

# Directory

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## ACCOMMODATION

Turkey has accommodation options to suit all budgets with concentrations of good, value-for-money pensions and hotels in all the places – such as İstanbul, Çanakkale, Selçuk, Fethiye and Göreme – most visited by independent travellers. The rates quoted in this book are for peak season (May to September) and include value-added tax (KDV); room prices can be discounted by up to 20% during the low season (October to April, but not during the Christmas period and major Islamic holidays; see p659).

Places within easy reach of İstanbul and Ankara (eg Safranbolu) may hike their prices at summer weekends.

In general, you can expect to spend less than €25 per person (sometimes much less) in places we list as budget options; €25 to €55 in those we list as midrange; and more than €55 in places we list as top end. Prices in İstanbul are considerably higher than those elsewhere in the country – expect to pay at least €10 per person more in a double room in İstanbul. Out east prices are lower. Breakfast is usually included in the price of all accommodation.

If you are planning a stay of a week or more in a coastal resort, check the prices in package-holiday brochures before leaving home. British, French and German tour companies in particular often offer flight-and-accommodation packages to places such as Kuşadası, Bodrum, Marmaris, Dalyan, Fethiye, Antalya, Side and Alanya for much less than you would pay if you make your own bookings.

These days most accommodation has websites for making advance reservations. Once on the travellers' circuit you will find that many pensions operate in informal chains, referring you from one to another. If you've enjoyed staying in one place you will probably enjoy its owner's recommendations, but of course you should hold hard to your right not to sign up to anything sight unseen.

Note that along the Aegean, Mediterranean, the Black Sea coasts and in some parts of Cappadocia, the vast majority of hotels, pensions and camping grounds close from mid-October to late April. These dates are variable, though; see p20 for more information.

### Apartments

Apartments for holiday rentals are usually thin on the ground. Wherever possible we have listed them in this book; otherwise your best bet is to try [www.ownersdirect.co.uk](http://www.ownersdirect.co.uk) or [www.holidaylettings.co.uk](http://www.holidaylettings.co.uk). If you're interested in hiring an apartment along the coast (eg Kaş, Antalya, Bodrum) your best bet is to contact local real estate agents (*emlakci*) who hold lists of available holiday rentals and are used to dealing with foreigners.

### Camping

Most camping facilities are along the coasts and are usually privately run. Inland, camping

## PRACTICALITIES

- Turkey uses the metric system for weights and measures. Basic conversion charts appear on the inside front cover of this book.
- Electrical current is 220V AC, 50Hz. Wall sockets are the round, two-pin European type. You can buy adaptors at most electrical shops for around €1.7. Power cuts are a fact of life so you need a surge protector.
- For the news in English, pick up the *Turkish Daily News* or the *New Anatolian*. The Turkish Airlines in-flight magazine, *SkyLife*, is an excellent, glossy monthly magazine, as is *Cornucopia*, published three times per year and full of excellent articles on Turkish life and culture.
- TRT3 provides news broadcasts on Saturday in French (5.15pm), English (7.15pm) and German (10.15pm) on 88.2 MHz in İstanbul, 91.6 MHz in Antalya and 92.8 MHz in Van. BBC World Service can be heard in southern coastal Turkey on 1323 KHz.
- Digiturk offers more than 300 different TV channels (including CNN, Fox Sports, Euro News, BBC Prime and BBC World).

facilities are fairly rare and are most likely to be on *Orman Dinlenme Yeri* (Forestry Department land). You usually need your own transport to reach these. Other facilities inland tend to be barren, overcrowded options on the outskirts of towns and cities.

If there are no designated camping grounds, ask about at hotels and pensions. Often they will let you camp in their grounds and use their facilities for a small fee (€3 to €6 per person). Otherwise, camping outside official camping grounds is often more hassle than it's worth. Not only may the police drop by to check you out and possibly move you on but also, out east, wolves and Kangal sheep dogs can be a real threat. We recommend female travellers always stick to official camp sites and camp where there are plenty of people around – especially out east.

### Hostels

Given that pensions are so cheap, Turkey has no official hostel network, even though a few places claim to be affiliated to the International Youth Hostelling Association (IYHA). However, there are plenty of hostels offering dormitories in touristy destinations. Dorm beds usually cost from €7 to €11 per night.

### Hotels

Hotels range from the dirt cheap to the boutique. The cheapest hotels (around €10 per double room) are mostly used by working-class Turkish men on business and are not suitable for lone women. While we don't want to restrict women's freedom of choice, if

you're greeted by silence and stony stares in a hotel reception, it may be better to move on.

Moving up a price bracket, one- and two-star hotels may cost around €15 to €35 for a double room with shower but are less oppressively masculine in atmosphere, even when the clientele is mainly male. Three-star hotels are usually used to catering for women travellers.

Hotels in more traditional Turkish towns, however clean and comfortable, normally offer only Turkish TV, Turkish breakfast and none of the 'extras' that are commonplace in pensions.

Prices are usually set by the local authorities and should be displayed at the reception desk. You should never pay more than these official prices; often you will be able to haggle for a lower (sometimes much lower) price.

Unmarried foreign couples don't usually have any problems sharing rooms, although out east you'll usually be given a twin room even if you asked for a double. However, some establishments still refuse to accept an unmarried couple when one of the parties is Turkish. The cheaper the hotel, and the more remote the location, the more conservative its management tends to be.

Not surprisingly, the most difficult places to find really good cheap rooms are İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir and package-holiday resort towns such as Alanya. In most other cities and resorts, good, inexpensive beds are readily available.

### BOUTIQUE HOTELS

Increasingly, old Ottoman mansions, caravanserais and other historic buildings are being

refurbished or completely rebuilt as hotels equipped with all mod cons and bags of character. Most of these options are in the mid to upper price range. Some are described in this guide; many more are in the excellent *Little Hotel Book*, by Sevan and Müjde Nişanyan, available in bookshops in İstanbul or through [www.nisanyan.net](http://www.nisanyan.net).

### Pensions & Guesthouses

In all of the destinations popular with travellers you'll be able to find simple family-run pensions and guesthouses (they are one of a kind) where you can get a good, clean single/double for around €20/30. Many also have dorm rooms and sometimes family rooms. These places usually offer a choice of simple meals, book exchanges, laundry services, international TV services etc, and it's these facilities that really distinguish them from traditional small, cheap hotels. Most pensions also have staff who speak at least one foreign language.

In a few places a handful of old-style *ev pansiyonu* (home pensions) survive. These are simply rooms in a family house that are let to visitors at busy times of year and won't normally have these extra facilities let alone anyone who speaks English. Nor do they usually advertise their existence in a formal way: ask locals where to find them and look out for *kiralık oda* (room for rent) in the windows.

In smaller tourist towns such as Fethiye, Pamukkale and Selçuk, touts for the pensions may approach you as you step from your bus and offer you accommodation. Some may string you a line about the pension you're looking for (it's burnt down; was destroyed by earthquake; the owner died) in the hope of getting you to their lair, where they may extract a commission from the owner. Taxi drivers sometimes like to play this game as well. Most people like to politely decline these offers and go to the pension of their choice; however, sometimes it's worth taking them up – especially if you're on a budget – as these touts are often working for newly opened pensions offering cheap rates. Before you let them take you to the pension make it known you're only looking and are under no obligation to stay.

### Tree Houses

Olympos (p379), on the Western Mediterranean coast near Antalya, is famous for its 'tree houses' – rough-and-ready permanent

shelters of minimal comfort in forested settings near the beach. A few of these places are real tree houses, but many are just tented platforms. They're fun, backpacker hang-outs, with bars, communal dining and internet connections. On the negative side, there's little security and there have been instances of guests falling ill as a result of what they've eaten or drunk. And sewage treatment seems to be an ongoing challenge, so consider swimming well away from the camps and check for odours before you check in. We have also heard of isolated cases of drugged beverages – see p381.

The success of Olympos has started to spawn tree houses elsewhere in Turkey (eg at Saklıkent, near Fethiye). More will probably have appeared by the time you read this.

### ACTIVITIES

Outdoor-activity aficionados have started to take notice of Turkey. Water sports abound, be it thrashing the white-water in Yusufeli, paddling over submerged ruins near Kaş or blissfully doing nothing on the sundeck of a *gület* (wooden yacht). Up high you can reconnoitre the best place for your towel while paragliding over Ölüdeniz, catch the breeze over Cappadocia in a hot-air balloon or tackle the wind at famous Alaçatı. In the mountains, Turkey has two way-marked long-distance trails, which are popular with trekkers (see p78), and abseiling, skiing and mountaineering are options as well.

All of these activities you can organise yourself, through your hotel, or check out the tour operators offering activity-based tours on p684. Other tour operators are listed in the various destination chapters; those specialising in trekking are listed on p87.

### Bird-Watching

Turkey is on an important migration route for birds travelling from north to south and vice versa, and spring and autumn are particularly good times to visit the country to watch migrating birds. There are several bird sanctuaries (*kuş cennetler*, bird paradises) dotted about the country, although unfortunately they are often popular with noisy, picnicking Turks who frighten the birds away. See p64 for more on birds and conservation issues in Turkey.

East of Gaziantep it's possible to visit one of the last nesting sites of the eastern bald ibis at Birecik (p599).

### Boat Trips

Many people want to take a boat trip along the Aegean or Mediterranean coast, preferably in a graceful *gület* (wooden yacht). There are endless possibilities, ranging from day trips out of Kuşadası, Bodrum, Marmaris, Fethiye, Antalya and all the smaller places in between to chartering a *gület* for a week-long tour of the coastline. Marmaris is another yachting centre, while Göcek and Alanya also have marinas. Yachts generally sail from May to October.

The most popular option is probably the four-day, three-night boat trip from Kale (near Olympos) to Fethiye or vice versa; for more details see p356. See p337 for more information on how to charter your own *gület* and p357 for tips on what to look out for.

### Canyoning & Abseiling

The glorious 18km-long Saklıkent Gorge, near Fethiye, is a thrilling spot for canyoning, and the icy-cold waters will add punch to your squeals. You can organise trips for six hours or even overnight (see p364). Abseilers head straight for the greatest rockscape in the country, Cappadocia. Ask at **Middle Earth Travel** (☎ 271 2528; [www.middleearthtravel.com](http://www.middleearthtravel.com)) in Göreme (p501) for details.

### Cycling

The most popular cycling routes are those along the coasts, particularly along the western Mediterranean coast between Marmaris and Antalya, with detours to nearby sites. The coastal road between Amasra and Sinop on the Black Sea passes by some beautiful scenery (see p539). Mountain biking around Cappadocia is popular, too, and plenty of places hire decent mountain bikes. Serious overlanders head out east: some cross to Iran and cycle all the way to India or beyond.

For practical tips on cycling in Turkey, see p679.

### Diving

Marmaris, Bodrum and Kaş are Turkey's main diving centres. Bodrum is a great place to take a PADI course with good marine life and coral for experienced divers. It also has plenty of wrecks and the possibility that a handful might open for exploration by the time you read this (see p276). Marmaris (p337) has a larger, more established scene, a legacy of its sponge-diving traditions (see p338). You can

also dive off Kaş' shores, too (p373), and it's a much nicer place to base yourself.

A growing number of people enjoy diving off the Gallipoli (Gelibolu) Peninsula to look at old WWI wrecks; see p190 for more details. You can also dive in Ayvalık (p213), which is famous for its red coral.

**Scubaturk.net** ([www.scubaturk.net](http://www.scubaturk.net)) is an İstanbul-based group with details about diving schools throughout the country; check out their photo gallery for inspiration!

### Horse-Riding

Whether or not Cappadocia means 'Land of Beautiful Horses', as some locals would have you believe, the area is certainly wonderful for exploring on horseback, and a couple of agencies in Avanos (p513) can organise rides of different durations. You can also ride through the mountainous Dilek National Park on the south Aegean coast (see p264).

### Hot-Air Ballooning

If you've never tried going up in a hot-air balloon then don't miss the chance at Cappadocia, where several companies compete for your trade. It's not cheap, but looking down on one of the world's most fascinating landscapes is bound to be one of the highlights of your trip. See the boxed text, p512, for more details.

### Mountaineering

Turkey's highest mountain is also its most famous: Mt Ararat. Mountaineers can tackle Ararat (Ağrı Dağı; 5137m), near Doğubayazıt, but you need to be cashed-up, organised and extremely patient with all the bureaucracy. See p589 for more information. It may be easier (and cheaper) to opt for climbing Süphan Dağı (Mt Süphan; 4434m), on the north side of Lake Van instead (see p636).

Two relatively easy mountains to climb are Hasan Dağı (Mt Hasan; 3268m) and Erciyes Dağı (Mt Erciyes; 3916m), both in Cappadocia. It's perfectly possible to arrange these climbs yourself; alternatively you could talk to Middle Earth Travel in Göreme (p501).

### Paragliding

Ölüdeniz (p359) is home to paragliding in Turkey, and pros come each year to challenge each other at the International Air Games every October. If you're new to dangling yourself in the air, you can tandem paraglide with one of the many operators offering flights.

## Swimming & Water Sports

Turkey's beautiful coasts and beaches are perfect for water sports from mid-May to September. The Aegean and Mediterranean coasts offer plentiful opportunities for water-skiing, snorkelling, sea-kayaking, scuba diving and swimming – unlike the chilly Black Sea coast.

There are excellent swimming beaches on Bozcaada (p206); in the Dilek National Park (p263); from Behramkale to Edremit (p212); on the Bodrum peninsula (p281); at İztuzu Beach, near Dalyan (p351); and at Altinkum (p239), near Çeşme. One of the finest is Patara Beach (p366). Note that Black Sea waters, especially close to İstanbul, can be treacherous for swimmers.

Sea-kayaking is a must over the sunken city of Üçağız (Kekova) near Kaş (see p373). Canoeing is possible on the Patara River, also near Kaş (p373).

## Trekking

Whatever your level of ability, Turkey is a great place for trekking. Turkey has two way-marked long-distance paths: the Lycian Way (see p78) and St Paul's Trail (p81).

The Kaçkar Mountains offer some of the best mountain hiking, whether you approach from the eastern Black Sea coast near Ayder (p85) or from Yusufeli (p572) on the southern side of the range, though the snow-free season is very short.

For more information on treks available in Turkey, see p87.

## Well-Being

Turks need no introduction to pampering themselves. Spend an afternoon in a *hamam* (Turkish bathhouse) and you'll soon see why (see opposite). The well-being industry has therefore found a natural home in Turkey, and opportunities for yoga, health retreats and the like are blossoming over the country. If you're a yoga devotee bring your mat. There are innumerable perfect spots to *asana* in the countryside, and many towns have classes you can join for a few hours, such as in Antalya (p387), which also has meditation instruction.

Kabak (p363) is a remote beach community firmly devoted to well-being, with relaxed accommodation offerings, yoga courses and even a spring-water swimming pool.

The Sultaniye Hot Springs and Mud Baths (p351), close to Dalyan, along the western

Mediterranean, is an excellent stopover for a mud bath rich in mineral salts said to aid skin complaints and rheumatism. A similar spa complex with even an open-air pool is Kurşunlu Banyo in Termal (p287). Asthma sufferers might want to head to the two caves near Alanya (p404) – apparently if you inhale the air inside the caves you'll be cured!

For a slightly odd treat visit Balıklı Kaplıca (p480), where teeny 'doctor' fish nibble on your toes, supposedly curing your skin of psoriasis.

## White-Water Rafting

The foaming white challenges of the Çoruh Gorge near Yusufeli (p572) are relatively undiscovered by all but those-in-the-know. Rapids junkies swear these are some of the best in the world. Other options include some gentler rapids near Çamlıhemşin (p560), the Köprülü Kanyon near Antalya (p396) and along the Kızılırmak and Zamanlı rivers near Avanos (p513). Check out Saklıkent Gorge, near Fethiye, as well (see p364).

## Windsurfing

Serious windsurfers need no introduction to Alaçatı (p240), near Çeşme. For the rest of us, it's the windsurfing hotspot of Europe – well, it's almost Europe. Beginners can take comprehensive courses; pros can try their hand with kites. It's definitely worth checking out.

