## Post

İstanbul's central post office (Map pp568-9) is several blocks southwest of Sirkeci Railway Station. There are branch post, telephone and telegraph offices (PTTs) in the Grand Bazaar, in Beyoğlu at Galatasaray and Taksim, and in the international and domestic departure areas at Atatürk International Airport.

## Tourist Information

Tourist offices are not very well organised in Turkey and the ones in İstanbul are no exception. Tour operators and pension owners in Sultanahmet are the best sources of information.

## Travel Agencies

Divan Yolu in Sultanahmet boasts several travel agencies that sell cheap air and bus tickets; some can also arrange train tickets and minibus transport to the airport, but you will need to shop around for the best deals.

## DANGERS &amp; ANNOYANCES

İstanbul is a fairly safe city but be wary of pickpockets on buses, in the Grand Bazaar and around Taksim Sq. Avoid following so-called 'friends' who approach you gently and offer to buy you a drink – a scam is usually involved.

## SIGHTS

## Old İstanbul

## TOPKAPI PALACE

Possibly the most iconic monument in İstanbul, the opulent **Topkapı Palace** (Topkapı Sarayı; Map pp568-9; ☎ 0212-512 0480; Soğukçeşme Sokak, Sultanahmet; adult/child €7/2, harem €6/2, Treasury €6/2; ☎ 9am-5pm Wed-Mon) is a highlight of any trip. The palace was begun by Mehmet shortly after the Conquest in 1453, and

Ottoman sultans lived in this impressive environment until the 19th century. It consists of four massive courtyards and a series of imperial buildings, including pavilions, barracks, audience chambers and sleeping quarters. Make sure you visit the mind-blowing **harem**, the palace's most famous sight, and the **Treasury**, which features an incredible collection of precious objects.

## AYA SOFYA (CHURCH OF HOLY WISDOM)

No doubt you will gasp at the overblown splendour of **Aya Sofya** (Hagia Sofia, Sancta Sophia; Map pp568-9; ☎ 0212-522 0989; Aya Sofya Meydanı, Sultanahmet; adult/child €8.50/3; ☎ 9am-4.30pm Tue-Sun), one of the world's most glorious buildings. Built as part of Emperor Justinian's (527-65) effort to restore the greatness of the Roman Empire, it was completed in AD 537 and reigned as the grandest church in Christendom until the Conquest in 1453. The exterior does impress, but the interior, with its sublime domed ceiling soaring heavenward, is truly over-the-top.

Climb up to the **gallery** to see the remaining splendid mosaics. After the Turkish Conquest and the subsequent conversion of Aya Sofya to a mosque (hence the minarets), the mosaics were covered over, as Islam prohibits images. They were not revealed until the 1930s, when Atatürk declared Aya Sofya a museum.

## BLUE MOSQUE

Another striking monument in Sultanahmet, the **Blue Mosque** (Sultan Ahmet Camii; Map pp568-9; Hippodrome, Sultanahmet; donation requested; ☎ closed during prayer times), just south of Aya Sofya, is a work of art in itself. It was built between 1609 and 1619, and is light and delicate compared with its squat ancient neighbour. The graceful exterior is notable for its six slender minarets and a cascade of domes and half domes; the inside is a luminous blue, created by the tiled walls and painted dome.

## HIPPODROME

In front of the Blue Mosque is the Hippodrome (Atmeydanı; Map pp568-9), where chariot races took place. It was also the scene of a series of riots during Justinian's rule. While construction started in AD 203, the Hippodrome was later added to and enlarged by Constantine.

The **Obelisk of Theodosius** (Map pp568-9) is an Egyptian column from the temple of Karnak. It features 3500-year-old hieroglyphics and rests on a Byzantine base. South of the obelisk are the remains of a **spiral column** of intertwined snakes. Erected at Delphi by the Greeks to celebrate their victory over the Persians, it was later transported to the Hippodrome, where the snakes' heads disappeared.

## TURKISH &amp; ISLAMIC ARTS MUSEUM

On the Hippodrome's western side, the **Turkish & Islamic Arts Museum** (Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi; Map pp568-9; ☎ 0212-518 1805; Hippodrome 46, Sultanahmet; admission €2.50; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm Tue-Sun) is housed in the former palace of İbrahim Paşa, grand vizier and son-in-law of Süleyman the Magnificent. The building is one of the finest surviving examples of 16th-century Ottoman secular architecture. Inside, the most spectacular exhibits are the wonderful floor-to-ceiling Turkish carpets, beautifully illuminated Qurans and the mosque fittings. Don't miss the fascinating ethnographic collection downstairs either.

## BASILICA CISTERN

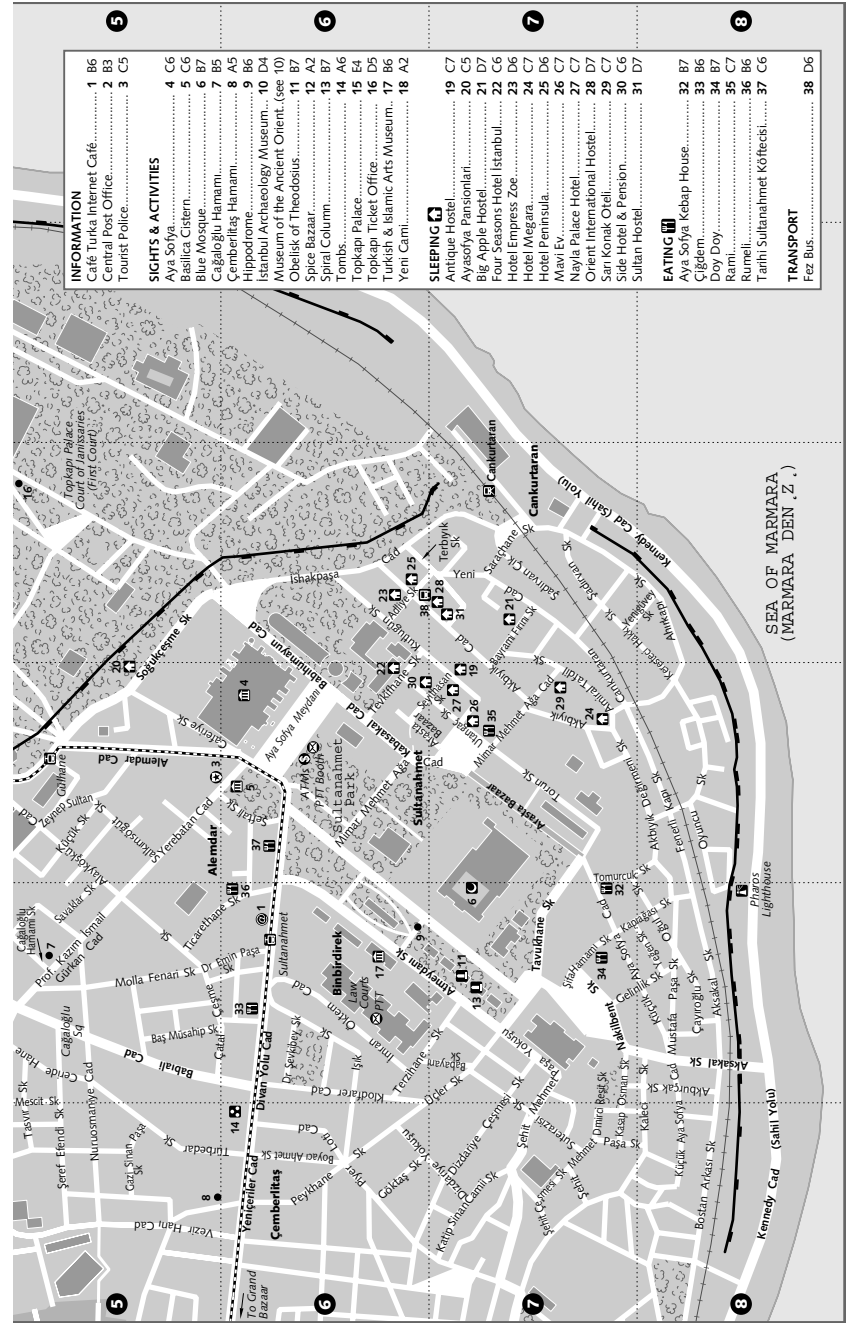
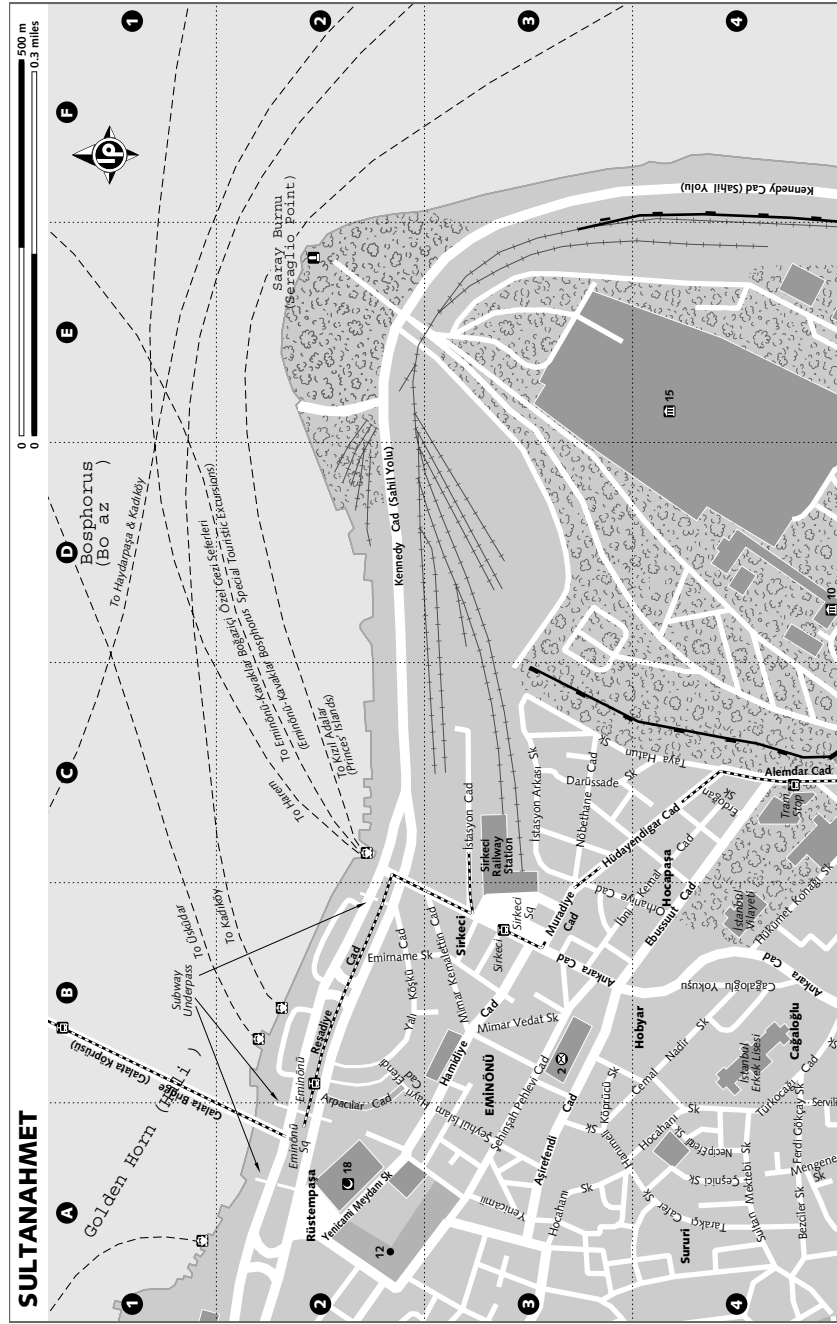
Across the tram lines from Aya Sofya is the entrance to the majestic **Basilica Cistern** (Yerebatan Sarnıcı; Map pp568-9; ☎ 0212-522 1259; Yerebatan Caddesi 13; admission €7; ☎ 9.30am-7.30pm Apr-Sep, 9.30am-5.30pm Oct-Mar), which was built by Constantine and enlarged by Justinian. This vast, atmospheric, column-filled cistern held water not only for regular summer use but also for times of siege.

## İSTANBUL ARCHAEOLOGY MUSEUM

Down the hill from the Topkapı Palace, the **Istanbul Archaeology Museum** (Arkeoloji Müzeleri; Map pp568-9; ☎ 0212-520 7740; Osman Hamdi Bey Yokuşu; admission €3; ☎ 9.30am-5pm Tue-Sun) is a must-see for anyone interested in the Middle East's ancient past. The main building houses an outstanding collection of Greek and Roman statuary, including the magnificent sarcophagi from the royal necropolis at Sidon in Lebanon, while a separate building on the same site, the **Museum of the Ancient Orient**, houses Hittite relics and other older archaeological finds.

## DIVAN YOLU CADDESİ

Walk or take a tram westward along Divan Yolu from Sultanahmet, looking out on



<b>INFORMATION</b>	1 B6	19 C7	32 B7
Café Turka Internet Café.....	2 B3	20 C5	33 B6
Central Post Office.....	3 C5	21 D7	34 B7
Tourist Police.....		22 C6	35 C7
<b>SIGHTS &amp; ACTIVITIES</b>	4 C6	23 D6	36 B6
Aya Sofya.....	5 C6	24 C7	37 C6
Basilica Cistern.....	6 B7	25 D6	
Blue Mosque.....	7 B5	26 C7	
Cağaloğlu Hamamı.....	8 A5	27 C7	
Hippodrome.....	9 B6	28 D7	
Istanbul Archaeology Museum.....	10 D4	29 C7	
Museum of the Ancient Orient (see 10)	11 B7	30 C6	
Obelisk of Theodosius.....	12 A2	31 D7	
Spice Bazaar.....	13 B7		
Spiral Column.....	14 A6		
Tombs.....	15 E4		
Topkapı Palace.....	16 D5		
Turkish & Islamic Arts Museum.....	17 B6		
Yeni Cami.....	18 A2		
<b>SLEEPING</b>			
Antique Hotel.....	19 C7		
Ayasofya Pansiyonları.....	20 C5		
Big Apple Hostel.....	21 D7		
Four Seasons Hotel Istanbul.....	22 C6		
Hotel Empress Zee.....	23 D6		
Hotel Megara.....	24 C7		
Hotel Peninsula.....	25 D6		
Novus Ex.....	26 C7		
Orbit Palace Hotel.....	27 C7		
Sarı Konaak Oteli.....	28 D7		
Side Hotel & Pension.....	29 C7		
Sultan Hostel.....	31 D7		
<b>EATING</b>			
Aya Sofya Kebap House.....	32 B7		
Ciğdem.....	33 B6		
Doy Doy.....	34 B7		
Ramli.....	35 C7		
Rumeli.....	36 B6		
Tarhi Sultanahmet Köftesi.....	37 C6		
<b>TRANSPORT</b>			
Fez Bus.....	38 D6		

your right for a complex of **tombs** (Map pp568–9) that was constructed for some 19th-century sultans, including Mahmut II (1808–39), Abdülaziz (1861–76) and Abdülhamid II (1876–1909).

A bit further along, on the right, you can't miss the **Çemberlitaş** (Banded Stone), a monumental column erected by Constantine the Great in 330 to celebrate the dedication of Constantinople as capital of the Roman Empire.

### GRAND BAZAAR

Make sure you hone your haggling skills before dipping into the mind-boggling **Grand Bazaar** (Kapalı Çarşı, Covered Market; Map pp564–5; ☎ 8.30am–7pm Mon–Sat). Just north of Divan Yolu, this labyrinthine medieval shopping mall consists of some 4000 shops selling everything from carpets to clothing, including silverware, jewellery, antiques and belly-dancing costumes. It's probably the most discombobulating and manic shopping precinct you could hope to experience. Sure, the touts are ubiquitous, but come prepared and you'll realise that it's part of the fun. It's also a great place to ramble and get lost – which you will certainly do at least once.

At first sight this mini city appears to be an impenetrable latticework of tiny streets and alleys; on closer inspection the bazaar reveals a careful organisation, with different sections for different products.

### BEYAZIT & SÜLEYMANIYE

Right beside the Grand Bazaar, the Beyazit area takes its name from the graceful **Beyazit Camii** (Map pp564–5), built in 1506 on the orders of Sultan Beyazit II, son of Mehmet the Conqueror. The great gateway on the north side of the square is that of **İstanbul University** (Map pp564–5).

Behind the university to the northwest is one of the city's most prominent landmarks and İstanbul's grandest mosque complex, the **Süleymaniye Camii** (Map pp564–5; Prof Siddik Sami Onar Caddesi; donation requested). It was commissioned by the most powerful of Ottoman sultans, Süleyman the Magnificent (1520–66), and was designed by Mimar Sinan, the most famous of all Imperial architects.

### Eminönü

At the southern end of Galata Bridge looms large **Yeni Cami** (New Mosque; Map pp568–9),

built between 1597 and 1663. Beside it is the atmospheric **Spice Bazaar** (Mısır Çarşısı; Map pp568–9; ☎ 8.30am–6.30pm Mon–Sat), awash with spice and food vendors and a great place for last-minute gift shopping. To the west, on a platform above the fragrant market streets, is the **Rüstem Paşa Camii** (Map pp564–5), a small, richly tiled mosque designed by the great Ottoman architect Sinan.

### Dolmabahçe Palace

Cross the Galata Bridge and follow the shore road along the Bosphorus from Karaköy towards Ortaköy and you'll come to the grandiose **Dolmabahçe Palace** (Map pp564–5; ☎ 0212-236 9000; Dolmabahçe Caddesi, Beşiktaş; admission selamlık €7, harem-cariyeler €5, combined ticket €9; ☎ 9am–4pm Tue, Wed & Fri–Sun), right on the waterfront. The palace was built between 1843 and 1856 as a home for some of the last Ottoman sultans. It was guaranteed its place in the history books when Atatürk died here on 10 November 1938.

Visitors are taken on guided tours of the two main buildings: the over-the-top **selamlık** (men's apartments) and the slightly more restrained **harem-cariyeler** (harem and concubines' quarters).

Any bus heading out of Karaköy along the Bosphorus shore road will take you to Dolmabahçe.

### Beyoğlu

Cross the Galata Bridge and cut uphill from Karaköy towards the cylindrical **Galata Tower** (Map pp564–5; Galata Meydanı, Karaköy; admission €3.75; ☎ 9am–8pm).

In its present form the tower dates from 1348, when Galata was a Genoese trading colony. Later it became a prison, an observatory, then a fire lookout before it caught fire itself in 1835. In 1967 it was completely restored as a supper club. The observation deck is an excellent place for views and photos.

### İSTIKLAL CADDESİ & TAKSIM

You can't leave İstanbul without strolling down İstiklal Caddesi. At the top of the hill, this pedestrianised thoroughfare, once called the Grand Rue de Péra, is indisputably the most famous thoroughfare in Turkey. It's a parade of smart shops, large embassies and churches, elegant residential buildings and fashionable teahouses and restaurants. If you want to experience a slice of modern Turkey,

there's no better place than İstiklal Caddesi. It's almost permanently crowded with locals, who patronise the atmosphere-laden *meyhaneler* (taverns) that line the side streets or indulge in shopping sprees in the hundreds of shops along its length. It's served by a picturesque restored tram that trundles up and down the boulevard.

There's a plethora of sights, but the colourful **Fish Market** (Balık Pazarı; Map pp564–5) and **Çiçek Pasajı** (Flower Passage; Map pp564–5), near the Galatasaray Lisesi (a famous high school), are absolute must-sees. Just behind Çiçek Pasajı, make a foray into Nevizade Sokak; with its collection of bustling taverns heaving with chattering locals sampling meze and raki, this is the epicentre of Beyoğlu's thriving bar scene.

At the southern end of İstiklal Caddesi, shambolic **Taksim Square**, with its huge hotels, park and Atatürk Cultural Centre, is not exactly an architectural gem but it's the symbolic heart of modern İstanbul.

### Ortaköy

Ortaköy is a cute suburb east of Dolmabahçe Palace, right by the Bosphorus. Right on the water's edge, the decorative **Ortaköy Camii** (Map pp564–5) is the most prominent feature. The mosque fronts onto Ortaköy Sq, home to a pretty fountain and popular waterfront cafés and restaurants. You could easily combine a visit to Dolmabahçe Palace with a leisurely stroll in Ortaköy. To get here catch any bus heading east from Beşiktaş.

### THE PLEASURES OF THE BATH

After a long day's sightseeing, few things could be better than relaxing in a *hamam* (bathhouse). The ritual is invariably the same. First, you'll be shown to a cubicle where you can undress, store your clothes and wrap the provided *peştamal* (cloth) around you. Then an attendant will lead you through to the hot room where you sit and sweat for a while.

Next you'll have to make a choice. It's cheapest to wash yourself with the soap, shampoo and towel you brought with you. The hot room will be ringed with individual basins that you fill from the taps above. Then you sluice the water over yourself with a plastic scoop. But it's far more enjoyable to let an attendant do it for you, dousing you with warm water and then scrubbing you with a coarse cloth mitten. Afterwards you'll be lathered with a sudsy swab, rinsed off and shampooed.

When all this is complete you're likely to be offered a massage, an experience worth having at least once during your trip.

Bath etiquette dictates that men should keep the *peştamal* on at all times.

Traditional *hamams* have separate sections for men and women or admit men and women at separate times. In tourist areas most *hamams* are more than happy for foreign men and women to bathe together.

### ACTIVITIES

#### Hamams

A visit to a *hamam* is an unforgettable experience, and we strongly recommend it. The **Çemberlitaş Hamamı** (Map pp568–9; ☎ 0212-522 7974; Zezi Hanı Caddesi 8, Çemberlitaş; bath only €9, bath & massage €14; ☎ 6am–midnight), just off Divan Yolu, was designed by the great Ottoman architect Mimar Sinan in 1584, and is one of the most atmospheric *hamams* in the city. Another wonderful place is **Cağaloğlu Hamamı** (Map pp568–9; ☎ 0212-522 2424; Yerebatan Caddesi 34, Cağaloğlu; bath only €10, bath & massage €20; ☎ men 8am–10pm, women 8am–8pm). It's pricey and pretty touristy but the service is experienced and hassle-free, and the surroundings are extraordinary.

#### Bosphorus Cruise

Don't leave the city without exploring the Bosphorus. Most day-trippers take the famous **Eminönü-Kavaklar Boğaziçi Özel Gezi Seferleri** (Map pp564–5; one way €2, return €4; ☎ 10.30am year-round, noon & 1.35pm Jun–Sep) ferries up its entire length. These depart from Eminönü and stop at various points before turning around at Anadolu Kavağı (the turnaround point). The shores are sprinkled with monuments and various sights, including the monumental Dolmabahçe Palace, the majestic Bosphorus Bridge, the seductive suburbs of Arnavutköy, Bebek, Kanlıca, Emirgan and Sarıyer, as well as lavish *yalıs* (waterside wooden summer residences) and numerous mosques.



## Princes' Islands (Adalar)

With good beaches, open woodland, a couple of monasteries, superb villas and transport by horse-drawn carriages, this string of nine spotless islands, especially **Büyükada** (the biggest), make an ideal escape from the noise and hustle of Istanbul. Ferries (€1.50) to the islands leave from the Adalar İskelesi dock (Map pp564-5) near Sirkeci Railway Station. Try to go midweek to avoid the crowds.

## FESTIVALS & EVENTS

The **Istanbul International Music Festival** (www.iks.org), from early June to early July, attracts big-name artists from around the world, who perform in venues that are not always open to the public (such as Aya İrini Kilisesi).

## SLEEPING

İstanbul's accommodation is becoming quite pricey. For the time being, the best area to stay remains Cankurtaran, immediately southeast of Sultanahmet, where the quiet streets play host to a range of moderate hotels, mostly with stunning views from their roof terraces, as well as more-luxurious options. Unless otherwise stated, room rates include breakfast and private bathrooms; the exception is hostel dorms, which have shared bathrooms.

## Budget

If your holiday budget is less offshore bank, more piggy bank, you can rest in one of the numerous hostels in Sultanahmet.

**Orient International Hostel** (Map pp568-9; ☎ 0212-518 0789; www.orienthostel.com; Akbiyik Caddesi 13, Sultanahmet; dm/s/d €9/17/21; 📺 🗺) Party, party, party. The Orient has built a serious reputation in this domain, especially on Monday, Wednesday and Friday nights, when there are free belly-dancing shows. Rooms are colourful and well tended, and the rooftop terrace is a stunner.

**Sultan Hostel** (Map pp568-9; ☎ 0212-516 9260; www.sultanhostel.com; Akbiyik Caddesi 21, Sultanahmet; dm €10-14, d €23-30; 📺 🗺) Next door to the Orient, the well-organised Sultan is a bit more sedate than its neighbour. Top marks go to the squeaky-clean bathrooms, quality bedding and atmospheric rooftop bar.

**Antique Hostel** (Map pp568-9; ☎ 0212-638 1637; www.antiquehostel.com; Kutlugün Sokak 51, Sultanahmet; dm/s/d €10/30/40; 📺 🗺) There's a homy, rustic feel in this hostel, located in a quiet side

street. There are only seven rooms and a basement dorm, ensuring calm and intimacy. It's salubrious and atmospheric.

**Big Apple Hostel** (Map pp568-9; ☎ 0212-517 7931; Akbiyik Caddesi, Bayrami Fırını Sokak 12, Sultanahmet; dm €7-9; 📺 🗺) An ambitious newcomer, the Big Apple Hostel features fairly airy and comfortable dorms. No doubt it will rank among the best-value abodes in the area by the time you read this.

Other recommendations:  
**Hostel Cafe Chill Out** (Map pp564-5; ☎ 0212-249 4784; www.chillouth.com; Balyoz Sokak 17-19, Beyoğlu; dm/s/d €8/10/25) In Beyoğlu, spitting distance from İstiklal Caddesi. A quirky hostel, with a colourful paint scheme and a mellow downstairs lounge-café. Unfortunately, the rooms are frustratingly tired looking and bathrooms are the most compact we've seen this side of the Euphrates.  
**Nayla Palace Hotel** (Map pp568-9; ☎ 0212-516 3567; www.geocities.com/nayla\_hotel; Kutlugün Sokak 22, Sultanahmet; s/d €26/30; 📺 🗺) In a quiet side street, this modest number offers small, clean, no-frills rooms.

## Midrange

Sultanahmet and Cankurtaran harbour a smorgasbord of high-quality midrange options.

**Side Hotel & Pension** (Map pp568-9; ☎ 0212-517 2282; www.sidehotel.com; Utangaç Sokak 20, Cankurtaran; s/d hotel €34/43, pension €19/32; 📺 🗺) Many travellers set up a base in this well-regarded venue, and it's easy to see why. The convivial Side features an inviting rooftop terrace and accommodation to suit all budgets. The pension rooms, with fans, provide the best value. Rooms 15 and 16 overlook the Blue Mosque and Aya Sofya. Ship out if offered rooms at the rear, as some are darkish and a bit noisy.

**Hotel Peninsula** (Map pp568-9; ☎ 0212-458 6850; www.hotelpeninsula.com; Adliye Sokak 6, Cankurtaran; s/d €35/45; 📺 🗺) Particularly good value for the price, the friendly Peninsula offers comfy, spacious rooms with firm beds and crisp sheets, but it's the rooftop terrace, with hammocks for guests (an instant elixir to a hot day's sightseeing), that wins out. You can get a discount if you pay cash.

**Hotel Megara** (Map pp568-9; ☎ 0212-458 4848; www.megarahotel.com; Akbiyik Caddesi 85, Sultanahmet; s/d €50/65; 📺 🗺) You could do a lot worse than book into one of these solidly furnished rooms, which are cosy and perfectly clean. The romantic rooftop restaurant is an added bonus.

## THE AUTHOR'S CHOICE

**Mavi Ev** (Map pp568-9; ☎ 0212-638 9010; www.bluehouse.com.tr; Dalbastı Sokak 14; s/d €100/115; 📺 🗺) The Mavi Ev (Blue House) is hard to miss. Befitting its name, it's the only splash of pastel blue in Sultanahmet and one of the smartest options in this price bracket. Grab a seat on the rooftop restaurant and we guarantee that you'll be hypnotised by the views over the Blue Mosque and the Sea of Marmara.

Other recommendations:  
**Sarı Konak Oteli** (Map pp568-9; ☎ 0212-638 6258; www.sarikonak.com; Mimar Mehmet Ağa Caddesi 42-46, Sultanahmet; s/d €50/70; 📺 🗺) Rooms come with all the requisite comforts. The atmospheric courtyard at the rear is a great place to chill out.  
**Ayasofya Pansiyonları** (Map pp568-9; ☎ 0212-513 3660; www.ayasofyapansiyonlari.com; Soğukçeşme Sokak, Sultanahmet; s €70-80, d €85-100; 📺 🗺) Feeling posh? Then kick back in style at this sybaritic venue, on a quiet pedestrianised street. The interior is seductively cosy, with velvet curtains, mirrors and armchairs with tasselled fringes.

## Top End

**Hotel Empress Zoe** (Map pp568-9; ☎ 0212-518 2504; www.emzoe.com; Adliye Sokak 10, Cankurtaran; s/d €68/88; 📺 🗺) This peach of a place is conjured up straight out of *The Thousand and One Nights*. Live the life of a royal in the charmingly appointed rooms or the divine suites, and soothe your chakras in the gorgeous flower-filled garden. Oh – and it doesn't cost the earth.

**Four Seasons Hotel İstanbul** (Map pp568-9; ☎ 0212-638 8200; www.fshr.com; Tevkifhane Sokak 1, Cankurtaran; s/d €350/385; 📺 🗺) For glamour and style in sumptuous surroundings, the Four Seasons surpasses them all – and it's literally in the shadow of the Blue Mosque and Aya Sofya. Of course, it has all the bells and whistles your credit card will allow for, including king-size beds, enormous marble bathrooms and antique-style work desks. And did we mention that it used to be the infamous Sultanahmet prison (remember *Midnight Express*?).

## EATING

Although there's a reasonable selection of places to eat in Sultanahmet, for a bigger choice you must head across town to

Beyoğlu. Start walking along İstiklal Caddesi and you'll be spoilt for choice, from takeaway döner kebab places to flashier, Westernised bar-cafés.

## Sultana Ahmet

**Tarihi Sultanahmet Köftçesi** (Map pp568-9; ☎ 0212-520 0566; Divan Yolu Caddesi 12; mains €3-4) As the name suggests, *köfte* are the order of the day.

**Çiğdem** (Map pp568-9; ☎ 0212-526 8859; Divan Yolu Caddesi 62/A) It's difficult for even the staunchest dieter to pass by the tantalising display of treats offered by this slick pastry shop on Divan Yolu. Enjoy!

**Aya Sofya Kebab House** (Map pp568-9; ☎ 0212-458 3653; Küçük Aya Sofya Caddesi 23; mains €2-5) This unfussy hole-in-the-wall lines the stomach with great pides and kebabs. The freshly squeezed orange juice is bliss.

**Doy Doy** (Map pp568-9; ☎ 0212-517 1588; Şifa Hamamı Sokak 13; mains €2-5) Another place well worth bookmarking. In the shadow of the Blue Mosque, Doy Doy consists of four sections, including a cosy lounge complete with cushions. The views from the breezy rooftop terrace are straight from heaven.

Other recommendations:  
**Rami** (Map pp568-9; ☎ 0212-517 6593; Utangaç Sokak 6, Cankurtaran; mains €11-13) Damn expensive, but this restored Ottoman house is downright romantic and the food equally impressive.

**Rumeli** (Map pp568-9; ☎ 0212-512 0008; Ticarethane Sokak 8; mains €8-12) This stylish venue boasts an attractively rustic interior and serves up well-executed Turkish classics in romantic surroundings.

## Beyoğlu

**Hacı Baba** (Map pp564-5; ☎ 0212-244 1886; İstiklal Caddesi 49; mains €5-9) Nosh on Ottoman delicacies in this bastion of traditional food, a short bag-haul from its rival Hacı Abdullah. The menu groans with lip-smacking dishes, and there's a vine-garlanded terrace for alfresco dining. Rejoice! You can order a beer, raki or wine with your meal.

**Sofyalı 9** (Map pp564-5; ☎ 0212-245 0362; Sofyalı Sokak 9; mains €4-10) The congenial, much-lauded Sofyalı 9 is reckoned to serve up the best *meyhane* food in the city. We agree.

**Saray** (Map pp564-5; ☎ 0212-292 3434; İstiklal Caddesi 102-104; sweets €1-2) Don't know what a *muhallebici* is? It's time to get an education. This renowned pudding shop has been serving puddings and other bait to sweet tooths since 1935. Drool over the *aşure* and

**THE AUTHOR'S CHOICE**

**Hacı Abdullah** (Map pp564-5; ☎ 0212-293 8561; Sakızağacı Caddesi 17; mains €5-9) Do you know what a gastronomic orgasm feels like? Order the special mixed plate or the *Manisa kebabı* (crepe stuffed with lamb and vegetables) and you'll see what we mean. This long-running institution (established in 1888) is one of the essential culinary stops you should make while in town. Be sure to leave room for the calorie-busting Quince dessert (a colourful fruit jelly) – one of the seven wonders of desserts. Shame that Hacı Abdullah doesn't serve alcohol to complement the food.

the *kemal paşa* (a syrupy sweet) on display; if you can resist, you're not human.

**Musa Ustam Ocakbaşı** (Map pp564-5; ☎ 0212-245 2932; Küçük Parmakkapı Sokak 17; mains €5-7) A carnivore's paradise. Join the locals chattering by the big *ocak* (grill) at the back. *Afiyet olsun* (bon appétit)!

**Otantik** (Map pp564-5; ☎ 0212-293 8451; İstiklal Caddesi 170; dishes €3-8) Two women in traditional Anatolian costume make crispy *gözleme* (pancakes) in the window. Don't be put off by this fairly cheesy choreography – enjoy the expertly cooked Turkish dishes on offer.

Don't leave the city without spending an evening out at one of the *meyhaneler* on Nevizade Sokak in Beyoğlu. Buried in the maze of narrow streets behind the historic Çiçek Pasajı (Flower Passage) on İstiklal Caddesi, this is the most lively eating precinct in the city. The emphasis is on meze and fresh fish. Knock it all back with a glass (or two) of raki and you'll be in seventh heaven. We recommend **Boncuk Restaurant** (Map pp564-5; ☎ 0212-243 1219; Nevizade Sokak 19; mains €3-8) and **Neyle Meyle** (Map pp564-5; ☎ 0212-249 8103; Nevizade Sokak 12; mains €2-8). **Krependeki İmroz Restaurant** (Map pp564-5; ☎ 0212-249 9073; Nevizade Sokak 24; mains €3-5) also has its share of devotees.