## Winter Sports

Ski facilities in Turkey are fairly basic by European or US standards but infinitely cheaper and less cliquey and they provide a great opportunity to after-party with the locals. Snow is generally good and may last well into spring, especially at the country's best ski fields, Palandöken ski resort (p569), near Erzurum. There is also decent skiing at Uludağ (p301), near Bursa, and on Davraz Dağı (p317), near Eğirdir. We also saw ski lifts being constructed on the slopes of Nemrut Dağı (the one near Van; p635) when we visited, so another ski resort in eastern Anatolia could be operating by the time you read this.

An alternative to skiing is snowshoeing, whereby you walk over snow on special shoes. Kirit Voyage in Avanos (p513) can arrange for you to explore beautiful Cappadocia on snowshoes – but only in years when there is plenty of snow, of course.

## THE PLEASURES OF THE TURKISH BATH

After all that vigorous activity few things could be better than relaxing in the nearest *hamam* (Turkish bathhouse).

The steam bath was an institution that passed from the Romans to the Byzantines, and thence to the Turks. It was once a much-anticipated weekly outing for women especially, an opportunity to gossip with friends, groom and pamper, and for mothers to size up potential matches for their sons. Although modern bathrooms have reduced the need for public bathing, the tradition of the leisurely soak is still alive, albeit on a much reduced scale. And unfortunately some of the finest old baths have raised prices for tourists, putting them out of reach for most locals. At the same time they have reduced the quality of their service on the assumption that tourists don't know what to expect and won't be coming back again anyway – boo hiss.

Many people feel anxious the first time they go to a *hamam*. So what should you expect when you cross the threshold? First up, you usually need to choose and pay for the service you'd like at the door. Then you enter the *camekan*, where you'll be shown to a cubicle where you can undress, store your clothes, lock up your valuables and wrap the *peştamal* (cloth) that's provided around you. You'll be given a pair of *nalm* (wooden clogs), which you'll need to attempt to wear to prevent slipping on the marble floors. Then an attendant will lead you through the *soğukluk* (cold room, though it's usually warm) to the *hararet* (steam room) where you sit and sweat for a while.

It's cheapest to wash yourself with the soap, shampoo and towel you brought with you. The steam room will be ringed with individual basins (*kurna*), that you fill from the taps above. When sluicing the water over yourself with a plastic scoop you should try not to get soap into the water in the basin. Also try to avoid splashing your neighbours, especially on a Friday when someone who has completed their ritual wash would have to start all over again if soaked by a non-Muslim.

But to wash yourself is to miss most of the fun. It's far more enjoyable to let an attendant do it for you, dousing you with warm water and then scrubbing you with a *kese* (a coarse cloth mitten), loosening dirt you never suspected you had. Afterwards you'll be lathered with a sudsy swab, rinsed off and shampooed.

When all this is complete you can have a massage, an experience worth having at least once during your trip. Some massages are carried out on the floor or a table, but usually you'll be spread out on the great marble slab called the *göbektası* (belly stone) beneath the great central dome. In touristy areas the massage is likely to be pretty cursory and, unless you're prepared to pay the extra for an 'oil massage', you may be disappointed. Elsewhere, however, a Turkish massage can be an unforgettable and invigorating experience.

Bath etiquette dictates that men should keep the *peştamal* on at all times. In the women's section, the amount of modesty expected varies considerably: in some baths total nudity is fine, in others it would be a blunder to remove your knickers; play safe by keeping your underwear on under your *peştamal* until inside the hot room where you can decide what is appropriate. If you want to shave your legs or armpits, you should do this in the *camekan* rather than in the bath.

Traditional *hamams* have separate sections for men and women or admit men and women at separate times. Opening hours for women are almost invariably more restricted than for men. In tourist areas some *hamams* are more than happy for foreign men and women to bathe together and charge a premium price for the privilege. In traditional *hamams*, women are washed and massaged by other women – no Turkish woman would let a male masseur anywhere near her. Women who accept a massage from a male masseur should have their massage within view of companions and protest loudly at the first sign of impropriety.

## BUSINESS HOURS

Government departments, offices and banks usually open from 8.30am to noon and 1.30pm to 5pm Monday to Friday. Shops are open from 9am to 7pm Monday to Saturday. During the

summer the working day in some cities, including the Aegean and Mediterranean regions, begins at 7am or 8am and finishes at 2pm. During the month of Ramazan the working day is generally shortened to 2pm or 3pm.

In tourist areas food and souvenir/carpet shops are usually open from around 8am to 11pm or later if it's very busy. Elsewhere, grocery shops are usually open from 7am to 7pm or 8pm daily; other shops are usually closed on Sunday. Friday, the Muslim Sabbath, is a normal working day in Turkey.

Many museums close on Monday, especially in Istanbul. From April to October museums usually open half an hour earlier and close 1½ to two hours later.

Internet cafés usually open from around 9am until late at night, or until the last customer has left.

## CHILDREN Practicalities

*Çocuklar* (children) may not be well catered for in Turkey, but they are the beloved centrepiece of family life and your children will be welcomed wherever they go. Your baby or young child's journey through the streets will be peppered with *Maşallah* (glory be to God) and your child clutched into the adoring arms of strangers, sometimes even against his/her will. You might want to learn your child's age and sex in Turkish – *ay* (month), *yil* (year), *erkek* (boy) and *kız* (girl). You might also want to make polite inquiries about the other person's children, present or absent: *kaç tane çocuklarınız var mı?* (how many children do you have?)

Pasteurised UHT milk is sold in cartons everywhere, but fresh milk is harder to find. Also hard to find is baby food, and what you do find your baby will understandably find inedible or it will be mashed banana, which you could easily prepare yourself. Consider bringing a supply with you. Migros supermarkets have the best range of baby food in the country. Alternatively you could rely on hotel and restaurant staff to prepare special dishes for your children. Most Turkish women breast-feed their babies (discreetly) in public and no-one is likely to mind you doing the same. You can buy formula and vitamin-fortified rice cereal in all supermarkets. High chairs in restaurants are the exception, not the rule.

Disposable *bebek bezi* (nappies or diapers) are readily available. The best brands are Prima or Huggies, sold in pharmacies and supermarkets – don't bother with the cheaper local brands. Oh, and if you find a public baby-changing facility in the country please let us know!

Most hotels can arrange some sort of babysitting service if you ask, but kids' clubs are few and far between and agencies are nonexistent. Many of the seaside towns have children's play equipment, but elsewhere, including Istanbul, the situation is grim. Check the equipment for safety before letting your child use it.

It's important to remember that bus journeys can be very long and that buses do not have toilets on board; trains, planes or automobiles might be the best option. Most car-rental companies provide child-safety seats for a small extra charge. In Turkey, traffic and treacherous road surfaces make travelling by stroller an extreme sport.

Always double check the suitability of prescriptions you may be given while in Turkey for children – see p690 for more information.

Check out Lonely Planet's *Travel with Children*, by Cathy Lanigan, which has lots of practical information and advice on how to make travel with children as stress-free as possible.

## Sights & Activities

Beaches aside, in terms of things to see and do Turkey doesn't have a lot of attractions that have been designed with children in mind. With the exception of the Rahmi M Koç museum (p123) in Istanbul, most Turkish museums would leave them bored to tears, and there are no zoos or activity centres easily accessible and worthy of mention. For other ideas on how to keep your kids entertained in Istanbul, see p134.

Activity options are a better bet, with boating, ballooning and, depending on their age, horse-riding, snorkelling and white-water rafting all great options.

Apart from the coasts, the area of the country most likely to appeal to older children is Cappadocia, with its underground cities, cave dwellings and kooky landscapes.

## Safety Precautions

Parents need to remember that in Turkey ideas of safety consciousness rarely meet the norms of countries such as the UK or the USA. The traffic must be at the forefront of parents' minds constantly, and we've already mentioned the broken-down and poorly designed play equipment (grrr). Watch out for open power points in hotels, crudely covered electric mains and open stairwells on the streets. Serious potholes, open drainage and

carelessly secured building sites are also a fact of life in Turkey.

If you looking for childcare while in Turkey, you may want to get some tips from **Child Wise** ([www.childwise.net/choose-with-care-php](http://www.childwise.net/choose-with-care-php)).

## CLIMATE CHARTS

For meteorologists, Turkey has seven distinct climatic regions, but from the point of view of most casual visitors, the most important distinctions are between the coast with its moderate winter temperatures and hot, humid summers, and the inland areas with their extremely cold winters and excessively hot summers. The further east you travel, the more pronounced these climatic extremes become, so that much of eastern Turkey is unpassable with snow from December through to April, with temperatures sometimes falling to around -12°C. In July and August temperatures rise rapidly and

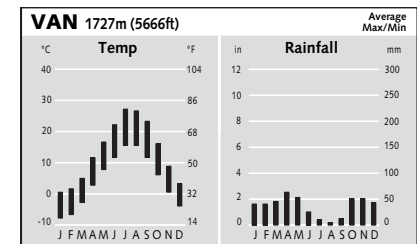
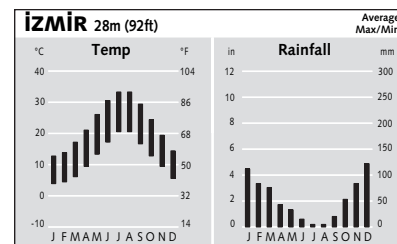
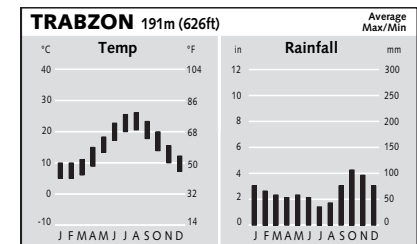
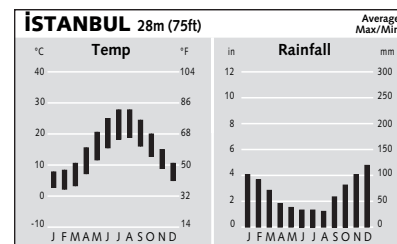
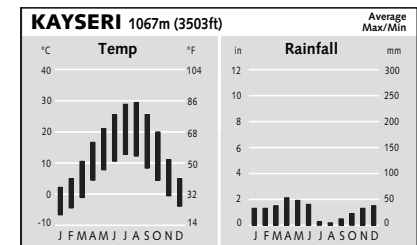
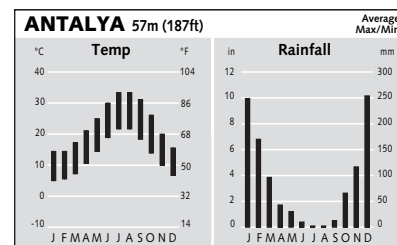
can exceed 45°C, making travel in the east very uncomfortable.

The Black Sea coast gets two to three times the national average rainfall, along with more moderate temperatures, making it rather like Central Europe but pleasantly warmer. See When to Go in the Getting Started chapter (p19) for more information.

## COURSES Cookery

**Cercis Murat Konağı** (☎ 0482-213 6841; [www.cercismurat.com](http://www.cercismurat.com) in Turkish at time of research), run by Ebru Baydemir, runs cookery courses in her restaurant in gorgeous Mardin, southeastern Anatolia. Come here for lessons by female chefs – a rarity anywhere in the country, let alone out east! See p629 for more information.

**Gökpınar Retreat** (☎ 0252-313 3888; [www.caravan-turkey.com](http://www.caravan-turkey.com)), run by Caravan Travel, offers an all-inclusive week-long cooking retreat in a



small village out of Bodrum for €500. There are sometimes other low-key courses running at the retreat simultaneously, such as carpet weaving or belly dancing. Jiggling the waistline may be the perfect antidote to a day's taste-testing.

**Heritage Travel** (☎ 0384-271 2687; www.goreme.com), based in Göreme, Cappadocia, runs one-week cuisine tours (€1050).

**Istanbul Food Workshop** (☎ 0212-534 4788; www.istanbulfoodworkshop.com; Yıldırım Caddesi 111, Fener, İstanbul) runs small-group workshops in a cosy semi-professional kitchen. These two- to 20-hour sessions (€20 to €170) are for serious foodies. Add one of their lectures on 15th- and 16th-century Ottoman palace culinary culture, no less, and you're guaranteed top-class kudos at your next dinner soiree. The Australian-Turkish team have recently started gourmet tours of İstanbul too.

If you're more interested in a no-fuss introduction to whipping up a few tasty Turkish specialties you're probably better off with the classes at the **Sarıç Hotel** (☎ 0212-518 2323; www.sarnichotel.com; Küçük Ayasofya Caddesi 26, Sultanahmet, İstanbul). Four-hour introductions to Turkish cookery in English, French and Dutch cost €40. After the lesson, you adjourn to the rooftop to polish off the results. Group sizes are capped at 10, but work better when there are a few less attendees.

### Belly-dancing

**Gökpinar Retreat** (☎ 0252-313 3888; www.caravanturkey.com) runs week-long belly dancing courses from April to November at its retreat near Bodrum from €490, including meals, transfers and 12 hours of lessons. Another option in İstanbul is **Les Arts Turcs** (p135), where you can have as many or as few lessons as you'd like.

### Language

İstanbul is the most popular place to learn Turkish, though there are also courses in Ankara, İzmir and a few other spots around the country. Tömer and Taksim Dilmer (see right) are the most popular schools, but both have their fans and detractors. To lessen the risk of disappointment, ask to sit in on a class before you commit, as the quality of your experience definitely depends on the teacher and your classmates. Prices start from €280 for 80 hours of teaching spread over four weeks.

If you'd prefer private tuition expect to pay from €25 per hour; tutors often advertise

in the *Turkish Daily News* and on the expat website [www.mymerhaba.com](http://www.mymerhaba.com). *Teach Yourself Turkish*, by David and Asuman Çelen Pollard, is by far the best of the many books on teaching yourself Turkish.

Schools to learn Turkish include:

**EF Language School** (☎ 0212-282 9064; www.turkishlesson.com; Aydin Sokak 5 Blok 12, 1 Levent, İstanbul)

**Spoken Turkish** (☎ 0212-244 9000; www.spokenenglishtur.com; Istiklal Caddesi 212/7, Beyoğlu, İstanbul) A newcomer on the scene offering less intensive courses than its competitors, but relatively untested.

**Taksim Dilmer** (☎ 0212-292 9696; www.dilmer.com; İnönü Caddesi, Prof Dr Tank Zafer Tunaya Sokak 18, Taksim, İstanbul)

**Tömer** (☎ 0212-230 7083; www.tomer.com.tr; Abide-i Hürriyet Sokak 43, Şişli, İstanbul) Affiliated with Ankara University and with many branches throughout the country.

### Handicrafts

If you're interested in making pottery, you might like to head to Avanos, the small Cappadocian town famous for its ceramics. There are so many workshops there, such as **Chez Galip** ([www.chez-galip.com](http://www.chez-galip.com)), offering informal short courses that it's best to just go and see what suits.

Travellers interested in learning weaving can also contact Chez Galip or **Gökpinar Retreat** (☎ 0252-313 3888; [www.caravanturkey.com](http://www.caravanturkey.com)). **Musa Başaran** (☎ 0212-517 0099; [musabasaran@ihlas.net.tr](http://musabasaran@ihlas.net.tr)) offers 10-hour introductions (€80) for small groups in his private studio in İstanbul. **Heritage Travel** (☎ 0384-271 2687; [www.goreme.com](http://www.goreme.com)), based in Göreme, runs 10- to 15-day kilim-weaving tours where you stay in a nomad village and learn all about carpet making (€1600).

### CUSTOMS

One carton (200) cigarettes, 1.5kg of coffee, 10 cigars and two bottles of wine can be imported duty-free. There's no limit to the amount of new Turkish liras or foreign currency you can bring into the country.

Items valued over US\$15,000 must be declared and may be entered in your passport to guarantee that you take the goods out of the country when you leave. It's illegal to take antiquities out of the country.

### DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Although Turkey is by no way a dangerous country to visit, it's always wise to be a little cautious, especially if you're travelling alone. Be wary of pickpockets in buses, markets and

### TRAVEL ADVISORIES

For the latest travel information log on to the following websites:

**www.smarttraveller.gov.au** Australian Government's Travel Advisory & Consular Assistance Service.

**www.fco.gov.uk/travel** UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office.

**www.travel.state.gov** US Department of State/Bureau of Consular Affairs.

other crowded places. Keep an eye out for anyone lurking near ATMs.