**Ortaköy**

**Çınaraltı** (Map pp564-5; ☎ 0212-261 7867; İskele Meydanı; mains €3-8) Probably the best Ortaköy waterside restaurant, with splendid views, a shady terrace, peerless people-watching opportunities and tasty fish dishes.

**Sedir** (Map pp564-5; ☎ 0212-327 9870; Mecidiyeköprüsü Sokak 16-18; mains €5-8) This elegant res-

taurant serves up Mediterranean fusion food, as well as salads and various snacks. Nab a seat on the terrace and enjoy the views of the decorative Ortaköy Camii. No alcohol is served.

For a quick bite on the hop, nothing beats the stands selling *kumpir* (potatoes stuffed with vegetables).

**DRINKING**

There's a thriving bar scene in Beyoğlu, and there's nothing better than swigging more than a few glasses of raki in the *meyhaneler* on Nevizade Sokak. If you're after a wine bar, **Pano** (Map pp564-5; ☎ 0212-292 6664; Hamalbaş Caddesi 26, Beyoğlu) is extremely popular at weekends, with an eclectic crowd gulping down glasses of blood-red wine. If hunger beckons, order an assortment of high-quality meze.

In summer, Akbiyık Caddesi in Sultanahmet really hops, with travellers drinking until the early hours at tables set out on the footpaths.

**GETTING THERE & AWAY****Air**

Most people fly into İstanbul's **Atatürk International Airport** (☎ 0212-663 2550; www.ataturkairport.com), 25km west of the city centre. Most foreign airlines have their offices north of Taksim, along Cumhuriyet Caddesi. Travel agencies can also sell tickets and make reservations. Domestic air services are operated by the main carrier, **Turkish Airlines** (☎ 0212-225 0556; www.thy.com). Onur Air, Atlasjet and Fly Air also operate domestic flights from İstanbul.

For more details on flying to/from and within Turkey, see p634 and p635.

**Boat**

Yenikapı (Map pp564-5), south of Aksaray Sq, is the dock for fast ferries across the Sea of Marmara to Yalova (for Bursa) and Bandırma (for İzmir).

**Bus**

The huge **International İstanbul Bus Station** (Uluslararası İstanbul Otogarı; ☎ 0212-658 0505; Esenler) is the city's main otogar (bus station) for intercity and international routes. It's in the western district of Esenler, 10km from Sultanahmet. The Light Rail Transit (LRT) service stops here en route from the airport; catch it to Aksaray or Yusufpaşa, then take a

tram to Sultanahmet. A taxi from Sultanahmet or Taksim Sq to the bus station will cost around €8. Many bus companies offer a free *servis* (shuttle bus) to or from the otogar.

Buses leave from here for virtually anywhere in Turkey and for international destinations including Bulgaria, Greece, Iran, Kosovo, Macedonia, Nakhichevan (Azerbaijan), Romania and Syria.

If you're heading east to Anatolia, you might want to board at the smaller **Harem Otogar** (Map pp564-5; ☎ 216-333 3763), north of Haydarpaşa Railway Station on the Asian shore, but the choice of service there is more limited.

**Car & Motorcycle**

It makes no sense to drive around İstanbul itself and have to deal with the traffic and parking problems. However, if you're heading out of the city all the main car-hire agencies have desks in the international terminal of Atatürk International Airport.

**Train**

For services to Edirne, Greece and eastern Europe go to **Sirkeci Railway Station** (Map pp564-5; ☎ 0212-527 0051). International services from Sirkeci include the daily *Bosfor Ekspresi* service to Budapest (Hungary) via Sofia (Bulgaria) and Bucharest (Romania; around €50). There's also a slow daily service to Thessaloniki (Greece; around €50).

Trains from the Asian side of Turkey and from points east and south terminate at **Haydarpaşa Railway Station** (Map pp564-5; ☎ 0216-336 4470), on the Asian shore of the Bosphorus. International services from Haydarpaşa include the *Trans-Asya Ekspresi* to Iran and the *Toros Ekspresi* to Syria.

**GETTING AROUND****To/From the Airport**

The fastest way to get into town from the airport is by taxi. During the day it costs about €13 to Sultanahmet (and takes about 25 minutes).

There is a quick, cheap and efficient LRT service from the airport to Aksaray (€0.70, 30 minutes). From Aksaray it's a five-minute walk to the Yusufpaşa tram stop, from where the tram makes its way down Divan Yolu to Sultanahmet.

If you are staying near Taksim Sq, the **Havaş airport bus** (☎ 0212-243 3399; €5) is your

best bet. It departs from the international terminal, stops at the domestic terminal, then goes to Taksim Sq via Aksaray. Buses leave every 30 minutes or so from 5am till midnight.

Many Divan Yolu travel agencies and Sultanahmet hostels book minibus transport from the hotels to the airport for about €4 a head. Unfortunately, this option only works going *from* town to the airport and not vice versa.

**Boat**

The cheapest and nicest way to travel any distance in İstanbul is by ferry. The main ferry docks are at the mouth of the Golden Horn (Eminönü, Sirkeci and Karaköy) and at Kabataş, 2km northeast of the Galata Bridge, just south of Dolmabahçe Palace. Short ferry hops cost about €0.50.

**Public Transport**

A tram runs from Karaköy to Gülhane and Sultanahmet, and then along Divan Yolu to Çemberlitaş, Beyazıt (for the Grand Bazaar) and Aksaray (to connect to the otogar and the airport). Trams run every five minutes from 5.30am to midnight. At the time of writing, works were underway to extend the line further. Another restored tram trundles along İstiklal Caddesi to Taksim.

An LRT service connects Aksaray with the airport, stopping at 18 stations, including the otogar, along the way. It operates from around 6am till midnight.

The most useful bus for travellers is the T4 bus that runs between Sultanahmet and Taksim Sq.

There is a one-stop Tünel funicular system between Karaköy and İstiklal Caddesi in Beyoğlu (€0.40, every 10 or 15 minutes from 7am to 9pm).

Every 30 minutes, suburban trains from Sirkeci Railway Station (€0.60) run along the southern walls of Old İstanbul and west along the Marmara shore. There's a handy station in Cankurtaran for Sultanahmet.

**Taxi**

İstanbul has 60,000 yellow taxis, all of them with meters – even if not every driver wants to run them. From Sultanahmet to Taksim costs around €4; to the otogar around €13.

## AROUND İSTANBUL

Since İstanbul is such a vast city, few places are within easy reach on a day trip. However, if you make an early start it's just possible to see the sights of Edirne in Thrace (Trakya), the only bit of Turkey that is geographically within Europe. The fast ferry link means that you can also just make it to Bursa and back in a day, although it's much better to plan to overnight there. İznik is another must-see; it's a historic walled town on the shores of a peaceful lake, and is easily accessible from İstanbul.

### EDİRNE

☎ 0284 / pop 115,000

A crossroads between Turkey, Bulgaria and Greece, Edirne is much more than a large frontier town or a mere stop-off point to or from the neighbouring countries. Several splendid mosques, historic houses and lively bazaars are testimony to its past prosperity – it was briefly the capital of the Ottoman Empire – and add to its distinctive, preserved Turkish character. And we must mention the **Kırpınar Wrestling Festival** at the end of June, when the town fills with Turkish tourists – it's a spectacle definitely worth seeing.

### Sights

Dominating Edirne's skyline like a massive battleship is the **Selimiye Mosque** (1569–75), the finest work of the great Ottoman architect Mimar Sinan. Its lofty dome and its four tall (71m), slender minarets create a dramatic perspective. Smack-bang in the centre of town, you can't miss the 1414 **Eski Cami** (Old Mosque), which has rows of arches and pillars supporting a series of small domes. Behind it is the **Rüstem Paşa Hanı**, a grand caravanserai built 100 years later. Another example of architectural magnificence is the **Üçşerefeli Cami**, which has four strikingly different minarets, all built at different times. Edirne's last great imperial mosque, the **Beyazıt II complex** (1481–1512), stands in splendid isolation to the north of the town.

### Sleeping & Eating

**Tuna Hotel** (☎ 214 3340; fax 214 3323; Maarif Caddesi 17; s/d €22/30; 🍽️) Behind Ali Paşa Bazaar, this is possibly the friendliest and best-value place in town. All the rooms and facilities are neat

as a pin and there's a pleasant courtyard for breakfast. Bookings are recommended.

**Aksaraylı Pansiyon** (☎ 212 6035; Alipaşa Ortakapı Caddesi; s/d €10/20) A few doors from the Tuna, this pension occupies a white, crumbling old house. The rooms, which have shoe-box bathrooms, are a tad scuffed around the edges, but at this price we're not complaining.

**Karam Hotel** (☎ 225 1555; fax 225 1556; Maarif Caddesi; s/d €40/50; 🍽️) A brave attempt at creating a boutique hotel, the Karam occupies a historic mansion complete with fine, high-ceilinged rooms with impeccable bathrooms and a welcoming courtyard restaurant.

You'll find numerous eateries in the vicinity of the bazaar, serving simple meals at unbeatable prices.

### Getting There & Away

The otogar is 8.5km east of the city centre. There are regular bus services for İstanbul (€9, 2½ hours, 235km) and Çanakkale (€9, 3½ hours, 230km). If you're heading for the Bulgarian border crossing at Kapıkule (€0.50, 18km), catch a minibus from in front of the tourist office.

### İZNIK

☎ 0224 / pop 20,000

A historic walled town on the shores of a peaceful lake, İznik is popular with week-ending İstanbullular but largely ignored by tourists, which has helped preserve its Turkish character. Visitors in a languid mood can stroll along the lakefront or mosey around the city centre, admiring the ruins of **Aya Sofya** (admission €1.25; 🕒 9am–noon & 2–5pm) and the Seljuk-style **Yeşil Cami** (Green Mosque), built between 1378 and 1387. The minaret, decorated with green and blue-glazed zigzag tiles, is a wonder. It's also worth sparing an hour to visit the **İznik Museum** (admission €1.50; 🕒 8.30am–noon & 1–5pm Tue–Sun), which contains examples of İznik tiles. More-active types can follow a 5km circuit around most of İznik's walls, which were first erected in Roman times. Four imposing **gates** still pierce the walls.

### Sleeping & Eating

**Kaynarca Pansiyon** (☎ 757 1753; www.kaynarca.s5.com; Kılıçaslan Caddesi, Gündem Sokak 1; dm/s/d €8/12/18) The most obvious choice if funds are short. It consists of two dorms and several monastic plain rooms. Breakfast is extra (€2).

**Aydin** (☎ 757 7650; www.iznikhotelaydin.com; Kılıçaslan Caddesi 64; s/d €20/30) If you want to scale up the ladder, opt for Aydin, which offers colourful rooms and tiled bathrooms, as well as a pastry shop on the ground floor.

**Çamlık Motel** (☎ 757 1362; www.iznikcamlikmotel.com; s/d €24/45) Scrupulously clean and quietly located at the southern end of the road along the lakeshore, Çamlık is also more upmarket. There's an on-site restaurant.

When it comes to the culinary scene, nothing really stands out. Well placed for a little sustenance, **Izgara** (☎ 757 8230; Kılıçaslan Caddesi 149; mains €2–3) churns out run-of-the-mill Turkish food at moderate prices.

In summer the best places to sip a cup of tea are the open-air cafés on Sahil Yol, overlooking the lake.

### Getting There & Away

There are regular buses from the otogar to Bursa (€2, 1½ hours, 82km) and less frequent services to İstanbul and Ankara.

### BURSA

☎ 0224 / pop one million

Sprawling at the base of Uludağ, Turkey's biggest winter-sports centre, Bursa prides itself on having been the first capital of the Ottoman Empire. Nowadays it's a modern, prosperous, sprawling city with lots of vitality and personality. Allow at least a day to make the most of its innumerable ancient mosques, *medreses* and *hamams*. Even if you're not an architecture buff, you'll be enthralled by the design of all these monuments. And if you prefer to pamper your frail body, the thermal springs in the villagelike suburb of Çekirge are the perfect salve after a day spent exploring the city on weary feet.

The city centre, with its banks and shops, is along Atatürk Caddesi, between the Ulu Cami (Grand Mosque) to the west and the main square, Cumhuriyet Alanı, commonly called Heykel (Statue), to the east. Çekirge is around about 6km west of Heykel. Bursa's otogar is an inconvenient 10km north of the centre on the Yalova road.

### Sights & Activities

About 1km east of Heykel is the supremely beautiful **Yeşil Cami** (Green Mosque; 1424) and its stunningly tiled **Yeşil Türbe** (Green Tomb; admission free; 🕒 8.30am–noon & 1–5pm). Right in the city centre, the largest of Bursa's mosques is the

20-domed **Ulu Cami** (Grand Mosque; Atatürk Caddesi), built in 1396. Behind the Ulu Cami, Bursa's sprawling **Covered Market** (Kapalı Çarşı) is a great place to while away a few hours.

Uphill and west of the Ulu Cami, on the way to Çekirge, don't miss the 14th-century **tombs of Osman and Orhan**, the first Ottoman sultans. A kilometre beyond lies the delightful **Muradiye Complex**, with a mosque and 12 decorated tombs dating from the 15th and 16th centuries. With a shady park in front, it's a peaceful oasis in a busy city.

Whether it's winter or summer, it's worth taking a cable-car ride up the 2543m-high **Uludağ** (Great Mountain) to take advantage of the view and the cool, clear air of Uludağ National Park. From Heykel take a dolmuş (shared taxi) east to the **teleferik** (cable car; one way €2.50). Alternatively take a dolmuş from central Bursa to the hotels on Uludağ (22km). Bear in mind that the skiing facilities, while some of Turkey's best, are not up to those of the best European ski resorts.

### Sleeping

There are a couple of decent options in Bursa, but also consider Çekirge, which has better options where you can escape the city's noise. Many hotels in Çekirge have private or public mineral baths. To get here, take a 'Çekirge' bus or dolmuş from Heykel or along Atatürk Caddesi.

**Hotel Çeşmeli** (☎ /fax 224 1511; Gümüşçeken Caddesi 6; s/d €24/42) In a tranquil side street north of Atatürk Caddesi, this is a sparklingly clean outfit, handy for everything. It's also a friendly retreat that suits solo women travellers.

**Otel Safran Restaurant** (☎ 224 7216; fax 224 7219; Ortapazar Caddesi, Arka Sokak 4; s/d €30/53) Opposite the Osman and Orhan tombs, this nearly-but-not-quite boutique hotel occupies a well-restored Ottoman-style mansion, with comfortable, if simply furnished, rooms.

**Mutlu Hotel** (☎ 236 3136; 1 Murat Caddesi 19, Çekirge; s/d €18/30; 🍽️) Coming from central Bursa, one of the first places you see in Çekirge is this agreeable hotel, with cosy pine-clad rooms and private mineral baths. An excellent choice for budget-seekers.

**Atlas Hotel** (☎ 234 4100; fax 236 4605; Hamamlar Caddesi 35, Çekirge; s/d €25/42; 🍽️) A step up in price and comfort, the Atlas is another commendable option, with its functional rooms and private mineral baths.

## Eating & Drinking

**Kebabçı İskender** (Ünlü Caddesi 7; mains €3-5) The place in Turkey to sample an *İskender kebab* for which Bursa is famous. Half a block from Heykel on a pedestrian-only street, this perennial favourite has been whipping up supertasty kebabs since 1867.

**Darüzziyafe** (☎ 224 6439; 2 Murat Caddesi 36; mains €3-6) Near the Muradiye mosque, this is a good place to feast on well-prepared Ottoman delicacies. We were impressed by the desserts, especially the *fukara keşkülü* (a delicious creamy pudding with pistachio and vanilla), easier to devour than to pronounce. There's a picture menu to help you choose.

**Hünkar** (☎ 327 8910; Yeşil Camii Yanı 17; mains €4-10) The selling point of this group-focused restaurant is its sublime position, next to the Yeşil Cami, which has such a breathtaking view over sprawling Bursa that it's hard to tear yourself away. Nab a window-side seat.

Make sure you spend an evening out at one of the fish restaurants on Sakarya Caddesi, just south of Altıparmak Caddesi. This is certainly the most atmospheric eating precinct in the city.

There are a few fashionable café-teahouses east of Heykel on either side of a stream. Mahfel Mado is an oversized place where bright young things gather to enjoy the atmosphere and chat over a glass of tea. Hayal Bahçesi, right by the stream, is a haven of calm. Sakarya Caddesi is also a hot spot, with several bars featuring live music at night.

## Getting There & Away

The fastest way to get to İstanbul (€11, 2½ to three hours) is to take a bus to Yalova, then a catamaran to İstanbul's Yenikapı docks. There are buses between Yalova and Bursa.

*Karayolu ile* (by road) buses to İstanbul (€7) take four to five hours and drag you around the Bay of İzmit. Those designated *feribot ile* (by ferry) go to Topçular, east of Yalova, and take the car ferry to Eskişehir, a much quicker and more pleasant way to go.

## AEGEAN COAST

While the scenery of the Aegean coast is not as spectacular as that of the Mediterranean, this is the part of Turkey that was once Asia Minor and it is studded with fantastic historic sites, including the ruins of Troy, Epe-

sus and Pergamum. This is also where you come to see the battlefield sites at Gallipoli.

## ÇANAKKALE

☎ 0286 / pop 60,000

Çanakkale is the most popular base for visiting the famous Gallipoli battlefields, across the other side of the Dardanelles, and the ruins at Troy. For Australians and New Zealanders, it's a mandatory stopover, especially on Anzac Day (25 April), when a dawn service commemorates the anniversary of the Allied landings on the peninsula in 1915. Unfortunately, Çanakkale is woefully inadequate for an influx of up 12,000 visitors on one day (not to mention hundreds of buses and cars). You would be well advised to make a visit at another quieter time.

The tourist office, all the cheap hotels, Internet cafés and a range of reasonable restaurants are within a block or two of the ferry pier, near the town's landmark clock tower.

## Sleeping

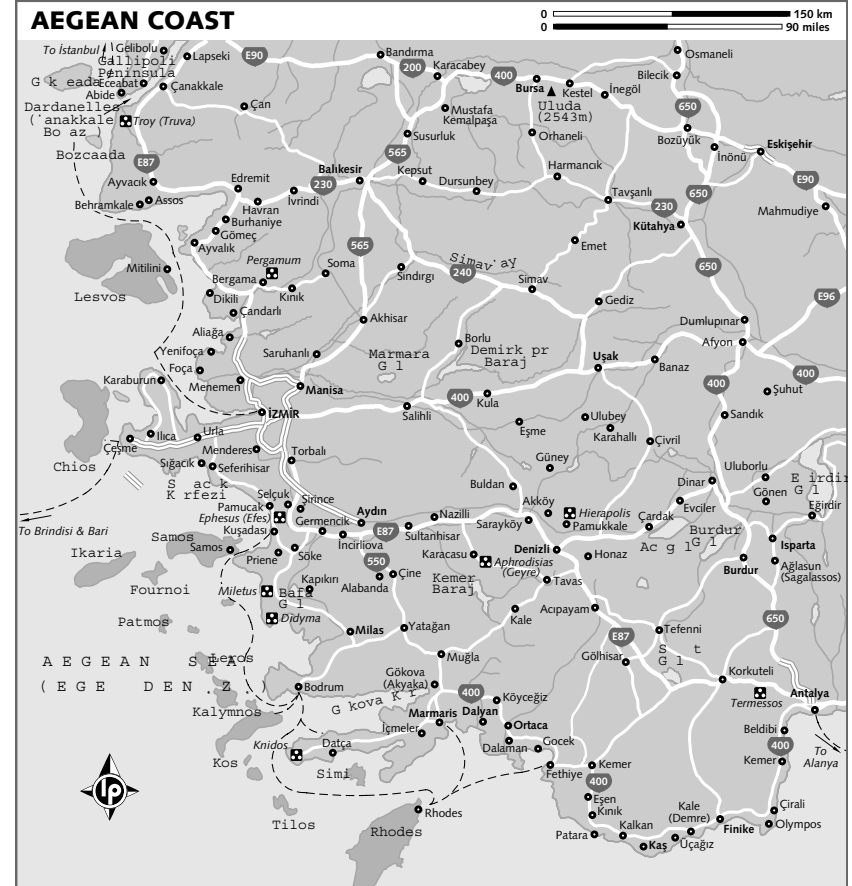
If you choose to visit on Anzac Day, keep in mind that rooms are expensive at that time and usually booked solid months before 25 April.

**Anzac House** (☎ 213 5969; www.anzachouse.com; Cumhuriyet Meydanı; dm/s/d €7/10/17; ♿) In an excellent location on the main drag, a short stagger from the docks, this backpackers' staple is a friendly and well-run operation with good facilities, including a travel agency, Internet access and laundry service. Rooms are barren but spick-and-span. Avoid the windowless ones, which are claustrophobic.

**Yellow Rose Pension** (☎ /fax 217 3343; Yeni Sokak 5; dm/s/d €6/9/17; ♿) The exuberant colour scheme at this guesthouse can make your eyes water and the rooms are fairly Spartan, but the staff are friendly, there's a kitchen, and the place has a laid-back appeal. It's on a quiet side street, 50m southeast of the clock tower.

**Hotel Efes** (☎ 217 3256; Aralık Sokak 5; s/d €25/30; ♿) Not your average hotel, the Efes is run by women. Located behind the clock tower, it's intimate, cosy and well tended, with lots of feminine touches.

**Hotel Kervansaray** (☎ 217 9011; Fetvane Sokak 13; s/d €25/43; ♿) Too good to be true, this tastefully restored *eski konak* (old mansion) exudes Ottoman charm and rustic elegance without



costing the earth. Rooms are spacious, with garnet-coloured bedcovers, and there's also a pretty garden at the back. Enjoy.

**Hotel Helen** (☎ 212 1818; www.helenhotel.com; Cumhuriyet Meydanı 57; s/d €31/42; ♿) All the creature comforts are available at this sleek, modern three-star affair. The only drawback is the busy road, so bag a room at the back.

## Eating & Drinking

**Gülen Pide** (Cumhuriyet Meydanı; mains €3-5) This cheerful eatery is usually packed to the gills with hungry punters wolfing down delectable pide. There's also a wide range of kebabs.

**Doyum Pide ve Kebab Salonu** (Cumhuriyet Meydanı; mains €3-5) Another reputable staple, similar in standards and style to the nearby Gülen.

**Baklavaları** (Cumhuriyet Meydanı) A gem for carb-lovers, this fancy pastry shop prepares the most gooey baklava this side of the Dardanelles. We'll be back.

**Sea Side** (mains €3-8) After a touch of sophistication? Head for this snazzy, Westernised bar-restaurant right by the harbour. Nab a table on the terrace, scoff a plate of pasta or a salad and watch the world stroll by.

## Getting There & Away

There are regular services to get to Ayvalık (€9, 3½ hours), Behramkale/Assos (€3.50, two hours), İstanbul (€13, six hours) and İzmir (€12, five hours).

There are also frequent ferry services to Eceabat (€0.50).

## ECEABAT (MAYDOS)

☎ 0286 / pop 4500

Across the Dardanelles from Çanakkale, Eceabat has perked up considerably in recent years and now makes a convenient base from which to visit the Gallipoli battlefields. If Çanakkale's raffish charm and raucous nightlife are not to your liking, you'll enjoy this easy-going waterfront town.

Everything you will need is a short hop from the dock.

### Sleeping & Eating

**TJs Hostel** (☎ 814 3122; www.anzaccgallipolittours.com; Cumhuriyet Caddesi 5/A; dm/s/d €7/8/16; 📺) In a multistorey building 100m from the main square, this enduringly popular backpackers' haunt is run by a friendly Turkish-Australian couple. The rooms are nothing flash and a tad poky, but there are heaps of services, including a book exchange, a travel agency, movies and the inevitable Vegemite toast for breakfast (about €2). There are rooftop barbecues for €6.50.

**Eceabat Hotel** (☎ 814 2458; www.anzaccgallipolittours.com; Cumhuriyet Caddesi; s/d €18/26; 📺) The greyish façade of this high-rise lump on the waterfront ain't eye candy but it's much more appealing inside. It's owned by the same people as TJs, so no prizes for guessing this place is also well run. Here you'll get airy, spanking-new rooms and Ottoman-style furnishings. Facilities include air-con, double-glazing, TV, fridge and laundry service.

**Aqua Hotel** (☎ 814 2864; www.heyboss.com; İstiklal Caddesi; s/d €20/38; 📺) Once a tomato-canning factory, aesthetically resurrected with super-clean, hospital-white rooms and a vast restaurant with exposed beams, stone walls and fluffy carpets. The main selling point is its location, right by the waterside. Oh, and the bar gets really zippy in high season.

**Liman Restaurant** (İstiklal Caddesi; mains €4-8) Settle into this popular joint south of the ferry dock, choose from the fresh fish on display and sample it grilled or fried with a salad. The terrace is an added bonus.

### Getting There & Away

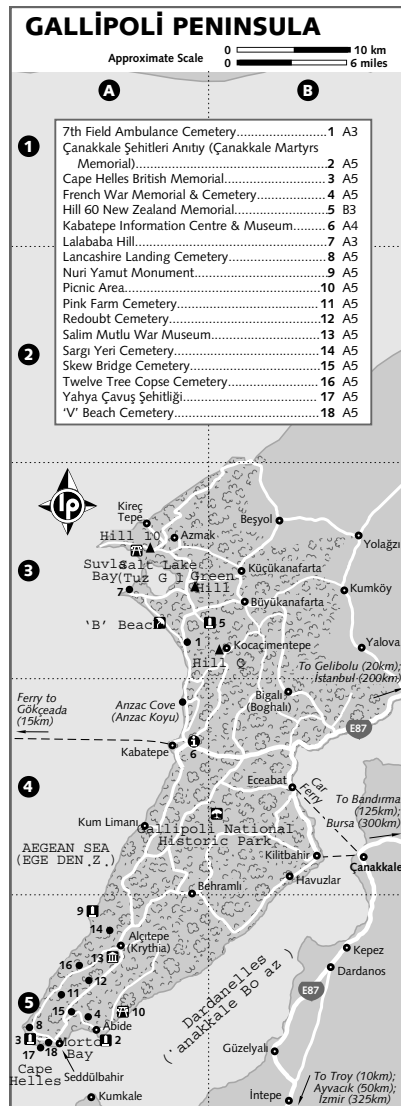
Long-distance buses pass through Eceabat on the way from İstanbul to Çanakkale (€13, 5½ hours).

There are frequent ferry services to Çanakkale (€0.50).

## GALLİPOLİ (GELİBOLU) PENINSULA

☎ 0286

Gallipoli has a special significance for Australians and New Zealanders, thousands of whom come here every year. Even if you're not overly interested in military matters, you can't help but be moved by the poignancy and sheer natural beauty of the site.



Always the first line of defence for İstanbul, the Dardanelles defences proved their worth in WWI. Atop the narrow, hilly Gallipoli Peninsula, Atatürk and his troops fought off a far superior but badly commanded force of Anzac and British troops. After nine months and having suffered horrendous casualties, the Allied forces were withdrawn.

For most people, a visit to the battlefields and war graves of Gallipoli (now a national historic park) is an overwhelming experience.

Visiting the sights by public transport is not very convenient. The easiest way to see the battlefields, particularly if time is tight, is with your own transport or on a minibus tour from Çanakkale or Eceabat with **Hassle Free Tours** (☎ 213 5969; hasslefree@anzachouse.com; Anzac House, Çanakkale), **Troy-Anzac Tours** (☎ 217 5849; Saat Kulesi Meydanı 6, Çanakkale) or **TJs Tours** (☎ 814 3121; www.anzaccgallipolittours.com; Eceabat) for about €20 per person. With a tour you can get the benefit of a guide who can explain the battles as you go along.

Most people use Çanakkale or Eceabat as a base for exploring Gallipoli. Car ferries cross the straits on a frequent basis from Çanakkale to Eceabat (per person €0.50). From there you can take a dolmuş to Kabatepe on the western shore of the peninsula. Ask to be dropped at the Kabatepe Information Centre & Museum.

Some travellers prefer to join an organised tour from İstanbul.

## TROY (TRUVA)

☎ 0286

The ruins of ancient Troy may not be as spectacular as those of Ephesus (Efes), but for anyone who has ever read Homer's *Iliad*, they have a romance few places on Earth can hope to match.

The ticket booth for the ruins of **Troy** (admission €6; 🕒 8.30am-5.30pm) is 500m before the site. The site is rather confusing for nonexpert eyes, but the most conspicuous features include the **walls** from various periods; the **Bouleuterion** (Council Chamber), built around Homer's time (c 800 BC); the Roman **Odeon**, where concerts were held; the stone **ramp** from Troy II (2600-2300 BC); and the **Temple of Athena** from Troy VIII (700-85 BC), rebuilt by the Romans.

In summer, dolmuşes ply back and forth along the 32km between Troy and Çanakkale

(€1.75, 35 minutes). Walk inland from the ferry pier to Atatürk Caddesi, and turn right towards Troy; dolmuşes wait by the bridge.

The travel agencies offering tours to the Gallipoli battlefields (left) also offer tours to Troy (around €25 per person).

## BEHRAMKALE & ASSOS

☎ 0286

Behramkale, 19km southwest of Ayvacık, is a colourful place with a colourful past. Picture an old hilltop village hugging a superb archaeological site where you can admire the ruins of a Doric-style **Temple of Athena** (admission €3; 🕒 8.30am-dusk). The view from the ruins out to Lesbos and the dazzling waters of the Aegean are nothing short of spectacular and well worth the admission fee. Beside the entrance to the ruins, the 14th-century **Hüdavendigar Camii** is a simple, pre-Ottoman mosque.

Just before the entrance to the village, a road winds 2km down to Assos harbour. It's a cluster of half-a-dozen old stone houses-turned-hotels overlooking a picture-perfect harbour, and is the ideal place to unwind over a cup of tea.

And the catch? It's no longer a sleeping beauty and it gets overcrowded, especially over summer weekends when İstanbullular and İzmirliş pour in by the bus load. Consider yourself warned.

### Sleeping

You can either stay in Behramkale village itself or in the hotels around Assos harbour.

## BEHRAMKALE

**Tekin Pansiyon** (☎ 721 7099; s/d €14/21; 📺) A brilliant-value guesthouse with ultraclean bathrooms and spotless, tiled rooms – no brownish, wuffy carpet!

**Assos Konukevi** (☎ 721 7081; d €55) Tucked away round the back of the village, this charming *evi* (house) is a peaceful retreat. It has three cosy, old-fashioned rooms with nice views over the ruins and an inviting courtyard.

**Eris Pansiyon** (☎ 721 7080; www.assos.de/eris; s €40, d €50-60; 📺) You can't miss the ivy-clad façade of this fine stone house at the back of the village. It's run by a semiretired American couple who have lots of information on the area. The rooms are certainly tidy and functional but nothing thrilling. The highlights here are the manicured garden

and the breezy terrace with million-dollar views over the hills.

Also recommended:

**Sidar Pansiyon** (☎ 721 7047; s/d €15/25) A simple place, next door to Tekin Pansiyon, with plain but restful rooms.

**Testi Han** (☎ 721 7477; fax 721 7478; r €40) A fairly upmarket guesthouse, with smallish but pretty rooms and natty bathrooms. A good pick.

## ASSOS

If you prefer to stay in the pricey hotels by Assos harbour, note that in high season virtually all of them insist on *yarım pansiyon* (half-board, ie breakfast and dinner). The **Nazlıhan Boutique Hotel** (☎ 721 7385; www.asso.sedengroup.com; s/d with half-board from €35/50) and the **Yıldız Saray Otel** (☎ 721 7025; www.yildizsaray-hotels.com; s/d with half-board €40/60; 🍷) have the most atmosphere. Be sure to ask for a room facing the sea.

## Eating

There's a smattering of cheap-and-cheerful options in the old village. Check the ramshackle Köy Restaurant in the heart of the village and the Assos Restaurant next to the mosque, where a plate of belly-filling *mantı* (Turkish ravioli) or a melt-in-your-mouth *gözleme* cost a pittance.

In Assos harbour, most harbourside hotels host a restaurant. The emphasis is unsurprisingly on fresh fish. Check the cost before ordering fish and wine.

## Getting There & Away

To get to Behramkale, catch an infrequent dolmuş (€1.25, 19km) from Ayvacık (not to be confused with nearby Ayvalık). Ayvacık is, in turn, linked by bus to Çanakkale (€3, two hours, 73km).

## AYVALIK

☎ 0266 / pop 32,000

Ayvalık is a delightful fishing port and beach resort, and is the departure point for ferries to Lesbos (Greece). It has embraced tourism without being consumed by it. If you come from a more touristy coastal town, you'll notice the difference in atmosphere and attitudes the minute you step off the bus. The wonderful winding streets in the old quarter and the buzzy waterfront area lend themselves perfectly to a day or two's relaxed pottering.

The otogar is 1.5km north of the town centre. In summer there's an information kiosk on the waterfront south of the main square, Cumhuriyet Alanı. Offshore is **Alibey Island** (Cunda), which is lined with open-air fish restaurants and linked by ferries and a causeway to the mainland. In summer don't leave Ayvalık without taking a **ruise** around the bay – there are plenty of operators keen to get you on board (about €8).

## Sleeping & Eating

**Taksiyarhis Pansiyon** (☎ 312 1494; www.taksiyarhis.com; Mareşal Çakmak Caddesi 71; per person €12) A delightfully quaint place in a renovated Ottoman house only five minutes' walk east of the PTT. It's a very friendly and affordable hang-out with bags of character. The rooms are nothing outstanding and the bathrooms are shared, but the general feel of cleanliness, the numerous artistic touches that adorn the communal areas, the two terraces with sprawling views and a kitchen for guests' use make it a real bargain. Book ahead if possible. Breakfast costs €4.

**Bonjour Pansiyon** (☎ 312 8085; Fevzi Çakmak Caddesi, Çeşme Sokak 5; s/d €15/30) Another gem of a place, shrouded with a palpable historic aura. Live like a pasha in this gorgeous house that once belonged to a French priest who was ambassador to the sultan. Rooms are spacious and high-ceilinged, and the shared bathrooms are impeccable. Some rooms in the rear building have private bathrooms. To find it, follow the signs across the road from the PTT.

**Paşalı** (☎ 312 5018; Vural Paşalı Arkası 18; mains €2-4) Tables here are hot property at weekends, and no wonder. This place serves up some of the best *Akdeniz mutfak* (Mediterranean cuisine) in town, and does so in surroundings as welcoming as they are attractive. It's worth saving room for the gooey desserts. It's also a good spot for vegetarians, with various *sebze yemekleri* (vegetables). Paşalı is in a side street off Cumhuriyet Meydanı.

**Canlı Balık** (☎ 313 0081; Cumhuriyet Alanı; mains €6-7) Settle into this bright joint right by the harbour and enjoy a large selection of seafood. The fish is so fresh it's almost jumping off the plate. The terrace also offers peerless people-watching opportunities.

## Getting There & Away

There are frequent direct buses from İzmir (€6, 1¼ hours) and Bergama (€4.50, 1¼

hours) to Ayvalık. Coming from Çanakkale (€6, 3½ hours), some buses drop you on the main highway to hitch to the centre.

Ayvalık Belediyesi buses run to Alibey Island (€0.40) via the causeway. Or you can take a boat from near the main square (€0.60, 15 minutes).

Daily boats operate to Lesbos (Greece) from June to September (€40/50 one way/return). There's at least one boat a week, even in winter. Buy your ticket at **Cunda Denizcilik** (☎ 312 7210), near the harbour.

## BERGAMA (PERGAMUM)

☎ 0232 / pop 50,000

From the 3rd century BC to the 1st century AD, Bergama (formerly Pergamum) was one of the Middle East's richest and most powerful small kingdoms. Today this glorious past is a distant memory but the extensive and well-preserved ruins on the outskirts of the city offer an unparalleled chance to step back in time.

There are banks with ATMs on Bankalar Caddesi (the main street), which is also where you'll find the PTT. **Arkadaş Cafe** (İzmir Caddesi; per hr €1; ☎ 9am-midnight), near Böblingen Pension, has good Internet connections.

## Sights

One of the highlights of the Aegean coast, the well-proportioned **Asclepion** (Temple of Asclepius; admission €6; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm), about 3km from the city centre, was a famous medical school with a library that rivalled that of Alexandria in Egypt. The ruins of the **Acropolis** (admission €6; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm), 6km from the city, are equally striking. The hilltop setting is absolutely magical, and the well-preserved ruins are magnificent – especially the vertigo-inducing 10,000-seat **theatre** and the marble-columned **Temple of Trajan**, built during the reigns of Emperors Trajan and Hadrian (2nd century) and used to worship them as well as Zeus.

Expand your knowledge of Turkish history by visiting the excellent **Archaeology Museum** (İzmir Caddesi; admission €3; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm Tue-Sun), which has fine displays from both of these sites.

## Sleeping & Eating

**Böblingen Pension** (☎ 633 2153; fax 631 5676; Asklepion Caddesi 2; s/d €9/18) This family-run guesthouse is the best bet if you don't want to

strain your wallet. The rooms won't win any prizes for decoration but it's perfectly clean and your hosts are a mine of local information. The evening meals (€7) are warmly praised. It's at the start of the road to the Asclepion.

**Manolya Pension** (☎ 633 4488; www.manolya.pension.8m.net; Tanpınar Sokak 11; s/d €13/26; 🍷) Don't be put off by the rather drab-looking façade of this high-rise block – the Manolya is a perfect place to rest your head after a long day's sightseeing. It has a kilim-draped lobby, clean-smelling rooms, well-sprung mattresses and pastel colours splashed all over the walls.

**Gobi Pension** (☎ 633 2518; İzmir Caddesi 18; s €12-15, d €21-24) It's nothing to write home about but at least it's clean and well kept. Light sleepers should steer clear of the rooms at the front, as the busy main drag is close by.

**Sağlam 3 Restaurant** (☎ 632 8897; Cumhuriyet Meydanı 29; mains €3-4) A short bag-haul from the PTT, the Sağlam is reckoned to cook up the best meat dishes in town and is usually packed. So many locals can't be wrong.

**Tadim Kebap Salonu** (☎ 632 1815; Denizciler Caddesi; mains €2-3) This hole-in-the wall, close to Kulaksız Cami, tosses up the usual suspects at puny prices.

**Özlem Pide ve Çorba Salonu** (☎ 632 5156; İzmir Caddesi 8; mains €2-4) First-rate hearty pide are served in this bright and cheery place on the main drag.

## Getting There & Around

There are frequent buses to and from İzmir (€4, two hours, 100km) and Ayvalık (€4.50, 1¼ hours, 50km). Check to see if your bus actually stops at Bergama's otogar. Some buses will drop you along the highway at the turn-off to Bergama, leaving you to hitch 7km into town or take a taxi (€11). At the time of writing, there were plans to build a new otogar on the outskirts of Bergama, close to the turn-off, which would make things easier.

There's no public transport to the archaeological sites. A taxi tour of the Acropolis, the Asclepion and the museum costs about €30.

## İZMİR

☎ 0232 / pop 2,233,000

Let's face it: although it has a dramatic setting around a bay backed by mountains, İzmir (once known as Smyrna) lacks the charisma

of other big Turkish cities. Its sites are relatively underwhelming and fail to impress. For most travellers, Turkey's third-largest city is just a place to hop off a bus or train and onto a bus or dolmuş heading north or south to the coastal resorts. But, to its credit, İzmir offers a refreshing touch of sophistication, an enticing cosmopolitan atmosphere and a disarmingly liberal attitude. Give it a chance and you may find it grows on you.

### Orientation & Information

The central area of İzmir is a web of *meydanlar* (squares) linked by streets that aren't at right angles to each other. Instead of names, the back streets have numbers. Ask for a free map at the tourist office.

Budget hotels cluster near Basmane train station, in a district sometimes called Çankaya. To the southwest, Anafartalar Caddesi twists and turns through the labyrinthine bazaar to the waterfront at Konak, the commercial and government centre. Atatürk Caddesi (Birinci Kordon) runs northeast from Konak along the waterfront, finishing 1.4km past Cumhuriyet Meydanı with its equestrian statue of Atatürk, the main PTT, luxury hotels and airline offices.

İzmir's otogar is 6km northeast of the town centre.

The helpful **tourist office** (☎ 484 2147; fax 489 9278; Akdeniz Caddesi 1344 Sokak 2; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri) is right on the seafront.

### Sights

Since most of old İzmir was destroyed by earthquakes there's little to see here compared with other Turkish cities. However, it does boast the remains of an extensive

2nd-century-AD Roman **agora** (marketplace; admission €2; ☎ 8.30am-noon & 1-5pm), right inside the sprawling, atmospheric modern **bazaar**. It's also worth taking a bus to the hilltop **Kadifekale** (*kale* means fortress), where women still weave kilims on horizontal looms and where the views are breathtaking.

### Sleeping

The area around Basmane train station – cross the road outside the station, turn left and immediately right – nurtures lots of cheapies, but most of them tend to be basic digs. It's best to stick to the places listed here.

**Hotel Imperial** (☎ 483 9771; 1296 Sokak 54; s/d €15/24) A sensible choice for budget travellers – if you can look past the garish fake Greek columns guarding the entrance. The rooms, while not luxurious, are perfectly adequate.

**Hotel Baylan** (☎ 483 1426; http://hotelbaylan.site mynet.com; 1299 Sokak No 8; s/d €21/36; ☎ ☎) Those wanting a clean and comfortable place could do worse than check into this professionally run outfit, a few doors from the Imperial. Rooms come with all the mod cons, including TVs, telephones and minibars.

**Otel Antik Han** (☎ 489 2750; www.otelantikhan.com in Turkish; Anafartalar Caddesi 600; s/d €35/60; ☎ ☎) A pleasant surprise right in the bazaar, close to the agora, this boutique hotel in a painstakingly restored Ottoman house oozes atmosphere. While the rooms are not luxurious, they are cosy and intimate enough. The courtyard is a great place to relax or to scribble a postcard or two over a cup of tea. There's a bar here, too.

For other hotel options, walk straight down Fevzipaşa Bulvarı from Basmane station and turn right (north). There are a few

clean, quiet hotels in 1368 Sokak and its westward continuation, 1369 Sokak.

### Eating

For bargain-basement meals, especially at lunchtime, head straight into the bazaar and take your pick from the countless small restaurants. For something more sophisticated, explore the tiny streets lined with restored houses in Alsancak district. Alternatively hit the waterfront café-bars, which offer innumerable opportunities for people-watching.

**Altın Kapı** (☎ 422 2709; 1444 Sokak 9/A & 14/A, Alsancak; mains €4-10) A ragingly popular venue in Alsancak that serves well-prepared dishes to a well-heeled crowd. It has three branches in the street, each specialising in a type of food (kebaps, fish dishes, Turkish meals). Get a seat on the shady terrace.

**Kırçıçeği** (☎ 464 3090; Kıbrıs Şehitleri Caddesi, Alsancak; mains €4-9) Business is brisk in this well-regarded option, set in the bustling pedestrianised Kıbrıs Şehitleri Caddesi. It serves the full array of Turkish staples, including kebaps, pide and grills. There's a picture menu to help you choose.

### Getting There & Away

#### AIR

Turkish Airlines offers nonstop flights to İstanbul (€85) and Ankara (€60) from İzmir, with connections to other destinations. Onur Air, Atlasjet and Fly Air also fly to İzmir.

#### BUS

İzmir is a major transport hub. From the otogar, frequent buses leave for Bergama (€4, two hours), Kuşadası (€2, 1½ hours), Selçuk (€2, one hour), and other destinations around the country. Buses to Çeşme (€5, 1½ hours) leave from a local bus terminal in Üçkuyular, 6.5km southwest of Konak.

#### TRAIN

The only train service that is really useful for travellers is the daily *İzmir Mavi* (€12) from Basmane station to Ankara. There are also express trains to Selçuk/Ephesus (€2) and Denizli (for Pamukkale; €5).

### ÇEŞME

☎ 0232 / pop 100,000

With its tangle of narrow backstreets and a dramatic Genoese fortress that dominates the town centre, Çeşme is a joy to explore.

Unfortunately it's no longer a secret and can get very busy during the school holidays. About 85km due west of İzmir, it's also popular with weekenders from İzmir. Outside high season, however, you'll have the whole place for yourself. Kick back with a meal of seafood washed down with a glass of rakı to really get into the spirit of things.

The helpful **tourist office** (☎ /fax 712 6653; İskele Meydanı 6; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Sat in summer), ferry and bus ticket offices, banks with ATMs, restaurants and hotels are all within two blocks of the main square.

### Sleeping & Eating

There's a wealth of good-value, homy pensions in Çeşme. They are usually open from May to October. Bookings are essential in summer and at weekends.

**Can Pansiyon** (☎ 712 6210; 2032 Sokak; d €24) One of the best pads in town. Away from the hubbub, it has had a lick of paint – in vivid hues, a refreshing sea-breeze choice – and offers sparkling clean accommodation. Some rooms sport balconies to maximise the view.

**Barnak Pansiyon** (☎ 712 6670; 3052 Sokak 58; d €35; ☎) Another sound choice, with light, airy interiors, a breezy terrace and knockout views.

**06 Pansiyon** (☎ 712 6047; 2037 Sokak 16; s/d €15/25) It has no views to speak of, but is blessed with a leafy garden.

**Yalçın Otel** (☎ 712 6981; www.yalcinhotel.freeseers.com; 1002 Sokak 10; s/d €19/25) After a bit more privacy? Head for Yalçın Otel, perched on the hillside overlooking the harbour. This well-managed place features well-equipped, value-for-money rooms, some with smashing views, and an agreeable terrace.

Heading north towards the marina there are several harbour restaurants that specialise in fresh fish, including **Rıhtım** (☎ 712 7433; mains €4-10). Near the fortress, **Biz Bize** (☎ 712 1746; İnkilap Caddesi; mains €4-8) is renowned for its kebaps, while **İmren** (☎ 712 7620; İnkilap Caddesi; mains €2-5) serves up the usual suspects at moderate prices in an attractive old building. For a melt-in-your-mouth pide, the cognoscenti swear there's no better place than **Fatih Pide** (☎ 712 8121; İnkilap Caddesi; mains €2-4). Amble down İnkilap Caddesi and you'll come across the **Friendly Corner** (☎ 712 1751; 3025 Sokak 2; mains €5-8), a 'rustic chic' establishment tarted up for tourists.

### DON'T FORGET YOUR NAZAR BONCUK

It's ubiquitous in Turkey, but you might not have noticed it. *Nazar Boncuk* is a Turkish 'evil-eye' charm. As in many cultures, Turks believe that the 'evil eye' can bring you bad luck. Turks use *Nazar Boncuks* (literally 'evil-eye beads') to ward off malicious forces associated with envious eyes. *Nazar Boncuks* can be seen pinned to the clothes of babies, guarding the doorways of restaurants, nailed on doors and walls... The bead reflects the evil intent back to the onlooker. With its concentric dots of colours, it somewhat resembles an eye and it is said that the typical blue colour helps protect the user.

This tradition goes back to the Arabian craftsmen who settled in İzmir during the decline of the Ottoman Empire. Today, the genuine eye beads are produced by a handful of glass masters in Görece and Kurudere near İzmir. Their methods and techniques have changed very little over the centuries.

*Nazar Boncuks* appear in various shapes and sizes, and make an ideal gift.

## Getting There & Away

There are buses from İzmir to Çeşme (€5, 1½ hours, 85km) from the western Üçkular terminal.

Çeşme is a transit point to the Greek island of Chios, 10km away across the water. In summer, there are daily ferries to Chios, and at least three weekly services in winter. Buy your ticket from any travel agency at the harbour.

There are also weekly or twice-weekly ferry services to Brindisi and Ancona (Italy). See p663 for more information.

## SELÇUK

☎ 0232 / pop 23,100

An easy one-hour bus trip south of İzmir, Selçuk is a magnet for backpackers from all over the world. It's packed with cheap pensions and eateries aimed at independent travellers. Although very touristy in the high season, this pleasant small town has retained an unhurried pace of life and is a backwater compared with coastal playpens such as Kuşadası and Marmaris.

Why it's so popular is easy to understand: the grandiose Roman ruins of Ephesus are almost on its doorstep.

## Orientation & Information

Most of the pensions are on the quieter western side of the highway (Atatürk Caddesi), behind the Ephesus Museum, but others are on the eastern side along with the otogar, restaurants and train station. There's a **tourist office** (☎ 892 6328; www.selcuk.gov.tr; ☎ 8.30am-noon & 1-5.30pm Mon-Fri year-round, 1-5pm Sat & Sun summer) in the park on the western side of the main street.

Ephesus is a 3km walk west from the otogar along a shady road – turn left (south) at the junction. There are frequent minibuses from the otogar to the junction, leaving you with just a 1km walk.

## Sights

Selçuk is not only close to Ephesus, it's also blessed with superb monuments scattered around the centre. Don't miss the conspicuous **Basilica of St John** (admission €2.50; ☎ 8am-5.30pm), atop Ayasuluk Hill. It was built in the 6th century on the site where it was believed St John the Evangelist had been buried. The less impressive **Temple of Artemis** (☎ 8.30am-5.30pm), between Ephesus and Selçuk, was

once one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. In its prime, it was larger than the Parthenon at Athens. Unfortunately, little more than one pillar now remains.

The excellent **Ephesus Museum** (admission €2.50; ☎ 8.30am-noon & 12.30-4.30pm), opposite the tourist office, houses a striking collection of artefacts.

## Sleeping

You'll be spoilt for choice in Selçuk. Many pensions offer free lifts to Ephesus.

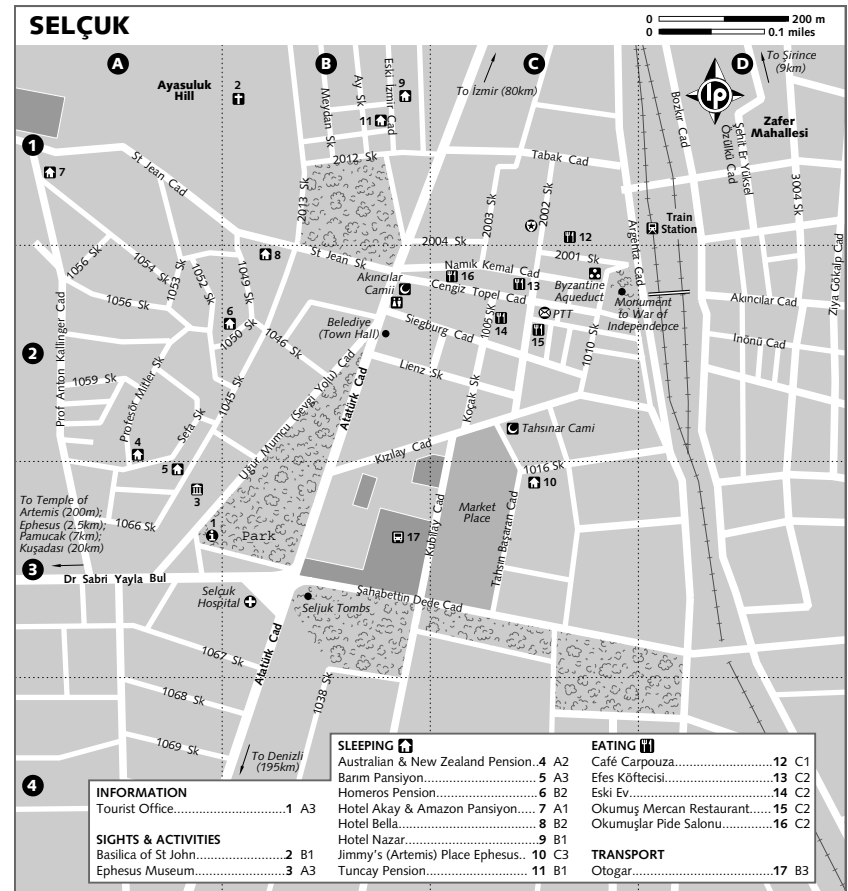
**Homeros Pension** (☎ 892 3995; www.homerospension.com; 1048 Sokak 3; s €9-15, d €18; ☎) This pension gets glowing reports from travellers, and it's no wonder. The squeaky-clean rooms are individually decorated – the owner is a carpenter – and there's a mellow atmosphere. The breezy rooftop terrace is perfect for a tittle and guests can borrow bikes free of charge.

**Hotel Bella** (☎ 892 3944; www.hotelbella.com; St Jean Sokak 7; s/d €15/22; ☎) The artistically inclined will enjoy staying at this charming hotel run by affable hosts. It features tastefully decorated rooms and an inviting rooftop terrace overlooking the basilica. The evening meals (€7) have also garnered high praise from travellers.

**Hotel Akay & Amazon Pansiyon** (☎ 892 3172; www.hotelakay.8m.com; 1054 Sokak 3; s in pension €8, s in hotel €20-40, d in hotel €30-60; ☎) This welcoming spot has three separate buildings to suit all budgets. Shoestringers will opt for the basic but pleasant pension, while wealthier travellers will stay at the conventional hotel or at the plusher boutique hotel, across the road from the pension. Facilities are excellent, and include a pool and a superb rooftop terrace blessed with lovely views.

**Jimmy's (Artemis) Place Ephesus** (☎ 892 1982; 1016 Sokak 19; dm/s/d €7/11/19, r deluxe €30; ☎) Smack-bang in the centre of town, Jimmy's Place is a perennial favourite, with lots of services and comforts. Some rooms feel a bit too lived-in but overall it's perfectly adequate, and owner Jimmy is a mine of local information. There's an on-site library of information on Turkey and guests can use the pool, just one minute's walk away.

**Australia & New Zealand Pension** (☎ 892 1050; www.anzturkishguesthouse.com; Profesör Mitler Sokak 17; dm/s €8/11, d €21-30; ☎) This lively pension-cum-hostel is a gregarious backpacking option, with a mixed bag of rooms set around



a refreshing courtyard. It's a bit cramped and lacks intimacy, but nothing beats a tasty barbecue and a cold beer on the rooftop terrace in the evening (€6). Air-con is extra.

Also recommended:

**Barım Pansiyon** (☎ 892 6923; 1045 Sokak 34; s/d €14/24; ☎) In an old stone house.

**Hotel Nazar** (☎ 892 2222; 2019 Sokak 34; www.nazarhotel.com; d €25; ☎) Was undergoing complete renovation when we visited.

**Tuncay Pension** (☎/fax 892 6260; s €9, d €18-20; ☎) A friendly spot with an open courtyard.

## Eating

Selçuk's culinary scene is not exactly enthralling but there are some commendable options in the centre.

**Okumuş Mercan Restaurant** (☎ 892 6196; PTT Karşısı Hal Binaları 43; mains €3-6) A popular place with a shady terrace; it's in the small square south of the post office.

**Efes Köftecisi** (☎ 892 3267; Namik Kemal Caddesi 2; mains €2-5) This cheap and cheerful eatery serves up plates of *köfte*.

**Okumuşlar Pide Salonu** (Namik Kemal Caddesi; mains €2-4) For pide, you won't find better than Okumuşlar Pide Salonu.

**Café Carpuza** (☎ 892 9264; Argenta Caddesi; mains €2-4) In the mood for an atmospheric setting? Try Café Carpuza, a well-restored house set in a verdant park north of the PTT.

**Eski Ev** (☎ 892 9357; 1005 Sokak 1; mains €2-5) This place boasts a relaxing *bahçe* (garden), but we found the food fairly average.



## Getting There & Away

Selçuk's notoriously hassley otogar is across from the tourist office. Buses from İzmir (€2, one hour, 80km) usually drop you on the main highway nearby.

Frequent minibuses head for Kuşadası (€2, 30 minutes, 35km) and the beach at Pamucak. Coming from the south or east you have to change at Aydın.

## EPHESUS (EFES)

Even if you're not an architecture buff, you can't help but be dazzled by the sheer beauty of the ruins of **Ephesus** (admission €10; ☎ 8am-4.30pm Oct-Apr, 8am-6.30pm May-Sep), the best-preserved classical city in the eastern Mediterranean. If you want to get a feel for what life was like in Roman times, Ephesus is an absolute must-see.

There's a wealth of sights to explore, including the **Great Theatre**, reconstructed between AD 41 and 117, and capable of holding 25,000 people; the marble-paved **Sacred Way**; the **agora**, heart of Ephesus' business life and dating back to 3 BC; and the **Library of Celsus**, adorned with niches holding statues. Going up Curetes Way, you can't miss the impressive Corinthian-style **Temple of Hadrian**, on the left, with beautiful friezes in the porch; the magnificent **Terraced Houses** (admission €10); and the **Fountain of Trajan**. Curetes Way ends at the two-storey **Gate of Hercules**, constructed in the 4th century AD, which has reliefs of Hercules on both main pillars. Up the hill on the left are the very ruined remains of the **prytaneum** (municipal hall) and the **Temple of Hestia Boulaea**, in which a perpetually burning flame was guarded. Finally, you reach the **odeum**, a small theatre dating from AD 150 and used for musical performances and meetings of town council.

You'll find a couple of unpretentious restaurants and *gözleme* and *ayran* stalls near the entrances.

Many pensions in Selçuk offer free lifts to Ephesus. Note that there are two entry points roughly 3km apart. A taxi from Selçuk to the main entrance should cost about €5.

## KUŞADASI

☎ 0256 / pop 50,000

At first glance, Kuşadası is not exactly the most alluring seaside town in Turkey. In summer, it's bustling with package holi-

daymakers from Europe in search of sun, beach and cheap booze – not really the sort of place that appeals to independent travellers. But come outside the high season and all the downsides vanish – you'll find a charming, laid-back town with some lovely beaches and stunning views.

There are Internet cafés and banks with ATMs in the centre. The otogar is 1.5km southeast of the centre on the highway.

## Sights

Kuşadası is short on specific sights, although there's a 16th-century **fortress** once used by pirates on an island in the harbour, and an old **caravanserai** near the harbour. Just beyond the PTT, a passage leads to the old **Kaleiçi** neighbourhood, which has narrow streets packed with restaurants and bars.

Kuşadası also makes a good base for visits to the superb ancient cities of **Priene**, **Miletus** and **Didyma** (admission to all 3 sites €1.25; ☎ 9am-8pm May-Sep, 8.30-5.30pm Oct-Apr) to the south; if you're pushed for time, a 'PMD' tour from the otogar costs around €20. Overlooking a plain, Priene boasts a lovely setting; Miletus preserves a spectacular theatre; and Didyma has a stupendous Temple of Apollo.

Kuşadası's most famous beach is **Kadınlar Denizi** (Ladies Beach), 2.5km south of town and served by dolmuşes running along the coastal road.

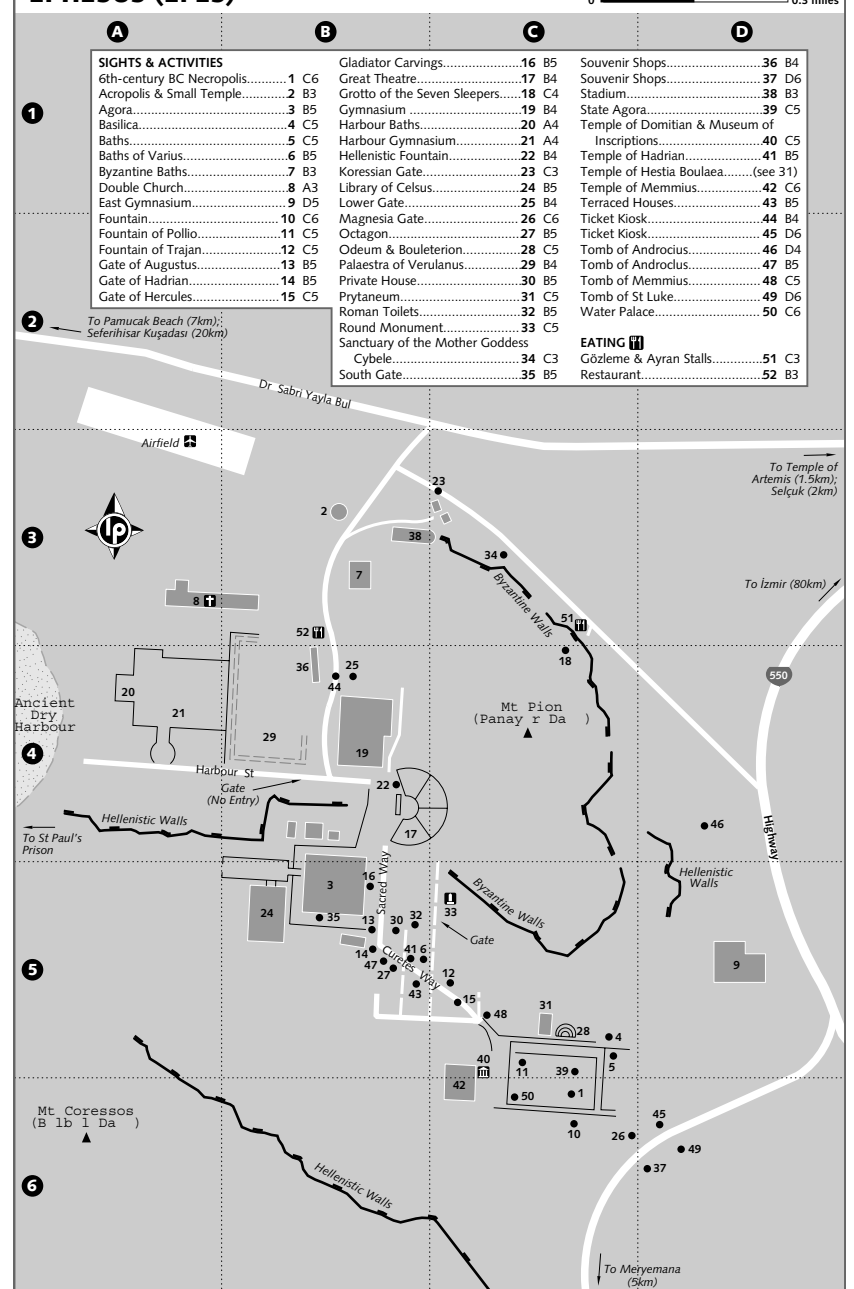
## Sleeping

Most hotels offer free pick-up from the otogar.

**Anzac Goldenbed Pension** (☎ 614 8708; www.kusadashotels.com/goldenbed; Aslanlar Caddesi, Uğurlu 1 Çikmazı 4; s €6-15, d €21-24; ☎) Tucked away in a quiet cul-de-sac, this long-time backpackers' favourite remains a solid choice, with a wide array of rooms varying in shape and size. The rooftop terrace is a killer and has a bar overlooking the town. It's a great place to socialise or to curl up with a book. The Turkish-Aussie couple who run the place will go the extra yard to help travellers.

**Liman Hotel** (☎ 614 7770; www.limanhotel.com; Kıbrıs Caddesi, Buyrak Sokak 4; s/d €18/25; ☎) Liman Hotel is a colourful pile, wedged between various shops right by the harbour. The spiffing location, as well as the spacious and comfy rooms with pristine bathrooms, make this a steal, and the talkative manager, dubbed 'Mr Happy', could not run the place

## EPHESUS (EFES)



with more smiles and determination. The rooftop terrace is a treat on a starry night. If you're penny-counting, consider requesting a cheaper room with no view.

**Captain's House Pension** (☎ 614 4754; fax 212 2216; Atatürk Caddesi 66; s/d €15/30; 🍷) This modest number often surprises guests with its personality. Lacking the typical ho-hum décor, it carries a nautical theme, with an appropriate Aegean-blue colour scheme and seafaring paraphernalia liberally scattered around the communal areas. The only downside is that it's a flick out of the action, to the north.

### Eating & Drinking

There's an abundance of eateries to suit every wallet. As ever, check the cost before ordering fish.

**Ferah Restaurant** (☎ 614 1281; Liman Caddesi 10; mains €8-12) On the waterfront, this popular eatery has garnered hearty recommendations for the quality and freshness of its fish dishes. The interior is outrageously unexciting but the restaurant boasts an inviting seaside terrace from where to survey the boats bobbing in the harbour. Watch the wine prices.

**Öz Urfa Restaurant** (☎ 614 6070; Cephane Sokak 9; mains €4-6) Locals and tourists alike cram into this cheerful joint, off Barbaros Hayrettin Paşa Bulvarı, any time of the day to tuck into pide and copious grills with relish.

**Avlu Restaurant** (☎ 614 7995; Cephane Sokak 15; mains €4-6) Almost next door to the Öz Urfa, the Avlu is one of those cheap-and-cheerful places where you can simply point at what you want, pay, eat and enjoy.

Need to let off steam? Head to Barlar Sokak (Bar St), which is chock-a-block with Irish-theme pubs. It's a scruffy-round-the-edges kind of street but after a few drinks it can be lots of fun.

### Getting There & Away

#### BOAT

All Kuşadası travel agencies sell tickets to the Greek island of Samos. There's at least one daily boat to/from Samos year-round (€30 one way, €35 same-day return).

#### BUS

From the otogar, direct buses depart for several far-flung parts of the country, or you can change at İzmir (€3). In summer there are frequent buses to Bodrum (€8,

two hours, 151km) and Denizli (for Pamukkale; €8, three hours).

For Selçuk (€1, 40 minutes), pick up a minibus on Adnan Menderes Bulvarı.

### INLAND FROM SELÇUK Pamukkale

☎ 0258

Way inland, east of Selçuk, Pamukkale is renowned for the gleaming white ledges (travertines) with pools that flow down over the plateau edge. It used to be one of the most familiar images of Turkey but these days it has lost a bit of its gloss. Sadly in recent years the water supply has dried up and it is no longer possible to bathe in the travertine pools. Behind this fragile natural wonder lie the magnificent ruins of the Roman city of Hierapolis, an ancient spa resort.

Pamukkale is also a good base from which to explore the ruined city of Afrodiasias (Geyre), near Karacasu south of Nazilli.

#### SIGHTS

##### Travertines & Hierapolis Ruins

As you climb the hill above Pamukkale village, you pay to enter the **travertines and Hierapolis** (admission €3; 🕒 24hr). The ruins of Hierapolis, including a huge theatre, a colonnaded street, a latrine building and a vast necropolis, are spread over a wide area; allow at least half a day to do them justice.

Afterwards you can swim amid sunken Roman columns at **Pamukkale Thermal** (admission €10), on top of the ridge, and visit the excellent **Hierapolis Archaeology Museum** (admission €1.25; 🕒 8.30am-noon & 1.30-5pm), which contains some spectacular sarcophagi and friezes from Hierapolis and nearby Afrodiasias. As you return to the village keep looking back for great views of the glittering travertines.

##### Afrodiasias

Ephesus may be the *crème de la crème* of Western Anatolia's archaeological sites, but the ruined city of **Afrodiasias** (admission €5; 🕒 9am-6pm May-Sep, 9am-5pm Oct-Apr) is thought by many to rival it. Because of its isolation, it is less overrun with coach parties (breathe a sigh of relief). Most of what you see dates back to at least the 2nd century AD. If it's not too busy, the site exudes an eerie ambience that is uniquely unforgettable. The 270m-long **stadium**, one of the biggest in the classical world, is a startling vision, as

are the **Temple of Aphrodite** and the white-marble **theatre**.

The only downside is that access by public transport is not easy. It makes sense to sign up for a transport-only arrangement with your pension in Pamukkale (about €18).

#### SLEEPING & EATING

Competition between Pamukkale's many pensions is intense, and the services on offer are much better than in most other towns. Most places provide good, cheap home-cooked meals and serve wine and beer.

**Kervansaray Pension** (☎ 272 2209; kervansaray2@superonline.com.tr; İnönü Caddesi; s/d €13/20; 🍷 📺 📺) One of the best deals in town, with cheerful rooms and a friendly family atmosphere.

**Beyaz Kale** (Weisse Burg Pension; ☎ 272 2064; weisseburg@yahoo.com; Menderes Caddesi; s/d €12/22; 🍷) The Beyaz Kale deserves plaudits for its eight renovated rooms, its tasty meals and its rooftop restaurant.

**Koray** (☎ 272 2300; Fevzi Çakmak Caddesi 27; s/d €12/22; 🍷 📺) Find heaven in this inviting place, located in the quiet south part of the village. After all that vigorous activity, recline by the pool or relax in the basement **hamam**. The Koray brothers offer tour services to all the surrounding sites.

**Öztürk Otel-Pension** (☎ 272 2116; ozturkhotel@ozturkotel.com; İnönü Caddesi; s/d €11/20; 🍷 📺 📺) Next to the Koray, the Öztürk is another firm favourite. There's lots of greenery around the pool.

**Allgau Hotel** (☎ 272 2767; allgau@superonline.com; Hasan Tahsin Caddesi; s/d €11/18; 🍷 📺 📺) Well-tended gardens and clean-smelling rooms.