In Turkey safety seems a low priority. Holes in pavements go unattended and unlit at night; precipitous drops go unguarded; safety belts are worn only as long as it takes to drive past a police officer before being released; lifeguards on beaches are conspicuous by their absence. Don't even ask yourself how safe it is for a dolmuş driver to be negotiating a bend while simultaneously counting out change! Things are changing slowly, but parents of young children in particular will need to be on their guard at all times.

At the time of writing, travelling in the southeast is safe as the unrest there appears to have largely subsided. However, the Kurdish issue is far from resolved, so be sure to check the situation before setting out.

### Flies & Mosquitoes

In high summer, mosquitoes can make a stay along the coast a nightmare. Some hotel rooms come equipped with nets and/or plug-in bug-busters, but it's a good idea to bring your own mosquito coils to burn as well. As dusk falls, remember to cover your arms and legs or at least to slather yourself with insect repellent.

In some towns the authorities try to combat the more general problem of insects by sending out vans that belch repellent into the sky, usually at about the time in the evening when everyone has just sat down on a terrace for dinner. Some people might consider these dubious clouds of noxious fumes to be as alarming as the insects they're supposed to be eradicating.

### Lese-Majesty

The laws against insulting, defaming or making light of Atatürk, the Turkish flag, the Turkish people, the Turkish Republic etc are

taken very seriously. Be warned that even if such remarks were never made, Turks have been known to claim they were in the heat of a quarrel, which is enough to get the foreigner carted off to jail.

### Traffic

Unfortunately Turkey has a terrible record when it comes to road safety, which means that you must drive defensively at all times. It's particularly unwise to drive in the dark on country roads where tractors may be ambling along with unlit trailers. See p681 for more information. When travelling long distances, it's worth paying slightly more to use a bus company with relief drivers, rather than risk being driven by someone who may be at the wheel for a straight 18 hours.

As a pedestrian note that there is no such thing as right of way, despite the little green man. Give way to cars and trucks in all situations, even if you have to jump out of the way.

### Scams & Druggings

Turkey is one of the friendliest and most welcoming countries on the planet, but there will always be a few sharks in the mix. Although it wouldn't do to be paranoid about potential scams, it does pay to be careful, especially in İstanbul.

One of the most popular scams targeted at single men is the nightclub-bar shake-down – it mostly happens in İstanbul. You probably know the scene: you're strolling through Sultanahmet, when you're approached by a dapper young man who starts up a conversation. After your initial hesitation, and once you realise he's not affiliated with a carpet shop, you start chatting away. He's says he's off to meet friends for a drink in Beyoğlu, as there's nowhere to party in Sultanahmet. Would you like to go along? Woohoo! You go into a bar and are approached by some girls by which time it's way too late to back out. When the bill arrives, lo and behold the girls' outrageously expensive drinks appear on it. It's no good claiming you have no cash on you – you'll be frogmarched to the nearest ATM and 'persuaded' to cough up. If this happens to you make sure you report it to the tourist police; some travellers have taken the policeman back to the bar and received some or all of their money back.

Drugging isn't a common problem, but it's worth mentioning nonetheless. In this

situation a single guy is approached by two or three so-called friends, often claiming to be from Egypt or Lebanon or Romania and often accompanied by the fig leaf of a woman. Fall for this one, and you risk finding your drink spiked and waking up in some unexpected location with all your belongings, right down to your shoes, missing – or worse. When the missing person billboards in 2005 went up for a Korean tourist, most locals knew the fate of this unlucky young man – a month later his body was found on the outskirts of İstanbul. Most likely he was a victim of a drugging gone wrong.

Moral of these stories? Single men should not accept invitations from unknown folk in large cities without sizing the situation up very carefully beforehand. You could also invite your new-found friends to a bar of *your* choice; if they're not keen to go, chances are they are shady characters.

We've also heard reports about two female travellers claiming to have their drinks drugged at a camp in Olympos. See p381 for more information.

## Smoking

Turks smoke here, there and everywhere. Our favourite example was a driver holding a newborn with his left hand and a cigarette, the gear stick and the steering wheel with his right! Anti-smoking laws are on the drawing board, but until they come into effect you'll have to endure smoking in restaurants, cafés, bars and hotel lobbies. Public transport is usually smoke-free. Taxi drivers will usually butt out if you ask them to.

## DISABLED TRAVELLERS

On the whole, Turkey is a challenging destination for disabled (*engelli* or *özürlü*) travellers. Ramps, wide doorways and properly equipped toilets are extremely rare, and Braille and audio information at sights nonexistent. Crossing most streets is particularly challenging; everyone does so at their peril.

Airlines and the top hotels and resorts have some provision for wheelchair access, and ramps are beginning to appear in a few other places, but very slowly. Hotel Rolli (p417) in Anamur is that rare thing – a hotel truly adapted for wheelchair-users. **Mephisto Voyage** (see p511) offers special tours in Cappadocia for mobility-impaired people, utilising the Jolette system.

Increasingly, dropped kerb edges are being introduced to cities, especially in western Turkey – in cities such as Edirne, Bursa and İzmir they seem to have been sensibly designed. Selçuk, Bodrum and Fethiye have been identified as relatively user-friendly towns for people with mobility problems because their pavements and roads are fairly level. Some towns – and even a few service stations – now have toilets adapted for disabled access, but these are the exception not the rule.

Check out [www.everybody.co.uk](http://www.everybody.co.uk) for information on the facilities for disabled travellers offered by various airlines. Turkish Airlines offers 40% discounts to disabled travellers who are also eligible for discounts on trains and at some museums. In İstanbul, disabled people are eligible for free bus travel. However, to qualify for these discounts you may have to show a doctor's letter as 'proof' of your

disability, however obvious it may seem to you. Trams are wheelchair-accessible too.

## Organisations

Some information resources dedicated to disabled travellers include:

**Access-Able** ([www.access-able.com](http://www.access-able.com)) Includes a small list of tour and transport operators in Turkey.

**Accessibility.com.au** (☎ 02-9692 9322; [www.accessibility.com.au](http://www.accessibility.com.au); Suite 6, The Coopergate, 56 Bowman St, Pyrmont NSW 2001, Australia)

**Radar** (☎ 020-7250 3222; [www.radar.org.uk](http://www.radar.org.uk); 12 City Forum, 250 City Rd, London EC1V 8AF, UK)

**Society for the Advancement of Travel for the Handicapped** (SATH; ☎ 212-447 7284; [www.sath.org](http://www.sath.org); 347 Fifth Ave, No 610, New York, NY 10016, USA)

The **Physically Disabled Support Association** (Bedensel Engellilerle Dayanışma Derneği; [www.bedd.org.tr](http://www.bedd.org.tr) in Turkish only) has helpful information for visitors to Turkey, but is unfortunately only in Turkish. You could email and someone with English might be able to help.

## DISCOUNT CARDS

Currently the only really useful card to lay your hands on is the International Student Identity Card (ISIC); you'll need a letter from your college or university to prove that you are a student before you will be able to get one legally. With an ISIC card you should be able to get discounts of at least 50% on most (but by no means all) museum entry fees. You can also get 20% off domestic and international train tickets.

## EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

### Turkish Embassies Abroad

The following are Turkish embassies in selected cities around the world. For other countries see the list on [www.mfa.gov.tr](http://www.mfa.gov.tr).

**Australia** (☎ 02-6295 0227; [www.turkishembassy.org.au](http://www.turkishembassy.org.au); 60 Mugga Way, Red Hill, ACT 2603)

**Canada** (☎ 613-789 4044; [www.turkishembassy.com](http://www.turkishembassy.com); 197 Wurtemberg St, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 8L9)

**France** (☎ 01 56 33 33 33; [www.tcaprbsk.com](http://www.tcaprbsk.com); 184 blvd Malesherbes, 75017 Paris)

**Germany** (☎ 030-275 850; [www.ttberlinbe.de](http://www.ttberlinbe.de); Runge Str 9, 10179 Berlin)

**Greece** (☎ 01-724 5915; 8 Vassileos Gheorgiou B St, 10674 Athens)

**Ireland** (☎ 01-668 5240; [turkembassy@eircom.net](mailto:turkembassy@eircom.net); 11 Clyde Rd, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4)

**Italy** (☎ 06-445 941; [www.ambasciataditurchia.it](http://www.ambasciataditurchia.it); Via Palestro 28, 00185 Rome)

**Spain** (☎ 91 319 8064; [www.tcmadridbe.org](http://www.tcmadridbe.org); Calle de Rafael Calvo 18 2A-B, Madrid)

**Switzerland** (☎ 031 359 7070; [www.tr-botschaft.ch](http://www.tr-botschaft.ch); Lombachweg 33, 3006 Berne)

**UK** (☎ 020-7591 6900; [www.turkishconsulate.org.uk](http://www.turkishconsulate.org.uk); Rutland Lodge, Rutland Gardens, Knightsbridge, London SW7 1BW)

**USA** (☎ 202-612 6700; [www.turkishembassy.org](http://www.turkishembassy.org); 2525 Massachusetts Ave, NW Washington, DC 2008)

## Embassies & Consulates in Turkey

Most embassies and consulates in Turkey are open from 8am to noon Monday to Friday although some embassies of Muslim countries may be open Sunday to Thursday. Often they also open in the afternoon for people to pick up visas. Exceptions to these opening hours are included below. If you need to ask the way to an embassy say: '[Country] *başkonsoloslugu nerede?*'

For details on getting visas to neighbouring countries, see p674.

**Armenia** Contact Russian embassy.

**Australia** (☎ 8.30am-4.30pm Mon-Fri) embassy in Ankara (Map p442; ☎ 0312-459 9521; [www.embaustralia.org.tr](http://www.embaustralia.org.tr); Uğur Mumcu Caddesi 88/7, Gaziosmanpaşa); İstanbul (☎ 0212-243 1333; fax 243 1332; 2nd fl, Suzer Plaza, Asker Ocağı Caddesi 15, Elmadağ, Şişli)

**Azerbaijan** (☎ 8.30am-4.30pm Mon-Fri) embassy in Ankara (☎ 0312-491 1681; Baku Sokak 1, Or-An); İstanbul (☎ 0212-284 9579; Sumbul Sokak 17, Levent 1); Kars (☎ 9.30am-12.30pm Mon-Fri; ☎ 0474-223 6475, 223 1361; fax 223 8741; Eski Erzurum Caddesi)

**Bulgaria** (☎ 9-11am Mon-Fri) embassy in Ankara (Map p442; ☎ 0312-427 5142; Atatürk Bulvarı 124, Kavaklıdere); Edirne (☎ /fax 0284-214 0617; Talat Paşa Caddesi 31); İstanbul (☎ 9am-noon Mon-Fri) (☎ 0212-281 0114; Mehmet Ahmet Adnan Zeygün Caddesi 44, Ulus, Levent 2)

**Canada** (☎ 9.30am-5.30pm Mon-Thu, 9.30am-12.30pm Fri) embassy in Ankara (Map p442; ☎ 0312-409 2700; Cinnah Caddesi 58, Çankaya); İstanbul (Map pp100-1; ☎ 0212-251 9838; fax 272 3437; İstiklal Caddesi 373/5, Beyoğlu)

**France** (☎ 9am-12.30pm Mon-Fri) embassy in Ankara (Map p442; ☎ 0312-455 4545; Paris Caddesi 70, Kavaklıdere); İstanbul (Map pp100-1; ☎ 0212-334 8730; fax 334 8727; İstiklal Caddesi 8, Taksim)

**Georgia** (☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri) embassy in Ankara (☎ 0312-442 6508; Hilal Mahallesi Caddesi 31, Yıldız); Trabzon (Map p550; ☎ 0462-326 2226; fax 326 2296; Pertev Paşa Sokak 10; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri); İstanbul (Map pp94-5; ☎ 0212-343 9258; Cumhuriyet Caddesi 169)

**Germany** (☎ 9am-noon Mon-Fri) embassy in Ankara (Map p442; ☎ 0312-455 5100; fax 427 8926; Atatürk Bulvarı 114, Kavaklıdere); İstanbul (Map pp100-1; ☎ 0212-334 6100; fax 249 9920; İnönü Caddesi 16, Taksim)

## HAVE WHEELS, WILL TRAVEL *Curtis Palmer (New Zealand)*

I am a C6, C7 quadriplegic who loves to travel. I travel with my partner who assists me where places are not accessible. Travelling around Turkey for six weeks was a total joy. I had some difficulties, but no more than when I travel around Europe.

What makes Turkey such a joy is the people. Turkish people are very laid-back and extremely helpful. Whenever we faced a dilemma there was never a shortage of willing helpers.

Admittedly access was testing at times, and independent travel would be very strenuous. We chose to stay in hostels and pensions, and this often meant my partner had to bump me up and down lots of steps. This proved to be more rewarding than expensive hotels, though, as the people were both friendly and helpful. The bathrooms mostly had one step into them and were small with handheld showers. Accessible toilets were rare, and most were squat toilets.

We used dolmuşes and tourist coaches to get around, which meant 'bumming' my way up the steps, to the astonishment of onlookers.

A lot of tourist sites were big obstacles, but getting in free made up for not being able to see everything.

**Iran** (☎ 8.30am-12.30pm & 2.30-4.30pm Mon-Thu & Sat, 8.30am-12.30pm Fri & Sun) embassy in Ankara (Map p442; ☎ 0312-468 2820; fax 468 2823; Tahrir Caddesi 10, Kavaklıdere); Eziurum (☎ 0442-316 2285; fax 316 1182; of Atatürk Bulvarı); İstanbul (Map pp100-1; ☎ 8.30-11.30am Mon-Thu & Sat; ☎ 0212-513 8230; fax 511 5219; Ankara Caddesi 1/2, Çağaloğlu)

**Iraq** embassy in Ankara (☎ 0312-468 7421; fax 468 4832; Turan Emeksis Sokak 11, Gaziosmanpaşa)

**Netherlands** (☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri) embassy in Ankara (Map p442; ☎ 0312-409 1800; fax 409 1898; Hollanda Caddesi 3, Yıldız); İstanbul (Map pp100-1; ☎ 0212-393 2121; fax 292 5031; İstiklal Caddesi 393, Beyoğlu)

**New Zealand** embassy in Ankara (Map p442; ☎ 0312-467 9056; fax 0312-467 9013; level 4, İnan Caddesi 13/4, Kavaklıdere); İstanbul (☎ 0212-251 3895; nzhonconist@hatem-law.com.tr; İnönü Caddesi 92/3, Gümüşsuyu)

**Russia** (☎ 10-11am Mon-Fri) embassy in Ankara (Map p442; ☎ 0312-439 2122; fax 438 3952; Kayağı Sokak 5, Çankaya); İstanbul (Map pp100-1; ☎ 0212-292 5101; visavi@turk.net; İstiklal Caddesi 443, Beyoğlu); Trabzon (Map p549; ☎ 0462-326 2600; fax 326 2101; Şh Refik Cesur 6, Ortahisar)

**Syria** embassy in Ankara (☎ 0312-440 9657; fax 438 5609; Sedat Simavi Sokak 40, 06680 Çankaya); İstanbul (☎ 0212-232 6721; fax 230 2215; Mağca Caddesi 59/5, Teşvikiye) There is a newly opened consulate in Gaziantep, but at the time of research it was processing visa applications only for Turkish nationals.

**UK** embassy in Ankara (☎ 0312-455 3344; fax 455 3351; Şehit Eran Caddesi 46/A, Çankaya; ☎ 9am-12.30pm & 2-4pm Mon-Fri); İstanbul (Map pp100-1; ☎ 0212-334 6400; fax 334 6407; Meşrutiyet Caddesi 34, Tepebaşı, Beyoğlu; ☎ 9am-12.30pm & 2-3.30pm Mon-Fri); Marmaris (☎ 0412 6486; fax 412 5077; Yeşil Marmaris Travel Agency & Yacht Management Bldg, Barbaros Caddesi 249; ☎ 9.30am-noon Mon-Fri & 2.30-5pm Mon-Thu in summer)

**USA** (☎ 8.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri) embassy in Ankara (Map p442; ☎ 0312-455 5555; fax 467 0019; Atatürk Bulvarı 118, Kavaklıdere); Adana (☎ 0322-346 6262; fax 346 7916; Girne Bulvarı No 212 Guzelevler Mahallesi); İstanbul; ☎ 0212-335 9000; fax 335 9102; Kaplıcalar Mevkii 2, İstinye)

## FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Turkey has loads of festivals – İstanbul seems to have something on almost every week! (See p135 for details of some of these.) The following are some of the national standouts:

### January

**New Year's Day** A surrogate Christmas on 1 January, with the usual decorations, exchange of gifts and greeting cards.

**Camel Wrestling** On the last Sunday in January be in Selçuk for the camel wrestle of a lifetime. Be a savvy spectator with our wrestling low-down on p250.

### March

**Nevruz** Kurds and Alevis celebrate the ancient Middle Eastern spring festival on 21 March with much jumping over bonfires and general jollity. Banned until a few years ago, Nevruz is now an official holiday with huge parties, particularly in Diyarbakır, that last well into the morning.

### April

**Children's Day** Every 23 April is celebrated with an international children's festival, with kids invited to countrywide events.

**Anzac Day** The disastrous WWI battles for the Dardanelles are commemorated with dawn services at Gallipoli on 25 April.

### June & July

**Aspendos Opera & Ballet Festival** From mid-June to early July this festival is an excellent excuse to enjoy a performance in one of the finest Roman theatres in the world (p395).

**International İzmir Festival** Mid-June to mid-July, İzmir, Çeşme and Ephesus host opera, classical and dance (p230).

**Kafkasör Kültür ve Sanat Festivali** In the last week-end of June join the crush at the bull-wrestling matches at Artvin (p575).

**Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling Competition** Every June, Turkey's greatest oil wrestlers slug it out for supremacy in Edirne (p171).

**Kültür Sanat ve Turizm Festival** During the last week-end of July Doğubayazıt hosts a culture and arts festival celebrating Kurdish music, dance and theatre (p587).

### August

**Hacı Bektaş Veli Festival** From 16 to 18 August, sleepy little Hacibeğtaş comes alive for the annual pilgrimage for followers of the Bektaşî order of dervishes (p517).

**International Ballet Festival** Can you think of a more atmospheric location than the Castle of St Peter in Bodrum for this annual festival? See p276 for more.

### December

**Mevlâna Festival** This Konya festival, honouring Celaleddin Rumi, the great poet and mystic who founded the Mevlevî order of whirling dervishes, usually lasts from around 10 to 17 December (see p486).

### FOOD

For information about what you'll find on Turkish menus, see p68.

In the Eating sections of this guide, we usually subdivide eating establishments into

restaurants, places for quick, cheap feeds and cafés. Restaurants are the smarter places where you can expect to find tablecloths and alcoholic drinks. Expect to pay between €15 and €30 without drinks to eat in a restaurant in most parts of Turkey (more in İstanbul, less way out east).

Quick eats include all the many *lokantas* that dish up soups, stews and grills – they rarely serve alcohol. A meal is likely to cost you only between €4 and €10, even in the big cities.

Cafés fall somewhere between the two categories. They are usually much smarter than *lokantas* but not as formal as restaurants. Most offer a selection of pastas, sandwiches and salads – you'll pay between €7 and €15. There will probably be alcohol available and may well be music in the evening.

## GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

Homosexuality is legal in Turkey and attitudes are changing thanks to the hard work of groups such as **Kaos GL** ([www.kaosgl.com](http://www.kaosgl.com)), but prejudice remains strong and there are sporadic reports of violence towards gays – the message is discretion. İstanbul has a flourishing gay scene (see p147), as does Ankara. Elsewhere there may only be a bar or two.

For more information, contact Turkey's gay and lesbian support group, **Lambda İstanbul** ([www.lambdaistanbul.org](http://www.lambdaistanbul.org)) and **Kaos GL**, based in Ankara, which publishes the country's only gay and lesbian magazine (in Turkish only).

Gay-friendly travel agents include **Sunset Gay & Lesbian Travel** ([www.sunset-gay-travel.com](http://www.sunset-gay-travel.com)) and **Absolute Sultans** ([www.absolutesultans.com](http://www.absolutesultans.com)).

## HOLIDAYS

When you're planning your trip, it's worth noting the dates of Turkish holidays. You should book accommodation and transport ahead of time wherever possible if you're planning to travel during a holiday or a few days either side of one. The biggest Islamic holiday, Kurban Bayramı, sees locals travel all over the

country: for those working in the big cities it may be the only time of the year they get to see their families.

All banks, businesses and most shops are closed on public holidays; however, most restaurants, grocery shops, supermarkets and businesses catering for foreign tourists will remain open. Note that just prior to and after the holidays banks will be extremely busy and ATMs may run out of cash during the holiday period. It's well worth planning ahead so you don't end up having to change money at inflated rates.

## Islamic Holidays

The official Turkish calendar is the Gregorian one used in Europe, but religious festivals are celebrated according to the Islamic lunar calendar. Dates in the Major Islamic Holidays table, below, are estimates; exact dates are not confirmed until the moon is sighted.

Turkey celebrates all the main Islamic holidays of which the most important are the month-long Ramazan and, two months later, Kurban Bayramı. Since these holidays are celebrated according to the Muslim lunar calendar, they take place around 11 days earlier each year.

An unofficial half-day holiday for 'preparation' precedes the start of major public and religious holidays; shops and offices close about noon, and the actual festival begins at sunset. Of the religious festivals, only Şeker Bayramı and Kurban Bayramı are also public holidays.

## RAMAZAN

The Holy Month (Ramadan in other Muslim countries) is similar in some ways to Lent. Fasting during Ramazan is one of the five pillars of Islam, and for 30 days devout Muslims let *nothing* pass their lips during daylight hours: no eating, drinking, smoking or even downing an Aspirin. Pregnant or nursing women, young children, the infirm and aged, and travellers are not obliged to fast.

### MAJOR ISLAMIC HOLIDAYS

Islamic year	New Year	Prophet's Birthday	Ramazan begins	Şeker Bayramı	Kurban Bayramı
1428	20 Jan 07	31 Mar 07	13 Sep 07	12 Oct 07	20 Dec 07
1429	10 Jan 08	20 Mar 08	2 Sep 08	1 Oct 08	8 Dec 08
1430	29 Dec 09	9 Mar 09	22 Aug 09	21 Sep 09	28 Nov 09

Before dawn, drummers wake the faithful so they can eat before sunrise. Traditionally, a cannon shot signals the end of the fast at sunset whereupon everyone sits down to an *iftar* (the break of fast meal).

During Ramadan, some restaurants may be closed from dawn to nightfall, but most eateries catering to tourists remain open. As non-Muslims, you're allowed to eat and drink when you like – and in the big cities you'll find lots of nonfasting Muslims beside you – but it's still best to be discreet, especially in conservative towns.

Ramazan is not an official public holiday, although many businesses operate in a half-hearted manner, opening late and closing early. Not surprisingly tempers can fray faster than usual at this time, and driving can be a bit more erratic.

### ŞEKER BAYRAMI

A three-day festival that celebrates the end of Ramadan, Şeker Bayramı (Sweets Holiday; Ramadan Bayramı) is so named because during this festival children go from door to door asking for sweet treats. Their elders go visiting, and everybody drinks lots of tea in broad daylight after the long fast. Banks and offices close; hotels, buses, trains and planes are booked solid.

### KURBAN BAYRAMI

The most important religious and secular holiday of the year, Kurban Bayramı (Festival of the Sacrifice) is just as important to Muslims as Christmas is to Christians. The festival commemorates İbrahim's near-sacrifice of İsmail on Mt Moriah (Quran, Sura 37; Genesis 22), the same story as the biblical one about Abraham and Isaac.

Every year around four million cows and sheep are sacrificed for Kurban Bayramı. Every head of household who can afford to buys a beast to sacrifice. Immediately after early morning prayers on the first day of the holiday the animal's throat is slit. It's then flayed and butchered, and family and friends prepare a feast. Part of the meat is given to the needy; the skin is donated to a charity, which then sells it to a leather products company. These days you won't see the sacrifices in the cities, but out in the countryside it's a different story.

Kurban Bayramı is a four- or five-day holiday, and banks usually close for a full

week. Transport is packed, and hotel rooms, particularly along the coasts, are scarce and expensive.

For more about the part played by food in these festivals, see p70.

### Public Holidays

**New Year's Day** (Yılbaşı; 1 January)

**National Sovereignty & Children's Day** (Ulusal Egemenlik ve Çocuk Günü; 23 April) Commemorates the first meeting of the Turkish Grand National Assembly in 1920.

**Youth & Sports Day** (Gençlik ve Spor Günü; 19 May)

Dedicated to Atatürk and the youth of the Republic.

**Victory Day** (Zafer Bayramı; 30 August) Commemorates the republican army's victory over the invading Greek army at Dumlupınar during the War of Independence.

**Republic Day** (Cumhuriyet Bayramı; 29 October) Commemorates the proclamation of the republic by Atatürk in 1923.

### School Holidays

You need to take Turkish school holidays into account when planning your trip. Along with increasing affluence has come a swelling domestic tourism market that gets into its stride in mid-June and continues right through until mid-September. During those months many coastal towns, especially along the north Aegean coast between Istanbul and İzmir, get very busy and transport can become very crowded.

### INSURANCE

A travel insurance policy to cover theft, loss and medical expenses is a very good idea. A huge variety of policies is available, so check the small print.

Some policies specifically exclude 'dangerous activities', which can include scuba diving, motorcycling and even trekking. Some policies don't recognise locally obtained motorcycle licences.

Some policies will pay your medical expenses directly, while others will reimburse you later. For more on health insurance, see p687.

Note that some insurance policies may not cover you if you travel to regions of the country where your government warns against travel. Similarly if you decide to cancel your trip on the advice of an official warning against travel your insurer may not cover you.

See p682 for details on motor and health insurance, respectively.

### INTERNET ACCESS Laptop Computers

If you plan to carry your notebook or palmtop with you, remember that the power supply voltage in Turkey may differ from that at home, which entails the risk of damage to your equipment. The best investment is a universal AC adaptor that will enable you to plug your appliance in anywhere without frying the innards. See [www.kropla.com](http://www.kropla.com) for more information.

In four- and five-star hotels, most phone connections are made using the American-style clear plastic RJ11 plug, so it's easy to plug in a laptop. Many of these hotels also have WLANs. In cheaper and older hotels, the phones often use a larger white or beige three-prong Turkish plug. In such cases you'll need to find an electrical shop and buy a cable with one of these plugs on one end and an RJ11 plug on the other.

You'll can find wi-fi in many airports, cafés and top-end hotels throughout the country. See [www.winet.turktelekom.com.tr](http://www.winet.turktelekom.com.tr) for the hot spots.

### Internet Cafés

Turks took to the internet like ducks to water. Wherever you go, you'll be two steps from an internet café, and most have ADSL connections. Most hotels, pensions, travel agencies and carpet shops are also hooked up. Fees are usually around €2 for an hour. Internet cafés are usually open from 9am til late at night, or until the last customer leaves.

The best internet cafés have English keyboards. Others will have Turkish keyboards, in which case you need to be aware that Turkish has two 'i's: the familiar dotted 'i', and the less familiar dotless 'i'. Unfortunately the one in the usual place on a Turkish keyboard is the dotless 'i'; ensure you are using the correct dotted 'i' when typing in email addresses.

Likewise, on a Turkish keyboard you will have to create the '@' symbol by holding down the 'q' and ALT keys at the same time.

### LEGAL MATTERS

It's important to remember that when you are in Turkey you are subject to Turkish law, not the law of your home country. Beyond urging the Turkish authorities to treat you fairly, your embassy won't be able to help you if you break the law.

For most travellers driving is the only thing likely to land them in trouble with the law. You may be stopped by blue-uniformed *trafik polis*. You can be fined on the spot for speeding. However, if you know you have done nothing wrong and the police appear to be asking for money, play dumb. Inevitably, though, you'll have to pay up if they persist.

If you have an accident, don't move the car before finding a police officer and asking for a *kaza raporu* (accident report). The officer may ask you to submit to an alcohol breath-test. Contact your car-rental company within 48 hours.

You could also fall foul of the laws on lesemajesty (see p655), antiquities smuggling or illegal drugs. It goes without saying that Turkish jails are not places where you want to spend any time.

### MAPS

#### Street Maps

Turkish tourist offices stock OK-quality street maps of Adana, Ankara, Antalya, İstanbul and İzmir. Of the local privately produced street maps, Map Medya's are best. It produces proper street maps of many western Turkey cities (€3). You can pick these up in İstanbul at **Azım Dağıtım** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 0212-638 1313; Klodfarer Caddesi 6, Sultanahmet; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Sat) or in the good bookshops along İstiklal Caddesi.

#### Touring Maps

Turkish tourist offices stock a free sheet *Tourist Map* (1:850,000) – it's OK at a pinch, but it's usually out of date. The best sheet map of the whole country you can buy is the *Türkiye Karayolları Haritası* (1:1,000,000; €3), by Map Medya, updated twice a year.

For detailed touring, the *Köy Köy Türkiye* (*Turkey Village by Village*; 1:400,000; €17) atlas is the best. The *Oto Atlas Türkiye* (*Road Atlas Turkey*) at 1:600,000 is another good option. Map Medya also produces excellent regional maps. You can buy these in İstanbul.

### MONEY

Turkey's currency is the Yeni Türk Lirası (New Turkish Lira; YTL). Lira comes in coins of 1, 5, 10, 25 and 50 *kurş* and a 1 lira coin, and notes of 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100 lira.

Prices in this book are quoted in more stable euros. For details on costs in Turkey, see p19. For exchange rates, see the Quick Reference in the inside front cover of this book.



After decades of rampant inflation – as high as 70% – the Turkish lira started to stabilise in 2003; by 2004 inflation was down to around 12%. The Yeni Türk Lirası was introduced in January 2005. However, it still makes sense to wait until you arrive in Turkey to change your money into lira since you will probably get a better exchange rate inside the country than outside. Turkish lira are virtually worthless outside Turkey, so make sure you spend them all before leaving.

Restaurateurs and shop owners don't often carry large-denomination notes on them, so try to keep a supply of small money on you for small payments.

### ATMs

ATMs dispense new Turkish lira to Visa, MasterCard, Cirrus and Maestro card holders. Look for these logos on the machines; they are found in most towns. Virtually all the machines offer instructions in English, French and German. It's possible to get around Turkey using only ATMs, provided you remember to draw out money in the towns to tide you through the villages that don't have them, and keep some cash in reserve for the inevitable day when the machine throws a wobbly, or it's a holiday. You can usually draw out about €350 per day.

Note that if your card is swallowed by a stand-alone ATM booth, it may be tricky getting it back in a hurry – these booths are often run by franchisees rather than by the banks themselves.

### 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/Access are widely accepted by hotels, shops, bars and restaurants, although not by pensions and local restaurants outside main tourist areas. You can also get cash advances on these cards. Amex cards are rarely accepted.

### Moneychangers

It's easy to change major currencies in exchange offices, some post offices (PTTs),

shops and hotels, although banks tend to 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 many tourist areas.

Exchange rates for several major currencies are listed on the inside front cover of this book.

### Tippling

In the cheapest restaurants locals leave a few coins in the change tray. Elsewhere you should tip about 10% to 15% of the bill. Some more expensive restaurants automatically add a 10% or 15% *servis ücreti* (service charge) to your bill, but there's no guarantee this goes to the staff, so you may want to tip the staff directly.

Tips are not expected in cheaper hotels. In more expensive places a porter will carry your luggage and show you to your room. For doing this (and showing you how to turn on the lights and the television) he'll expect about 3% of the room price.

It's usual to round up metered taxi fares to the nearest 50 *kuruş*, so round up YTL4.70 to YTL5. Dolmuş drivers never expect a tip.

In Turkish baths you should tip around 10% to 20% to the masseuse/masseur. In the tourist-oriented *hamams* the fixed price may already be so high that you may assume that service is included, but it usually isn't and a tip is appreciated.

If you are shown around a site that is not normally open to the public or are given a guided tour by the custodian, you should certainly tip them for their trouble. A few YTL for 10 or so minutes is usually fine.

### Travellers Cheques

Our advice: don't bring them! Banks, shops and hotels usually see it as a burden to change travellers cheques and will either try to get you to go elsewhere or charge you a premium for changing them.