#### GETTING THERE & AWAY

In summer, Pamukkale has several direct buses to and from other cities. At other times of year you'll probably have to change in Denizli. Buses run between Denizli and Pamukkale every 30 minutes or so.

### BODRUM

☎ 0252 / pop 32,200

If you have time for only one stop on the Aegean coast, you can hardly do better than Bodrum. With its sugar-cube houses draped in brilliantly coloured bougainvillea, its palm-lined streets and its twin bays, it has managed to cling to its original charm. By some miracle it retains a really special magic – a fusion of wind, sea, light and re-

strained sophistication – that isn't dissipated even by the throngs of lager louts and the influx of charter deals in high summer.

### Orientation & Information

The **otogar** (Cevat Şakir Caddesi) is 500m inland from the Adliye (Yeni) Camii, a small mosque at the centre of the town. The PTT and several banks with ATMs are on Cevat Şakir. There are Internet cafés on Üçkuyular Caddesi, all charging about €1 per hour. The **tourist office** (☎ 316 1091; fax 316 7694; Kale Meydanı; 🕒 8.30am-5.30pm) is beside the Castle of St Peter.

### Sights & Activities

Bodrum's star attraction is the conspicuous **Castle of St Peter**. Built in 1402 and rebuilt in 1522 by the Crusaders, the castle houses the **Museum of Underwater Archaeology** (admission €6.25; 🕒 9am-noon & 1-5pm Tue-Sun), containing finds from the oldest Mediterranean **shipwreck** (admission €2.50; 🕒 10-11am & 2-4pm Tue-Fri) ever discovered; and a model of a Carian princess's tomb, inside the **French Tower** (admission €2.50; 🕒 10am-noon & 2-4pm Tue-Fri). Sadly there's little left of the **Mausoleum of Halicarnassus** (admission €1.50; 🕒 8am-noon & 12.30-5pm Tue-Sun), the monumental tomb of King Mausolus, which was once among the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

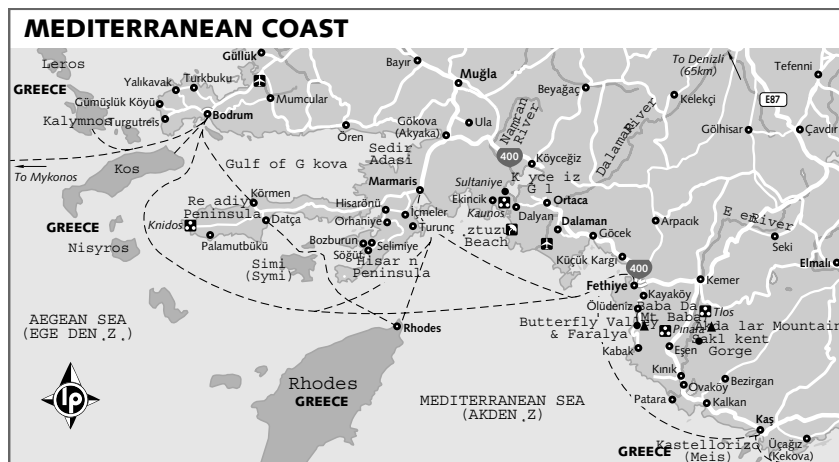
Bodrum is famous for its **scuba diving**. Look for the dive centres on the boats moored near the tourist office. Numerous yachts moored along Neyzen Tevfik Caddesi on the western bay run **day trips** (around €15) around the bay.

### Sleeping

The narrow streets north of Bodrum's western harbour house pleasant family-run pensions. Those behind the western bay tend to be quieter than those on the eastern bay because they're further from the famously noisy Halikarnas Disco. Prices drop between November and March, but few places stay open in winter.

**Su Otel & Cottages** (☎ 316 6906; www.bodrum4u.com/suhotel; Turgutreis Caddesi, 1201 Sokak; s/d €40/80; 🍷 📺 📺) Here, quite possibly, is Bodrum's most seductive hotel. Why do we love it so? Amiable, English-speaking owners who take pride in their hotel, sparkling bathrooms, handsome rooms set around a flower-filled courtyard, colourful walls, a





The otogar is 2km north of town, off the road to Bodrum.

### Sights & Activities

The small **castle** (admission €0.70; ☎ 8am-noon & 1-5.30pm) houses a modest museum and offers lovely views of Marmaris.

Numerous yachts along the waterfront offer day tours of Marmaris Bay, and its beaches and islands. A day's outing usually costs around €15 per person, much less in the low season.

The most popular daily excursions are to Dalyan and Kaunos or to the bays around Marmaris, but you can also take longer, more serious boat trips along the hilly peninsula west of Marmaris to Datça and Knidos.

Marmaris is also a popular place to scuba dive, and there are several dive centres located on the waterfront.

### Sleeping

Unlike Kuşadası and Bodrum, Marmaris is bereft of small, cheap pensions. Most places are closed from November to April.

**Ayçe Otel** (☎ 412 3136; www.aycehotel.com; 64 Sokak 11; s/d €25/33; ☎ ☎ ☎) No doubt the best place to rest your party-weary head is this family-run hotel. Located in a residential neighbourhood north of the tourist office, the Ayçe is one of the most commendable options in town. Rooms are fairly compact but immaculate and well furnished. The facilities are top-notch and the nifty pool is a distinct bonus.

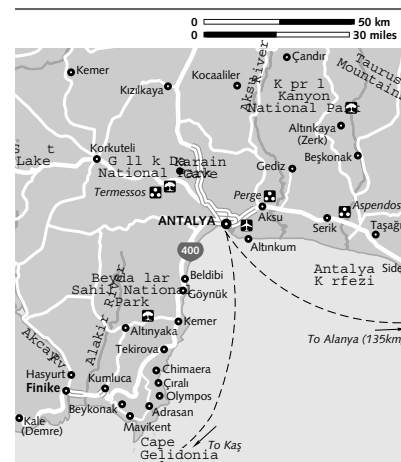
**Interyouth Hostel** (☎ /fax 412 3687; Tepe Mahallesi, 42 Sokak 45; dm/d €7/17; ☎) In the covered bazaar, right in the swing of things. Relishing being the only backpacker place in town, this hostel has piles of Spartan, boxlike but clean rooms. The shared bathrooms are in fine fettle. The staff here are as clued-up as you'd expect from an HI joint. The hostel sells cheap ferry tickets to Rhodes, hires out scooters for €18 per day and runs *gilet* (traditional wooden yacht) cruises. No breakfast is served.

**Marina Hotel** (☎ 412 6598; Barbaros Caddesi 39; s/d €27/45; ☎ ☎) Nothing beats the Marina's location beneath the castle and the unsurpassable views from the rooftop terrace. Ignore the Barbie-esque yellow colour scheme if you can; instead, focus on the fabulously detailed wooden ceilings.

**Barış Motel** (☎ 413 0652; barismotel@hotmail.com; 66 Sokak 10; s/d €17/23) A short hop from the Ayçe, this modern building is nothing exciting, but it's quiet, clean, well managed and sizzling-hot value for Marmaris. There's a handful of cheaper singles with shared bathrooms (€10) – a boon for budget travellers.

### Eating & Drinking

Waterfront restaurants to the south and the east of the tourist office have pleasant outdoor dining areas, but prices are inevitably higher than those inland. Check prices before ordering to avoid nasty shocks. For the cheapest fare, explore the bazaar and the



streets beyond it, looking for 'untouristy' local Turkish places selling pide, kebaps and ready-made food.

**Kırçıceği** (☎ 413 7710; Yeni Yol Caddesi 15; mains €2-6) Cut inland from the Atatürk statue along Ulusal Egemenlik Bulvarı and turn right opposite the Tansaş shopping centre to find this exceedingly popular eatery. The attentive staff zip about at lunchtime and the menu runs the gamut from pide to grills, kebaps, soups and stews.

**Ney Restaurant** (☎ 412 0217; 26 Sokak 24; mains €6-9) Dramatically housed in a quaint old house off the waterfront, Ney has much more character than most of its nearby competitors. The food is on an equal footing. Indulge in yummy Turkish home-style cooking served in a pocket-sized dining room.

**Fellini** (☎ 413 0826; Barbaros Caddesi 61; mains €6-9) On the waterfront, this is the perfect place to give your palate a break from the usual kebaps. It specialises in delectable pasta and Italian-style pizzas.

Just inland from the PTT are several reputable restaurants, including **Sofra** (☎ 413 2631; 36 Sokak 23; mains €2-3; ☎ 24hr), a sprawling place heaving with happy diners any time of the day (or night), and its competitor **Anadolu Ev Yemekleri** (☎ 413 1331; 34 Sokak 13; mains €2-3; ☎ 24hr). These long-standers have a hearty range of dishes. Join the throng and enjoy.

Good news if you're up for a big night: Hacı Mustafa Sokak is wall-to-wall with bars and discos that keep the music pumping until around 4am.

### Getting There & Away

The nearest airports to Marmaris are at Bodrum and Dalaman.

The otogar in Marmaris has frequent buses and minibuses to Bodrum (€7, four hours, 165km), İzmir (€7, 4½ hours, 320km) and Fethiye (€7, four hours, 130km).

Hydrofoils to Rhodes operate twice daily in summer (once or twice weekly in winter) for €40 one way/same-day return (one hour). Buy your ticket in any Marmaris travel agency.

### KÖYCEĞİZ

☎ 0252 / pop 7600

Hard to pronounce, but definitely worth the effort of a little practise, Köyceğiz is one of southern Turkey's most peaceful villages, almost perfectly preserved from the relentless growth of hotels serving package holiday-makers. Set inside a nature reserve, it boasts a superb setting on the edge of a serene lake, which is joined to the Mediterranean Sea by the Dalyan River. The town smells sweetly of orange blossom, a reminder that it still has a farming life beyond tourism. Köyceğiz is the perfect place to kick back and unwind before heading to the more adrenaline-fuelled resorts further east.

### Sleeping & Eating

Most accommodation options are off to the right (west) as you approach the mosque when coming into town. They can organise various tours on and around the lake.

**Tango Pansiyon & Hostel** (☎ 262 2501; www.tango-pension.com; Alihsan Kalmaz Caddesi; dm/s/d €8/13/19; ☎ ☎ ☎) With a relaxed, easy-going vibe, this guesthouse-cum-hostel has a social life that gets the thumbs up from more than a few travellers in season. Rooms are luminous and marshmallow coloured, with lashings of bright colours splashed all over the walls. Other pluses include hire bikes, English movies, free pick-up from the bus station, a verdant garden, boat trips on the lake and an extensive breakfast menu (cornflakes, anyone?). The terrace is a delightful place to chill out with a beer in hand. Tango is used by the Fez Bus (p636).

**Hotel Alila** (☎ /fax 262 1150; Emeksis Caddesi; s/d €22/34; ☎ ☎ ☎) This well-situated hotel has full-frontal views of the beach and is easily Köyceğiz' fanciest place to stay. Think light-filled rooms, a pool to cool off in when it's

sweltering and bathrooms so scrupulously clean you could probably eat off the floor. Recommended.

**Fulya Pension** (☎ 262 4356; Alihsan Kalmaz Caddesi; s/d €10/19; 🍷) A short jaunt from Tango Pansiyon, this casual-feeling family-run guesthouse is another solid choice, with unremarkable but perfectly serviceable rooms at unbeatable prices.

**Panorama Plaza** (☎ 262 3773; www.panorama-plaza.de; Cengiz Topel Caddesi 69; s/d €23/38; 🍷 🍷 🍷) Almost 1km west of the mosque, the Panorama is run with care and efficiency, and is popular with German tour groups – not a bad sign. It offers spruce (if a wee bit impersonal) rooms with spotless bathrooms, but the killer here is the gleaming swimming pool.

**Istanbul Pide & Pizza Lahmacun** (☎ 262 2186; Fevzipaşa Caddesi 23; mains €1-2) Make a beeline for this little eating den in the alley of shops off the main square. It has the best pide in town, cooked before your eyes, at tiny prices.

**Coliba Restaurant** (☎ 262 2987; Emeksiz Caddesi; mains €3-7) West of the mosque, this is one of the most agreeable places in town, especially on a sunny day. Nab a table on the terrace and soak up the views of the lake while munching on fresh seafood.

## Getting There & Away

There are frequent buses to Fethiye (€4, 1½ hours), Marmaris (€3, one hour) and Ortaca (for Dalyan; €1, 25 minutes).

## DALYAN

☎ 0252

Set on the banks of a placid river and backed by a cliff face cut with elegant Lycian tombs, Dalyan is the kind of quaint, picturesque small-scale town that looks great on postcards. Some people feel it has become a bit too touristy but it's still a superb place worth including on your itinerary.

In summer, excursion boats go out to explore the river and the lake, charging about €5 per person. A typical cruise might take in the **Sultaniye hot springs** and **mud baths** on the shores of Köyceğiz Lake, the unspoilt **İztuzu beach** and the ruined city of **Kaunos** (admission €2.50; 🕒 8.30am-5.30pm).

## Sleeping & Eating

**Tolga Pansiyon** (☎ /fax 284 2294; Maraş Caddesi; s/d €20/35; 🍷) Quiet and understated, this lovely pension is a genuine find. It features bright,

spacious rooms and squeaky-clean bathrooms. Some rooms have wood-panelled ceilings and superb views of the river. There's lots of space in the garden for loafing by the river. Boat hire is available.

**Adem's Pension** (☎ 284 2030; info@ademspension.com; s/d €18/30; 🍷) This engaging pension is a winner if you can score one of the more expensive rooms, blessed with views to the tombs. Enjoy your breakfast or dinner in the well-tended garden overlooking the river.

**Gül (Rose) Pansiyon** (☎ 284 2467; fax 284 4803; Erkul Sokak; s/d €15/20; 🍷) This welcoming pension is exceedingly clean and tidy. Some rooms feature wood panelling, and breakfast is served on a shady terrace. It's not right on the river and air-con is extra (€3).

**Berg Hotel** (☎ /fax 284 4024; Ada Sokak 20; s/d €33/56; 🍷) The newest option, close to Tolga Pansiyon. Slick and smart, with minimalist décor, well-chosen furnishings, pristine bathrooms and light tones.

If you don't fancy eating in your pension, try one of the riverside restaurants. Beyaz Gül Restaurant serves excellent outdoor grills in a dreamy garden setting, while Ceyhan concocts a wide array of Turkish specialities, including vegetarian options. There are also some bars on the main drag to keep you active until the wee hours.

## Getting There & Away

To get to Dalyan you'll have to change bus in Ortaca (€0.50, 13km) on the main highway. At Ortaca otogar you can catch connecting buses to Köyceğiz (€1, 25 minutes).

## FETHIYE

☎ 0252 / pop 48,200

Despite its picture-postcard harbour backdrop, Fethiye still has much more of the feel of a living town than big resorts such as Kuşadası and Marmaris. It's an incredibly easy-going place, often visited at the beginning or end of a *gület* cruise.

## Orientation & Information

Fethiye's otogar is 2km east of the centre. Atatürk Caddesi, the main street, has banks with ATMs. Most pensions are west of the centre and overlook the yacht harbour.

## Tours

Be sure to sign up for the **12-Island Tour** (per person €16), which mixes swimming, cruising

## BLUE VOYAGES

For many travellers a four-day, three-night cruise on a *gület* (traditional wooden yacht) between Fethiye and Kale (Demre) is the highlight of their trip to Turkey. Usually advertised as a Fethiye-Olympos voyage, the boats actually start or stop at Kale and the trip to/from Olympos (1¾ hours) is by bus. From Fethiye, boats call in at Ölüdeniz and Butterfly Valley and stop at Kaş, Kalkan and Üçağız (Kekova), with the final night at Gökkaya Bay. A less common route is between Marmaris and Fethiye, also taking four days and three nights.

Food and water is usually included in the price, but you have to buy your booze on the boat. All boats are equipped with showers, toilets and smallish but comfortable double cabins (usually six of them). In practice most people sleep on mattresses on deck.

Backpacker cruises are usually quoted in pounds sterling. Depending on the season the price is €120 to €150 per person, which is not at all cheap, so it makes sense to shop around. Here are some of our suggestions to avoid getting fleeced:

- Do ask for recommendations from other travellers.
- Do bargain, but don't necessarily go for the cheapest option because the crew will skimp on food and alcohol.
- Do check out your boat (if you are in Fethiye) and ask to see the guest list.
- Do ask whether your captain and crew speak English.
- Don't go for gimmicks such as free water sports – they don't cost the companies anything.
- Don't buy your ticket in İstanbul, as pensions and commission agents take a healthy cut selling tickets.
- Don't take a boat just because it is leaving today.

We recommend owner-operated outfits, as they run a much tighter ship. During summer some larger companies may farm out unknowing tourists to lazy captains with suspect boats. Boats come and go just about every day of the week between late April and October. Competition is stiff between the following companies:

**Almila Boat Cruise** (☎ 0535-636 0076; www.beforelunch.com)

**Big Backpackers** (☎ 0252-614 9312; www.bluecruiseftethiye.com)

**Compass Yachting** (☎ 0252-612 5921; www.compassyachting.com)

**Interyouth Hostel** (☎ 0252-412 3687; interyouth@turk.net)

**Olympos Yachting** (☎ 0242-892 1145; www.olympusyachting.com)

and sightseeing. Any hotel or travel agency can sign you up, or you can ask around at the harbour. The boats usually stop at six islands and cruise by the rest.

## Sleeping

Most places to stay are uphill from the yacht marina along Fevzi Çakmak Caddesi. Take a Karagözler dolmuş along the harbour road to reach them or give them a call on arrival and they will pick you up from the bus station.

**Ferah Pension** (Monica's Place; ☎ 614 2816; ferahpension@hotmail.com; 2 Karagözler Mahallesi, Ordu Caddesi 2; dm/s/d €8/15/18; 🍷 🍷) The long-standing and quality Ferah Pension is clean and well managed, and has received positive reviews from many travellers. All

rooms have private bathrooms and there's one dorm room with its own bathroom. This place is as neat as a pin and the flowery courtyard is a great place to rest on a hammock. Monica's hearty home cooking (€6) gets lots of warm praise.

**Duygu Pension** (☎ 614 3563; www.duygupansiyon.com; 2 Karagözler Mahallesi; s/d €12/19; 🍷 🍷) Almost a carbon copy of the Ferah and further along the same street, the Duygu Pension is another endearing option, with its commodious and functional rooms. There's a pervading tranquillity here and the views from the breezy terrace will take your breath away. The rooms with air-con cost an extra €6.

**İrem Hotel** (☎ 614 3006; fax 614 3396; 1 Karagözler Mahallesi, Fevzi Çakmak Caddesi 38; s/d €22/37;

(P ☺ ☺) This concrete pile overlooking the bay is perfectly acceptable, with well-appointed and comfortable rooms containing not one whit of soul or character. Still, some boast superb views and there's a smallish pool if you want to take a dip.

### Eating & Drinking

There's a smattering of excellent options in the centre, in or around the bazaar.

**Meğri Lokantasi** (☎ 614 4047; Çarşı Caddesi; mains €2-5) This casual spot in the bazaar is heavily patronised by locals at lunchtime. It serves the usual selection of kebaps and ready-made meals at bargain-basement prices.

**Meğri Restaurant** (☎ 614 4046; Likya Sokak 8-9; mains €5-15) More upmarket than its *lokanta*, this venue, located in the heart of the bazaar, oozes character. The large, rustic interior is enticing but the real wow is the outdoor seating. It's a great place to chill out and soak up the atmosphere. There's an extensive menu, including vegetarian options, and a very decent wine list.

**Paşa Kebap** (☎ 614 9807; Çarşı Caddesi 42; mains €2-6) This popular eatery near the bazaar has won accolades for its ultrafresh dishes, all served with a smile. The *kalamar salata* (squid salad) is a good bet to start, followed by a *tavuk güveç* (chicken stew).

**Cafe Oley** (☎ 612 9532; Eski Meğri Sokak 4; mains €3-7; ☺) You don't expect to find this cute café-bistro in the bazaar. If you're growing weary of kebaps, this is the place to chow down on spaghetti, chicken wings and fresh salads.

In the mood for fish? Head for the fish section of the market, where several eateries, including the **Cem & Can** (☎ 614 3097), have hit on a great idea – you buy a fish at the market and they cook it. A full meal will set you back about €10.

If you fancy an evening out, the **Ottoman Bar** (☎ 612 1148; Hamam Sokak), set in a restored old house behind the bazaar, is the best place to check out the local scene. In high season it's packed to the rafters with fun-seekers of all backgrounds and nationalities, all jostling shoulders with a minimum of worries.

### Getting There & Away

If you're going straight to Antalya (€9, four hours, 222km), note that the *yayla* (inland) route is quicker and much more comfortable than the *sahil* (coastal) route. There are also regular services to Marmaris (€7, four

hours, 130km), Kalkan (€3.50, two hours, 81km), Kaş (€4, 2½ hours, 110km) and Olympos (€9, five hours, 219km). Minibuses to more-local destinations, including Ölüdeniz (€2, 15km), leave from behind the big white mosque (Yeni Cami) in the town centre.

### ÖLÜDENİZ

☎ 0252

Over the mountains to the south of Fethiye, lovely Ölüdeniz (Dead Sea) has proved a bit too beautiful for its own good. It's now one of the most famous beach spots on the Mediterranean, with far too many hotels catering for the package-holiday market backed up behind the sands. Still, the **lagoon** (admission €1.25; ☎ 8am-8pm) itself remains tranquility incarnate and is a gorgeous place to sun yourself. Ölüdeniz is also a mecca for **tandem paragliding**. Many companies here offer tandem paragliding flights for €65.

### Sleeping & Eating

**Oba** (☎ 617 0158; www.obahotel.com; old bungalows s/d €15/24, villas €75; ☺) In a congenial, spacious and leafy garden, the Oba offers accommodation to suit all budgets, including ultrabasic bungalows for the impecunious. Should you need some luxury, there's a series of chaletlike bungalows (called villas) fitted with all the mod cons – they wouldn't be out of place in Finland or Switzerland. The food comes in for good reviews too and there's an inviting Turkish corner complete with cushions for practising idleness.

**Ünsal Hotel** (☎ 617 0031; www.unsalhotel.com; s/d €30/45; ☺ ☺ ☺) This family-run two-star venture, about 100m from the beach, prides itself on its large pool amid a verdant garden, and rightly so. It has plainly decorated, light-filled rooms with sparkling bathrooms.

There are also plenty of camping grounds a thong's throw from the beach. Most offer fixed tents and cabins with or without running water.

### Getting There & Away

Frequent minibuses run between Ölüdeniz and Fethiye (€2, 20 minutes).

### PATARA

☎ 0242

Blessed with a splendid 20km white-sand beach, Patara, by some miracle, has been successful at clinging to its original charm.

With its rural setting and unhurried pace of life, it's a great place to chill out for a few days. There are also extensive ruins (admission €1.25), including a triple-arched triumphal gate at the entrance to the site, with a necropolis containing several Lycian tombs nearby. All in all, it's a good combination of nature and culture.

### Sleeping & Eating

All the places to stay and most of the places to eat are in Gelemiş village, 1.5km inland from the beach.

**Akay** (☎ 843 5055; akaypension@hotmail.com; s/d €12/18; ☺ ☺) A good find for budget-seekers, with spotless rooms, a homely atmosphere and good Turkish meals.

**Flower Pansiyon** (☎ 843 5164; flowerpension@hotmail.com; s/d €11/18; ☺) Another welcoming option, similar in standards to the Akay.

**Golden Pension** (☎ 843 5008; www.goldenpension.com; s/d €15/19; ☺ ☺) You'll strike gold at this pension, with its good facilities and prim, clean rooms. It's owned by the mayor, who is, unsurprisingly, knowledgeable about the area.

**Patara View Point Hotel** (☎ 843 5105; www.patara.viewpoint.com; s/d €21/31; ☺ ☺) Picture this: a tranquil setting up a hill, first-rate facilities, plain but well-equipped rooms, unabashed views over the valley and a delightful pool. This is our idea of a nice retreat.

### Getting There & Away

Buses plying the Fethiye–Antalya route can drop you on the highway, 2km from the village (3.5km from the beach, signposted 'Patara'). From here dolmuşes head down to the village. In summer there are also direct dolmuşes from Kaş (€3, one hour, 42km), from Kalkan (€1.50, 25 minutes) and from Fethiye (€4).

### KALKAN

☎ 0242

Kalkan is, arguably, the most picturesque and photographed of the coastal towns along the western Mediterranean. What is not in question, however, is that you'll need a sturdy set of knees, for Kalkan tumbles down a steep hillside to a marina full of open-air restaurants.

Once a quaint fishing village, it's now a rather sophisticated tourist resort, 11km east of the Patara turn-off. Its picturesque tangle

of narrow streets lined with pretty wood-and-stone houses is a real treat. With its high-quality restaurant scene and excellent pensions and hotels to suit all budgets, Kalkan is a place for sybarites. The only gripe is that Kalkan itself has no good beaches – you'll have to hire a scooter and head to Patara.

### Sleeping

**Türk Evi** (☎ 844 3129; selmaelitez@superonline.com; Yalıboyu Mahallesi; d €25-35) Fancy something stylish without breaking the bank? This sensitively restored mansion is for you. Its nine rooms are elegantly decked out, with a subdued rustic feel and lots of feminine touches. The delightful courtyard is a great place to chill out. The only drawback may be the lack of air-con.

**Daphne Pansiyon** (☎ 844 3380; daphne\_kalkan@hotmail.com; Kocabaya Caddesi; s/d €25/35; ☺) Find heaven in this tranquil retreat on the road winding down past the mosque to the harbour. The décor combines Ottoman charm (carpets and kilims) with more-modern trimmings, including air-con in all the rooms. Black-and-white photos taken by the owner add a touch of originality, plus there's the mandatory rooftop terrace.

**Çelik Pansiyon** (☎ 844 2126; Yalıboyu Mahallesi 9; s/d €15/20; ☺) Tidy, unfussy and attractively priced, Çelik is best suited to the thrifty, who'll enjoy the refreshingly low-key atmosphere. Rooms 9 and 11 are the best lit and boast lofty views of the bay. Breakfast is served on a breezy terrace overflowing with purple bougainvillea (another clincher).

**The White House** (☎ 844 3738; fax 844 3501; s/d €21/36; ☺) This renovated guesthouse doesn't exude much personality, but the 10 rooms are well appointed and neat as a pin. There's a great rooftop terrace for dozing in the sun. Fancy a carpet? Rejoice: the ones that adorn the walls in the corridor are for sale.

### Eating

**Aubergine Restaurant** (☎ 844 3332; mains €8-12) Turkish cuisine with a French twist. Feast on *saumon en crouste* (salmon cooked in pastry), Ottoman leg of lamb, savoury burgers or a tender fillet of wild boar. The flowery terrace right by the seafront is hard to beat, and a respectable wine list encourages a long, relaxed dinner. There's a vegetarian menu, too.

**Korsan** (☎ 844 3076; mains €3-7) Next to the town beach, this place is almost hidden

under a veil of bougainvillea. The bird's-eye view of the bay from the rooftop terrace may aid digestion of the hearty dishes on offer.

**Ottoman House** (☎ 535 224 6684; mains €6-12) This much-praised restaurant attends to most tastebuds and includes good vegetarian options. The *Hünkar Beğendi* (sautéed lamb served on a bed of aubergine puree), the sultan's favourite dish, goes down a treat. Or you could sit on floor cushions on the terrace and puff a nargileh.

**Paprika Cafe & Terrace Restaurant** (☎ 844 1136; Yalboyu 12/B; mains €7-10) It's slick, it's swish, it's smart. The eye-catching menu includes fresh homemade pasta, salads, meat dishes and desserts. There's occasionally live music in the evenings.

**New Flower Tomato Restaurant** (☎ 844 2655; mains €2-3) Look no further in Kalkan for a cheap (ie a bit greasy, but delicious) fill. It serves up ready-made meals and the proverbial kebab. It's usually packed at lunchtime.

**Foto/Nun Yeri** (☎ 844 3464; Yalboyu Mahallesi; mains €2-4) Another welcoming place with cool vibes. The food is straightforward, with dishes such as *gözleme*, and the views are thrown in for free.

## Getting There & Away

In summer, minibuses connect Kalkan with Fethiye (€3.50, two hours), Kaş (€2, 30 minutes) and Patara (€1.50, 25 minutes).

## KAŞ

☎ 0242 / pop 8000

This little stunner is the pride of the western Mediterranean coast. It's an incredibly scenic town with a picturesque quay, a very good restaurant scene, numerous shops and a scattering of Lycian tombs. Although it's pretty touristy, it has so far managed to keep some of its small-town charm and rarely comes under siege from tour groups and souvenir sellers. For action-seekers, there are outdoor adventures galore to gorge on amid a stunning landscape. You should definitely afford Kaş a day or two if you possibly can.

## Sights & Activities

Apart from enjoying the town's wonderfully mellow atmosphere and a few small pebble beaches, you can walk west a few hundred metres to the well-preserved **theatre**. Behind it you'll see the **Doric Tomb**, cut into the hillside in the 3rd century BC. It's

also well worth walking up the hill on the street to the left of the tourist office to reach the **Monument Tomb**, a Lycian sarcophagus mounted on a high base.

The most popular **boat trip** (€15) is to Kekova Island and Üçağız, a three-hour excursion that includes time to see several interesting ruins as well as stops for swimming. Other standard excursions go to the Mavi Mağara (Blue Cave), Patara and Kalkan, or to Liman Ağzı and several nearby islands. There are also overland excursions to the wonderful 18km-long Saklıkent Gorge and villages further inland.

If you want to do anything slightly active while you are in Kaş, contact **Bougainville Travel** (☎ 836 3737; www.bougainville-turkey.com; İbrahim Selin Caddesi 10). This long-established English-Turkish tour operator offers scuba diving, trekking, mountain biking and canyoning trips in the area. The sea-kayaking day trips over the Kekova sunken city (€35), suitable for all fitness levels, will be the highlight of your stay in Kaş.

## Sleeping

Kaş' quietest places to stay are all on the west side of town. All places provide free pick-up from the otogar.

**Ani Motel** (☎ 836 1791; Süleyman Yıldırım Caddesi; www.motelani.com; dm/s/d €7/10/18; ☎) Congenial owners are part of the reason that the Ani has such a faithful following. This backpackers' den has oodles of hippy charm and features well-arranged, if a tad sterile, rooms with pathogen-free bathrooms. Some rooms have air-con, the others are equipped with fans. If you're watching the pennies, there are also three functional dorms. In summer, the breezy rooftop terrace is a winner, with a BBQ every other day (€6), satellite TV and comfy couches that you can happily laze on.

**Kaş Otel** (☎ 836 1271; kasotel@yahoo.com; Hastane Caddesi 15; s €22, d €30-45; ☎) You couldn't possibly get a better position for a dreamy night: the dazzling waters of the Mediterranean are right at your doorstep, the waves are within earshot and Meis Island looms on the horizon. The Kaş Otel has piles of sun-filled, uncluttered rooms with gleaming bathrooms; be sure to score a sea-facing room with balcony. There's also a rooftop restaurant. What more could you ask for?

**Hilal Pension** (☎ 836 1207; www.korsan-kaş.com; Süleyman Yıldırım Caddesi; s/d €8/16; ☎) Another cheery

backpacker haunt with a homy feel and excellent facilities, including free Internet access, air-con in all the rooms, back-friendly beds, balconies and a plant-filled terrace.

Other options:

**Kale Otel & Pension** (☎ 836 1062; info@guletturkey.com; Amfityatro Sokak 8; s/d pension €35/50, hotel €50/70; ☎) It's a wee bit overpriced, but it's still a pleasant place to mooch around, drinking tea or reading a book on the sea-facing lawn at the rear. Rooms are immaculate.

**Santosa** (☎ 836 1714; Süleyman Yıldırım Caddesi; s/d €15/24; ☎) A decent fallback if the other pensions are full.

## Eating

**Chez Evy** (☎ 836 1253; Terzi Sokak 2; mains €8-15; ☎ dinner Tue-Sun) In the mood for something different? *Ooh la la*, this French outpost, tucked away in a side street, is really worth checking out. Savvy locals swear that the steaks here are the best this side of the Seine. Evy won't let you leave until you're patting your tummy contently.

**Bahçe Restaurant** (☎ 836 2370; Anıt Mezar Karşısı 31; mains €5-8) Up behind the Monument Tomb, this enchanting venue boasts a dreamy garden setting. Vegetarians will thank their lucky stars for the flavoursome meze on offer.

**Çınarlar** (☎ 836 2860; Şube Sokak 4; mains €3-7) This cheap-and-cheerful joint specialises in pide, pizzas and *güveç* (stew), all flawlessly cooked.

**Nur Pastaneleri** (☎ 836 4380; Atatürk Bulvarı) This sleek pastry shop is something of a treasure-trove for carb-lovers, with lots of ravishing baklava. Just treat yourself!

**Natur-el** (☎ 836 2834; Gürsoy Sokak 6; mains €5-8) Indulge in fine *ev mutfağı* (home cooking), prepared with care and served with a smile in attractive surroundings. Finish up with the calorie-busting homemade *aşure*.

**Sun Café & Bar** (☎ 836 1053; Hükümet Caddesi; mains €3-6) Favoured by locals for its chilled-out vibe and tasty Ottoman specialities.

Also recommended:

**Oba Restaurant** (☎ 836 1687; Çukurbağlı Caddesi 8; mains €2-4) A perennial favourite, up the hill past the PTT.

**Sempati Restaurant** (☎ 836 2418; Gürsoy Caddesi 11; mains €4-8) A rather sophisticated place, with an intimate atmosphere.

## Drinking

Rejoice! There are a couple of buzzing bars in Kaş. Not the kind of boisterous places you would find in Marmaris or Kuşadası,

but more-civilised venues heavy on atmosphere. Check out Harry's Bar, Mavi Bar or Hi Jazz Bar.

## Getting There & Away

There are daily bus services to Kalkan (€2, 30 minutes, 29km), Olympos (€5, 2½ hours, 109km) and Patara (€3, one hour, 42km). For other destinations, connect at Fethiye (€4, 2½ hours, 110km) or Antalya (€6, four hours, 185km).

## OLYMPUS & ÇIRALI

☎ 0242

Olympos is a Shangri-la for travellers. Picture fragmentary ruins scattered among wild grapevines, a secluded beach, a steep forested valley, a stream that runs through a rocky gorge and various accommodation options heavy on atmosphere. This fabulous mix – a heart-palpitatingly dramatic setting and an unrivalled ambience – is a rare treat. No wonder many people come here for a couple of days and end up staying for weeks.

Neighbouring Çıralı, 1km to the east, is another gem of a place. While Olympos has a well-established party reputation, Çıralı is the perfect place to experience the fine art of *keyif* (quiet relaxation).

The drive here is also a treat, strewn with mountain views all the way from Kaş.

## Sights

Don't miss the fascinating ruins of **ancient Olympos** (admission €1.25). A skip away from the beach, it's a wild, abandoned place where ruins peek out from forested coppices, rock outcrops and riverbanks.

If you just want to spend a lazy day, nothing beats the **beach** in Olympos. Çıralı also boasts a fine stretch of clear sand.

Various pensions in Olympos and in Çıralı run evening tours (for a modest fee) to **Chimaera**, a cluster of flames that blaze spontaneously from crevices on the rocky slopes of Mt Olympos. It's located about 3km from Çıralı's beach.

## Sleeping & Eating

### OLYMPUS

Staying in a rustic treehouse is a typical Olympos experience, though they are slowly being replaced by proper bungalows with bathrooms. Treehouses cost about €9 to €12 per person, and rooms or bungalows





views over a beautiful marina and the soaring Bey Mountains (Beydağları).

Heading down from the **clock tower** you will pass the **Yivli Minare** (Grooved Minaret), which rises above an old mosque. Further into Kaleiçi, the quirky **Kesik Minare** (Truncated Minaret) is built on the site of a ruined Roman temple.

Just off Atatürk Caddesi, the monumental **Hadrian's Gate** was erected during the Roman emperor Hadrian's reign (AD 117–38).

Don't miss the excellent **Suna & İnan Kıraç Kaleiçi Museum** (Kocatepe Sokak 25; admission €1.25; ☎ 9am–noon & 1–6pm Thu–Tue), in the heart of Kaleiçi. It houses a fine collection of Turkish ceramics, together with rooms set up to show important events in Ottoman family life.

Need some hush and a cool place to rest your sightseeing-abused feet? Nothing beats **Karaalioglu Parkı**, a large, attractive and flower-filled park that's good for a stroll, or the equally inviting **Tophane Parkı**.

Excursion yachts tie up in the Roman Harbour in Kaleiçi, offering **boat trips** that visit the Gulf of Antalya islands and some beaches for a swim (from €15).

## Sleeping

There are pensions aplenty in Kaleiçi. Architecture buffs, this area will appeal to your sense of aesthetics: most places to stay are housed in renovated historic buildings.

**Sibel Pansiyon** (☎ 241 1316; fax 241 3656; Fırn Sokak 30; s/d €16/26; ☎) This is a peaceful, sweetly run retreat with spick-and-span rooms set in a pair of renovated Ottoman houses. Your multilingual host, Sylvie, goes all out to make this place feel like your own home (only cleaner). The plant-filled courtyard, where breakfast is served, is a real plus. A peach of a place.

**Senem Family Pension** (☎ 247 1752; fax 247 0615; Zeytin Geçidi Sokak 9; s/d €19/25; ☎) A safe haven for women travellers, with luminous, well-scrubbed rooms and an inviting terrace affording heavenly views over the bay. It's run by Mrs Seval Ünsal, a congenial mama who goes out of her way to make your stay a happy one.

**Erken Pansiyon** (☎ 247 6092; fax 247 6092; Hıdırlık Sokak 5; s/d €15/21; ☎) Another good runner-up, with natty bathrooms and well-furnished rooms. It's housed in a *konak* (mansion).

**Dedekonak** (☎ 248 5264; Hıdırlık Sokak 13; s/d €15/25; ☎) This stately mansion is a bargain,

with character-filled rooms and a lovely secluded garden at the back.

**Ninova Pension** (☎ 248 6114; fax 248 9684; Hamit Efendi Sokak 9; s/d €25/40; ☎) Those wanting a cosy and comfortable base could do worse than check in here. Parquet floors, wooden ceilings, fine rugs and crisp white linen make the rooms distinctive. An added bonus is the stone-walled garden shaded by orange trees.

**Özmen Pansiyon** (☎ 241 6505; www.ozmenpension.com; Zeytin Çıkmaşı 5; s €12–15, d €20–25; ☎ ☎) This backpacker staple has undergone a quality renovation and is now perfectly serviceable, with airy rooms and modern bathrooms. Enjoy the views from the attractive rooftop terrace.

**Hotel Alp Paşa** (☎ 247 5676; reservation@alppasa.com; Hesapçı Sokak 30; s/d €55/75; ☎ ☎ ☎) If you're keen to play out Ottoman fantasies during your stay, consider pampering yourself in this swish establishment in the heart of the Kaleiçi. It sports 70 blissfully decorated rooms and suites with opulent bathrooms. Other luxuries include a *hamam*, a courtyard swimming pool and whirlpool baths in the more-expensive rooms. The on-site restaurant is well regarded. A sultan's life is a hard life, isn't it?

**Minyon Hotel** (☎ 247 1147; www.minyonhotel.com; Tabakhane Sokak 31; d €75–80; ☎ ☎ ☎) The attention to detail in this elegant place, in the southern part of Kaleiçi, shows impeccable taste. The owner has created an enveloping ambience through the use of period pieces and antiques, including mosaic flooring, and the full comforts of modernity (mini-bar, bathrooms with all the frills) have been seamlessly integrated into the traditional design. You can cool off in the glittering pool too, when temperatures swelter in this part of the city.

## Eating & Drinking

Many pensions serve good meals at decent prices. Otherwise, Eski Sebzeciler İçi Sokak, an alley near the junction of Cumhuriyet and Atatürk Caddesi, is lined with little restaurants and pastry shops where you can feast on goodies such as chicken, beef and baklava at unbeatable prices. Many eateries have outdoor tables.

**Mermerli Restaurant** (☎ 248 5484; Mermerli Banyo Sokak 25; mains €5–8) Perched above the eastern end of the harbour, this restaurant can't be beaten for sunset views of the bay and Bey

Mountains. It serves up the usual array of grills and salads.

**Gül Restaurant & Café** (☎ 247 5126; Kocatepe Sokak 1; mains €5–7; ☎) dined lunch Sun) Cosy and intimate, the Gül offers well-prepared meat dishes. An unexpected bonus is the garden at the back.

**Hasanağa** (☎ 242 8105; Mesit Sokak 15; mains €5–9) Located in a quiet backstreet, this enduring Antalya icon doesn't disappoint. The menu covers enough territory to please most palates, and vegetarians are well catered for with a respectable selection of tasty meze. The leafy garden at the back has atmosphere by the bucket load. Musicians appear most nights, getting the raki drinkers singing along.

**Sırrı Restaurant** (☎ 241 7239; Uzun Çarşı Sokak 25; mains €4–7) One of the most interesting places to eat, even if the food hardly rises to gourmet standards. You'll love the Ottoman décor and the outdoor tables in a garden strung with lights.

There are innumerable bars in Kaleiçi and around the yacht harbour. It's well worth seeking out the atmospheric **Gızlı Bahçe** (☎ 247 4601; Karadağ Sokak 5), tucked away in a side street just outside of Kaleiçi; the lively **Dem-Lik** (☎ 247 1930; Zafer Sokak 6), filled with Turkish students; the dynamic **Castle Café-Bar** (☎ 242 3188), right on the cliff's edge behind the tower Hıdırlık Kulesi; and the mellow **Natural Türk Evi** (Tophane Parkı).

## Getting There & Away

Antalya's airport is 10km east of the city centre on the Alanya highway. Turkish Airlines offers frequent flights to/from İstanbul and Ankara. Onur Air and Atlasjet also have flights to/from Antalya.

From the otogar, buses head for Alanya (€4, 2¼ hours), Göreme (€13, around 10 hours), Konya (€9, five hours), Olympos (€2, 1½ hours) and Manavgat/Side (€3, 1¼ hours).

## AROUND ANTALYA

Between Antalya and Alanya there are several magnificent Graeco-Roman ruins to explore. You can't help but be dazzled by the sheer beauty of the ruins at **Perge** (admission €6; ☎ 8am–5.30pm), east of Antalya and just north of Aksu. The site has a 12,000-seat stadium and a 15,000-seat theatre. Another stunning place is **Aspendos** (admission €6), 47km east of Antalya. Here you'll see Turkey's best-preserved ancient theatre, dating from the

2nd century AD and still used for performances during the Antalya Festival every June/July. **Termessos** (admission €2.50; ☎ 8am–5pm), high in the mountains off the Korkuteli road, to the west of Antalya, has a spectacular setting but demands some vigorous walking and climbing to see it all. Unless a coach party turns up, these places are eerily deserted.

The only gripe is that it's not convenient to get to these sights by public transport. The easiest way to see them is with your own transport or on a tour from Antalya. A full-day tour to Perge and Aspendos should not cost more than €35 per carload, and a half-day tour to Termessos should cost about €25. Ask at your pension or hotel in Antalya. There are plenty of agencies in Antalya hiring out cars for €25 per day.

## SIDE

☎ 0242 / pop 18,000

Come prepared. In summer, Side is a huge destination, and you won't feel as if you've fallen upon an undiscovered gem. During the day the heart of the town is awash with carpet shops and souvenir sellers catering to coach-party holidaymakers. Unless you like the 'Hello, I do a special price for you' sales pitch, it'll quickly drive you insane. But by late afternoon, when the crowds have left, Side reverts to a charming, relatively low-key coastal town – it's the perfect time to enjoy its fantastic ruins and sandy beaches.

You'll find several banks with ATMs on the main drag.

## Sights

Side's impressive ancient structures include a huge **theatre** (admission €6.50; ☎ 8am–5pm) with 15,000 seats, one of the largest in Anatolia; a Roman bath, now a **museum** (admission €3; ☎ 8.30am–5.15pm), with an excellent small collection of statues and reliefs; and seaside **temples** to Apollo and Athena, dating from the 2nd century AD. It's also blessed with sandy **beaches**.

## Sleeping & Eating

**Beach House Hotel** (☎ 753 1607; Küçük Plaj; s/d €18/33) Gets the thumbs up for its plain but serviceable sea-facing rooms – some with a balcony. Perched right on the beach, it also offers free sun beds.

**Emir Pansiyon Cafe** (☎ 753 4859; Köseoğlu Otel Yanı; d €20) Another nifty option, it has luminous,

clean rooms with slick bathrooms. Feeling peckish? The café on the ground floor serves up various inexpensive munchies.

**Moonlight Restaurant** (☎ 753 1400; Barbaros Caddesi 49; mains €5-12) This alluring restaurant overlooking the sea offers indoor and outdoor seating for tucking into tasty dishes. On balmy summer evenings, the seaside tables, with waves almost lapping your toes, are a winner. It specialises in fish, so check the prices carefully.

The harbour is wall-to-wall with restaurants chock-full of tourists. Most serve average cuisine whipped up for tourists (yawn). Be careful to get the price on any seafood and wine you order.

### Getting There & Away

In summer, Side has direct bus services to Ankara, İzmir and İstanbul. Otherwise, frequent minibuses connect Side with Manavgat otogar (€0.30), 4km away, from where buses go to Antalya (€3, 1¼ hours), Alanya (€3, 1¼ hours) and Konya (€11, 5½ hours).

### ALANYA

☎ 242 / pop 110,100

Ask any independent traveller: Alanya has little to entice backpackers. Because of its swathe of sandy beaches stretching 22km east from the town, Alanya has swollen out of recognition with package holidaymakers and frolicking sun-seekers from Europe. It's not all that bad, however. The waterfront promenade is worth a stroll and the magnificent Seljuk fortress perched high on a hill above the town is a magnet for architecture buffs.

The otogar is on the coastal highway (Atatürk Caddesi), 3km west of the centre. You'll find numerous banks with ATMs in the centre.

### Sights & Activities

Alanya's crowning glory is the Seljuk **fortress** on top of the promontory. It was built in 1226. From here you get unimpeded views over the city and the coast. The octagonal **Kızıl Kule** (Red Tower; admission €2; ☎ 8am-noon & 1.30-5.30pm), down by the harbour, was also built in the year 1226.

If you're an active type, it's possible to **scuba dive** in the bay. There are several dive operators uphill above the harbour.

Various boats offer **excursions** around the promontory (about €15). Tours visit several caves as well as a beach.

### Sleeping

Sadly, Alanya is bereft of cheap accommodation options, as pensions have been superseded by faceless concrete lumps. But there are a couple of exceptions above the harbour.

**Hotel Temiz** (☎ 513 1016; fax 519 1560; İskele Caddesi 12; s/d €18/30; ☎) This friendly place is definitely *temiz* (clean) and offers 32 spruce and well-maintained rooms with stout bedding and gleaming bathrooms. The rooms at the front boast terrific views of the bay but those at the back are certainly quieter.

### Eating & Drinking

These days, you'll have to head well inland to the bazaars and beyond to get a cheap bite to eat. Otherwise, the waterfront restaurants are worth frequenting for evening meals if your credit line can stand it.

**Ravza** (☎ 513 3983; Yeni Çarşı Zambak Sokak; mains €2-5) Brisk, buzzing, filling and excellent value: this popular eatery, off the seafont, bounces with ebullient waiters. It's been doling out well-executed pide and kebaps since 1955.

**Mahperi** (☎ 512 5491; Rihim Caddesi; mains €6-14) A veteran on the Alanya dining scene, this local favourite on the seafont serves up an expansive (and expensive) selection of lip-smacking specialities, including seafood, grills, salads and pasta.

**Ottoman House** (☎ 511 1421; Damlatas Caddesi 31; mains €10-12) This old Ottoman house is high on atmosphere, with a neat garden and cosy upstairs rooms. Undecided tastebuds can go for a big plate of meze.

**Çello** (İskele Caddesi) On the same street as the Hotel Temiz. Looking slightly sinister with its dimly lit interior, Çello is actually anything but. Featuring a much more amiable atmosphere than its kitsch counterparts on the harbour, it has Turkish live bands every evening.

### Getting There & Away

There are frequent buses from Alanya to Antalya (€4, 2¾ hours) and to Adana (€11, 10 hours), stopping in Anamur (€4, three hours).

**Akfer Denizcilik** (☎ 511 5565) runs ferries to Girne (Northern Cyprus) three times a week

from April to October (€83 return, including tax).

### THE EASTERN COAST

East of Alanya, the coast sheds some of its touristic freight. About 7km east of **Anamur**, it would really be a shame to miss the wonderful **Mamure Castle** (Mamure Kalesi; admission €1.25; ☎ 8am-6pm), built right on the beach by the emirs of Karaman in 1230. The ghostly ruins of Byzantine **Anamurium** (admission €1.25; ☎ 8am-8pm), 8.5km west of the town, are also worth a stop.

Anamur is a good base to break your journey. In the harbour district, **Hotel Bella** (☎ 0324-816 4751; Kürşat Caddesi 5; tayfun98@hotmail.com; s/d €15/27; ☎) has benefited from an overhaul, and offers clean rooms and excellent facilities. It's professionally managed by Anamur local Tayfun Eser, who is fluent in English. He also runs **Eser Pansiyon** (☎ 0324-814 2322; eser@eserpansiyon.com; s/d €14/22; ☎), almost next door. If you want to be next to the otogar, **Hotel Dedehan** (☎ 0324-814 7522; Otogar Yanı; s/d €11/18; ☎) is a decent pad, but expect some noise seeping in from the main drag or from the mosque across the street. If hunger beckons, opt for **Kaptan Mustafanin Yeri** (☎ 0324-816 6957; İnönü Caddesi; mains €2-4), on the waterfront, or **Astor** (☎ 0324-814 7405; İskele Meydanı; mains €2-5), a delightful restaurant decorated with folksy flair. The Astor *köfte* go down a treat, but the fish dishes are equally tasty.

**Kızkalesi** (Maiden's Castle), 185km east of Adana, is a growing holiday resort with a striking Crusader castle offshore.

### ANTAKYA (HATAY)

☎ 0326 / pop 140,700

The biblical Antioch, Antakya (confusingly, also called Hatay) was vilified as the Roman Empire's most depraved city. Undeterred, St Peter dropped by to preach here and you can visit the ancient **Church of St Peter** (St Pierre Kilisesi; admission €3; ☎ 8.30am-noon & 1.30-4.30pm Tue-Sun), 3km east of the centre. The magnificent Roman mosaics in the **Antakya Archaeology Museum** (☎ 214 6168; Gündüz Caddesi; admission €3; ☎ 8.30-11.30am & 1.30-5pm Tue-Sun) more than justify an overnight stop on the way to Syria.

**Hotel Saray** (☎ 214 9001; fax 214 9002; Hürriyet Caddesi; s/d €12/17) is the best budget option in town. **Atahan Hotel** (☎ 214 2140; Hürriyet Caddesi 28; s/d €16/20; ☎) is conveniently located in the town centre. If you want to kick back

in style, the **Antik Beyazıt Otel** (☎ 216 2900; bbeyazit@antikbeyazitoteli.com; Hükümet Caddesi 4; s/d €60/75; ☎) fits the bill. It's in a French colonial building dating from the 1920s.

The otogar has direct buses to most western and northern points. There are also frequent services to Gaziantep (€6, four hours) and Şanlıurfa (€10, seven hours).

There are direct buses across the border to Aleppo and Damascus in Syria (p635).

## CENTRAL ANATOLIA

For people needing a break from the tourist trails of the southern Aegean and the western Mediterranean, central Anatolia is the perfect antidote. Here, amid the mildly undulating steppe, you find some of modern Turkey's most important towns, including Ankara, the country's capital. For curious travellers, central Anatolia is a godsend: you won't see coach parties here, and the resorts are non-existent, which adds to the sense of adventure.

And culture? Lovers of fine Seljuk architecture will be enthralled by Konya and Sivas; those who prefer the Ottoman style should stop off in Safranbolu and Amasya, two hidden treasures blessed with uniquely unforgettable architecture.

### ANKARA

☎ 0312 / pop four million

It's often said that the capital of Turkey is devoid of charm, but one visit to the citadel and the Museum of Anatolian Civilisations will help you change your mind. Sure, the relative austerity and orderliness of the Turkish capital are not to everybody's taste, but you'll soon discover that Ankara boasts beguiling sights and has its inviting quarters. So pack an open mind and investigate the possibilities.

### Orientation & Information

Ankara's *hisar* (citadel) crowns a hill 1km east of Ulus Meydanı (Ulus Sq), the heart of Old Ankara and near most of the inexpensive hotels. The newer Ankara lies further south, around Kızılay Meydanı (Kızılay Sq) and Kavaklıdere.

Atatürk Bulvarı is the main north-south axis. Ankara's mammoth otogar is 6.5km southwest of Ulus Meydanı and 6km west

of Kızılay Meydanı. The train station is about 1.4km southwest of Ulus Meydanı.

The helpful **tourist office** (☎ /fax 231 5572; Gazi Mustafa Kemal Bulvarı 121, Maltepe) is opposite Maltepe Ankaray station. The main **PTT** (Atatürk Bulvarı) is just south of Ulus Meydanı. There are Internet facilities and branches of the main banks with ATMs in Ulus.

## Sights

With the world's richest collection of Hit-tite artefacts, the state-of-the-art **Museum of Anatolian Civilisations** (Anadolu Medeniyetleri Müzesi; ☎ 324 3160; Hisarparkı Caddesi; admission €6; ☎ 8.30am-5.15pm) is the *crème de la crème* of the museums in Turkey, and Ankara's premier attraction. Just up the hill, it's also well worth exploring the side streets of the **citadel**, by far the most stunning part of Ankara. Inside it, local people still live as if in a traditional Turkish village.

About 500m north of Ulus Meydanı, it's worth taking a look at the surprisingly well preserved remains of the **Roman baths** (admission €1.25; ☎ 8.30am-12.30pm & 1.30-5.30pm Tue-Sun), dating back to the 3rd century. To the east you'll find Roman ruins, including the **Column of Julian** (AD 363) in a square that is ringed by government buildings, and the **Temple of Augustus & Rome**.

If you're an Atatürk devotee, you can't leave the city without having paid your respects to the founder of modern Turkey at the **Anıt Kabir** (Mausoleum of Atatürk; admission free; ☎ 9am-noon & 1.30-5pm), 2km west of Kızılay Meydanı.

## Sleeping & Eating

All places listed below are in Ulus or in the citadel, which are convenient for the main attractions.

**Hotel Oğultürk** (☎ 309 2900; www.ogulturk.com; Rüzgarlı Eşod Sokak 6; s/d €30/45; ☎) Just off Rüzgarlı Sokak on the right, the Oğultürk is a reliable three-star affair, featuring good-sized rooms and a cheerful lobby with a mellow Turkish corner and a small fountain. It's professionally managed and good for lone women.

**Hotel Spor** (☎ 324 2165; fax 312 2153; Rüzgarlı Plevne Sokak 6; s/d €25/30; ☎) A block west, and just off Rüzgarlı Sokak, the modernish Spor wins no prize for character but features well-equipped (if smallish) rooms with impeccable bathrooms and a surpris-

ingly scrumptious (by Turkish standards) breakfast buffet.

**Angora House Hotel** (☎ 309 8380; fax 309 8381; Kalekapısı Sokak 16-18; s/d €45/70; ☎) Step through the door into this treasure-trove of a *konak* and you'll never want to leave. It's blessed with an ace location inside the citadel, a short bag-haul from the Museum of Anatolian Civilisations. The six rooms are individually decorated and ooze rustic charm, with wood-beamed ceilings, antique furniture and brick walls. Rooms 20 and 22 boast fine views.

**Kebabistan** (Sanayi Caddesi, Ulus İşhanı 6/A; mains €3-5) Off Atatürk Caddesi, this place perches above the courtyard of a huge block of offices and shops. Indulge in hearty kebabs and succulent pide. It's often packed out, and justifiably so.

**Urfalı Hacı Mehmet** (☎ 439 6068; Turan Güneş Bulvarı; mains €2-5) Just near the PTT, this long-running institution is a godsend for vegetarians and those who've grown weary of kebabs. Where else in Turkey could you find a menu groaning with 20 varieties of salad? It also concocts excellent pide.

**Zenger Paşa Konağı** (☎ 311 7070; Ankara Kale, Üstü Doyran Sokak 13; mains €3-8) Set in an old house in the citadel, this quirky restaurant has several dining rooms stuffed with a mind-boggling array of ethnographic artefacts. The food gets good reports, with the usual array of Turkish staples. Nab a table near the window to enjoy the sensational views of the city. There's live music every evening.

**Kale Restaurant** (☎ 311 4344; Ankara Kale, Doyran Sokak 5-7; mains €6-12) Another place strong on atmosphere, but much less cluttered than the Zenger Paşa. The Kale also occupies a wonderfully converted *konak*, with a soothing courtyard, splendid views and high-quality food. Finish off your meal with one of the delicious calorie-laden desserts.

## Getting There & Away

### AIR

Ankara's Esenboğa airport, 33km north of the city centre, is the hub for Turkey's domestic flight network. There are daily nonstop flights to most Turkish cities with Turkish Airlines. Atlasjet and Flyair also operate flights to/from Ankara.

### BUS

Ankara's huge otogar (Ankara Şehirlerarası Terminali İşletmesi; AŞTİ) is the vehicu-

## SAFRANBOLU & AMASYA: RELAX IN (OTTOMAN) STYLE

Bored with the ubiquitous concrete eyesores that disfigure almost every city centre in Turkey? Make a beeline for Safranbolu and Amasya, 90km off the road from İstanbul to Ankara and 175km off the road from Ankara to Sivas respectively. These two picture-postcard towns are slightly off the beaten track, but beckon the savvy with their unique setting and historic atmosphere. Both retain much of their original Ottoman style. For Safranbolu, there are a few direct buses from Ankara, while Amasya is conveniently reached from Sivas. Budget in a couple of days to savour both cities and their treasures.

Safranbolu is such an enchanting city that it was declared a Unesco World Heritage site, on a par with Florence, Italy. It boasts a wonderful old Ottoman quarter bristling with 19th-century half-timbered houses. Most of them have been restored, and as time goes on, more and more are being saved from deterioration and turned into hotels or museums.

Blissfully located on riverbanks hemmed in by a cliff, Amasya is probably Turkey's best-kept secret. One of the prettiest towns in all Turkey, it harbours numerous historic sites, including the rock-hewn tombs of the kings of Pontus, a lofty citadel, impressive Seljuk buildings and a profusion of picturesque Ottoman wooden houses scattered among the city centre.

Good news: both Safranbolu and Amasya are endowed with excellent accommodation. There's a profusion of delightful B&Bs, all set in skilfully restored Ottoman mansions. Enjoy!

lar heart of the nation, with coaches going everywhere all day and night. They depart for İstanbul (€15, six hours) at least every 15 minutes.

## TRAIN

There are useful services to Adana, İstanbul, Kayseri, Sivas and a few other cities, but the long-haul services can be excruciatingly slow.

## SİVAS

☎ 0346 / pop 252,000

Once an important crossroads on the long-distance caravan route to Persia and Baghdad, Sivas has many marvellous Seljuk buildings to prove it, all handily situated right in the centre of town. The quintessential Turkish town, it has a very special significance for Turks: in 1919 Atatürk convened the second congress of the War of Independence here.

The **tourist office** (☎ 221 3535; Hükümet Meydanı; ☎ 9am-5pm) is in the *valılık* (provincial government headquarters) building on the main square. Don't miss the buildings in the adjoining park: the **Çifte Minare Medrese** (Seminary of the Twin Minaret) with a grand Seljuk-style gateway; the fabulous **Şifaiye Medresesi**, a medical school that's one of the city's oldest buildings; the **Bürüciye Medresesi**; the 1197 **Ulu Cami** (Great Mosque); and the glorious **Gök Medrese** (Blue Seminary).

There's a clutch of cheap hotels 700m southeast of Konak Meydanı, at the junction

of Atatürk Caddesi and Kurşunlu Sokak. If you're after more creature comforts, opt for the **Otel Madımak** (☎ 221 8027; Eski Belediye Sokak 2; s/d €23/35), near the PTT, or the renovated **Sultan Otel** (☎ 221 2986; rezervasyon@sultanotel.com; Eski Belediye Sokak 18; s/d €35/50), which has modern, well-equipped rooms and satellite TV.

If you're after a quick, no-frills bite, head for the small street behind the PTT, which is packed with pint-sized cheap restaurants. Nimet and Örnek Lokanta are regarded as the best joints for a savoury kebab any time of the day.

There are services to go to Amasya (€10, 3½ hours), Ankara (€13, six hours) and Erzurum (€17, seven hours), among others.

Sivas is a main rail junction. The *Doğu Ekspresi* goes through Sivas to Erzurum and Kars daily; the *Güney Ekspresi* (from İstanbul to Diyarbakır) goes on alternate days.

## KONYA

☎ 0332 / pop 762,000

Be savvy: don't skip Konya. South of Ankara, this booming town was the capital of the Seljuk Turks and showcases some of the best Seljuk architecture in Turkey. It's also a highly significant spiritual centre; it was here that the 13th-century poet Mevlana Rumi inspired the founding of the whirling dervishes, one of Islam's most important mystical orders. You can see the whirling dervishes perform in Konya during the **Mevlana Festival** held on 10 to 17 December.

## Orientation & Information

The town centre stretches from Alaettin Tepesi, the hill topped by the Alaettin Mosque (1221), along Mevlana Caddesi to the tomb of Mevlana, now called Mevlana Müzesi. The otogar is 14km north of the centre; free *servis* take half an hour for the trip into town.

The **tourist office** (☎ 351 1074; Mevlana Caddesi 21; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Sat) is across the square from the Mevlana Müzesi. You'll find numerous banks with ATMs and Internet cafés in the centre, as well as the PTT.

## Sights

Ditch your bags on arrival and leg it straight to the wonderful **Mevlana Museum** (admission €3; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun, 10am-5.30pm Mon), off Mevlana Caddesi. The former lodge of the whirling dervishes, it is topped by a brilliant turquoise-tiled dome – one of the most inspiring images of Turkey. Although it's virtually under siege from pilgrims, there's a palpable mystique here.

It's also well worth visiting two outstanding Seljuk buildings near the Alaettin Tepesi: **Karatay Müzesi** (admission €1.25; Alaettin Bulvarı; ☎ 9am-noon & 1-5.30pm), once a Muslim theological seminary, now a museum housing a superb collection of ceramics; and **İnceminare Medresesi** (Seminary of the Slender Minaret; admission €1.25; Alaettin Bulvarı; ☎ 9am-noon & 1.30-5.30pm), now the Museum of Wooden Artefacts & Stone Carving. The former features a splendid marble entrance, the latter boasts an extraordinarily elaborate doorway.

## Sleeping & Eating

**Otel Mevlana** (☎ 354 0334; Cengaver Sokak 2; s/d €21/36; ☎) A good deal, one block off Mevlana Caddesi, to the south. This hotel has been updated and features unexciting but serviceable rooms with satisfactory beds and TVs. Try to get a 10% discount.

**Otel Derya** (☎ 352 0154; Ayambey Caddesi 18; s/d €21/33; ☎) The newish Derya is a good-value business hotel with glistening bathrooms. It's conveniently positioned, a short bag-haul from Mevlana Müzesi.

**Hotel Ulusan** (☎ 351 5004; ulusanhotel@my.net.com; Çarşı PTT Arkası; s/d €9/16; ☎) Signposted behind the PTT, this is a nice surprise, with perfectly presentable rooms.

**Aydın Et Lokantası** (☎ 351 9183; Mevlana Caddesi, Şeyh Ziya Sokak 5; mains €2-5) In a city swarming with unimpressive kebab joints, this outfit

bucks the trend and features a welcoming interior, with tables set around a fake tree that rises from a fish pond – tacky, but pleasantly soothing. The ultrafresh pide is a winner, as is the *fırın kebab* (slices of tender, oven-roasted mutton served on puffy bread).

**Meşhur Tandir Kebabçısı** (☎ 351 4485; Nadi Fikret Sokak 4; mains €2-4) A fine spot for an informal meal, just near the tourist office. The menu doesn't try to set records in culinary innovation, sticking to classics such as pide and kebabs.

**Şıfa** (☎ 352 0519; Mevlana Caddesi 29; mains €2-5) A bright, spacious and bustling *lokanta* on the main drag, noted for its variety of ready-made meals and savoury *fırın kebab*.

## Getting There & Away

There are daily flights to and from İstanbul with Turkish Airlines.

From the otogar there are frequent buses to Nevşehir, some of which continue to Göreme (€8, 3½ hours). There are also frequent buses between Konya and Pamukkale (€12, seven hours).

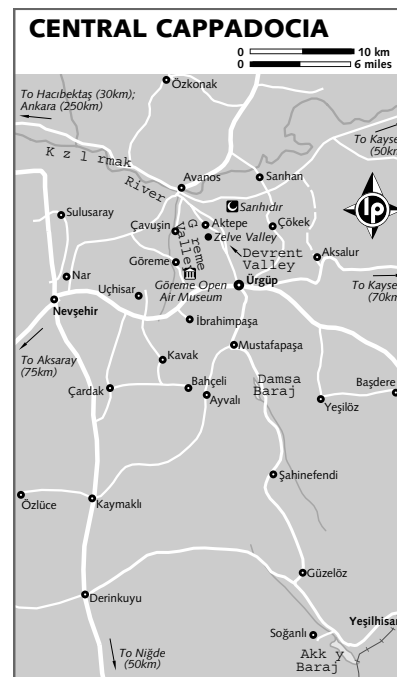
You can get to Konya by train from İstanbul.

# CAPPADOCIA (KAPADOKYA)

Deep in the heart of the country lies a world of lunar landscapes and surreal scenery, of ancient churches and cave dwellings, of picture-postcard villages and big cities steeped in tradition. One of Turkey's most tourist-friendly areas, Cappadocia boasts an exceptional blend of cultural sights, activities and geological wonders. Compared to the southern and eastern coasts, tourist development here has retained a more human scale.

Cappadocia's heavenly backdrop consists of soft volcanic tuff that has been sculpted over millennia into fantastic shapes by water and erosion. The end result is fascinating: huge stone mushrooms (dubbed 'fairy chimneys' by locals), soft ridges and deep valleys, acute edges and mild undulations. Early Christians carved chambers, vaults and labyrinths into the chimneys, for use as churches, stables and homes.

Cappadocia is a place that never fails to make onlookers' jaws drop in awe.



## Tours

The following agencies offer good daily tours (costing around €45) of local highlights, including Ihlara Valley.

**Neşe Tour** (☎ 0384-271 2525; www.nesetour.com; Avanos Yolu, Göreme)

**Ötügen Voyage** (☎ 0384-271 2588; www.otuken.travel.com; Avanos Yolu, Göreme)

**Zemi Tour** (☎ 0384-271 2576; Bilal Eroğlu Caddesi, Göreme)

**Kirkit Voyage** (☎ 0384-511 3259; www.kirkit.com; Atatürk Caddesi, Avanos) and **Argeus** (☎ 0384-341 4688; www.argeus.com.tr; İstiklal Caddesi 7, Ürgüp) are experienced travel agencies with varied programmes including horse-riding and cycling tours. **Middle Earth Travel** (☎ 0384-271 2528; www.middleearthtravel.com; Göreme) also offers a programme of walking tours and activities such as abseiling.

## GÖREME

☎ 0384 / pop 2000

One of Turkey's most familiar images, Göreme village is a magical place set amid towering tuff cones and honeycombed

cliffs, and surrounded by vineyards. Unsurprisingly it's a magnet for backpackers from all over the world. It is chock-a-block with pensions, restaurants and tour agencies, and the amazing Göreme Open-Air Museum is on its doorstep – Göreme really does seem to have it all.

All the services useful to travellers are in the centre, including the otogar, two ATMs, the PTT and Internet cafés.

## Sights & Activities

Cappadocia's number one attraction is the **Göreme Open-Air Museum** (admission €7.50, Karanlık Kilise €3.50; ☎ 8am-5.30pm Apr-Oct, 8am-4.30pm Nov-Mar). It's pricey but it's worth every lira. Medieval frescoes can be seen in the rock-hewn monastery, nunnery and churches. Some date from the 8th century, though the best are from the 10th to 13th centuries. The stunning **Karanlık Kilise** (Dark Church) is one of the most famous and fresco-filled of the churches. The **Tokalı Kilise** (Buckle Church), which is across the road from the main entrance, is equally impressive and has fabulous frescoes.

There are a number of **hiking** options around Göreme village. It's surrounded by a handful of gorgeous valleys that are easily explored on foot, allowing about one to three hours for each of them. Most pension owners will be happy to guide you on the trails for a minimal fee.

## CAPPADOCIA FROM ABOVE

If you've never taken a flight in a hot-air balloon, Cappadocia is one of the best places in the world to do it. Flight conditions are especially favourable here, with balloons operating most mornings from the beginning of April to the end of November. The views are simply unforgettable and it's a magical experience. It costs about €180 to €200 per person, or €120 for the cheaper 45-minute flight. It's pricey but definitely worth blowing your budget on.