### POST

Postcards to Europe cost €0.55, and to all other destinations €0.65. Letters to Europe cost €0.65, and to all other destinations €0.80. Post your letters in the post office: the *yurtdışı* slot is for mail to foreign countries, the *yurtiçi* for mail to other Turkish cities; the *şehirçi* for

local mail. See [www.ptt.gov.tr](http://www.ptt.gov.tr) for information on post offices and rates.

Turkish *postanes* (post offices) are indicated by black-on-yellow 'PTT' signs. Main post offices in large cities are open from 8am to 8pm daily. Smaller post offices keep more limited hours (8.30am to 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 5.30pm) and may be closed on Saturday afternoon and all day Sunday.

Most post offices in tourist areas offer poste-restante services, generally from 8.30am to noon and 1.30pm to 4pm. To collect your mail, go to the *merkez postane* (main post office) with your passport. Letters should be addressed as follows: Name, Poste Restante, Merkez Postahane, District, Postcode, City, Province, Turkey. There are no guarantees you will receive mail, so never have anything valuable or important sent to you.

Letters sometimes take several weeks to arrive (packets even longer), so plan ahead accordingly.

### Parcels

If you decide to ship something home from Turkey, don't close your parcel before it has been inspected by a customs official. Take packing and wrapping materials with you to the post office. Parcels sent by surface mail to Europe cost around €14 for the first 1kg, then €2 per kg thereon; to USA, €14 for the first 1kg, then €4 thereon; and to Australia €15 for the first 1kg, then €5 thereon.

If you'd prefer the security of an international courier, DHL, for example, charges €85 for a 2kg parcel to Europe, €105 for the USA and €140 to Australia.

We receive occasional complaints from readers who have bought a beautiful kilim and agreed to have the shopkeeper ship it out, only to find a much cheaper item arriving. This is only likely to happen if the shop is a fly-by-night one. Shops that have been in business a long time have no vested interest in ripping off their customers and are usually well used to shipping parcels worldwide.

### SHOPPING

Travellers are usually surprised and delighted by the range and quality of things to buy in Turkey. Sure, there are plenty of chintzy souvenirs, but most of what you buy here won't end up in the cupboard within a week of returning. Goodies here are increasingly being exported to designer boutiques round the world.

If you're wondering about the meaning behind the ubiquitous blue-glass eyes, see (p232).

Note that most shops close on Sunday except in prime tourist locations.

### Carpets & Kilims

Turkey is famous for its beautiful carpets and kilims (flat-weave rugs). Most carpet shops have a range of pieces made by a variety of techniques. Besides the traditional pile carpets, they usually offer double-sided flat-woven mats such as kilims. Most are beautiful traditional designs and techniques, but many are patchwork or other contemporary designs.

As well as Turkish carpets, most carpet shops sell pieces from other countries, in particular from Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan and the ex-Soviet republics of Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. If it matters that your carpet is actually from Turkey, bear in mind that Iran favours the single knot and Turkey the double knot. Turkish carpets also tend to have a higher pile, more dramatic designs and more varied colours than their Iranian cousins.

The carpet market is lucrative and the hard-sell antics of some dealers have tended to bring the trade into disrepute, putting off some potential purchasers. To ensure you get a good buy, spend time visiting shops and comparing prices and quality. It's also worth taking a look in the shops at home before you leave so that you'll know what's available and for what prices at home. When deciding whether to buy a particular carpet it might help to follow some of the guidelines listed here:

- A good-quality, long-lasting carpet or kilim should be 100% wool (*yüz de yüze yün*). Is the wool fine and shiny, with signs of the natural oil? Recycled or cheap wool feels scratchy and has no sheen, and the cheapest carpets may be made from mercerised cotton or 'floss'. Another way to identify the material is to turn the carpet over and look for the fine, frizzy fibres common to wool. But bear in mind that just being made of wool doesn't guarantee a kilim or carpet's quality. If the dyes and design are ugly, even a 100% woollen piece can be a bad buy.
- Check the closeness of the weave by turning the carpet or kilim over and inspecting the back. In general, the tighter the weave

and the smaller the knots, the higher the quality and durability of the piece.

- Beware the salesman who asserts that all his range are coloured with natural dyes. Chemical dyes have been the main method of colouring in the country for the last 50 years. There is nothing wrong with chemical dyes, but natural dyes and colours tend to be preferred and therefore fetch higher prices. Spread the nap with your fingers and look at the bottom of the pile. Both natural and chemical dyes fade (despite what the salesman might tell you). If you see the colours are lighter on the surface than deep in the pile, it's often an indication that the surface has faded in the sun, but not necessarily that it is an antique.
- Unless you know something about antique carpets and kilims, which are always more expensive, it's probably best to stick with new productions. New carpets can be made to look old, and damaged or worn carpets can be rewoven (good work, but expensive), patched or even painted.

There's nothing wrong with a dealer offering you a patched or repainted carpet provided they point out these defects and price the piece accordingly.

### Ceramics

After carpets and kilims, Turkey's beautiful ceramics would have to be the most successful souvenir industry. Many of the tiles you see in shops have been painted using a silkscreen printing method and this is why they're cheap. One step up are the ubiquitous hand-painted bowls, plates and other pieces; these are made by rubbing a patterned carbon paper on the raw ceramic, tracing the black outline, and filling in the holes with colour. The most expensive pieces are hand-painted by master craftspeople, without the use of patterns.

Note that many ceramics have been covered in lead-based glaze so it's probably safest to use them as ornaments.

### Copper

Gleaming copper vessels will greet you in every souvenir shop. Some are old, most

are handsome and some are still eminently useful. New copperware tends to be of lighter gauge, but will still have been made by hand.

Copper vessels should not be used for cooking or eating unless they have been tinned inside: that is, washed with molten tin that covers the toxic copper. If you intend to use a copper vessel, make sure the interior layer of tin is intact or negotiate to have it *kalaylı* (tinned). Be sure to ask about the price of the tinning in advance as *teneke* (tin) is expensive.

### Inlaid Wood

You'll find cigarette boxes, chess and *tavla* (backgammon) boards and all sorts of items inlaid with different coloured woods, silver or mother-of-pearl on sale all over Turkey. Make sure what you're buying actually is inlay – these days, alarmingly accurate imitations exist. Also, check whether the 'silver' is not actually aluminium or pewter.

### Jewellery

Turkey is a wonderful place to buy jewellery, whether new or old. Jewellers' Row in any market is a dazzling strip of glittering shop windows filled with gold for brides-to-be. Serious gold-buyers should check the daily price for unworked gold of so-many carat in the daily papers. Watch carefully as the jeweller weighs the piece in question, and then calculate what part of the price is for gold and what part for labour.

Silver is another matter. You can certainly find sterling silver jewellery (look for the hallmark) but beware nickel silver and pewter-like imitations. Silver, too, is sold by weight as well as labour.

### Leather

On any given Kurban Bayramı (Festival of the Sacrifice), more than 2.5 million sheep get the axe in Turkey. Add to that the normal day-to-day needs of a cuisine based on mutton and lamb, and you have a huge amount of raw material to be made into leather; hence the country's thriving leather industry.

Jackets are one of the most popular purchases. To be sure of a good buy, examine the piece thoroughly. Try it on just as carefully and see whether the sleeves are full enough, the buttonholes are positioned well and the collar rubs.

### Meerscham

If you smoke a pipe, you know about meerscham (*lületaş*). The world's largest and finest beds of this hydrous magnesium silicate, this soft, white stone, are found near the city of Eskişehir (p303). This porous but heat-resistant material is used most famously to make pipes. Artful carving of the stone produces pipes portraying anything from turbaned paşas to mythological beasts.

### SOLO TRAVELLERS

Turkey is a great country for solo travellers since most hotels and pensions have a per-head charge or offer discounts for lone travellers; only rarely will you have to pay the full price of a double (except at the Hilton, Sheraton and their ilk). However, single travellers do need to develop a thick skin as most Turks couldn't conceive of going anywhere alone (except, perhaps, on business). Wherever you go you'll have people double-checking with you that you're really alone and expecting you to justify your solitary status.

If you, too, are having doubts about solitude then Turkey's many small pensions are great places to meet potential travelling companions, as are the hostels in İstanbul.

Lone women inevitably have a harder time of it, although the problems rarely go much further than the occasional unsolicited knock on the hotel door at midnight; see p668 for more information.

### TELEPHONE

**Türk Telekom** ([www.telekom.gov.tr](http://www.telekom.gov.tr)) has a monopoly on phone services, and service is efficient if costly. You can direct-dial within Turkey and overseas with little difficulty. When calling Turkey from overseas the country code is ☎ 90, and you drop the 0 on the area codes. The international access code to call abroad from Turkey is ☎ 00.

### Kontörlü Telefon

If you're only going to make one call, it's best to look for a booth with a sign saying *kontörlü telefon* (metered telephone); you make your call and the owner reads the meter and charges you accordingly. The cost of a local call depends on what the phone's owner charges for each *kontör* (unit). In tourist areas you can get rates as low as €0.25 per minute to Europe, the UK, USA and Australia. These rates are, however, almost twice as much International

### THE ART OF BARGAINING

Traditionally, when customers enter a Turkish shop to make a significant purchase, they're offered a comfortable seat and a drink (*çay* – tea, coffee or a soft drink). There is some general chit-chat, then discussion of the shop's goods in general, then of the customer's tastes, preferences and requirements. Finally, a number of items in the shop are displayed for the customer's inspection.

The customer asks the price; the shop owner gives it; the customer looks doubtful and makes a counteroffer 25% to 50% lower. This procedure goes back and forth several times before a price acceptable to both parties is arrived at. It's considered very bad form to haggle over a price, come to an agreement, and then change your mind.

If you can't agree on a price it's perfectly OK to say goodbye and walk out of the shop. In fact, walking out is one of the best ways to test the authenticity of the 'last' offer. If shopkeepers know you can find the item elsewhere for less, they'll probably call out, 'OK, it's yours for what you offered.' Even if they don't stop you, there's nothing to prevent you from returning later and buying the item for what they quoted.

To bargain effectively you must be prepared to take your time, and you must know something about the items in question, not to mention their market price. The best way to do this is to look at similar goods in several shops, asking prices but not making counteroffers. Always stay good humoured and polite when you are bargaining – if you do this the shopkeeper will too. When bargaining you can often get a discount by offering to buy several items at once, by paying in a strong major currency, or by paying cash.

If you don't have sufficient time to shop around, follow the age-old rule: find something you like at a price you're willing to pay, buy it, enjoy it, and don't worry about whether or not you received the world's lowest price.

In general, you shouldn't bargain in food shops or over transport costs. Outside tourist areas, hotels may expect to 'negotiate' the room price with you. In tourist areas pension owners are usually fairly clear about their prices, although if you're travelling in winter or staying a long time it's worth asking about *indirim* (discounts).

Phonecards (see below), but may be the best option if you're only making a quick call.

### Mobile Phones

Turks adore mobile (*cep*, pocket) phones, and reception is excellent throughout nearly all of the country. Mobile phone numbers start with a four-figure code beginning with 05.

If you want use your home phone in Turkey, note that Turkey uses the standard GSM (Global System for Mobile Communications) network operating on 900MHz or 1800MHz. Most phones are GSM so they should be fine but some US-, Canadian- and Scandinavian-bought mobiles phones are not compatible. You should set up an international roaming facility with your home phone provider before you leave home. Mobiles can connect with Turkey's **Turkcell** ([www.turkcell.com.tr](http://www.turkcell.com.tr)), **Telsim** ([www.telsim.com.tr](http://www.telsim.com.tr)) or **Avea** ([www.avea.com.tr](http://www.avea.com.tr)) networks.

If you want to buy a SIM card while you're in Turkey, it's a good idea to stick to the big networks – Turkcell, Avea or MyCep (Telsim) – as you'll get good coverage over the country as well as competitive rates. A SIM card with Turkcell costs around €17 and usually includes some free *kontör* (unit); you'll need to show your passport and ensure the seller sends your details through to Turkcell to activate your account. You can buy prepaid phone cards at any of the little streetside booths around the country. Expect to pay around €7/14 for 120/300 *kontör* with Turkcell, a little more with MyCep or Avea, but it depends on what specials are on.

### Pay Phones & Phonecards

Türk Telekom payphones can be found in most major public buildings and facilities, public squares and transportation termini. International calls can be made from all payphones. All payphones require cards that can be bought at telephone centres or, for a small mark-up, at some shops. There are two sets of cards in use: magnetic strip floppy cards and ones with chips on them called Smart cards.

In general, both cards cost about the same. A 30-unit card (€1.50) is sufficient for local calls; 50 units (€2.75) for short domestic intercity calls; and 100 units (€4.75) for longer domestic intercity calls or short international chats. The newer phones also accept major credit cards.

### INTERNATIONAL PHONECARDS

The cheapest option for international calls is with phonecards that you use with a land-

line (ie the phone in your hotel room) or a public phone. You call the national toll-free number, put in the PIN number on the card and dial away. Companies such as IPC and Bigalo offer the best rates (note, these are *not* the cards with the Türk Telecom logo). For a 300-*kontör* IPC card (which costs €3) you can speak for 20/6 minutes to a landline/mobile in Australia, and around 26/6 minutes to a landline/mobile to the UK, Europe and the USA. IPC cards are available in 300, 1000 (€8.50) and 1500 (€17) *kontör* lots. It's worthwhile sticking to a reputable phonecard company (such as IPC or Bigalo) as with other companies' cards credit has been known to disappear or calls won't go through. These cards are widely available in the street-side booths in tourist areas of İstanbul and Ankara but can be difficult to find elsewhere. You cannot use these cards through mobile phones.

### TIME

Turkish time is two hours ahead of GMT/UTC. Daylight saving (summer time) runs from 3am on the last Sunday in March until 4am on the last Sunday in October. During daylight saving time, when it's noon in İstanbul it's 2am in Los Angeles and Vancouver, 5am in New York, 10am in London, 6pm in Tokyo, 7pm in Sydney and 9pm in Auckland. See [www.timeanddate.com](http://www.timeanddate.com) to calculate other time differences.

Turks use the 24-hour clock.

### TOILETS

Although most hotels and public facilities have sit-down toilets, you'll also see hole-in-the-ground models in Turkey. The custom is to wash yourself using the left hand with water from a jug or to use the little copper tube in the toilet, which spurts water where needed. You then dry yourself with tissues, which you usually provide yourself. In most slick, modern bathrooms you can flush paper directly down the toilet, but in many places if you do this you may flood the premises. If you're not sure, play it safe and put it in the bin provided.

Fairly clean public toilets can usually be found at major attractions and transport hubs. In an emergency it's worth remembering that every mosque has a basic toilet.

Most public toilets – even in restaurants or cinemas – require payment of around €0.30.

### TOURIST INFORMATION

Every Turkish town of any size has an official tourist office run by the Ministry of Tourism. They're usually open from 8.30am to noon or 12.30pm, and from 1.30pm to 5.30pm Monday to Friday, with longer hours and at weekends in summer in popular tourist locations. Unfortunately only a handful have staff who know anything about the area or who speak any language other than Turkish. If the information you need is not already in this book, you are unlikely to find it by visiting a tourist office. Your best bet is usually to seek out a sympathetic tour operator or pension owner.

Following is a select list of tourist offices outside Turkey:

**France** (☎ 01 45 62 78 68; [www.infoturquie.com](http://www.infoturquie.com); 102 Avenue des Champs-Élysées, 75008 Paris)

**Germany** Berlin (☎ 030-214 3752; [www.tuerkei-kultur-info.de](http://www.tuerkei-kultur-info.de); Tauentzien Str 9-12, 10789) Frankfurt (☎ 069-23 3081; [www.reiseland-tuerkei-info.de](http://www.reiseland-tuerkei-info.de); Baseler Str 35-37, 60329 Frankfurt)

**UK** (☎ 0207-839 7778; [www.gototurkey.co.uk](http://www.gototurkey.co.uk); 4th fl, 29-30 St James's St, London SW1A 1HB)

**USA** New York (☎ 212-687 2194; [www.tourismturkey.org](http://www.tourismturkey.org); 821 UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017) Los Angeles (☎ 323-937 8066; 5055 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 850, Los Angeles, CA 90036) Washington DC (☎ 202-612 6800; 2525 Massachusetts Ave, Washington, DC 20008)

### VISAS

Nationals of the following countries (among others) don't need a visa to visit Turkey for up to three months: Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. Nationals of Australia, Austria, Canada, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, the UK and USA do need a visa, but this is just a sticker bought on arrival at the airport or border post rather than at an embassy in advance (make sure to join the queue to buy your visa before the queue for immigration). How much you pay for your visa (essentially a tourist tax) varies; at the time of writing British, Australians and US citizens paid €15, Canadians €45, Spanish, Italians and Irish €10. No photos are required and the procedure is straight forward.