The following two agencies have good credentials.

**Göreme Balloons** (☎ 0384-341 5662; www.goremehalloons.com; Sivritas Mahallesi 4, Ürgüp) Based in Ürgüp and Göreme.

**Kapadokya Balloons** (☎ 0384-271 2442; www.kapadokyaballoons.com; Adnan Menderes Caddesi, Göreme)

## Sleeping

Göreme has some of Turkey's best-value pensions, which often offer guests the chance to try out the troglodyte lifestyle by sleeping in a cave.

**Elif Star Caves** (☎ 271 2479; www.elifstar.com; Uzundere Caddesi; d €30) This welcoming place is run with care and efficiency by a Turkish-English couple. The seven cave rooms are well appointed and as clean as a whistle. And if you really need an English breakfast, this one's for you!

**Kemal's Guest House** (☎ 271 2234; www.kemalsguesthouse.com; Zeybek Sokak 3; dm/d €6/24; 📺) Barbara and Kemal, a Dutch-Kurdish couple, run this attractive pension, located stumbling distance from the otagar.

**Flintstones** (☎ 271 2555; flintstonescave@hotmail.com; dm €6, s €8-10, d €15-18; 📺 📺) Along the road leading to the Pigeon Valley, this is a secluded place offering accommodation (caves, dorms and standard rooms) to suit all budgets. The best assets here are the swimming pool and the laid-back, chummy atmosphere.

**Köse Pension** (☎ 271 2294; dawn@kosepension.com; per person dm €4, huts €5, d with shared/private bathroom €7/11; 📺 📺) Another solid choice, run by a friendly Scottish-Turkish couple. There's a stadium-sized basic roof dorm, two quirky adjoining huts, and unspectacular, no-frills bedrooms with balconies. But the real drawcards here are the swimming pool and good home-cooked food for vegetarians and meat-eaters (€5). Pity about the rather dull location, near the PTT.

**Canyon View** (☎ 271 2333; www.canyonviewhotel.com; s €25, d €30-50; 📺) Stay at this nearly-but-not-quite boutique hotel right up in the old village and you won't believe your bill – it's excellent value. The nine rooms – some caves, some vaulted – are all decked out with flair, and the architecture is perfectly in tune with the local environment.

Also recommended:

**Paradise Pension** (☎ 271 2248; www.paradise-pension.com; Müze Caddesi; dm €3, s €7-12, d €13-18; 📺) On the road to the Göreme Open-Air Museum.

**Walnut House** (☎ 271 2235; www.walnuthouse.info; Zeybek Sokak; s/d €14/20; 📺) A stately mansion, a few steps away from the otagar.

**Kelebek** (☎ 271 2531; www.kelebekhotel.com; r €25-50, ste €65-100) Pamper yourself in this smart boutique hotel, snugly situated in the heights of Göreme. The suites, in a lovely separate building, are exceedingly atmospheric.

## Eating

Most of Göreme's pensions provide good, cheap meals but you could also take advantage of some fine eateries in town.

**Alaturca** (☎ 271 2882; Müze Caddesi; mains €6-10) Tired of kebab joints? Then consider splashing out a bit in this gastronomic venue. It specialises in traditional Ottoman cuisine with a contemporary twist. Hmm.

**Orient** (☎ 271 2346; Adnan Menderes Caddesi; mains €5-11) Another much-lauded spot, serving excellent fare in rustic, yet elegant, surrounds.

**Dibek** (☎ 271 2209; Hakkı Paşa Meydanı; mains €5-7) Housed in an attractive old stone house, the Dibek oozes atmosphere with its traditional, cosy design. There are few more pleasant experiences than sitting on floor cushions around low wooden tables while noshing on a plate of *mantı*.

**SOS Restaurant & Café** (☎ 271 2872; Bilal Eroğlu Caddesi; mains €2-6) Another place well worth book-marking. Come here for the tasty ready-made meals served in friendly surroundings. The pots lining the front are for the *testi kebab* (a delicious meat and vegetable dish cooked in a sealed pot, which is broken to serve).

Also recommended:

**Café Utopia** (☎ 271 2487; Harm Sokak; mains €5-15) A funky place, with a cosy décor and a rather sophisticated ambience. You can't help but feel you're paying more for the setting and the views than for the food.

**Silk Road** (Müze Caddesi; mains €2-4) A tiny place, which is also puny on prices. Grab a seat on the terrace and chow down on decent munchies.

**Cappadocia Kebab House** (Müze Caddesi; mains €2) This no-nonsense den churns out good sandwiches.

**Göreme Restaurant** (Müze Caddesi; mains €3-5) A genuinely relaxed eatery that serves up Turkish staples in a cosy setting, with kilims and cushions.

## Getting There & Away

There are daily long-distance buses to all sorts of places from Göreme otagar.

Minibuses travel from Ürgüp to Avanos (€0.75) via the Göreme Open-Air Museum, Göreme village and Zelve every two hours. In summer, there's also a half-hourly municipal bus running from Avanos to Nevşehir (€0.75) via Göreme and Uçhisar.

## UÇHISAR

☎ 0384 / pop 3851

Between Göreme and Nevşehir is picturesque, laid-back yet stylish Uçhisar, built around a **rock citadel** (admission €1.25; 🕒 8am-

sunset) that offers panoramic views from its summit. There are some excellent places to stay; the following spots are brilliant value and afford formidable views over the valley. They are all located on the same street.

**Kilim Pansiyon** (☎ 219 2774; www.sisik.com in Turkish; Eski Göreme Yolu; s/d €15/27)

**La Maison du Reve** (☎ 219 2199; www.lamaison-dureve.com; Tekelli Mahallesi 17; s/d €18/28)

**Les Terrasses d'Uçhisar** (☎ 219 2792; www.terrasses-pension.com; Eski Göreme Yolu; s/d €26/29)

In summer, there's a half-hourly municipal bus running from Avanos to Nevşehir via Göreme and Uçhisar (€0.75).

## ZELVE VALLEY

Make sure to visit the excellent **Zelve Open-Air Museum** (admission €3.50; 🕒 8.30am-5.30pm), off the road from Göreme to Avanos. It is less visited than the Göreme Valley, though it too has rock-cut churches, a rock-cut mosque and the chance to indulge in some serious scrambling. On the way back be sure to stop off to see some of the finest fairy chimneys at **Paşabağı**. This beguiling, much-photographed spot is a popular place to come to watch the sunset.

## AVANOS

☎ 0384 / pop 15,900

On the northern bank of the Kızılırmak (Red River), Avanos is known for its pottery. Less touristy than Göreme, it's another potential base for exploring the Cappadocian valleys. You'll find banks with ATMs, the PTT and a couple of Internet cafés along the main drag.

## Sleeping & Eating

**Kirkit Pension** (☎ 511 3148; www.kirkit.com; s/d €22/33) An excellent base, set in converted old stone houses off the main drag. This home away from home offers impeccable rooms with spick-and-span bathrooms. Other perks include an on-site restaurant and a reputable travel agency.

**Venessa Pansiyon** (☎ 511 3840; www.katpatuka.org/venessa; Hafıza Sokak 20; d €30) Another savvy option. Set in a beautifully restored old house decked out with collectables – and its own private underground city.

**Sofa Hotel** (☎ 511 5186; www.sofa-hotel.com; Orta Mahallesi 13; s/d €25/40) Near the northern end of the bridge, this quirky place is full of

nooks and crannies, and has 31 character-filled rooms set in several old houses.

**Dayımın Yeri** (☎ 511 6840; Atatürk Caddesi 23; mains €2-5) This central place gets the thumbs up for its ultrafresh meat dishes and is usually full of happily chomping locals and tourists.

**Bizim Ev** (☎ 511 5525; Orta Mahallesi; mains €3-6) One of the fancier eateries in town, Bizim Ev exudes bucket loads of charm, thanks to its delightful setting (a vaulted dining room), exemplary service, some dazzling wine and well-prepared food.

## Getting There & Away

Minibuses travel from Ürgüp (€0.75) to Avanos via the Göreme Open-Air Museum, Göreme village and Zelve every two hours. In summer, there's also a half-hourly municipal bus running from Avanos to Nevşehir (€0.75) via Göreme and Uçhisar.

## ÜRGÜP

☎ 0384 / pop 14,600

With the most irresistible collection of boutique hotels in Turkey, Ürgüp is the perfect place to splash out. Do yourself a favour and live like a sophisticated sultan for a couple of days in one of these top-notch lodgings.

Although Ürgüp is no longer a well-kept secret, it is still a lovely place to discover, with honey-coloured stone buildings and old houses left over from the days (pre-1923) when the town still had a large Greek population. It is ideally positioned, about 7km east of Göreme Valley. For wine buffs, it also boasts Cappadocia's best wineries.

There are Internet cafés, banks with ATMs, hotels and restaurants around Cumhuriyet Meydanı, the main square.

## Sleeping & Eating

**Elkep Evi Pansiyon 1, 2 & 3** (☎ 341 6000; www.elkepevi.com; Esbelli Mahallesi; s/d €50/75) All we can say is... oh yeah! The most affordable boutique hotel in Ürgüp is perfect for an indulgent holiday. It boasts three separate sections containing a total of 21 cave rooms, each with a small rock-cut terrace. It's elegant, atmospheric and not to be missed. The breakfast room's terrace has unsurpassable views.

**Hotel Elvan** (☎ 341 4191; fax 341 3455; Dutlu Cami Mahallesi, Barbaros Hayrettin Sokak 11; s/d €16/27) A homely atmosphere and motherly welcome await you at this unpretentious but immaculate guesthouse. Excellent value.

**Asia Minor Hotel** (☎ 341 4645; www.cappadocia.house.com; İstiklal Caddesi; s/d €25/35) This is a great deal: the hardwood floor, balconies and manicured garden create a tasteful, comfortable ambience.

**Sun Pension** (☎ 341 6165; İstiklal Caddesi; s/d €8/16) Tucked away behind the *hamam*, this simple pension is run by an elderly couple. It's a good bet if you can get a room on the upper floors, especially rooms 201 to 208, which are brighter and more modern. Avoid by all means the tiny and sombre cave rooms set around the courtyard. Breakfast costs €3.

**Razziya Evi** (☎ 341 5089; www.razziyaevi.com; Cingilli Sokak 24; s/d €25/40) One of the best-value options in Ürgüp, this appealing *evi* is located across the other side of town, southwest of the main square. It has only seven generously sized rooms (some are cave rooms) for greater intimacy. An added benefit is the *hamam* (€5).

**Esbelli Evi** (☎ 341 3395; www.esbelli.com; Esbelli Mahallesi; s/d €65/80; ☑) Yet another darling in Ürgüp's luxury clique, Esbelli Evi was the first boutique hotel in town and still attracts its fair share of aficionados with a refined yet informal environment and a cocoon-like ambience.

For plump wallets, other recommended boutique hotels in the Esbelli district include **Kayadam Cave House** (☎ 341 6623; www.kayadam.com; Esbelli Sokak 6; s/d €60/75) and **Selçuklu Evi** (☎ 341 7460; www.selcukluvi.com; Esbelli Mahallesi; r €60-80), both designed to spoil you rotten. Pure fairy-tale romance!

## Eating & Drinking

**Şömine Restaurant** (☎ 341 8442; Cumhuriyet Meydanı; mains €3-8) The widely acclaimed Şömine, right on the main square, has indoor and outdoor tables and serves up a broad variety of Turkish staples in fairly classy surroundings.

**Ocakbaşı** (☎ 341 3277; Güllüce Caddesi 44; mains €3-7) This is practically an institution. Despite a no-nonsense décor, the Ocakbaşı is consistently rated as one of the best restaurants in Ürgüp. It's a carnivore's paradise, with superb grills, but vegetarians can tuck into equally good meze.

**Kardeşler** (Cumhuriyet Meydanı; mains €2-4) This quirky eatery, on the main square, is famed for its *tandır* (stew cooked in a clay pot, then wrapped in bread).

**Şu & Ne Kahvaltı Ve Börek Salonu** (☎ 341 2818; Cumhuriyet Meydanı; mains €1-2) A small eatery

popular with local women, who come here for some *dedikodu* (gossip), a cup of tea and excellent snacks.

**Şükriüğü** (Cumhuriyet Meydanı) This is the place towards which all heads turn; it's a sleek pastry shop crammed with bait for the sweet toothed. Find heaven here!

**Prokopi Bar** (Cumhuriyet Meydanı) A cosy lounge-bar on the main square.

## Getting There & Away

There are daily long-distance buses to all sorts of places from Ürgüp's otogar.

Minibuses travel to Ayanos (€0.75) via the Göreme Open-Air Museum, Göreme village and Zelve every two hours.

## MUSTAFAPAŞA

☎ 0384 / pop 2500

Mustafapaşa is the sleeping beauty of Cappadocia, a peaceful village with pretty old stone-carved houses, a few minor rock-cut churches and several good places to stay. If you want to get away from it all, this is the place to base yourself.

For backpackers, **Monastery Pension** (☎ 353 5005; www.monasteryhotel.com; Mehmet Şakirpaşa Caddesi; s/d €12/24) is a lovely find. It has 12 neat rooms – some vaulted, some caved – with tiled bathrooms. Some are a bit claustrophobic, so ask to see a few. The pleasant leafy balcony is perfect for kicking back with a book. Meals are available on request (€7).

Another good option, the family-run **Hotel Pacha** (☎ 353 5331; www.pachahotel.com; Sinaso Meydanı; s/d €21/30) is a notch up in standard, with immaculate yet nondescript rooms. More atmospheric is the terrace, with its kilims and artefacts. The home-cooked dinners (about €7), as only a Turkish mama can make them, get rave reviews from travellers.

The quirkiest place in town is probably **Old Greek House** (☎ 353 5306; www.oldgreekhouse.com; Şahin Caddesi; s/d €30/40), a wonderful Ottoman-Greek house with an attractive courtyard. Some rooms have original 19th-century frescoes. Guests praise the meals (€10).

Six buses a day (less on Sunday) travel between Ürgüp (€0.50) and Mustafapaşa.

## IHLARA VALLEY

☎ 0382

A beautiful canyon full of rock-cut churches dating back to Byzantine times, **Ihlara Valley** (Ihlara Vadisi; admission €3; ☎ 8am-7pm Apr-Oct, 8.30am-

5pm Nov-Mar) is a definite must-see. It's still less touristy than Göreme, if only because access is more time-consuming. People come here to follow the course of the stream, Melendiz Suyu, which flows for 16km from the wide valley at Selime to a narrow gorge at Ihlara village. The easiest way to see this gorgeous valley is on a day tour from Göreme (p611), which allows a few hours to walk through the central part of the gorge.

## KAYSERİ

☎ 0352 / pop 536,000

In the shadow of Mt Erciyes, Kayseri is a mind-boggling city that mixes religious conservatism with a phenomenal sense of business and innovation. Much of Kayseri's charm lies in this contradiction and in the juxtaposition of old and new. Venerable mosques and the bustling bazaar district, awash with traditional shops and pungent smells, rub up against contemporary Kayseri in the pedestrianised streets in the centre, where hip-looking university students can be seen courting in slick pastry shops.

Don't miss Kayseri. Even if you're not an architecture buff, you'll be enthralled by the mosques, tombs and old seminaries sprinkled around the city centre, behind the faceless high-rises.

## Orientation & Information

The basalt-walled citadel at the centre of the old town, just south of Cumhuriyet Meydanı (the huge main square) is a good landmark. The train station is at the northern end of Atatürk Bulvarı, 500m north of the old town. The otogar is 800m northwest of the centre.

You'll find banks with ATMs in the centre. To check your email, head to **Hollywood Internet Café** (Sivas Caddesi 15; per hr €1; ☎ 9am-11pm), east of the old town.

## Sights

The fabulous walls of the **citadel** were constructed out of black volcanic stone by Emperor Justinian in the 6th century and extensively repaired in the 13th and 15th centuries. Just southeast of the citadel is the wonderful **Güpgüğü Konağı**, a fine stone mansion dating from the 18th century, which now houses a mildly interesting museum.

Among Kayseri's distinctive features are important building complexes founded by Seljuk queens and princesses, such as the

impressive **Mahperi Hunat Hatun Complex**, east of the citadel. Opposite is the **Ulu Cami** (Great Mosque), a good example of early Seljuk style. Other must-sees are the **Çifte Medrese** (Twin Seminaries). These adjoining religious schools, in Mimar Sinan Parkı north of Park Caddesi, date back to the 12th century.

Scattered about Kayseri are several conical **Seljuk tombs**.

## Sleeping & Eating

**Hotel Titiz** (☎ 221 4203; fax 221 4204; Maarif Caddesi 7, Zengin Sokak 5; s/d €17/25) One of the best ventures if you're on a budget; it's also very conveniently positioned inside the city walls.

**Hotel Gönen** (☎ 222 2778; fax 231 6584; Nazmi Toker Caddesi 15; s/d €19/30) Another reliable stand-by, a short hop from the Titiz.

**Hotel Almer** (☎ 320 7970; www.almer.com.tr; Kavuncu Caddesi 15; s/d €30/42; ☎ ☎) With its glass-fronted façade and faux-marble reception, this well-organised high-rise on Düvenönü Meydanı certainly impresses. Rooms are soulless but comfortable and fair sized.

**Be Yaz Saray** (☎ 221 0444; Millet Caddesi 8; mains €3-5), near the citadel, is always packed to the rafters with happy punters enjoying succulent kebabs, as is the ever-popular **İskender Kebap Salonu** (☎ 222 6965; Millet Caddesi 5; mains €3-5) across the road. Afterwards, finish up with a delectable baklava at **Divan Pastanesi** (☎ 222 3974; Millet Caddesi), immediately opposite.

## Getting There & Away

Turkish Airlines and Onur Air have flights from Kayseri's Erkiilet airport to İstanbul.

On an important north-south and east-west crossroads, Kayseri has lots of bus services. Destinations include Sivas (€7, three hours) and Ürgüp (€3, 1¼ hours).

By train, there are useful services to Adana, Ankara, Diyarbakır, Kars and Sivas.

# THE BLACK SEA & NORTHEASTERN ANATOLIA

Travel no further: you've found what you're looking for. A place where resorts are non-existent, where you can really feel a sense of wilderness and adventure, and where superb archaeological sites and hidden treasures are

set amidst eerie landscapes – welcome to the Black Sea coast and eastern Turkey.

If you're heading overland for Iran or Syria you will certainly need to transit parts of these fascinating areas; bear in mind that the weather can be bitterly cold and snowy in winter, especially in eastern Turkey.

Turkey's Black Sea coast is a distinctive part of the country. With plenty of rain, even in summer, it's the garden of Turkey. It is steep and craggy, damp and lush, and isolated behind the Pontic Mountains for most of its length. The coast west from Sinop to the Bosphorus is little visited, although the quaint seaside town of **Amasra**, with its Roman and Byzantine ruins and small, cheap hotels, is worth a look. **Sinop**, three hours northwest of Samsun, is a fine little backwater, with beaches on both sides of the peninsula, as well as a few historic buildings and several cheap hotels.

While **Samsun** has little of interest to detain tourists, there are excellent beaches around the cheerful resort town of **Ünye**, on a wide bay 85km east of Samsun. About 80km further to the east, **Ordu** is a bustling seaside city with a pleasant seafront boulevard. **Giresun** is famous for its hazelnuts and cherries.

From the Black Sea coast, it's fairly straightforward to get to northeastern Anatolia. This remote section of the country exerts a magnetic power, even for the Turks. Here the flavours of the neighbouring Caucasus, Central Asia and Iran are already palpable. It's a perfect blend of nature and culture, with many palaces, castles, mosques and churches dotted around the steppe.

## TRABZON

☎ 0462 / pop 485,000

Modern Trabzon is vibrant, sprawling, energising and fairly cosmopolitan. It is by far the most engaging urban centre along the Black Sea coast, with lots of old Byzantine buildings and the amazing Sumela Monastery right on its doorstep. Trabzon held out against the Seljuks and Mongols and was the last town to fall to the Ottoman Turks. Today it still feels very different from other Turkish towns, not least because its trading focus is on Russia and the Caucasus.

### Orientation & Information

Modern Trabzon is centred on Atatürk Alanı (also known as Meydan Parkı). About

3km to the east is the otogar for long-distance buses. The airport is 5.5km east of the centre of town. You'll find several banks with ATMs as well as a PTT booth and Internet cafés on or just off Atatürk Alanı.

The helpful **tourist office** (☎ /fax 326 4760) is off the southern side of Atatürk Alanı, near Hotel Nur. The **Georgian consulate** (☎ 326 2226; fax 326 2296; Gazipaşa Caddesi 20) is off the northern side of the square. There's also the **Russian consulate** (☎ 326 2600; fax 326 2101; Şh Refik Cesur 6, Ortahisar), which is west of the centre in Ortahisar district, past the bazaar.

### Sights

Without doubt, Trabzon's star attraction is the 13th-century **Aya Sofya** (admission €1.25; ☎ 9am–6pm Tue–Sun Apr–Oct, 9am–5pm Tue–Sun Nov–Mar), 4km west of town and reachable by dolmuş from Atatürk Alanı. Marvel at the vividly coloured frescoes and mosaic floors.

Another draw is the **Atatürk Köşkü** (Atatürk Villa; admission €1.25; ☎ 8am–7pm May–Sep, 8am–5pm Oct–Apr). This beautiful 19th-century mansion is set high above the town and is accessible by bus from the northern side of Atatürk Alanı.

The lively **bazaar** is to the east, accessible by the pedestrianised Kunduracılar Caddesi from Atatürk Alanı, which cuts through the tightly packed streets of the ancient bazaar.

You could also poke around the atmospheric **old town**, a 20-minute walk west of Atatürk Alanı. With its timber houses and stone bridges, it still looks medieval.

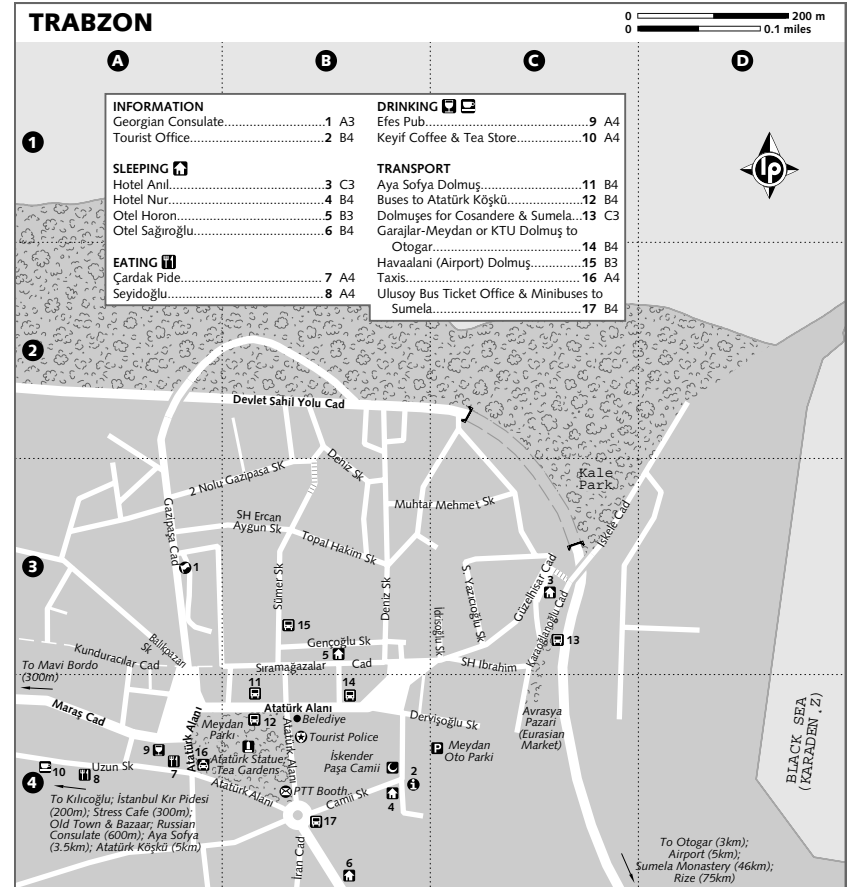
### SUMELA MONASTERY

Of all the dreamy spots in eastern Turkey that make you feel like you're floating through another time and space, **Sumela Monastery** (admission €3; ☎ 9am–6pm Jun–Aug, 9am–4pm Sep–May), 46km south of Trabzon, wins the time-travel prize by a long shot. Carved out of a sheer rock cliff like a swallow's nest, this Byzantine monastery features superb frescoes (partially damaged by vandals). Some of them date from the 9th century.

From May to August, Ulusoy buses depart for Sumela (€9, 45 minutes) from outside the Ulusoy ticket office by Atatürk Alanı. You can also visit on a tour (€6) from Trabzon.

### Sleeping

**Hotel Nur** (☎ 323 0445; fax 323 0447; Cami Sokak 15; s/d €24/36; ☎) Location, location, location!



Next to the tourist office, just steps away from Atatürk Alanı, this is the best haunt for frugal travellers. Rooms (especially singles) are a little boxy, but never less than spotlessly clean.

**Otel Horon** (☎ 326 6455; fax 321 6628; Sıramağazalar Caddesi 125; s/d €42/53; ☎) Sure, the greyish façade of the Horon could do with a make-over, but inside it's much more enticing. Enjoy the cosy rooms with prim bathrooms, as well as the rooftop restaurant-bar commanding stellar views of the city.

**Otel Sağıroğlu** (☎ 323 2899; Taksim İşhanı Sokak 1; s/d €39/56; ☎) Located off Atatürk Alanı, this impossible-to-miss yellow high-rise sports excellent rooms kitted out with the full array of amenities, including TV,

minibar, stout bedding and the obligatory rooftop restaurant.

**Hotel Anıl** (☎ 326 7282; Güzelhisar Caddesi 12; s/d €15/24) The Anıl is not exactly the most suitable place for a honeymoon, but it does the trick for shoestringers. The rooms are decent enough, though the bathrooms are a tad skanky. The English-speaking staff can organise trips to Sumela (€9).

### Eating

Rumbling tummies should head for Atatürk Alanı and the two main drags (Uzun Sokak and Maraş Caddesi) to the west, where there's a choice of cheap-and-cheerful *lokantas*.

**Çardak Pide** (☎ 321 7676; Uzun Sokak 4; mains €2–3) Patrons pour in at lunchtime for a pide fix.

It also serves meat dishes. Nab a seat in the pleasant vine-shaded courtyard.

**Seyidoğlu** (Uzun Sokak; lahmacun €0.50) This hole in the wall, on one of Trabzon's main streets, is justly revered for its succulent, thin-crust *lahmacun*.

**İstanbul Kır Pidesi** (☎ 321 2212; Uzun Sokak 48; mains €1-2) Pide and börek aficionados head straight to this popular joint, regarded as the best place to gobble a savoury börek any time of the day.

Also recommended:

**Mavi Bordo** (☎ 323 3325; Trabzonspor Sadri Şener Sosyal Tesisleri; mains €3-7) A sassy newcomer, making a brave attempt at creating a spiffy-yet-minimalist décor. Pizzas, pasta, ice creams and other munchies are on offer.

**Kılıçoğlu** (☎ 321 4525; Uzun Sokak 42) Hands down the best pastry shop in town. One lick of the *fıstıklı* (pistachio) ice cream and you'll be hooked.

## Drinking

**Stress Cafe** (☎ 321 3044; Uzun Sokak) The misnamed Stress Cafe is your ideal hang-out after a day's sightseeing. Relax over a glass of beer in the tea garden or enjoy live music upstairs.

**Efes Pub** (☎ 326 6083; Maraş Caddesi 5) Mmmm, fresh beer. This drinking hole, just spitting distance from Atatürk Alanı, is the closest thing Trabzon has to a pub.

**Keyif Coffee & Tea Store** (☎ 326 8026; Uzun Sokak, Canbakkal İş Merkezi) If you're pining for a milky tea or an espresso, this is your chance! This congenial outfit, located in a shopping mall, exudes a gracious, winning charm and offers over 200 varieties of tea and coffee.

## Getting There & Away

Turkish Airlines, Onur Air, Atlasjet and Fly Air fly to and from İstanbul. Turkish

### SAFETY IN THE EAST

The security situation in southeastern Turkey has improved considerably since the capture of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) leader Abdullah Öcalan in 1999. Although it's always wise to keep your ear to the ground, at the time of writing there was little reason to think travellers would suffer anything worse than delays at checkpoints along the way. The only spot that was still considered unsafe at the time of research was the Şirnak area.

Airlines, Atlasjet and Fly Air also operate flights to and from Ankara.

A couple of travel agencies down by the harbour sell tickets for ferries going to Sochi in Russia (about €50), but you need to have your Russian visa sorted. There are two to three weekly services.

From Trabzon's otogar, you can reach numerous destinations in Turkey as well as Tbilisi (Tiflis) in Georgia and Erivan in Armenia (via Tiflis). There are regular services to Erzurum (€10, six hours), Kars (€16, 10 hours) and Kayseri (€22, 12 hours). From May to late August, Ulusoy runs buses to Sumela (€7), departing from outside the Ulusoy ticket office by Atatürk Alanı.

## ERZURUM

☎ 0442 / pop 362,000

The largest city on the eastern Anatolian plateau, Erzurum is famous for its harsh climate, but it has some striking Seljuk buildings that justify a stay of a day or so. Like Konya, it's said to be a conservative, austere city; you'll probably agree, but Erzurum is rapidly metamorphosing into a vibrant metropolis and, as a university town, there's a fluid, lively energy to the city.

It also comes as a surprise to many travellers to discover that Erzurum is also a popular base in winter for skiing enthusiasts, who come from all over Turkey and abroad to enjoy the nearby **Palandöken** ski resort.

## Orientation & Information

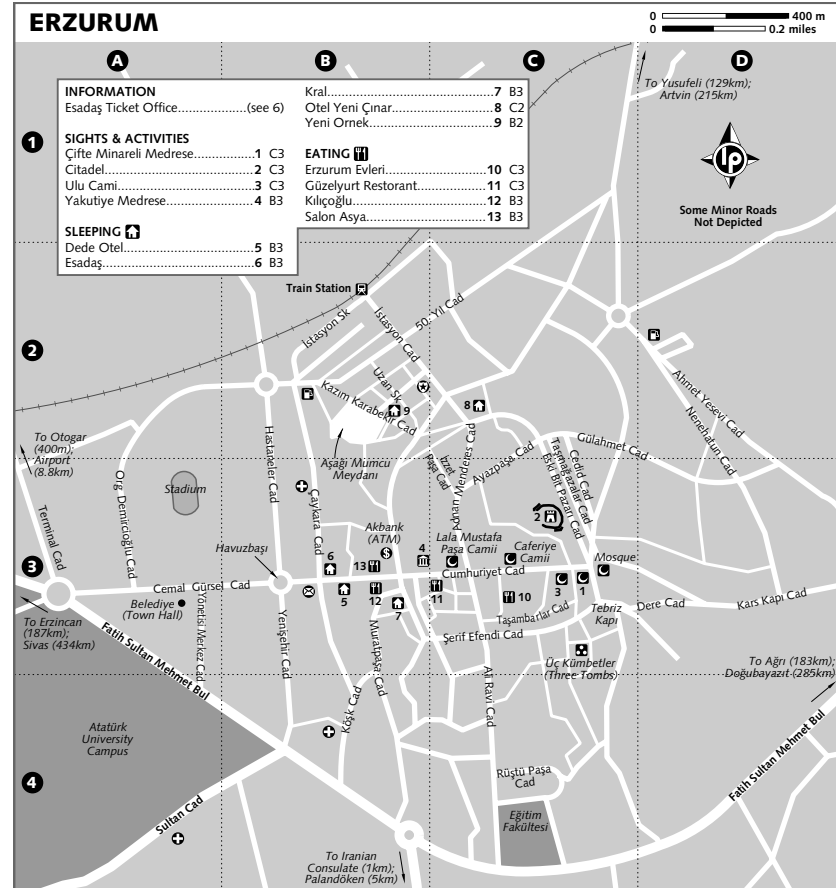
The otogar is 2km from the centre along the airport road. The centre is compact, with the main sights within walking distance of each other. You'll find lots of banks with ATMs, the PTT and Internet cafés on or around Cumhuriyet Caddesi, the main drag.

The **Iranian consulate** (☎ 316 2285; fax 316 1182; ☎ 8am-noon & 2.30-5pm Mon-Thu & Sat), just off Atatürk Bulvarı, can arrange visas in 10 days.

## Sights

The well-preserved walls of the 5th-century **citadel** loom over a maze of narrow streets, offering good views of the town and the bleak surrounding plains.

Another must-see is the beautifully symmetrical **Çifte Minareli Medrese** (Twin Minaret Seminary; Cumhuriyet Caddesi), a famous example of Seljuk architecture dating from 1253.



The eye-catching carved portal is flanked by twin brick minarets decorated with small blue tiles.

Next to the Çifte Minareli is the **Ulu Camii** (Great Mosque; Cumhuriyet Caddesi), built in 1179. Unlike the elaborately decorated Çifte Minareli, the Ulu Camii is restrained but elegant.

Further west along Cumhuriyet Caddesi is a square with an Ottoman mosque and, at the western corner, the **Yakutiye Medrese** (Cumhuriyet Caddesi), a seminary built by the local Mongol emir in 1310 and now a museum.

## Sleeping

**Otel Yeni Çınar** (☎ 213 6690; Ayazpaşa Caddesi 18; s/d €11/16) A cross between a genteel guesthouse and a standard motel – veering towards

the former – the Yeni Çınar is a colourful, friendly and well-run operation with no-frills clean rooms. It's in the market. The only flaw is the deserted, dimly lit street at night. No breakfast is served.

**Dede Otel** (☎ 233 9041; Cumhuriyet Caddesi 8; s/d €15/19) If the Yeni Çınar is full, this is an OK runner-up, brilliantly located in the heart of the action. Despite the rosy walls, the interior is fairly characterless, but the rooms are more than adequate. Breakfast is supremely disappointing.

**Yeni Ornek** (☎ 233 0053; Kazım Karabekir Caddesi 25; s/d €12/24) About 400m north of Cumhuriyet Caddesi, the newish Ornek won't make it into the style mags, but it's a good place to rest your head after a long day's travelling.



**Esadaş** (☎ 233 5425; www.erzurumesadas.com.tr in Turkish; Cumhuriyet Caddesi 7/A; s/d €25/36) Opposite the Dede, Esadaş has top-notch facilities, including a restaurant and a bus company office, but few would call it homely.

**Kral** (☎ 234 6400; fax 234 6474; Erzincankapı 18; s/d €25/36) This hotel boasts a central location and cheerful rooms with far more style than you'd expect for the price.

## Eating

There are several reasonable choices along Cumhuriyet Caddesi.

**Erzurum Evleri** (☎ 214 0635; Yüzbaşı Sokak; mains €2-4) A stunner set in an old wooden house off the main drag. With its several intimate rooms lavishly decorated with rugs, kilims, artefacts and cushions, it's the perfect antidote to sightseeing fatigue. You can eat some snacks or indulge in a nargileh while listening to the mellow music.

**Güzelyurt Restorant** (☎ 234 5001; Cumhuriyet Caddesi 51; mains €3-7) The most renowned restaurant in town. Try the *mantarlı güveç* (lamb-and-mushroom casserole).

**Salon Asya** (☎ 234 9222; Cumhuriyet Caddesi 27; mains €2-4) A block away or so from Güzelyurt, Salon Asya dishes up excellent kebaps and ready-made meals.

**Kılıçoğlu** (☎ 235 3233; Cumhuriyet Caddesi 20) A smart pastry shop that also turns out snacks, burgers and pizzas.

## Getting There & Away

Turkish Airlines has two weekly flights to İstanbul and a daily flight to Ankara. Onur Air operates a daily flight to İstanbul.

Erzurum has frequent buses to most big towns in eastern Turkey, including Doğubayazıt (€10, 4½ hours), Trabzon (€10, six hours) and Kars (€7, 3½ hours).

Erzurum has rail connections with İstanbul and Ankara via Kayseri and Sivas, and with Kars via the same cities.

## KARS

☎ 0474 / pop 76,000

Arriving in Kars, about 260km northeast of Erzurum, is discombobulating. From the mix of influences – Azeri, Turkmen, Kurdish and Russian – you'd be forgiven for thinking that you're in Central Asia. Kars may look a bit austere and rough around the edges, but that's part of its charm. How you feel about Kars, however, probably depends

on what kind of weather you see it in. In the sunshine, the stately pastel-coloured stone buildings look almost chirpy, giving the town the look of a Little Russia in Turkey. But when it rains, the muddy backstreets hardly encourage you to linger. Don't forget to gorge yourself on the delicious local *bal* (honey) and *peynir* (cheese); these will certainly keep your spirits high.

## Information

Most banks (and ATMs), Internet cafés, hotels and restaurants are on or close to Atatürk Caddesi, the main street. The **tourist office** (☎ 212 6817; Lise Caddesi; ☎ 8am-noon & 1-5pm Mon-Fri) can help you organise a taxi to Ani, but your best bet is to contact **Celil Ersoğlu** (☎ 212 6543, 0532-226 3996; celilani@hotmail.com), who acts as a private guide and speaks very good English.

The **Azerbaijani consulate** (☎ 223 6475; fax 2238741; Erzurum Caddesi) is just off the canal, to the north.

## Sights

The most prominent point of interest is the **Kars Castle** (admission free; ☎ 8am-5pm), which has smashing views over the town and the steppe. Actually, most people come to Kars to visit the dramatic ruins of **Ani** (admission €3; ☎ 8.30am-5pm), 45km east of town. Set amid spectacular scenery, the site exudes an eerie ambience. Ani was completely deserted in 1239 after a Mongol invasion, but before that it was a thriving city and a capital of both the Urartian and Armenian kingdoms. Fronted by a hefty wall, the ghost city now lies in fields overlooking the Arpaçay River, which forms the border with Armenia. The ruins include several notable churches and a cathedral built between the years 987 and 1010.

## Sleeping & Eating

**Güngören Oteli** (☎ 212 5630; Halit Paşa Caddesi, Millet Sokak 4; s/d €17/26) This two-star venture is one of the best picks in town, with a friendly atmosphere, colourful amply sized rooms and a welcoming lobby. A good restaurant and *hamam* in the basement are perks.

**Hotel Temel** (☎ 223 1376; fax 223 1323; Yenipazar Caddesi 9; s/d €15/27) A serious competitor to the Güngören, the Temel is another reliable choice. Bright blues and yellows colour the nifty rooms.

**Kent Otel** (☎ 223 1929; Hapan Mevkii 12; s/d €10/16) Smack-bang in the centre, this bare-boned alternative is suitable for hardened travellers. There are private rooms with clean sheets, stout bedding and a sink. The shared bathrooms could do with a fresh paint job but are passable. No breakfast is served.

**Ocakbaşı Restoran** (☎ 212 0056; Atatürk Caddesi 276; mains €2-4) For carnivores, nothing beats this bustling place, which rustles up hearty portions of kebaps, grills and pide. It has two adjoining rooms, including a troglodyte-themed one.

**Şirin Anadolu Mutfağı** (☎ 213 3379; Karadağ Caddesi 55; mains €2-5) Fill up from an eclectic range of tasty yet predictable kebaps, salads and pide at bargain-basement prices, and enjoy the quirky décor – the big *ocak* is set in a mock groto.

**Antep Pide & Lahmacun Salonu** (☎ 223 0741; Atatürk Caddesi 121; mains €1-2) For the best pide or *lahmacun* in town, don't miss this inexpensive little spot.

**Doğuş Pastanesi ve Simit Sarayı** (☎ 212 3583; Faik Bey Caddesi) The aptly named Simit Sarayı (Simit Palace) puts out some delicious *simit*s and other goodies to a hungry crowd of students of both sexes.

## Getting There & Away

There are a few daily minibuses to Erzurum (€7, 3½ hours) and one daily minibus to Van (€16, six hours). If you're heading for Doğubayazıt, you'll have to take a minibus to Iğdır, then another to Doğubayazıt.

For Ani take the taxi dolmuşes organised by Kars tourist office or Celil Ersoğlu, a private guide. It costs about €12 per person, provided there's a minimum of six people. If not, the full fare is €38 return plus waiting time.

## DOĞUBAYAZIT

☎ 0472 / pop 36,000

Doğubayazıt is a dusty frontier town blessed with a fabulous backdrop; picture a soaring dormant volcano – Mt Ararat (Ağrı Dağı; 5137m), Turkey's highest summit – capped with ice and shrouded in clouds, towering above a sweeping grass plain. A biblical aura emanates from this fantastic mountain: Noah and his flock are said to have landed on Mt Ararat when the 40 days and 40 nights finally ended. It's a nice story but one that innumerable mountaineers have failed to confirm.

Doğubayazıt is also the main kicking-off point for the overland trail through Iran (the border is a mere 35km away).

## Information

Everything is within a five-minute stroll of the centre. You'll find banks (including Nişantaş Döviz and TC Ziraat Bank) with ATMs, Internet cafés (including Omega Internet Café) and the PTT, but no tourist office. Instead, various travel agencies, including **East Turkey Expeditions** (☎ 0536-702 8060; www.eastturkey.com), will be able to help with your queries. They can also help with getting a visa to Iran in five days (about €80).

## Sights & Activities

Your jaw will drop in amazement the minute you see **Işhak Paşa Palace** (Işhak Paşa Sarayı; admission €3; ☎ 8am-5.30pm Apr-Oct, 8.30am-5pm Nov-Mar). Perched romantically among rocky crags, 6km east of town, this palace-fortress is the epitome of a *Thousand and One Nights* castle. Built between 1685 and 1784, it blends elements of Seljuk, Ottoman, Georgian, Persian and Armenian architecture.

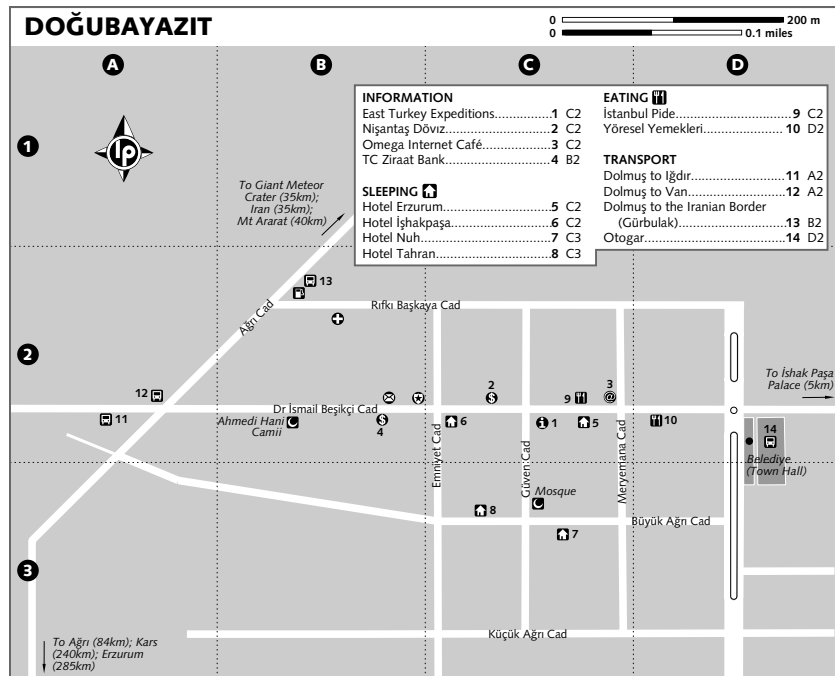
Travel agencies in Doğubayazıt offer tours to sights around the town, taking in Işhak Paşa Palace, a couple of interesting geological formations (including a giant meteor crater), hot springs and a Kurdish village for about €25 per person.

Now that the troubles in the east have died down, it is once again possible to climb **Mt Ararat**, although you need a permit and a guide. At the time of research you needed to apply at least one month in advance. You can apply through any reputable travel agency in Turkey.

## Sleeping & Eating

**Hotel Tahrán** (☎ 312 0195; Büyük Ağrı Caddesi 124; s/d €8/12; ☎) The Tahrán is a godsend for savvy budgeters, with modestly sized but spotless rooms with tiled bathrooms. Another draw is Celal, the ebullient, English-speaking young owner, who does his best to make you feel at ease. You can read, watch satellite TV or check your emails for free in a communal room. It's also a great option for women travellers.

**Hotel Erzurum** (☎ 312 5080; Dr İsmail Beşikçi Caddesi; s/d €4/6) For true budget-seekers, this place is hard to beat. Rooms are Spartan and cell-like, but tidy enough. Bathrooms



are shared, but they're kept in damn good nick. The young owner, Metin, is a good source of local information and can help you organise a trek to Mt Ararat (although it's dubious whether he can get a proper permit in three days, as he claims).

**Hotel İshakpaşa** (☎ 312 7036; fax 312 7644; Emniyet Caddesi 10; s/d €9/13) Don't be put off by the ratty carpets in the rooms. The tiled bathrooms are in good working condition, the back-friendly beds are graced with crisp linen and all rooms have balconies and TVs.

**Hotel Nuh** (☎ 312 7232; www.hotelnuh.8m.com; Büyük Ağrı Caddesi; s/d €24/40; P) A short bag-haul from the otogar, the Nuh offers characterless but functional good-sized rooms, and a rooftop restaurant affording superb vistas of Ararat.

**Yöresel Yemekleri** (☎ 312 4026; Dr İsmail Beşikçi Caddesi; mains €2-4) Don't miss this quirky restaurant on the 1st floor. The décor is bland, but what makes it distinctive is the staff; for once, it's predominantly female. An association of Kurdish women whose husbands are imprisoned prepares savoury *yöresel* (traditional) meals at bargain-basement prices.

**İstanbul Pide** (☎ 312 2324; Dr İsmail Beşikçi Caddesi 77; mains €2) A cheerful, welcoming joint famous for its mouthwatering pide and börek.

### Getting There & Away

There are about four daily minibuses to Van (€6, 2½ hours). To get to Kars, change minibus at İğdır (€2.50, 45 minutes).

For services to Iran, see p634.

### VAN

☎ 0432 / pop 447,000

One of the easternmost cities in Turkey, Van is not the dusty, exotic, rough-around-the-edges place you would expect in such a remote location. It's more a sprawling modern town with lots of good vibes, thanks to a sizable student population.

Everything you'll need (hotels, restaurants, banks, the PTT and the bus-company offices) lie on or around Cumhuriyet Caddesi, the main commercial street.

### Sights

Van's main claim to fame is its 3000-year-old **castle** (admission €1.25; ☎ 9am-dusk), about 3km

west of the city centre. Another must-see is the 10th-century church on **Akdamar Island** in Van Gölü (Lake Van), an easy half-day trip from Van. It's a poignant piece of Armenian architecture in a fantastic setting, and has frescoes and reliefs depicting biblical scenes. To get here you need to take a dolmuş to Akdamar harbour (€2, 44km), or catch a minibus to Tatvan and ask to be let off at the Akdamar harbour. From there pick up a boat. An inclusive ticket for the crossing and admission to the island costs €3.

A day excursion southeast of Van takes you to the spectacular **Hoşap Castle** (admission €1.25), a Kurdish castle perched on top of a rocky outcrop. From Van, catch a minibus heading to Başkale and ask to be let off at Hoşap (€3).

### Sleeping

**Otel Aslan** (☎ 216 2469; Özel İdare İş Merkezi Karşısı; s €7-11, d €11-15) Space is tight at this little no-nonsense joint, so the rooms can be something of a squeeze, but the atmosphere makes it a pleasant haven from the nearby market. The tiled shared bathrooms are well scrubbed. No breakfast is served.

**Büyük Asur Oteli** (☎ 216 8792; fax 216 9461; Cumhuriyet Caddesi, Turizm Sokak 5; s/d €14/24; P) This looks drab and severe from the outside, but the lobby has floor cushions you can snuggle into. The well-maintained rooms are painted in vaguely refreshing shades of green. It's an excellent choice and has a helpful manager who speaks English.

**Otel Akdamar** (☎ 214 9923; fax 212 0868; Kazım Karabekir Caddesi; s/d €25/34) Ignore the outside of this concrete monstrosity fronting busy Kazım Karabekir Caddesi, because inside the renovated rooms are spruce and roomy and the facilities are excellent. It's a reliable stand-by if you're after some creature comforts.

### Eating & Drinking

**Besse** (☎ 215 0050; Sanat Sokak; mains €3-6) If you're in search of a bit of sophistication, Besse fits the bill perfectly. It's done out in soothing yellow tones and features parquet flooring and dim lights. Foodwise, the focus is on tasty meat dishes.

**Akdeniz Tantuni** (☎ 216 9010; Cumhuriyet Caddesi; mains €2-3) This modest eatery features surprisingly pleasant surrounds. Enjoy your chicken sandwich while sitting around low wooden tables.

**Simit Sarayı** (Cumhuriyet Caddesi; mains €1-2) You can't miss this bustling *simit* shop, on the main drag, which entices by aroma alone. If you can resist these damn-heavenly little things, you're masochistic.

**Kebabistan** (☎ 214 2273; Sinemalar Sokak; mains €2-4) A carnivore's paradise, with expertly cooked kebabs. Its second branch, across the street, specialises in pide.

**Şaşi Beyaz** (☎ 212 2693; Kazım Karabekir Caddesi) Right in the centre, the pleasant, shaded terrace is a real oasis for those wanting to unwind over a cup of tea or a delectable *dondurma*.

**Safa 3** (☎ 215 8121; Kazım Karabekir Caddesi 29; soups €1.50) The quirky Safa 3 serves up soups around the clock. Adventurous diners can try the *İşkembe çorbası* (tripe soup). Hardened overlanders can check out the supposedly palate-pleasing *kelle* (mutton's head). *Afiyet olsun!*

**Barabar Türk Evi** (☎ 214 9866; Sanat Sokak) This popular haunt, upstairs in a concrete building near Besse, attracts a feisty young crowd in the evening, here to enjoy Kurdish live music and that oh-so-refreshing beer.

### Getting There & Away

There are daily flights to/from Ankara and İstanbul with Turkish Airlines. Atlasjet operates daily flights to/from İzmir and İstanbul.

There are also regular daily bus services to Diyarbakır (€14, seven hours) and several morning dolmuşes to Doğubayazıt (€6, 2½ hours). For services to Iran, see p634.

### DİYARBAKIR

☎ 0412 / pop 350,400

Diyarbakır prides itself on being *the* bastion of Kurdish identity, culture and tenacity. Indeed, it won't take long to feel that the atmosphere is noticeably different from the rest of the country. Some travellers think it's a bit rough around the edges, others regard it as a veiled, self-contained city that doesn't easily bare its soul. Whatever your perspective, Diyarbakır is not bereft of charm. The mazelike old town – encircled by impressive basalt walls pierced by four main gates – the Arab-style mosques with black-and-white bands of stone, the hustle and bustle of the bazaar, the women with their colourful Kurdish headscarves and the men with their baggy *şalvar* (traditional baggy pants) all conjure up an air of exoticism.

## Orientation & Information

Most services useful to travellers are in Old Diyarbakır, on or around Gazi Caddesi, including the PTT, Internet cafés and banks with ATMs. The **tourist office** (☎ 228 1706; Dağ Kapı; ☒ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri) is housed in a tower within the walls. The otogar is 3.5km northwest of the centre. The train station is 1.5km west of the centre.

## Sights

Diyarbakır's single most conspicuous feature is the 6km circuit of basalt **walls**, probably dating from Roman times. The walls make a striking sight whether you're walking along the top or the bottom.

Of Diyarbakır's many mosques, the most impressive is the **Ulu Cami** (Gazi Caddesi), built in 1091 by an early Seljuk sultan. The **Nebi Camii** (Gazi Caddesi), at the main intersection of Gazi and İzzet Paşa/İnönü Caddesi, has a quirky detached minaret sporting a stunning combination of black-and-white stone.

## Sleeping

**Aslan Palas Oteli** (☎ 228 9224; fax 223 9880; Kibris Caddesi 21; s/€8-10, d/€13-16; ☒) A good pick for the cash conscious, with unadorned but cleanish rooms featuring back-friendly beds and tiled bathrooms. The cheapest rooms have shared bathrooms. Those at the back are a tad sombre but less noisy. No breakfast is served.

**Hotel Aslan** (☎ 224 7096; fax 224 1179; Kibris Caddesi 23; s/d/€13/19; ☒) Not to be confused with the Aslan Palas Oteli next door, the Aslan is not exactly a home away from home but fits the bill if you're penny-counting. Rooms are on the small side but serviceable. Breakfast is extra (€2).

**Hotel Kaplan** (☎ 229 3300; fax 224 0187; Yoğurtçu Sokak 14; s/d/€16/25; ☒) Tucked in an alleyway off Kibris Caddesi, the Kaplan is a pleasant surprise, with nondescript yet comfortable good-sized rooms. Aim for one of the brighter top-floor rooms.

**Balkar Oteli** (☎ 228 6306; İnönü Caddesi 38; s/d/€19/30; ☒) A step up in quality, the Balkar is a typical middling three-star, with well-looked-after rooms and prim bathrooms. Added bonuses include a lift and a hearty breakfast.

## Eating & Drinking

A stroll along Kibris Caddesi reveals plenty of informal places to eat and tantalising pastry shops.

**Aslan Yemek Salonu** (Kibris Caddesi; mains €2-4) Almost next door to Hotel Aslan, this famous local joint is packed like a rock concert at lunch, when it dishes up tasty grills and superfresh ready-made meals.

**Şarמשık Ocakbaşı** (Kibris Caddesi 31; mains €2-4) You can't go wrong at this cheap and cheerful eatery specialising in savoury kebaps.

**Küçe Başı Et Lokantası** (☎ 229 5661; Kibris Caddesi 11; mains €2-7) Head to the room at the back for more atmosphere – it's designed like a rustic barn or a fake cavern, depending on your perspective. Order innovative dishes (ie not kebaps) such as *güveç* or *kiremit* (meat cooked in a clay pot) – the picture menu really helps. Add a salad and a Turkish coffee, and you can walk away happy and buzzing for €7.

**Güllüoğlu** (☎ 228 2404; Kibris Caddesi 35) Don't leave Diyarbakır without sampling some delectable *kadayıf* in this slick pastry shop. It's also a good spot for breakfast.

## Getting There & Away

Diyarbakır is connected with İstanbul and Ankara by daily Turkish Airlines flights. Onur Air also flies to Diyarbakır from İstanbul.

Several buses a day link Diyarbakır with Şanlıurfa (€6, three hours) and Van (€14, seven hours), among others. For Mardin (€4), take a minibus from a separate terminal near Dağ Kapı.

## MARDIN

☎ 0482 / pop 55,000

About 100km south of Diyarbakır, Mardin is a real gem and should definitely be on your itinerary. This beautiful ancient town, crowned with a castle, overlooks the vast Mesopotamian plains extending to Syria. It's pure joy to explore the streets of honey-coloured stone houses that trip down the side of the hillside, giving the town something of the feel of old Jerusalem.

Mardin has started to become popular with Turkish travellers. Get here before it becomes too touristy!

## Sights

Strolling through the rambling **bazaar**, keep your eyes open for the ornate **Ulu Cami**, a 12th-century Iraqi Seljuk structure.

**Mardin Museum** (Mardin Müzesi; admission €1.25; ☒ 8am-6pm), prominently positioned on

Cumhuriyet Meydanı, is housed in a superbly restored mansion dating from the late 19th century. Back on Cumhuriyet Caddesi, head east and keep your eyes peeled for the three-arched façade of an ornately carved **house**.

Continue east, looking for steps on the left (north) that lead to the **Sultan İsa Medresesi** (☒ daylight), which dates from 1385 and is the town's prime architectural attraction.

Opposite the post office, you can't miss the minaret of the 14th-century **Şehidiye Camii**. It's superbly carved, with colonnades all around and three small domes superimposed on the summit.

Also worth visiting is the 15th-century **Forty Martyrs Church** (Kırklar Kilisesi; 217 Sağlık Sokak), with the martyrs depicted above the doorway of the church as you enter. If it's closed, try to find the caretaker.

The **Kasimiye Medresesi** (1469), 800m south of Yeni Yol, the main drag, is another must-see. It sports a sublime courtyard walled in by arched colonnades, as well as a magnificent carved doorway.

## Sleeping & Eating

**Otel Bilen** (☎ 213 0315; fax 212 2575; s/d/€32/47; ☒) In the new part of Mardin (Yenişehir), 2km northwest of Cumhuriyet Meydanı. Nothing flash, but the rooms are serviceable. Try to negotiate a discount if it's not busy.

**Erdoba Konakları** (☎ 212 7677; www.erdoba.com.tr; Cumhuriyet Caddesi 135; s/d/€45/68; ☒) In the heart of the old town, this hotel comprises two finely restored historic mansions, which have graciously decorated rooms and splendid views over the Mesopotamian plain. It also houses a vaulted restaurant.

**Turistik Et Lokantası** (☎ 212 1647; Cumhuriyet Meydanı; mains €3-6) A long-standing institution, the Turistik features indoor and outdoor areas with superb views over the plains and has an extensive menu to suit all palates.

**Cercis Murat Konağı** (☎ 213 6841; Cumhuriyet Caddesi 517; mains €4-6) If you're after some kind of sophistication, the Cercis fits the bill. It occupies a traditional Syrian Christian home with two finely decorated rooms and a terrace affording stunning views. The food is as elaborate as the classy décor.

## Getting There & Away

There are frequent bus services between Mardin and Diyarbakır (€4, 1½ hours).

## ŞANLIURFA (URFA)

☎ 0414 / pop 839,800

Women cloaked in black chadors elbowing their way through the odorous crush of the bazaar streets; moustachioed gents in *şalvar* swilling tea and click-clacking backgammon pieces in a shady courtyard; pilgrims feeding sacred carp in the shadows of a medieval fortress – welcome to Şanlıurfa, one of the most exotic cities in Turkey. It's here that you begin to feel you've reached the Orient, yet there's also a distinctly Middle Eastern flavour, courtesy of its proximity to Syria. Şanlıurfa also boasts a glut of historic buildings, and you could easily spend several days here without getting bored. It's a magical place, and a definite must-see.

## Orientation & Information

Along different stretches the city's main thoroughfare is called Atatürk, Köprübaşı, Sarayönü and Divan Yolu Caddesi. Gölbaşı park is about 1km south of the centre. The otogar is about 1km to the west.

Most banks with ATMs and Internet cafés are on or around Sarayönü Caddesi. For tourist information, contact **Harran-Nemrut Tours** (☎ 215 1575; ozcan\_aslan\_teacher@hotmail.com; Köprübaşı Şanmed Hastanesi). The owner speaks very good English.

## Sights

The former **Edessa** is a delightful city that claims to harbour the **cave** where the patriarch Abraham (İbrahim) was born. It's in the Gölbaşı park, surrounded by a complex of mosques. Pilgrims come to pay their respects, then feed fat sacred carp in a pool nearby. After doing likewise, you can explore the wonderful **bazaar**. It's a jumble of streets, some covered, some open, selling everything from sheepskins and pigeons to jeans and handmade shoes.

The **kale** (fortress; admission €1.25; ☒ 8am-8pm) on Damlacık hill, from which Abraham was supposedly tossed, is Urfa's most striking feature. It looks magnificent when floodlit and can be reached via a flight of stairs or a tunnel cut through the rock. Come up here for unobstructed views over Urfa.

It's also worth visiting the numerous **mosques** dotted in the centre.

About 50km to the south, **Harran** is one of the oldest continuously occupied settlements in the world. Its ruined walls and

Ulu Cami, crumbling fortress and beehive houses are powerful, evocative sights.

Getting to Harran is straightforward and most people visit from Urfa on a day trip. Minibuses (€3, one hour) leave from Urfa's otogar approximately every hour.

## Sleeping

**Ipek Palas** (☎ 215 1546; Köprübaşı Şanmed Hastanesi Arkası 4; s €12-19, d €20-30; 🏠) Right in the swing of things, but in a tranquil side street, this well-run hotel boasts rooms that have been done up recently. They're nothing flashy, but it's a good choice for women travellers and the shared bathrooms are well tended.

**Hotel Doğu** (☎ 215 1228; Sarayönü Caddesi 131; s/d €10/13) The Doğu is not exactly the perfect cocoon for a romantic getaway, but it's a reliable pad for backpackers, with bare but clean rooms. Be prepared for a sweaty night in summer – there's no air-con.

**Hotel Bakay** (☎ 215 8975; Asfalt Yol Caddesi 24; s/d €15/25; 🏠) A bustling, friendly establishment with lived-in appeal. Some rooms are darker than others, so ask to see a few. It's popular with Turkish families – a good sign for women travellers.

**Beyzade Kokak** (☎ 216 3535; Sarayönü Caddesi; s/d €20/31; 🏠) It's too good to be true: a short stagger from the main drag, this utterly charming 19th-century stone building features a soothing courtyard that's the perfect spot to debrief over a cup of tea. There are also several comfy Ottoman-style lounges – and just look at the rates! The rooms themselves are, surprisingly, less impressive but are well equipped. It also has a reputable restaurant with live music in the evening.

Also recommended:

**Hotel Güven** (☎ 215 1700; Sarayönü Caddesi 133; s/d €18/30; 🏠) A safe choice that won't hurt that shrinking wallet, a few doors from the Doğu.

**Hote El-Ruha** (☎ 215 4411; www.hotelelruha.com; Balıklıgöl; s/d €60/80; 🏠) Brand-spanking-new when we popped in (you could still smell the paint), this is Urfa's first boutique hotel.

## Eating & Drinking

**Zahter Kahvaltı & Kebap Salonu** (Köprübaşı Caddesi 3; mains €2-3) The best place for a hearty breakfast. Here you'll enjoy gooey honey and cream on flat bread, washed down with a large glass of tea or *ayran*.

**Altınış** (☎ 215 4646; Sarayönü Caddesi; mains €2-5) The Altınış is a popular eatery where you

can delve into a range of Turkish fare and ready-made meals.

**Çardaklı Köşk** (☎ 217 1080; Vali Fuat Caddesi, Tünel Çıkışı 1; mains €3-5) Set up in a superb old Urfa house, the Çardaklı has several rooms arranged around the courtyard. The food is not that inspirational – the reals draws are the atmosphere and the view over Gölbaşı.

**Birlik Pastanesi** (☎ 313 1823; Köprübaşı Caddesi) Almost next door to the Zahter, this is an ideal stop for those who want to sate a sweet tooth. Try the *kadayıf* and you'll instantly feel happy with life.

**Kızılay Cafe Restaurant** (☎ 215 8553; Sarayönü Caddesi; mains €2-4) Off the main drag, this is a great place to chill out and soak up the atmosphere.

**Zerzembe** (☎ 216 4499; Karamedani Otopark İçi; mains €2-3) It serves up some nibbles, but it's the setting that's the pull here rather than the cuisine. In a converted depot, the interior is embellished with rugs, pottery, carpets and other knick-knacks.

The various tea gardens in the Gölbaşı park all serve simple grills.

## Getting There & Away

Turkish Airlines has direct flights to Ankara and İstanbul.

Fairly frequent buses connect Şanlıurfa with Gaziantep (€5, 2½ hours) and Diyarbakır (€7, three hours).

Minibuses to Akçakale, at the Syrian border, and Harran leave from the minibus terminal beside the otogar.

## MT NEMRUT

Mt Nemrut (Nemrut Dağı; 2150m) is one of the great must-see attractions of eastern Turkey. Two thousand years ago, right on top of the mountain and pretty much in the middle of nowhere, an obscure Commagene king chose to erect his **memorial sanctuary** (admission €3.50). The fallen heads of the gigantic decorative statues of gods and kings, toppled by earthquakes, form one of Turkey's most enduring images.

There are a few possible bases for visiting Mt Nemrut. To the north is Malatya, where the tourist office organises daily minibus tours (€30, early May to late September), with a sunset visit to the heads, a night at a hotel near the summit and a second, dawn visit. Or, visit the mountain from the south via Kahta. This is the most straightforward

option, but Kahta is notoriously hassly. At least by taking this route you do get to see other interesting sites along the way.

Two-day tours (€40, minimum four people) or sunset/sunrise tours (€40, minimum four people) to Nemrut are also available from **Harran-Nemrut Tours** (☎ 0414-215 1575; ozcan\_aslan\_teacher@hotmail.com; Köprübaşı Şanmed Hastanesi) in Şanlıurfa.

Some people take a three-day tour (€130 per person) from Göreme in Cappadocia but it's a tedious drive. These take in other places in the east too.

## Sleeping

### MALATYA

**Malatya Büyük Otel** (☎ 0422-325 2828; fax 323 2828; Halep Caddesi; s/d €18/30) Definitely the best choice in the town centre and handy for shopping in the bazaar.

**Hote Yeni Sinan** (☎ 0422-321 2907; Atatürk Caddesi 6; s/d €15/24) Very central. Clean, if simple, rooms.

**Aygün Hotel** (☎ 0422-325 5657; PTT Caddesi 7; s/d €10/18) A welcoming place with well-scrubbed, if smallish, rooms with shared bathrooms.

### KAHTA

In high summer the nicest places to stay, especially if you have your own transport, are not in Kahta itself but on the slopes of the mountain.

**Karadut Pension** (☎ 0416-737 2169; camp sites per person €3, d €22) Five small but neat rooms.

**Hotel Kervansaray** (☎ 0416-737 2190; fax 737 2085; s/d €23/28; 🏠) This place also has great views, and piles on the home comforts too.

In Kahta itself:

**Hotel Nemrut** (☎ 0416-725 6881; fax 725 6880; Mustafa Kemal Caddesi; s/d €21/39; 🏠) A characterless but well-regarded hotel.

**Pension Kommagene** (☎ 0416-725 9726; fax 725 5548; Mustafa Kemal Caddesi; camp sites per person €3, s/d from €12/17; 🏠) At the start of the Nemrut road. A better choice than the Anatolia.

**Hotel Mezopotamya** (☎ 0416-725 7705; fax 725 5385; Mustafa Kemal Caddesi 18; s/d €10/16; 🏠) This hotel gets good reports from tour operators used to working in Kahta.

## GAZİANTEP (ANTEP)

☎ 0342 / pop one million

Although well off the tourist trail, Gaziantep offers an altogether Turkish experience and an untapped potential as a travel destina-

tion. For most travellers it comes as a surprise to discover a fast-growing, pulsing and atmospheric city with a soul. If you're a sweet tooth, you'll be in seventh heaven – Gaziantep is said to be the baklava capital of the world.

## Orientation & Information

The throbbing heart of Gaziantep is the intersection of Atatürk Bulvarı/Suburcu Caddesi and Hürriyet/İstasyon Caddesi, marked by a large statue of Atatürk. Most hotels, banks with ATMs, and sights are within walking distance of the main intersection. The otogar is about 6km from the town centre. The train station is 800m north.

The **tourist office** (☎ 230 5969; 100 Yıl Atatürk Kültür Parkı İçi; ☎ 8am-noon & 1-5pm Mon-Fri) is in a park, to the northwest.

## Sights

The unmissable **kale** (citadel; admission free; ☎ 8am-noon & 1-5pm Tue-Sun) offers superb vistas over the city. Not far from the citadel is a buzzing **bazaar**, where you can see artisans at work. Scattered in the centre are numerous old **stone houses**, some of which are skilfully restored.

It would be a shame to skip the **Gaziantep Museum** (İstasyon Caddesi; admission €1.25; ☎ 8am-noon & 1-5pm). It holds portions of the fabulous mosaics unearthed at the rich Roman site of Belkis-Zeugma.