The standard visa is valid for three months and, depending on your nationality, usually allows for multiple entries. See the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs** ([www.mfa.gov.tr](http://www.mfa.gov.tr)) for the latest information.

### Residency Permits

If you plan to stay in Turkey for more than three months, you can apply for an *ikamet tezkeresi* (residence permit), which is usually valid for one to two years. You'll need to contact the local *emniyet müdürlüğü* (security police) and show that you have some means of supporting yourself (savings, a steady income from outside the country) or legal work within the country. As the permit costs a whopping €320 for a year, many expats find it more convenient and cheaper to cross the border every three months.

### Visa Extensions

In theory a Turkish visa can be renewed once after three months at the nearest branch of the *emniyet müdürlüğü*, 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. Unless you speak Turkish, dealing with the *emniyet müdürlüğü* is complicated.

### Working Visas

It's best to obtain a *çalışma vizesi* (working visa) from the Turkish embassy or consulate before you leave your home country. At least two months before your departure date submit in person the completed visa form, your passport, a photo of yourself, your proof of employment (a contract or letter from your employer) and the required fee (between €140 and €200, depending on your nationality). After about three weeks (*Inşallah*, God willing), your passport will be returned with the visa stamped inside.

Once you arrive in Turkey with a work permit, you must obtain a 'pink book' (a combined work permit and residence permit) from the *emniyet müdürlüğü* (security police). If your employer doesn't do this for you, apply with your passport, five passport photos and the processing fee (€320 for a year, but check as it rises regularly). Your pink book should be ready in three or four working days and replaces the visa in your passport. It's renewable every year as long as you can prove you're still working.

Most people who are working in Turkey illegally (as private English tutors, for example) cross the border into Greece, Northern Cyprus or Bulgaria every three months rather than bother with the cost and hassle of trying to extend their visa or get residency. In theory

an immigration officer could query a passport full of recent Turkish stamps. However, in our experience most of them happily turn a blind eye to this bending of the rules.

Note that rules seem to change regularly, so see [www.e-konsolosluk.net](http://www.e-konsolosluk.net) and the Turkish embassy or consulate in your home country for the latest information about visa requirements.

## WOMEN TRAVELLERS

Travelling Turkey as a female traveller is easy and enjoyable, provided you follow some simple guidelines. Tailor your behaviour and your clothing to your surrounds. Look at what local women are wearing. On the streets of Beyoğlu in Istanbul you'll see skimpy tops and tight jeans, but cleavage and short skirts without leggings are always a bit of a no-no. Having a banter with men in restaurants and shops in western Turkey can be great fun, especially since most won't necessarily think anything of it. Out east it's a different story. Passing through some towns you can count the number of women you see on one hand, and those you do see will be headscarved and wearing long jackets. Life here for women is largely restricted to the home. This is not the place to practice your Turkish (or Kurdish) for hours on end with the local *kebabci* and expect him not to get the wrong idea. Keep your dealings with men formal and polite, not friendly. You certainly don't need to don a headscarf, but long sleeves and baggy long pants should attract the least attention.

Men and unrelated women are not expected to sit beside each other in long-distance buses, and lone women are often assigned seats at the front of the bus near the driver. If you're not told where to sit, avoid sitting at the back since that seems to have 'back-of-the-cinema' connotations in some men's minds. We have also received reports of some *yardımcıs* (conductors) on night buses harassing their female customers. If that happens to you, complain loudly, making sure that others on the bus hear, and repeat your complaint on arrival at your destination – you have a right to be treated with respect. When travelling by taxi avoid getting into the seat beside the driver.

When looking for a hotel, you may have to accept that the cheapest fleapits are not suitable for lone women and stick with family-oriented midrange hotels. In 2001 a Taiwanese tourist was murdered in an Urfa hotel and,

while that was undoubtedly a dreadful one-off, if conversation in the lobby invariably grinds to a halt as you cross the threshold it might suggest that this is not really a great place for a woman. If there is a knock on your hotel door late at night, don't open it; in the morning, complain to the manager.

We recommend female travellers always stick to official camp sites and camp where there are plenty of people around – especially out east. A female traveller was raped in mid-2006 while camping beside a waterfall near Van with her male companion and, while this is a very rare occurrence, it's a risk you need to weigh up nonetheless. We should also mention that we've heard reports about two female travellers claiming to have been drugged with drinks at a camp in Olympos. See p381 for more information.

Restaurants that aim to attract women usually set aside a special room (or part of one) for family groups. Look for the term *aile salonu* (family dining room).

## WORK

Some travellers come to Turkey for a week and end up staying for months, or even a lifetime. However, jobs aren't all that easy to find (Turkey has a high unemployment level) and most people end up teaching English, though there are other opportunities of course. Job hunters may have luck with the *Turkish Daily News* and the expat websites [www.mymerhaba.com](http://www.mymerhaba.com), [www.expatinturkey.com](http://www.expatinturkey.com) and <http://istanbul.craigslislist.org>.

## Nannyng

One of the most lucrative nonspecialist jobs available to foreigners (from €550 to €850 per week) involves nannyng for the wealthy city elite; work mainly restricted to English-speaking women who must be prepared for long hours and demanding employers. Contact **Anglo Nannies** (☎ 0212-287 6898; [www.anglonannies.com](http://www.anglonannies.com); Bebek Yolu Sokak, Ebru Apt No 25/2 Etiler, Istanbul, 80630), the main agency dealing with placements.

## Teaching English

It is also possible to earn a decent living as an English teacher, either privately, for a university, a private *dershane* (school), or for one of the many private language schools around the country.

If you don't have any teaching qualifications, you can usually still find a job, though

it'll be private tuition (which pays from €17 to €30 per hour) or at a private language school (where you can expect around €11 an hour). If you have teaching qualifications (at least a Bachelor of Education, majoring in English) you should arm yourself with a TEFL certificate as well to place yourself within reach of the best jobs. Universities will not hire without teaching qualifications, nor will most *dershanes*, and the best private language schools expect at least a TEFL. Pay can be from €750 to €1400 per month, often with accommodation, flights home and a work permit thrown in. The best time of the year to job hunt is near the end of the summer school break, around mid- to late August, when schools are desperate for teachers to replace those who found a spot on a beautiful beach and decided to stay.

As well as those job-hunting resources listed in the introduction to this section, you may also want to log onto [www.eslcafe.com](http://www.eslcafe.com) and [www.tefl.com](http://www.tefl.com).

## Tourism

Many travellers also find work illegally for room and board in pensions, bars and carpet

shops, leaving the country every three months to renew their visas. This sort of work has the advantage that you can take it or leave it at will. But be warned that the authorities take a dim view of foreigners 'stealing' local jobs and that there are occasional shake-outs when they rush around threatening people with prosecution (it rarely actually happens).

## Volunteer Work

There are a slowly growing number of volunteering opportunities in Turkey, offering everything from working on organic farms to helping out on an archaeological dig. **Volunteer Abroad** ([www.volunteerabroad.com](http://www.volunteerabroad.com)) is a UK-based company listing volunteering opportunities through international organisations in Turkey. Local operators include:

**Alternative Camp** ([www.alternativecamp.org](http://www.alternativecamp.org)) A fully volunteer-based organisation running camps for disabled people around the country.

**Genctur** ([www.genctur.com](http://www.genctur.com)) A portal for various volunteering schemes throughout the country, and a good first point of call to see what's on offer in Turkey.

**Ta Tu Ta** ([www.bugday.org/tatuta](http://www.bugday.org/tatuta)) Organises work on some 60-odd organic farms around the country, where you can stay for free or for a small donation to cover costs.

# Transport

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## GETTING THERE & AWAY

### ENTERING THE COUNTRY

Generally speaking, entering Turkey by air is pretty painless. The only snag to be aware of is that most people need a 'visa' which is really just a stamp in their passport issued at the point of entry. If you fly into the country you must *first* join the queue to pay for the stamp in your passport before joining the queue for immigration. See p667 for more details. Rarely do customs officers stop you to check your bags at airports.

Entering the country by land can be more trying. Getting a visa is the same deal, but sometimes you can pay for the visa only in euros or US dollars. And at many of the land border crossings there are no facilities for changing money nor ATMs, so make sure you bring enough to pay for your visa. You may also want to consider having some Yeni Türk Lirası (YTL) on you before you get to the border.

Security on borders with countries to the east (Georgia, Iran, Iraq or Syria) is generally tight, so customs officers may want to see what you are bringing in. If you're travelling by train or bus expect to be held up at

### THINGS CHANGE...

The information in this chapter is particularly vulnerable to change. Check directly with the airline or a travel agent to make sure you understand how a fare (and ticket you may buy) works and be aware of the security requirements for international travel. Shop carefully. The details given in this chapter should be regarded as pointers and are not a substitute for your own careful, up-to-date research.

the border for two to three hours – or even longer if your fellow passengers don't have their paperwork in order.

### Passport

Make sure your passport will still have at least three months' life in it after you enter Turkey.

### AIR

#### Airports & Airlines

Turkey's busiest international airport is İstanbul's **Atatürk International Airport** (code IST; ☎ 0212-465 3000; www.dhmiata.gov.tr), 23km west of Sultanahmet (the heart of Old İstanbul). The international (*dış hatlar*) and domestic terminals (*iç hatlar*) are side by side. İstanbul also has a smaller airport, **Sabiha Gökçen International Airport** (code SAW; ☎ 0216-585 5000; www.sgaairport.com), some 50km east of Sultanahmet and Taksim Sq on the Asian side of the city. Sabiha Gökçen mainly services cheap flights from Europe, particularly Germany, and some domestic routes.

Throughout the year, but especially during the busy summer months, you can also catch international flights to/from **Antalya** (AYT; ☎ 0242-330 3221; www.aytport.com), **Bodrum** (BJV; ☎ 0252-523 0101), **Dalaman** (DLM; ☎ 0252-692 5899) and the rapidly expanding **İzmir** (ADB; ☎ 0232-274 2424). From Turkey's other airports, including Ankara, you usually have to transit İstanbul.

Turkey's national carrier is Turkish Airlines, which has direct flights from İstanbul to most capital cities around the world. It has a

reasonable safety record, and service is usually pretty good too.

### AIRLINES FLYING TO & FROM TURKEY

For contact details for most of these airlines in İstanbul, see p155.

- Aeroflot** (airline code AFL; www.aeroflot.com)
- Air France** (AF; www.airfrance.com)
- Alitalia** (AZ; www.alitalia.com)
- American Airlines** (AA; www.aa.com)
- Azerbaijan Airlines** (AHY; www.azal.az)
- British Airways** (BA; www.britishairways.com)
- Condor** (DE; www.condor.de)
- Corendon Airlines** (CAI; www.corendon.com)
- Cyprus Turkish Airlines** (KTHY; www.kthy.net)
- EasyJet** (EZY; www.easyjet.com)
- Emirates Airlines** (EK; www.emirates.com)
- Fly Air** (FLM; www.flyair.com.tr)
- German Wings** (GW); www.25.germanwings.com)
- Hapag Lloyd** (HFwww.hlx.com)
- Iberia** (IB; www.iberia.com)
- Iran Air** (IR; www.iranair.com)
- Japan Airlines** (JL; www.jal.co.jp/en)
- KLM-Royal Dutch Airlines** (KL; www.klm.com)
- Lufthansa** (LH; www.lufthansa.com)
- Olympic Airways** (OA; www.olympicairlines.com)
- Onur Air** (OHY; www.onurair.com.tr/eng/)
- Pegasus Airlines** (PGT; www.flypgs.com)

**Singapore Airlines** (SIA; www.singaporeair.com)  
**Turkish Airlines** (Türk Hava Yolları, THY; www.thy.com)

### Tickets

If you're after cheap flights, the cheapest routes between Europe and İstanbul are flying through Germany to Turkey, and with EasyJet, which flies between London (Luton) and İstanbul, and Switzerland (Basel) and İstanbul. Sometimes you can also find them by booking on less-usual airlines eg Cyprus Turkish Airlines and Azerbaijan Airlines. Some airlines offer student fares too. Otherwise Turkey is not the best destination for special deals.

It's a good idea to book at least two months in advance for flights to/from Turkey if you plan to arrive in the country any time from early April until late August.

Flights quoted in this chapter are for peak season and include airport taxes.

### Australia

You can fly directly to İstanbul with Emirates, Japan, Malaysia and Singapore Airlines for around A\$1200/1890 (one-way/return) from Sydney or Melbourne. You can often get cheaper flights with European airlines such as

### CLIMATE CHANGE & TRAVEL

Climate change is a serious threat to the ecosystems that humans and wildlife rely upon, and air travel is the fastest-growing contributor to the problem. Lonely Planet regards travel, overall, as a global benefit, but believes we all have a responsibility to limit our personal impact on global warming.

#### Flying & Climate Change

Pretty much every form of motorised travel generates CO<sub>2</sub> (the main cause of human-induced climate change), but planes are far and away the worst offenders, not just because of the sheer distances they allow us to travel, but because they release greenhouse gases high into the atmosphere. The statistics are frightening: two people taking a return flight between Europe and the USA will contribute as much to climate change as an average household's gas and electricity consumption over a whole year.

#### Carbon Offset Schemes

Climatecare.org and other websites use 'carbon calculators' that allow travellers to offset the level of greenhouse gases they are responsible for with financial contributions to sustainable travel schemes that reduce global warming – including projects in India, Honduras, Kazakhstan and Uganda.

Lonely Planet, together with Rough Guides and other concerned partners in the travel industry, support the carbon offset scheme run by climatecare.org. Lonely Planet offsets all of its staff and author travel.

For more information check out our website: [www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com).

Lufthansa, but you'll have to transit in a European city first (ie Frankfurt for Lufthansa), before catching a flight back to İstanbul – very frustrating!

Three well-known agencies for cheap fares are **STA Travel** (☎ 1300 733 035; www.statravel.com.au), **Flight Centre** (☎ 133 133; www.flightcentre.com.au) and **Best Flights** (☎ 1300 767 757; www.bestflights.com.au).

## Canada

Most flights from Toronto, Ottawa and Vancouver connect with İstanbul-bound flights in the UK and continental Europe. One-way/return fares from İstanbul start at around C\$950/1550 with Lufthansa and Air Canada. Try **Travelcuts** (☎ 1866-246 9762; www.travelcuts.com), Canada's national student travel agency, or **Airlineicketsdirect.com** (☎ 1877-679 8500; www.airlineicketsdirect.com).

## Continental Europe

Generally, there's not much variation in fares to Turkey from one European city or another. Most European national carriers fly direct to İstanbul for around €200 return. Cheaper return flights can be found for around €160 but usually involve changing planes en route, so if you fly İstanbul–Paris with Lufthansa, you'd fly via Frankfurt each way. **STA Travel** (www.statravel.com/worldwide.htm) has offices throughout Europe. If you plan to visit a resort, check with your local travel agents for flight and accommodation deals.

Germany has the biggest Turkish community outside Turkey, which has enabled some great deals between the two countries. Lufthansa has direct flights to İstanbul, Ankara and İzmir from €160. There are also a number of charter airlines offering flights between several German cities and İstanbul, Antalya, Bodrum, Dalaman and İzmir. Try Condor, Hapag Lloyd, German Wings or Corendon Airlines (see p671 for contact details).

In France, **OTU Voyages** (☎ 01 55 82 32 32; www.otu.fr) is aimed at student travel, but can supply discount tickets to travellers of all ages. **Voyageurs du Monde** (☎ 08 92 68 83 63; www.vdm.com) and **Nouvelles Frontières** (☎ 08 25 00 07 47; www.nouvelles-frontieres.fr) are also recommended.

In Italy, **CTS Viaggi** (☎ 199 501150; www.cts.it) is one of the major travel agencies. In Spain, we recommended **Barcelo Viajes** (☎ 902 11 62 26; www.barceloviajes.com).