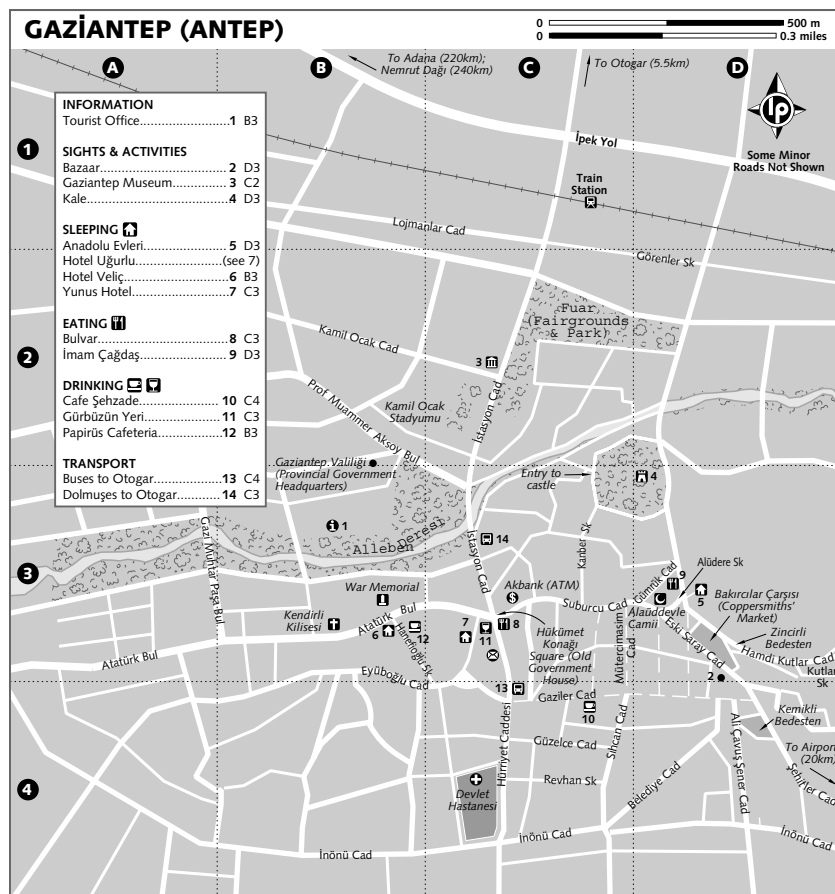
## Sleeping

**Yunus Hotel** (☎ 221 1722; fax 221 1796; Kayacak Sokak 16; s/d €13/22; 🏠) The well-run Yunus has comfortable rooms and gleaming bathrooms. Its peerless location, in a tranquil side street but close to the action, makes this an excellent base for exploring the city.

**Hotel Uğurlu** (☎ 220 9690; www.hotelugurlu.com; Kayacak Sokak 14; s/d €18/25; 🏠) Next door to the Yunus, this is another reassuring choice with no surprises up its sleeve.

**Hotel Veliç** (☎ 221 2212; fax 221 2210; Atatürk Bulvarı 23; s/d €22/36; 🏠) The bland façade is not attractive but the rooms are much more inviting, with squeaky-clean bathrooms and springy carpets. The breakfast room on the upper floor affords stunning views. The catch? The singles are pocket sized.

**Anadolu Evleri** (☎ 220 9525; www.anadoluevleri.com; Köroğlu Sokak 6; r €70-100; 🏠) After the rigors of eastern Anatolia, pamper yourself



in this gorgeous boutique hotel, located in a beautifully restored stone house close to the bustling bazaar. The rooms ooze charm and character, with exposed beams, period furniture, mosaic floors, painted ceilings and carefully displayed artefacts. The owner speaks perfect English and is well clued-up.

### Eating & Drinking

**İmam Çağdaş** (☎ 220 4545; Kale Civarı Uzun Çarşı; mains €1-5) Just thinking about İmam Çağdaş' gorgeously gooey *fıstıklı baklava* titillates our tastebuds. This Gaziantep institution (established in 1887) also serves up savoury kebabs and melt-in-your-mouth *lahmacun* in a separate building across the street.

**Bulvar** (☎ 220 7011; Suburcu Caddesi, İstasyon Kavaşağı 2/A; mains €2) Famous for its delicious *tavuk döner* (chicken sandwich), this central, no-frills place is always packed with hungry punters grabbing a supercheap meal.

**Cafe Şehzade** (☎ 231 0350; Gaziler Caddesi 47; snacks €2-3; ☎ 8.30am-8pm) The food, mostly snacks, is nothing to write home about, but the setting is absolutely lovely. Where else could you sip a cup of tea in an eight-centuries-old converted *hamam*?

**Gürbüzün Yeri** (Hürriyet Caddesi; juices €1) Feeling weak? This tiny juice bar right in the centre has the antidote, with superb freshly squeezed juices. Try the *muzlu süt* (a mixture of milk, honey, banana, hazelnuts and pistachios) and you'll be hooked forever.

**Papirüs Cafeteria** (☎ 220 3279; Noter Sokak 10) Housed in a historic mansion off Atatürk Caddesi, this treasure-trove is perfect for unwinding after a bout of sightseeing. It has piles of character, and features a leafy courtyard and several rooms with ancient frescoes and old furniture. It lures in students looking for a pleasant spot to flirt and relax.

### Getting There & Away

Turkish Airlines has flights to Ankara and İstanbul. Onur Air also flies to İstanbul.

From the otogar you can reach many destinations in Turkey, including Şanlıurfa (€6, 2½ hours) and Antakya (€6, four hours).

## TURKEY DIRECTORY

### ACCOMMODATION

#### Camping

Camping facilities are dotted about Turkey, although not perhaps as frequently as you might hope. Some hotels and pensions will also let you camp in their grounds and use their facilities for a small fee.

#### Hostels

Given that pensions are so cheap, Turkey has no real hostel network. Some are real hostels with dormitories, others are little different from the cheapest pensions.

### PRACTICALITIES

- For the news in English, pick up the *Turkish Daily News*. Fez Travel's free magazine *Fark Etmez*, available at the big tourist gathering points, is full of tips for travellers.
- TRT3 (Türkiye Radyo ve Televizyon) on 88.2MHz, 94MHz and 99MHz provides short news broadcasts in English, French and German every two hours.
- Digiturk offers more than 300 different TV channels (including CNN, Fox News and BBC World).
- Electrical current is 220V AC, 50Hz. Wall sockets are the round, two-pin European type.
- Turkey uses the metric system for weights and measures.

### Pensions & Hotels

Most tourist resorts offer simple family-run pensions where you can get a good, clean bed for around €10 a night. They are often cosy and represent better value than full-blown hotels. These places usually offer a choice of simple meals (including breakfast), book exchanges, laundry services, international TV services and so on, and it's these facilities that really distinguish them from traditional small, cheap hotels. Most pensions also have staff who speak English.

In most cities there is a variety of old and new hotels, which range from the heart-sinkingly basic to full-on luxury. The cheapest nonresort hotels (around €15 a night) are mostly used by working Turkish men travelling on business and are not always suitable for lone women, unless they can face the stares whenever they enter the lobby. Moving up a price bracket, one- and two-star hotels may cost €20 to €30 for a double room with shower, but these hotels are less oppressively masculine in atmosphere, even when the clientele remains mainly male.

If you fancy top-notch accommodation at reasonable prices, Turkey is the place to do it. Boutique hotels are all the rage in the country. Increasingly, old Ottoman mansions and other historic buildings are being refurbished or completely rebuilt as hotels equipped with all the mod cons and bags of character. The best boutique hotels are located in İstanbul, Cappadocia, Samsun and Amasya, but almost every city boasts at least one or two character-filled establishments.

Note that along the coast the vast majority of hotels and pensions close from mid-November to mid-March.

Unless otherwise stated, breakfast and private bathrooms are included in the room rates quoted in this book, with the exception of dorms in İstanbul, which all have shared bathrooms.

### Treehouses

Olympos, on the coast southwest of Antalya, is famous for its 'treehouses', wooden shacks of minimal comfort in forested settings near the beach. Increasingly, these basic shelters are being converted into chalets with much more comfort.

**RESIST THE TOUTS!**

In smaller tourist towns such as Fethiye, Pamukkale and Selçuk, touts for the pensions may accost you as you step from your bus and string you whatever line they think will get you to their lair most quickly. Of course they are after commission from the owner. Taxi drivers often like to play this game too. For everyone's sake, do your best to avoid letting them make your choices for you.

**ACTIVITIES**

Popular activities include hiking and trekking in the Kaçkar Mountains and in the Ala Dağlar, near Niğde. Another popular area is the Lycian Way, a 30-day, 509km walk around the coast and mountains of Lycia, starting at Fethiye and finishing near Antalya. The spectacular valleys of Cappadocia make another excellent area for hiking. If you're a serious hiker you could even consider conquering the 5137m-high Mt Ararat (p621) near Doğubayazıt, but you need a permit.

All sorts of water sports, including diving, water-skiing, rafting and kayaking, are available in the Aegean and Mediterranean resorts. The best diving is offered off Kaş, Bodrum and Marmaris. You can also try tandem paragliding at Ölüdeniz.

Skiing is becoming more popular, with the best facilities at Uludağ, near Bursa; on Mt Erciyes, near Kayseri; and at Palandöken, near Erzurum. However, even at these sites the facilities would not meet the standards of the better European resorts.

Those of a lazier disposition may want to take a *gilet* trip along the coast, stopping off to swim in bays along the way (see Blue Voyages, p597). The laziest 'activity' of all consists of paying a visit to a *hamam*, where you can get yourself scrubbed and massaged for a fraction of what it would cost in most Western countries.

**BUSINESS HOURS**

Government and business offices, and banks usually open from 8.30am to noon and 1.30pm to 5pm Monday to Friday. Main post offices in large cities are open every day. Smaller post offices may be closed on Saturday afternoon and all day Sunday. During the hot summer months

the working day in some cities begins at 7am or 8am and finishes at 2pm. The working day also gets shortened during the holy month of Ramadan.

In tourist areas food, souvenir and carpet shops are often open virtually around the clock. Elsewhere, grocery shops and markets are usually open from 6am or 7am to 7pm or 8pm Monday to Saturday. It's increasingly rare for shops to close for lunch except in the most out-of-the-way places.

Friday, the Muslim Sabbath, is a normal working day in Turkey. The day of rest, a secular one, is Sunday.

**CUSTOMS**

Two hundred cigarettes and 50 cigars or 200g of tobacco, and five 100cc or seven 70cc bottles of alcohol can be imported duty-free.

It's strictly illegal to buy, sell or export antiquities. Customs officers spot-check luggage and will want proof that you have permission from a museum before letting you leave with an antique carpet.

**DANGERS & ANNOYANCES**

Although Turkey is one of the safest countries in the region, you must take precautions. Wear a money belt under your clothing and be wary of pickpockets on buses, in markets and in other crowded places. Keep an eye out for anyone suspicious lurking near ATMs.

In Istanbul, single men are sometimes lured to a bar (often near İstiklal Caddesi) by new Turkish 'friends'. The man is then made to pay an outrageous bill, regardless of what he drank. Drugging is also becoming a serious problem, especially for lone men. Sometimes the person in the seat next to you on the bus buys you a drink, slips a drug into it and then makes off with your luggage. So be a tad wary of who you befriend, especially when you're new to the country.

More commonly, the hard-sell tactics of carpet sellers can drive you to distraction. Be warned that 'free' lifts and suspiciously cheap accommodation often come attached to near-compulsory visits to carpet showrooms.

Travelling in the southeast is now safe, provided you don't venture into the mountains south of Hakkari or into the Şirnak area. For more information, see p618.

**EMBASSIES & CONSULATES**  
**Turkish Embassies & Consulates**

Following are the Turkish embassies and consulates in major cities around the world. For addresses of Turkish embassies in neighbouring Middle Eastern countries, see the relevant country chapters.

**Australia** (☎ 02-6295 0227; www.turkishembassy.org.au; 60 Mugga Way, Red Hill ACT 2603)

**Canada** (☎ 613-789 4044; www.turkishembassy.com; 197 Wurtemberg St, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 8L9)

**France** (☎ 01 53 92 71 11; www.tcparsbk.com; 184 Boulevard Malesherbes, 75017 Paris)

**Germany** (☎ 49-228 34 40 93; www.tcberlin.be.de; Johann-Georg Str 12, 10709 Berlin)

**Ireland** (☎ 01-668 5240; turkembassy@eircom.net; 11 Clyde Rd, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4)

**Netherlands** (☎ 70-360 4912; turkije@dataweb.nl; Jan Evenstraat 2514 BS, The Hague)

**New Zealand** (☎ 4-472 1290; turkem@extra.co.nz; 15-17 Murphy St, Level 8, Wellington)

**UK** (☎ 0207-393 0202; info@turkishembassy-london.com; 43 Belgrave Sq, London SW1X 8PA)

**USA** (☎ 202-612 6700; www.turkishembassy.org; 2525 Massachusetts Ave, NW Washington, DC 20008)

**Embassies & Consulates in Turkey**

Foreign embassies are in Ankara but many countries also have consulates in Istanbul. In general they are open from 9am to noon Monday to Friday.

**Australia** Ankara (☎ 0312-446 1180; www.embaustralia.org.tr; Nenehatun Caddesi 83, Gaziosmanpaşa); Istanbul (☎ 0212-257 7050; fax 257 7054; Tepecik Yolu 58, Etiler)

**Bulgaria** (☎ 0312-426 2071; fax 427 3178; Atatürk Bulvarı 124, Kavaklıdere, Ankara)

**Canada** (☎ 0312-459 9200; fax 459 9361; Nenehatun Caddesi 75, Gaziosmanpaşa, Ankara)

**Egypt** Ankara (☎ 0312-426 1026; fax 427 0099; Atatürk Bulvarı 126, Kavaklıdere); Istanbul (☎ 0212-263 6038; fax 257 4428; Cevdet Paşa Caddesi 173, Bebek)

**France** Ankara (☎ 0312-455 4545; fax 455 4527; Paris Caddesi 70, Kavaklıdere); Istanbul (Map pp564-5; ☎ 0212-334 8730; fax 249 9168; İstiklal Caddesi 8, Taksim)

**Germany** Ankara (☎ 0312-455 5100; fax 427 8926; Atatürk Bulvarı 114, Kavaklıdere); Istanbul (Map pp564-5; ☎ 0212-334 6100; fax 249 9920; İnönü Caddesi 16-18, Taksim)

**Greece** Ankara (☎ 0312-436 8860; fax 446 3191; Ziya-ur-Rahman (Karagöz) Caddesi 9-11, Gaziosmanpaşa); Istanbul (Map pp564-5; ☎ 0212-245 0597; fax 252 1365; Turnacıbaşı Sokak 32, Galatasaray)

**Iran** Ankara (☎ 0312-468 2820; fax 468 2823; Tahrani Caddesi 10, Kavaklıdere); Erzurum (☎ 0442-316 2285;

fax 316 1182; off Atatürk Bulvarı); Istanbul (☎ 0212-513 8230; fax 511 5219; Ankara Caddesi 1/2, Cağaloğlu)

**Iraq** (☎ 0312-468 7421; fax 468 4832; Turan Emeksiz Sokak 11, Gaziosmanpaşa, Ankara)

**Ireland** Ankara (☎ 0312-446 6172; fax 446 8061; Uğur Mumcu Caddesi, MNG Binası B-BI 88/3, Gaziosmanpaşa); Istanbul (Map pp564-5; ☎ 0212-246 6025; fax 248 0744; Cumhuriyet Caddesi 26/A, Harbiye)

**Israel** Ankara (☎ 0312-446 3605; fax 446 8071; Mahatma Gandhi Caddesi 85, 06700 Gaziosmanpaşa); Istanbul (Map pp564-5; ☎ 0212-225 1040; fax 317 6555; Valikonagi Caddesi 73/4, Nişantaşı)

**Jordan** Ankara (☎ 0312-440 2054; fax 440 4327; Mesnevi Dede Korkut Sokak 18, Çankaya); Istanbul (☎ 0212-325 6862; fax 325 6565; Sümbül Sokak 51, İçevent)

**Lebanon** Ankara (☎ 0312-446 7485; fax 446 1023; Kikulesi Sokak 44, Gaziosmanpaşa); Istanbul (Map pp564-5; ☎ 0212-236 1365; fax 227 3373; Teşvikiye Caddesi 134/1, Teşvikiye)

**Netherlands** Ankara (☎ 0312-409 1800; fax 409 1898; Turan Güneş Bulvarı 7, Caddesi 3, Yıldız); Istanbul (Map pp564-5; ☎ 0212-393 2121; fax 292 5031; İstiklal Caddesi 393, Beyoğlu)

**New Zealand** Ankara (☎ 0312-467 9056; newzealand@superonline.com.tr; İnan Caddesi 13/4, Kavaklıdere); Istanbul (☎ 0212-251 3895; nzhonconist@hatem-law.com.tr; İnönü Caddesi 92/3)

**Russia** Ankara (☎ 0312-439 2122; fax 438 3952; Karyagdi Sokak 5, Çankaya); Istanbul (Map pp564-5; ☎ 0212-292 5101; İstiklal Caddesi 443, Beyoğlu); Trabzon (☎ 0462-326 2600; fax 326 2101; Şh Refik Cesur 6, Ortahisar)

**Syria** Ankara (☎ 0312-440 9657; fax 438 5609; Sedat Simavi Sokak 40, Çankaya); Istanbul (Map pp564-5; ☎ 0212-232 6721; fax 230 2215; Maçka Caddesi 59/5, Teşvikiye)

**UK** Ankara (☎ 0312-455 3344; fax 455 3351; Şehit Ersan Caddesi 46/A, Çankaya); Istanbul (Map pp564-5; ☎ 0212-334 6400; fax 245 4989; Meşrutiyet Caddesi 34, Tepebaşı, Beyoğlu)

**USA** Ankara (☎ 0312-455 5555; fax 467 0019; Atatürk Bulvarı 110, Kavaklıdere); Istanbul (Map pp564-5; ☎ 0212-335 9000; fax 323 2037; Kaplıcalar Mevkii 2, İstinye)

**FESTIVALS & EVENTS**

Following are some of the major annual festivals and events in Turkey:

**Anzac Day** The great battle at Gallipoli is commemorated with a dawn ceremony (25 April).

**International Istanbul Music Festival** Held from early June to early July.

**Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling Championship** Huge crowds watch oil-covered men wrestling in a field near Edirne in June.

**Mevlana Festival** The dervishes whirl in Konya from 10 to 17 December.

**Nevruz** Kurds and Alevis celebrate the ancient Middle Eastern spring festival on 21 March. Banned until recently, Nevruz is now an official holiday.

## GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

Although not uncommon in a culture that traditionally separates men and women, overt homosexuality is not socially acceptable except in a few small pockets in İstanbul, Bodrum and other resorts. In İstanbul there is an increasing number of openly gay bars and nightclubs, mainly around the Taksim Sq end of İstiklal Caddesi. Some *hamams* are known to be gay meeting places.

For more information, contact Turkey's own gay and lesbian support group, **LAMBDA İstanbul** ([www.lambdaistanbul.org](http://www.lambdaistanbul.org)).

## HOLIDAYS

As well as the major Islamic holidays (p647), Turkey observes the following national holidays:

**New Year's Day** 1 January

**Children's Day** 23 April

**Youth & Sports Day** 19 May

**Victory Day** 30 August

**Republic Day** 29 October

**Anniversary of Atatürk's Death** 10 November

## INTERNET ACCESS

Wherever you go, you'll never be far from an Internet café. Lots of hotels, pensions, tour operators and carpet shops are also hooked up. Fees are usually around €1 for an hour. In the big cities, ADSL connections tend to dominate.

## LANGUAGE

Turkish is the official language and almost everyone understands it. It's been written in the Latin script since Atatürk rejected Arabic in 1928. In southeastern Anatolia, most Kurds speak Turkish, but in remote places you'll hear Kurmanji and Zazaki, the two Kurdish dialects spoken in Turkey. South of Gaziantep you'll also certainly hear Arabic being spoken alongside Turkish.

For words and phrases in Turkish, see p679.

## MAPS

Turkish tourist offices supply an excellent free *Tourist Map* (1:850,000). IGN's *Carte Touristique Turquie* (1:750,000) is also a good reference.

## MONEY

The new (*yeni*) Turkish lira (YTL) was introduced in January 2005 and will have completely replaced the Turkish lira (TL) by the time you read this. Notes are in denominations of one, five, 10, 20, 50 and 100 new Turkish lira. The new Turkish lira is divided into 100 new *kuruş*.

Inflation was more or less under control when we visited but check exchange rates shortly before your visit. Prices in this book are quoted in more stable euros.

Below are the exchange rates for a range of currencies when this book went to print.

Country	Unit	New Turkish lira (YTL)
Australia	A\$1	1.00
Canada	C\$1	1.15
euro zone	€1	1.59
Japan	¥100	1.16
New Zealand	NZ\$1	0.93
Syria	£10	0.26
UK	UK£1	2.37
USA	US\$1	1.36

## ATMs

ATMs readily dispense Turkish lira to Visa, MasterCard, Cirrus, Maestro and Eurocard holders; there's hardly a town that lacks a machine. Provided that your home banking card only requires a four-digit personal identification number (PIN), it's perfectly possible to get around Turkey with nothing else. But remember to draw out money in the towns to tide you through the villages, and keep some cash in reserve for the inevitable day when the ATM decides to throw a wobbly.

Note that some overseas banks charge an arm and a leg for the conversion so check before you leave home.

## Cash

US dollars and euros are the easiest currencies to change, although many banks and exchange offices will change other major currencies such as UK pounds and Japanese yen. You may find it difficult to exchange Australian or Canadian currency except at banks and offices in major cities.

## Credit Cards

Visa and MasterCard are widely accepted by hotels, restaurants, carpet shops and

so on, although they are not accepted by pensions and local restaurants outside the main tourist areas. You can also get cash advances on these cards. Amex cards are rarely useful.

## Moneychangers

It's easy to change major currencies in most exchange offices, some PTTs, shops and hotels, although banks may make heavy weather of it. Places that don't charge a commission usually offer a worse exchange rate instead.

Although Turkey has no black market, foreign currencies are readily accepted in shops, hotels and restaurants in main tourist areas.

## Tiping

Turkey is fairly European in its approach to tipping and you won't be pestered by demands for baksheesh as elsewhere in the Middle East. Leave waiters and bath attendants around 10% of the bill. It's usual to round off metered taxi fares.

## Travellers Cheques

Our advice: don't bring them! Banks, shops and hotels often see it as a burden to change travellers cheques, and will probably try to get you to go elsewhere. In case you do have to change them, try Akbank.

## POST

Postcards to Europe cost €0.45, to Australia and New Zealand €0.55, and to the USA €0.50. Letters to Europe cost €0.50, to Australia and New Zealand €0.60, and to the USA €0.55.

Turkish *postanes* (post offices) are indicated by black-on-yellow 'PTT' signs.

Most post offices in tourist areas offer a poste restante service.

## TELEPHONE & FAX

Türk Telekom payphones can be found in many major public buildings and facilities, public squares and transportation termini. International calls can be made from all payphones.

Türk Telekom centres have faxes, but require lots of paperwork and often insist on retaining your original! It's easier to use your hotel fax, although you should always check the cost first.

## Mobile Phones

The Turks just love *cep* (mobile) phones. But calling a mobile costs roughly three times the cost of calling a land line, no matter where you are. Mobile phone numbers start with a four-figure code beginning with 04 or 05. If you set up a roaming facility with your home phone provider you should be able to connect your own mobile to the Turkcell or Telsim network. At the time of writing, US-bought mobile phones couldn't be used in Turkey.

## Phone Codes

The country code for Turkey is 90, followed by the local area code (minus the zero), then the seven-digit subscriber number. Local area codes are given at the start of each city or town section. Note that İstanbul has two codes: 0212 for the European side and 0216 for the Asian side. The international access code (to call abroad from Turkey) is 00.

## Phonecards

All Türk Telekom's public telephones require telephone cards, which can be bought at telephone centres or, for a small mark-up, at some shops. If you're only going to make one quick call, it's easier to look for a booth with a sign saying '*köntrollü telefon*', where the cost of your call will be metered.

## TOILETS

Most hotels and public facilities have familiar Western toilets, but you'll also sometimes see traditional squat toilets. Always carry toilet paper and don't forget to place it in the bin provided to avoid inadvertently flooding the premises.

Almost all public toilets require payment of about €0.30.

## VISAS

Nationals of the following countries don't need to obtain a visa to visit Turkey for up to three months: Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Sweden and Switzerland. Although nationals of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, the UK and the USA need a visa, this is just a stamp in the passport that you buy on arrival at the airport or at an overland border rather than

at an embassy in advance. Make sure you join the queue to buy your visa before joining the one for immigration. How much you pay depends on your nationality; at the time of writing British citizens paid UK£10, Australians and Americans US\$20, and Canadians US\$60 or €45. You *must* pay in hard currency cash.

The standard visa is valid for three months and, depending on your nationality, usually allows for multiple entries.

For details of visas for other Middle Eastern countries, see p653 and the Visas sections in the Directory of the other country chapters.

In theory a Turkish visa can be renewed once after three months, but the bureaucracy and costs involved mean that it's much easier to leave the country (usually to a Greek island) and then come back in again on a fresh visa.

## WOMEN TRAVELLERS

Some women travel around virtually unmolested while others report constant harassment. Whatever your own experience and feeling, your best bet is to dress modestly and be sensitive to the society's customs. Cover the upper legs and arms and avoid shorts or skimpy T-shirts, except in the resorts. Provided you stick to these recommendations, most men will treat you with kindness and generosity. Wearing a wedding ring and carrying a photo of your 'husband' and 'child' will help immeasurably, as can wearing dark glasses to avoid eye contact.

Unrelated men and women are usually separated on buses and there are separate sections in most restaurants for women and families (although in tourist areas they won't mind where you sit).

## TRANSPORT IN TURKEY

### GETTING THERE & AWAY Entering the Country

For information on Turkish visas and entry requirements, see p633.

#### Air

Turkey's most important airport is Istanbul's **Atatürk International Airport** (code IST; ☎ 0212-663 2550; www.ataturkairport.com), 25km

west of the city centre. The cheapest fares are almost always to Istanbul, and to reach other Turkish airports, even Ankara, you usually have to transit in Istanbul. Other international airports are at Adana, Ankara, Antalya, Bodrum, Dalaman and Izmir.

Turkey's national carrier is **Turkish Airlines** (Türk Hava Yolları, THY; ☎ 0212-444 0849, 225 0556; www.thy.com), which has direct flights from Istanbul to most capital cities around the world, including Beirut, Cairo, Damascus, Dubai, Jeddah, Kuwait, Riyadh, Tehran and Tripoli in the Middle East. It has a good safety record.

Other airlines flying to and from Turkey: **Air France** (airline code AF; in Istanbul ☎ 0212-310 1919; www.airfrance.com) Hub: Charles de Gaulle International Airport, Paris.

**American Airlines** (airline code AA; in Istanbul ☎ 0212-219 2930; www.aa.com) Hub: O'Hare Airport, Chicago.

**Azerbaijan Airlines** (airline code AHY; in Istanbul ☎ 0212-245 1852) Hub: Baku airport.

**British Airways** (airline code BA; in Istanbul ☎ 0212-234 1300; www.britishairways.com) Hub: Heathrow Airport, London.

**Emirates Airlines** (airline code EK; in Istanbul ☎ 0212-293 5050; www.emirates.com) Hub: Dubai International Airport.

**Iran Air** (airline code IR; in Istanbul ☎ 0212-225 0255) Hub: Tehran Mehrabad Airport.

**KLM** (airline code KL; in Istanbul ☎ 0212-230 0311; www.klm.com) Hub: Amsterdam Schiphol Airport.

**Lufthansa** (airline code LH; in Istanbul ☎ 0212-315 3434; www.lufthansa.com) Hub: Frankfurt Airport.

**Olympic Airlines** (airline code OA; in Istanbul ☎ 0212-247 3701; www.olympicairlines.com) Hub: Athens International Airport.

**Qantas Airways** (airline code QF; in Istanbul ☎ 0212-219 8223; www.qantas.com) Hub: Sydney Airport.

**Singapore Airlines** (airline code SIA; in Istanbul ☎ 0212-232 3706; www.singaporeair.com) Hub: Singapore Changi Airport.

#### Land

Turkey shares borders with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Iran, Iraq and Syria. There are plenty of ways to get into and out of the country by rail or bus. For details see p660.

#### IRAN

Gürbulak/Bazargan, 35km east of Doğubayazıt, is the main crossing point for Iran. It's pretty hassle-free. The second border

post at Esendere/Sero, southeast of Van, keeps shorter hours than the one near Doğubayazıt.

From Van, there are at least two daily buses to Orumiye (€15, 311km) in Iran. From Doğubayazıt, minibuses run approximately every half-hour to Gürbulak (€2). The crossing may take up to an hour. From the Iranian side of the border, you can pick up a shared taxi on to Maku, from where regular buses make the four-hour run to Tabriz. From Istanbul, there are several direct bus services to Tabriz and Tehran each week (about €45), but the ride is tedious.

By train, the *Trans-Asya Espresi* leaves Istanbul every Wednesday and arrives two nights later in Tehran (about €65).

#### IRAQ

As long as the situation in Iraq is unsafe, we strongly advise you against crossing the border into Iraq.

#### SYRIA

There are several border posts between Syria and Turkey, with the border at Reyhanlı/Bab al-Hawa, 50km east of Antakya, by far the busiest and most convenient. Other border posts include Yayladağı (south of Antakya), Kilis (south of Gaziantep), Akçakale (south of Şanlıurfa) and Nusaybin (east of Mardin).

From Antakya, there are direct buses across the border to the Syrian cities of Aleppo (Haleb; €6, four hours, 105km) and Damascus (€8, eight hours, 465km). Although you have to wait for everyone on the bus to complete border formalities, it's much easier than doing it on your own.

Alternatively you can catch a dolmuş south to the border post at Yayladağı, from where you can pick up a taxi or hitch a few kilometres further to the border. Once across, you're just 2km from the Syrian village of Kassab, from where regular minibuses make the 45-minute run to Lattakia.

From Mardin, there are regular minibuses to Nusaybin (€3). From Gaziantep, you can take a minibus to Kilis (€3).

You can also buy tickets direct from Istanbul to Aleppo (€30, 24 hours) or Damascus (€35, 33 hours), but the trip's long and painful.

A train for Damascus (via Aleppo, about €70) leaves Istanbul's Haydarpaşa Railway Station every Thursday.

#### Sea

Turkey has passenger shipping connections with Greece, Italy and northern Cyprus. For details see p663.

## GETTING AROUND Air

The state-owned **Turkish Airlines** (Türk Hava Yolları, THY; in Istanbul ☎ 0212-444 0849, 0212-225 0556; www.thy.com) connects all the country's major cities and resorts, albeit inconveniently, via its two main hubs, Istanbul and Ankara.

The most useful destinations for travellers include Ağrı (for Doğubayazıt), Ankara, Antalya, Bodrum, Dalaman (for Marmaris), Diyarbakır, Erzurum, Gaziantep, Istanbul, İzmir, Kars, Kayseri, Konya, Mardin, Şanlıurfa, Sivas, Trabzon and Van. A one-way fare usually costs between €75 and €90. You can buy tickets through travel agencies or directly through the airlines.

Domestic flights are also available with the following airlines:

**Atlasjet** (in Istanbul ☎ 0216-444 0387; www.atlasjet.com) Flies from Izmir to Antalya, Istanbul, Konya, Kars, Trabzon and Van, and from Istanbul to Ankara, Antalya, Bodrum, Izmir, Kars, Trabzon and Van. One-way fares cost about €55.

**Fly Air** (in Istanbul ☎ 0212-444 4359; www.flyair.com.tr) Flies from Istanbul to Antalya, Bodrum, Izmir and Trabzon, and from Ankara to Trabzon. One-way fares cost about €50.

**Onur Air** (in Istanbul ☎ 0212-662 9797; www.onurair.com.tr) Flies from Istanbul to Antalya, Bodrum, Dalaman, Diyarbakır, Erzurum, Gaziantep, Izmir, Kayseri, Kars and Trabzon, among others. One-way fares cost about €50.

#### Bus

Turkish buses go just about everywhere you could possibly want to go, and what's more they do so cheaply and comfortably (around €40 to cross the whole country).

A town's otogar (bus station) is often on the outskirts, but the bigger bus companies usually have free *servis* (shuttle minibuses) to ferry you into the centre and back again. Most otogars have an *emanet* (left-luggage room) that will charge a small fee, or you can sometimes leave luggage at the bus company's ticket office. Besides intercity buses, the otogar often handles dolmuşes that operate local routes.

All Turkish bus services are officially smoke-free.



### FEZ BUS

A hop-on, hop-off bus service, the **Fez Bus** (Map pp564-5; in İstanbul ☎ 0212-516 9024; www.feztravel.com; Aybılık Caddesi 15, Sultanahmet, İstanbul) links the main tourist resorts of the Aegean and the Mediterranean with İstanbul and Cappadocia. The big bonuses of using the Fez Bus are convenience (you never have to carry your bags), flexibility (the passes are valid all year and you can start anywhere on the circuit) and atmosphere (it's fun and energetic, with a strong party vibe). The downsides? You spend most of your time with other travellers rather than with locals, and it can rapidly become boring once you've had your fill of the backpacker fraternity. And it doesn't work out to be cheaper than doing it yourself with point-to-point buses.

A Turkish Delight bus pass, costing €190, allows you to travel from İstanbul to Çanakkale, Selçuk, Köyçegiz, Fethiye, Olympos, Cappadocia and then back to İstanbul.

### Car & Motorcycle

In the major cities, plan to leave your car in a parking lot and walk – traffic is terrible.

### DRIVING LICENCE

An international driving permit (IDP) may be handy if your driving licence is from a country likely to seem obscure to a Turkish police officer.

### FUEL

There are plenty of modern petrol stations in the west, many open 24/7. In the east, they are a bit less abundant but you won't have trouble finding one. Be warned: petrol is deadly pricey (about €1.30 per litre at the time of writing).

### HIRE

Hiring a car is quite expensive (often around €40 to €50 per day with unlimited mileage, less for a longer period). All the main car-hire companies are represented in the main towns and resorts. It's better to stick to the well-established companies (such as Avis, Budget, Europcar, Hertz and Thrifty) as they have bigger fleets and better emergency backup.

### INSURANCE

You *must* have third-party insurance, valid for the entire country.

### ROAD RULES

Drink-driving is a complete no-no. Maximum speed limits, unless otherwise posted, are 50km/h in towns, 90km/h on highways and 130km/h on an *otoyol* (motorway). Driving is fairly hazardous because of fast, inappropriate driving and overloaded trucks.

### Local Transport

With a few exceptions you probably won't use public buses in large cities. In İstanbul, the underground metro and the tram are a quick and efficient way of getting around.

Taxis are plentiful. They have meters – just make sure they're switched on.

### Train

**Turkish State Railways** (TCDD; www.tcdd.gov.tr in Turkish) runs services across the country, but it has a hard time competing with the long-distance buses for speed and comfort. Don't plan a trans-Turkey train trip in one go as the country is large and the trains depressingly slow. For example, the *Vangözü Ekspresi* from İstanbul to Lake Van (Tatvan), a 1900km trip, takes almost two days. The bus takes less than 24 hours, the plane less than two hours. Only between Ankara and İstanbul is train travel really fast and pleasant.

© Lonely Planet Publications. To make it easier for you to use, access to this chapter is not digitally restricted. In return, we think it's fair to ask you to use it for personal, non-commercial purposes only. In other words, please don't upload this chapter to a peer-to-peer site, mass email it to everyone you know, or resell it. See the terms and conditions on our site for a longer way of saying the above - 'Do the right thing with our content.'