Turkish Airlines and Cyprus Turkish Airlines have daily direct services from İstanbul,

İzmir and Ankara to Ercan airport at Lefkoşa (Northern Nicosia).

## Middle East & Asia

If you want to fly to/from Turkey from any of the central Asian countries, you can usually pick up a flight with Turkish Airlines or the country's national carrier. Turkish Airlines flies İstanbul–Tbilisi (Georgia) and İstanbul–Baku (Azerbaijan) for around €300 each way. Azerbaijan Airlines also offers direct flights between Baku and İstanbul or Ankara, and these are generally cheaper. Because the border between Turkey and Armenia is closed, you can't travel overland between the two countries, but you can fly. Both Armavia Airlines and Fly Air have two flights a week each way between İstanbul and Yerevan. Turkish Airlines has daily flights to Tehran and Tabriz (Iran), for as little as €120.

One of the cheapest ways to get between northeast or southeast Asia and Turkey is to fly via Dubai. Emirates Airlines flies to İstanbul and over nine destinations in India, to Pakistan and further afield to Hong Kong and Bangkok. Fly Air flies to Khartoum for €250. Singapore Airlines often has very good deals on its website between Asia and İstanbul, with return flights between Denpasar and İstanbul as low as €480, Singapore and İstanbul for just €450.

## New Zealand

Fares to İstanbul from Auckland start at NZ\$1500/2400 one way/return on Air New Zealand, but Singapore Airlines and Qantas fares are also worth checking.

**Flight Centre** (☎ 0800 243 544; www.flightcentre.co.nz) and **STA Travel** (☎ 0508-782 872; www.statravel.co.nz) are recommended travel agencies.

## UK & Ireland

British Airways, Turkish Airlines and EasyJet offer direct flights between London and Turkey. British Airlines flies into İstanbul (from UK£200 return), Dalaman, Ankara and İzmir. Turkish Airlines usually has direct flights only between İstanbul (from UK£200 return) and London. EasyJet flies direct between London (Luton) and İstanbul from UK£80 return.

For most cheap flights you can generally expect to fly to Turkey with a transit in a European city (though EasyJet flies direct). Or you could look into charter flights, which are usually cheaper at the beginning and end

of the season. Typical return charter fares, bought in advance, are UK£149/199 for one/two weeks. Charter flights to Turkey go from Birmingham, Bristol, Gatwick, London, Manchester, Nottingham and Newcastle. Try online charter flight agents **Just the Flight** (☎ 0870-758 9589; www.justtheflight.co.uk) and **Thomsonfly.com** (☎ 0870-190 0737; www.thomsonfly.com).

Other recommended travel agencies in the UK and Ireland:

**STA Travel** (☎ 0870-163 0026; www.statravel.co.uk)

**Traillfinders** (☎ 0845-058 5858; www.traillfinders.co.uk)

**Usit Unlimited** (☎ 01 602 1904; www.usitworld.com)

## USA

Turkish Airlines offers flights to İstanbul from New York from about US\$1400 return. From Los Angeles fares start at US\$1650 return. Try Delta and American Airlines, too. You'll probably get a marginally cheaper flight with Lufthansa or KLM-Royal Dutch Airlines, but you'll have to change planes in Europe.

Some leading US travel agencies:

**Expedia** (☎ 800-397 3342; www.expedia.com)

**STA Travel** (☎ 800-781 4040; www.statravel.com)

**Travelocity** (☎ 888-872 8356; www.travelocity.com)

## LAND

If you are planning to travel overland, you'll be spoilt for choice since Turkey has land borders with eight countries. Bear in mind, however, that Turkey's relationships with most of its neighbours tend to be tense, which can affect the availability of visas and when and where you can cross. Always check with the relevant embassy for the most up-to-date information before leaving home (see p657).

## Border Crossings

Crossing land borders by bus and train is fairly straightforward, but expect delays of between one and three hours. You'll usually have to get off the bus or train and endure a paperwork and baggage check of all travellers on both sides of the border. This is a relatively quick process if you're on a bus, but naturally takes a longer when there's a trainload of passengers. Before you ditch the idea of trains, however, be aware that delays can be caused by the long line of trucks and cars banked up at some borders – especially at the Reyhanlı–Bab al-Hawa border between Turkey and Syria – not the number of fellow passengers.

Crossing the border with your own vehicle should be fairly straightforward. No special documents are required to import a car for up to six months, but be sure to take it out again before the six months is up. If you overstay your permit, you may have to pay customs duty equal to the full retail value of the car! If you want to leave your car in Turkey and return to collect it later, the car must be put under a customs seal, which is a tedious process.

For more on each country's border crossings, see the relevant country headings following.

## Armenia

At the time of writing, the Turkish–Armenian border was closed to travellers. The situation could always change so it's worth checking (the Russian embassy handles Armenian diplomatic interests in Turkey).

If you want to travel from Turkey to Armenia (or vice versa) you can fly (see opposite) or travel by bus via Georgia. At least three buses weekly depart from Trabzon's otogar heading for Yerevan – see p554.

## Azerbaijan (Nakhichevan)

At least two daily buses depart from Trabzon's otogar heading for Tbilisi, where you can change for a bus to Baku – see p554.

You can also cross from Turkey to the Azerbaijani enclave of Nakhichevan via the remote Borualan–Sadarak border post, east of Iğdır (see p586). From there you'll need to fly across Armenian-occupied Nagorno-Karabakh to reach the rest of Azerbaijan and Baku.

## Bulgaria & Eastern Europe

It's fairly easy to get to İstanbul by direct train or bus from many points in Europe via Bulgaria. There are three border crossings between Bulgaria and Turkey. The main border crossing is the busy Kapitan–Andreevo/Kapıkule, 18km west of Edirne on the E5. The closest town on the Bulgarian side is Svilengrad, some 10km from the border. You have to hitch a lift or hire a taxi rather than walk between the Greek–Turkish border posts. Petrol, foreign-exchange facilities, restaurants and accommodation are available at this crossing, which is open 24 hours daily. For more details, see p172. There is a second, newly opened, crossing at Lesovo–Hamzabeyli, some 25km

## VISAS FOR NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES

### Armenia

Most nationalities can get visas upon arrival at the borders (and the airport) for US\$30 (valid for 21 days) or three-day transit visas for US\$18. You can usually get your visa extended to 35 days on the border; if you want to stay longer you'll need a letter of invitation.

### Azerbaijan

Like Syria, the visa conditions for Azerbaijan can be a little tricky to pin down. Officially most nationalities must get a visa prior to arrival costing €63 for two months and coupled with a letter of invitation. If you arrive by air you can get a visa at the airport for €31 (valid for three months) – go figure! We have also heard of European travellers applying at the consulate in Kars, paying only €31 (valid 15 days), with two photos, and having their visa issued in three days. Please let us know your wacky adventures in getting an Azerbaijani visa.

### Bulgaria

Currently citizens of Australia, Canada, Ireland, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, the UK and the USA can obtain a free 30-day tourist visa at any Bulgarian border. Citizens of other EU countries are able to get a 90-day visa.

### Georgia

Most nationalities (including Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, Switzerland, EU countries and the USA) can obtain a 90-day tourist visa upon arrival at any Georgian border. Single-entry visas valid for one month cost €8. See [www.mfa.gov.ge](http://www.mfa.gov.ge) for the latest information.

### Greece

Nationals of Australia, Canada, all EU countries, New Zealand and the USA can enter Greece for up to three months without a visa.

### Iran

All would-be visitors to Iran need to get a visa in advance. There is an embassy in Ankara and consulates are located in İstanbul and Erzurum. You will need two photos and a copy of the most important pages of your passport. You must pay a non-refundable application fee of €40 and

then wait at least 10 days to hear whether your application has been granted. Some people wait a day or so, others weeks. Visas are not usually granted to Americans, and the British aren't too popular either, but the Dutch can often get them virtually straight away. If you haven't arranged a visa before arriving in Doğubayazıt you can organise one through the consulate in Erzurum. Although you will need to travel back to Erzurum, in most cases the visa can be arranged in one hour, allowing you to return to Doğubayazıt the same day. You may be asked to show a visa for the country you are travelling to after Iran. Women must be wearing *hijab* (full body cover), the rules for which are more relaxed nowadays so that you can show your fringe, wear make-up and jewellery, and brave colours other than black (although never red).

### Northern Cyprus

Visas for the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) are available on arrival. If you're planning to visit Greece or the Greek islands, remember that relations between the Greek Cypriot-administered Republic of Cyprus (in the south) and the TRNC remain chilly. Also, if you enter the TRNC and have your passport stamped you may later be denied entry to Greece. The Greeks will only reject a stamp from the TRNC, *not* a stamp from Turkey proper, so have the Turkish Cypriot official stamp a piece of paper instead of your passport, a procedure with which they are familiar.

### Russia

The Russian consulate in Trabzon will refer you to Burcu Turizm virtually next door. You will need one photograph and €95 for a visa to be issued the same day.

### Syria

Getting a visa to Syria can be taxing as the rules seem changeable. At the time of writing all foreigners wanting to enter Syria need a visa, and most must get it in advance. Some travellers have got visas at the border, but many have been knocked back. It's best to play it safe and apply in your home country, although you can get visas in Ankara or İstanbul. Visa costs vary depending on the nationality, ranging from A\$41 for Australians to £32 for UK citizens. Most foreigners also need a letter of recommendation from their embassy. You will not be granted a visa if you have Israeli stamps in your passport.

north of Edirne; it's a quieter option during the busy summer months than Kapitan-Andreevo/Kapikule, but takes a little longer to get to and there's no public transport. The third crossing is at Malko Tárnovo–Kırikkale, some 70km northeast of Edirne and 92km south of Burgas.

## BUS

There are several departures daily to Sofia, and the coastal cities of Varna and Burgas in Bulgaria from İstanbul's otogar – at least six companies offer services. There are also daily departures to Skopje, Tetovo and Gostivar in Macedonia, and to Constanta and Bucharest in Romania. The following companies run serves from İstanbul's otogar.

**Drina Trans** (☎ 0212-658 1851; ticket office 88) Daily departures for Skopje, Macedonia (€30, 14 hours)

**Metro Turizm** (☎ 0212-658 3232; [www.metroturizm.com.tr](http://www.metroturizm.com.tr); ticket office 107) Daily departures to Sofia (€20, nine hours), Varna and Burgas in Bulgaria.

**Öz Batu** (☎ 0212-658 0255; ticket office 149) Daily departures for Sofia, Bulgaria (€17, nine hours) and Skopje, Macedonia (€32, 14 hours).

**Özlem** (☎ 0212-658 1344; ticket office 97) Daily departures for Constanta (€35; eight hours) and Bucharest (€35; eight hours), Romania.

## TRAIN

The *Bosphorus Express* leaves İstanbul daily and runs to Bucharest, from where you can travel onwards by train to Chişinău (Moldova) and Budapest (Hungary). You can also catch the *Bosphorus Express* as far as Dimitrovgrad (Bulgaria) from where you can travel onwards to Sofia (Bulgaria) and on to Belgrade (Serbia).

Essentially the *Bosphorus Express* leaves İstanbul with a line of carriages. There are separate carriages for passengers heading to Budapest, to Sofia and Belgrade, and to Chişinău. The carriages are switched to local trains at either Bucharest or Dimitrovgrad, depending on where you're heading. Confused? Don't worry; bookings are simply from A to B, though there will be some delay as carriages are transferred.

You'll need to take your own food and drinks as there are no restaurant cars on these trains. Note also that the Turkey–Bulgaria border crossing is in the early hours of the morning and you need to leave the train to get your passport stamped – the holdup takes about two hours. We've heard stories of harassment, especially of women, at the border, so lone women may be best taking an alternative

route. Travelling in the sleeper cars is always the safest and most comfortable option.

## Georgia

The main border crossing is at Sarp on the Black Sea coast, between Hopa (Turkey) and Batum (Georgia). You can also cross inland at the Türkgözü border crossing near Posof, north of Kars (Turkey) and southwest of Akhaltsikhe (Georgia). The Sarp border crossing is open 24 hours a day; Türkgözü is open from 8am to 8pm, though in winter you might want to double-check it's open at all.

**Göktaş Ardahan** (☎ in İstanbul 0212-658 3476; ticket office 10) runs direct buses between Tiflis and the otogar in İstanbul for €43. The journey takes around 26 hours. At least two daily buses depart from Trabzon's otogar heading for Tbilisi – see p554.

If you're heading to the Türközü border from the Turkish side, a convenient starting point is Kars (p585). You need to get to Posof first, then hire a taxi or minibus to take you to the border post (16km, €20). From the border, hire another taxi to take you to the Georgian town of Akhaltsikhe (€15; two hours), from where regular buses head to Tbilisi (which can take up to seven hours).

### Greece & Western Europe

An alternative to getting to Turkey from Europe is to make your way to Alexandroupolis in Greece and cross at Kipi-İpsala, 43km northeast of Alexandroupolis, or Kastanies-Pazarkule, 139km northeast, near the Turkish city of Edirne. Both borders are open 24 hours.

To cross at Kipi-İpsala take a bus service from Alexandroupolis to the Greek border point of Kipi, then hitch to the border. From there you can get a taxi (€8.50) to the bus station in İpsala and an onward bus to İstanbul.

If you're crossing from Turkey into Greece, do so as soon after 9am as possible in order to catch one of the few trains or buses from Kastanies south to Alexandroupolis, where there are better connections. Alternatively, take a bus from Edirne to Keşan, then to İpsala and cross to Kipi.

### BUS

Bus services to İstanbul run only from Germany, Italy, Austria and Greece, so if you're travelling from other European cities, you'd need to catch a connecting bus. Two of the best Turkish companies – **Ulusoy** (☎ 0212-444 1888 in Turkey; www.ulusoy.com.tr) and **Varan Turizm** (☎ 0212-658 0270 in Turkey; www.varan.com.tr) – operate big Mercedes buses on these routes. Sample one-way fares to İstanbul are: Frankfurt €130 (45 hours), Munich €110 (42 hours), Vienna €105 (36 hours), and Athens €68 (20 hours).

### CAR & MOTORCYCLE

The E80 highway makes its way through the Balkans to Edirne and İstanbul, then on to Ankara. Using the car ferries from Italy and Greece can shorten driving time from Western Europe considerably, but at a price (see opposite).

From Alexandroupolis in Greece, the main road goes to the most convenient crossing

(Kipi-İpsala) then to Keşan and east to İstanbul or south to Gallipoli, Çanakkale and the Aegean.

### TRAIN

From Western European cities (apart from those in Greece) you will come via Eastern Europe; see p673.

The best option travelling between Greece and Turkey is the overnight train between Thessaloniki and İstanbul called the *Filias-Dostluk Express*. The journey takes 12 to 14 hours, including an hour or two's delay at the border, and accommodation is in comfy, air-conditioned sleeper cars. Good-value one-way rates are €48 for 2nd-class between İstanbul and Thessaloniki; or €68 for 2nd-class if you take a connecting Greek Intercity train to/from Athens.

You can buy tickets at the train stations but not online. For more information see the websites of **Turkish State Railways** (TCDD; www.tcdd.gov.tr) or the **Hellenic Railways Organisation** (www.ose.gr).

### Iran

There are two border crossings between Iran and Turkey, the busier Gürbulak-Bazargan, near Doğubayazıt (Turkey) and Şahabat (Iran); and the Esendere-Sero border crossing, southeast of Van (Turkey). Gürbulak-Bazargan is open 24 hours. Esendere-Sero is open from 8am until midnight, but double-check in winter as the border might be closed. Travellers are increasingly using this second crossing into Iran, which has the added bonus of taking you through the breathtaking scenery of far Southeastern Anatolia. And to make things easy, there is a direct bus running between Van (Turkey) and Orumiyeh (Iran). See p642 for departure information.

### BUS

There are regular buses from İstanbul and Ankara to Tabriz and Tehran. From İstanbul otogar, try **Best Van Tur** (☎ 0212-444 0065; otogar ticket office 147) with daily departures (€55, 35 hours). From Ankara, they leave from the AŞTİ bus terminal.

You may also want to consider taking a dolmuş from Doğubayazıt 35km east to the border at Gürbulak, for about €2, and then walking across the border. The crossing might take up to an hour. From Bazargan there are onward buses to Tabriz; from Sero there are

buses to Orumiyeh. You can catch buses to Iran from Van.

### TRAIN

The *Trans-Asya Ekspresi* runs between Tehran and İstanbul, travelling via Tabriz, Van and Tatvan. Expect a comfortable journey on connecting Turkish and Iranian trains, a ferry ride across Lake Van, and no showers. See the Iranian Railways site, **RAJA Passenger Train Co** (www.rajatrails.com), for more information.

There's a weekly train service between Tehran (Iran) and Damascus, running through the Turkish cities of Van and Malatya. See www.tcdd.gov.tr for more information.

### Iraq

Although we obviously don't suggest that travelling to wider Iraq is at all advisable, a handful of hardy travellers have been travelling into northern Iraq via the Habur-Ibrahim al-Khalil border post. It's near Cizre and Silopi, on the Turkish side; Zakho is the closest town to the border on Iraqi side. There's no town or village at the border crossing and you can't walk across it. A taxi from Silopi to Zakho costs around €20, from Cizre to Zakho US\$30.

Travellers report having to give a photocopy of their passport at the Turkish side, and being given a week-long entry stamp (not a visa) on the Iraqi side, as well as having to get a health certificate for a nominal fee. Travelling across the border into Turkey your bags will probably be searched – don't carry patriotic Kurdish items. See p631 for a peep into Tony Wheeler's Iraqi adventures. Check the local situation before crossing into Iraq.

### Syria

There are eight border posts between Syria and Turkey, but the border at Reyhanlı-Bab al-Hawa is by far the most convenient, and therefore the busiest. Daily buses link Antakya in Turkey with the Syrian cities of Aleppo (Halab; €3, four hours, 105km) and Damascus (Şam; €5.50, eight hours, 465km). Also close to Antakya is the border post at Yayladağı. For both these crossings see p437. Other popular crossings to Syria include via Kilis, 65km south of Gaziantep (p598), the Akçakale border, 54km south of Şanlıurfa (p606) and the Nusaybin-Qamishle border 75km east of Mardin (p630).

It's possible to buy bus tickets direct from İstanbul to Aleppo or Damascus. **Hatay Pan Turizm** (☎ 0212-658 3911; otogar ticket office 23) has a daily service leaving İstanbul otogar at 6am and arriving in Damascus (€27) at 3am the next morning. **Urfa Seyahat** (☎ 0212-444 6363; otogar ticket office 10) has departures for Aleppo at 1.30pm daily.

The very comfortable *Toros Express* train runs between İstanbul and Aleppo (and not all the way to Damascus as it says in the official timetables) – see the table, p157, for details. Bring your own food and drinks as there is no restaurant car. Several comfortable trains link Aleppo and Damascus daily.

There's a weekly train service between Tehran (Iran) and Damascus, running through the Turkish cities of Van and Malatya. See www.tcdd.gov.tr for more information.

### SEA

Car ferry services operate between Italian and Greek ports and several Turkish ports, but not to İstanbul. There are also a handful of routes over the Black Sea. **Ferrylines** (www.ferrylines.com) is a good starting point for information about ferry travel in the region.

### Greece

Private ferries link Turkey's Aegean coast and the Greek islands, which are in turn linked by air or boat to Athens. Services are usually daily in summer, several times a week in spring and autumn, and perhaps just once a week in winter. The table, p678, summarises the services between the Greek islands and Turkey.

### Italy

**Marmara Lines** (www.marmaralines.com) ferries connect Brindisi and Ancona in Italy with Çeşme. **Turkish Maritime Lines** (www.tdi.com.tr in Turkish) also operates twice-weekly ferries between Brindisi and Çeşme. For more details on these services, see p239.

### Northern Cyprus

The main crossing point between northern Cyprus and Turkey is between Taşucu (near Silifke) and Girne on the northern coast of northern Cyprus. **Akgünler Denizcilik** (www.akgunler.com.tr) makes this journey – see p418. You can also travel between Alanya and Girne with **Fergün Denizcilik** (www.fergun.net) – see p414. Finally, you can travel between Mersin and



### FERRIES BETWEEN TURKEY & GREECE

Route	Frequency	Fare (one way/return)	More details
Ayvalık-Lesvos	daily Jun-Sep; twice a week Oct-May	€40/50	(p217)
Bodrum-Kos	daily May-Oct; three times a week Nov-Apr	(hydrofoil) €60 open return, €30/35 same-day (ferry) €25/25 same-day, €50 open return	(p280)
Bodrum-Rhodes	daily Jun-Sep	€50/60 same-day, €100 open return	(p280)
Çeşme-Chios	five times a week Jun-Sep; twice a week in winter	€25/40 same day, €50 open return	(p239)
Datça-Rhodes & Simi	Sat May-Sep and gület upon demand	(hydrofoil) €35/70 (gület) €50	(p344)
Kaş-Kastellorizo (Meis)	daily	€35 return	(p375)

Gazimağusa (Famagusta) on the east coast of Northern Cyprus, with **Turkish Maritime Lines** (☎ 231 2688, 237 0726 in Mersin) – see p425).

### Russia

Ferries travel between Trabzon and Sochi in Russia three times a week; see p553 for more details.

### Ukraine

**UKR Ferry** (www.ukrferry.com) has a comfortable 36-odd hour (each way) weekly service crossing the Black Sea between Odessa and İstanbul and returning to İstanbul (€105 per person (one way)).

Another weekly service runs between Sevastopol and İstanbul, departing Sevastopol at 6pm Sunday (arriving at İstanbul 8am Tuesday) for €120 per person in a shared three-bed room, or €400 per person in a private luxury double. Departures from İstanbul are on Thursday nights at 10pm (arriving 8am Saturday). Ferries travel between İstanbul and Yalta too. Ring ☎ in Ukraine 0654-323 064 for more information or email the folk at www.aroundcrimea.com.

### TOURS

The following are international tour companies whose trips to Turkey generally receive good reports.

**Backroads** (☎ 1800 462 2848; www.backroads.com) US-based company offering combined bike and sailing tours of western Turkey.

**Cultural Folk Tours of Turkey** (☎ 1800 935 8875; www.boraazkok.com) US-based company offering group and private cultural and history tours.

**Exodus** (☎ 870-240 5550; www.exodus.co.uk) UK-based adventure company offering a wide range of tours including Lycian cruises and kayaking tours.

**Imaginative Traveller** (☎ 0800 316 2717; www.imaginative-traveller.com) UK-based company offering Anzac Day tours and a variety of overland adventures through Turkey.

**Intrepid Travel** (☎ 03-9473 2626; www.intrepidtravel.com.au) Australia-based company with a variety of small-group, good-value tours for travellers who like the philosophy of independent travel, but prefer to travel with others.

**Pasha Tours** (☎ 800 722 4288; www.pachatours.com) US-based company offering general tours as well as special-interest tours such as culinary, Jewish heritage, 'Seven churches of Asia Minor' etc.

See p684 for details of some Turkey-based tour operators.

## GETTING AROUND

Many countries could learn a thing or two from Turkey about how to run an effective and affordable transport system. Turkey's intercity bus system is as good as any you'll find, with modern coaches crossing the country at all hours and with very reasonable prices. The railway network is useful on a few major routes, and becoming an increasingly popular choice as improvements are made. And finally, flying is an excellent option for such a large country, and fierce competition between the many domestic airlines keeps tickets affordable.

### AIR Airlines in Turkey

Domestic airlines fly to some 30 cities throughout the country. Many flights, for instance from Dalaman to Van, go via the hubs of İstanbul or Ankara. Atlasjet is one of the few airlines offering direct flights between west coast and central and eastern destinations.

You can book flights on most airlines' websites. You'll get cheaper seats and more convenient departure times if you book a couple of months ahead.

Domestic flights are available with the following airlines.

**Atlasjet** (☎ 0216-444 3387; www.atlastjet.com) A growing network, with flights from İzmir, Bodrum, Dalaman and Antalya to many cities throughout the country.

**Fly Air** (☎ 0212-444 4359; www.flyair.com.tr) A smaller network, mainly with flights to/from İstanbul only, but can offer the cheapest rates.

**Onur Air** (Map p94-5; ☎ 0212-662 9797; www.onurair.com.tr) Good network and fares from €40 to €80.

**Pegasus Airlines** (www.pegasusairlines.com) Flies between İstanbul and Nevşehir.

**Sun Express Airlines** (www.sunexpress.com.tr) A Turkish Airlines subsidiary.

**Turkish Airlines** (Map p94-5; Türk Hava Yolları, THY; ☎ 0212-444 0849; www.thy.com) State-owned Turkish Airlines provides the main domestic network, and you can book and pay for tickets online. One-way fares from €38.

### BICYCLE

Like bike touring anywhere, riding in Turkey is a wonderful adventure, full of surprises, challenges and a whole lotta grunt. Highlights are the spectacular scenery, the easy access to archaeological sites, which you might have all to yourself, and the curiosity and hospitality of locals, especially out east. Take the road-hog drivers, rotten road edges and, out east, stone-throwing children, wolves and ferocious Kangal sheep dogs in your stride. To give yourself the best chance of an enjoyable and safe trip, plan to avoid main roads wherever possible.

You'll be able to find excellent-quality spare parts in İstanbul and Ankara, but bring whatever you think you might need elsewhere. The best bike brand in Turkey is Bisan, with decent models starting at around €150, but you can find leading international brands in bike shops in İstanbul such as **Pedal Sportif** (☎ 0212-511 0654; www.pedalbisiklet.com in Turkish; Mimar Kemalettin Caddesi 29, Sirkeci), or in Ankara at **Delta Bisiklet** (☎ 0212-259 2279; www.deltabisiklet.com; Bosna

Hersek Caddesi 21, Emek). Both these shops have English-speaking staff and come highly recommended by tourers. They service bikes and can send parts throughout the country.

The best map for touring by bike is the *Köy Köy Türkiye Yol Atlası* (€19) available in bookshops in İstanbul; for other map recommendations see p661. You can usually transport your bike by air, bus, train or ferry free of charge, although mini- and midibuses will charge for the space it takes up. You can hire bikes for short rides in tourist towns along the coast and Cappadocia.

### BOAT

#### Sea of Marmara Ferries

**İstanbul Fast Ferries** (İstanbul Deniz Otobüsleri, İDO; ☎ 0212-444 4436; www.ido.com.tr) operates high-speed car ferry services crossing the Sea of Marmara. There are services from İstanbul (Yenikapı terminal) to Yalova (for Bursa) p287, Bandırma (for İzmir) p202, and a third, to Mudanya (for Bursa).

### BUS

Buses form Turkey's most widespread and popular means of transport. Virtually every first-time traveller to the country comments on the excellence of the bus system compared with that in their home country. The buses are well kept and comfortable too, and you'll be treated to snacks and tea along the journey, plus liberal sprinklings of the Turks' beloved *kolonya* (lemon cologne).

Most Turkish cities and towns have a central bus station generally called the otogar, *garaj* or *terminal*. Besides intercity buses, the otogar often handles dolmuş (minibuses that follow prescribed routes) to outlying districts or villages. Most bus stations have an *emanetçi* (left luggage) room, which you can use for a nominal fee.

These are some of the best companies, with extensive route networks.

**Boss Turizm** (☎ 444 0880; www.bossturizm.com in Turkish) specialises in super-deluxe İstanbul-Ankara services.

**Kamil Koç** (☎ 444 0562; www.kamilkoc.com.tr in Turkish)

**Ulusoy** (☎ 444 1888; www.ulusoy.com.tr)

**Varan** (☎ 444 8999, 0212-551 5000; www.varan.com.tr)

### Costs

Bus fares are subject to fierce competition between companies, and sometimes you can bargain them down by claiming poverty, student status etc. However, this doesn't always

work. Prices also reflect what the market will bear, so that the fare from Rich City X to Poor Village Y may not always be the same as from Poor Village Y to Rich City X.

We give sample fares from all Turkey's main bus stations under Getting There & Away in the individual place entries. Typically, a bus ticket from İstanbul to Çanakkale costs €9, from İstanbul to Ankara around €22, and from İstanbul to Göreme (Cappadocia) €17 to €22.

## Reservations

Although you can usually walk into an otogar and buy a ticket for the next bus, it's wise to plan ahead for public holidays, at weekends and during the school-holiday period from mid-June to early September. You can reserve seats over the web on most of the bus companies listed (p679).

When you enter an otogar prepare for an onslaught of touts, all offering buses to the destination of your choice. How do you choose which company to go with? It's usually a good idea to stick to the reputable big-name companies we've listed (p679). You may pay a bit more, but at least you can be more confident the bus has been well maintained, will run on time, and that there will be a back-up driver on really long hauls. For shorter trips, you'll find other bus companies have big localised city networks; for example Truva serves the area around Çanakkale, and Uludağ covers destinations around Bursa.

After buying a ticket, getting a refund can be difficult; exchanging it for another ticket with the same company is easier.

All seats are reservable, and your ticket will bear a specific seat number. The ticket agent will have a chart of the seats with those already sold crossed off. Look at the chart and indicate your seating preference, avoiding those right at the back of the bus (which can get stuffy) or immediately over the wheels (which can get bumpy!). On night buses you may also want to avoid the front row of seats behind the driver, which have little legroom (you may have to inhale the driver's cigarette smoke and listen to him chatting to his conductor into the early hours). The seats immediately in front of and behind the middle door are also a bad choice; those in front don't recline, and those behind have no legroom.

## Servis

While it obviously makes sense from a town-planning point of view to move the otogars out of the town centres, what this tends to mean is that real journey times are becoming a bit how-long-is-a-piece-of-stringish. The timings we give are from otogar to otogar, but you may need to add up to an hour in either direction for getting to and from the otogars. This is especially true if you're using a *servis* (shuttle minibus) to get there. As otogars move further out of town, so most bus companies provide a *servis* bus to take passengers to and from the city centre. When buying a ticket ask whether there's a *servis* and when it leaves for the otogar. On arrival, say '*Servis var mı?*' to find out whether there's a *servis* into town. Rare cities where there are no *servises* include Bursa, Konya and Safranbolu.

*Servis* drivers like to allow plenty of time for getting to the otogar, which means that in Göreme, for example, you must usually be at the pick-up point for transfer to Nevşehir a good 45 minutes before the bus is scheduled to leave even though it's just a 15-minute drive.

While these services are free, they do have some snags. You may find yourself waiting around interminably for another busload of passengers to arrive or for your driver to be dragged away from the TV to run his *servis*. Even when he shows up, the journey can still be protracted as he drops each and every passenger off at their doorstep (well, perhaps not literally). If time is more important than money, then forget it and jump into a taxi.

Also, beware pension owners who lead you to believe that the private minibus to their pension is the bus company *servis*. This certainly happens at Nevşehir otogar and probably at other places too.

## CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Driving around Turkey gives you unparalleled freedom to enjoy the marvellous countryside and coastline. You can stop at the teeny roadside stalls selling local specialities, explore back roads leading to hidden villages, and picnic at every opportunity, just like locals. Road surfaces and signage is generally good along main roads at least – the most popular route with travellers, along the Aegean and Mediterranean coast, offers excellent driving conditions. Hiring a scooter to explore the rugged Hisarönü Peninsula (p342) of the Western Mediterranean is a day out you'll cherish long after you've recovered from the knuckle-whitening corners.

The bad news is that Turkey has one of the world's highest motor-vehicle accident rates. Turkish drivers are not particularly discourteous, but they are impatient and incautious. They like to drive at high speed and have an irrepressible urge to overtake. To survive on Turkey's highways, drive cautiously and very defensively, and *never* let emotions affect what you do. Avoid driving at night, when you won't be able to see potholes, animals on the road, or even vehicles driving with their lights off!

When you're planning your trip, be mindful that Turkey is a huge country and spending time in the car travelling huge distances will eat up your travel time. Consider planes,

trains or buses to cover long distances and hiring a car for localised travel.

## Automobile Associations

Turkey's main motoring organisation is the **Türkiye Turing ve Otomobil Kurumu** (Turkish Touring & Automobile Association; ☎ 0212-282 8140; www.turing.org.tr; Oto Sanayi Sitesi Yani, Seyrantepe 4 Levent, İstanbul).

Motorcyclists may want to check out **One More Mile Riders İstanbul**, (www.omriders.com), a community resource for riding in Turkey, and the Turkey-related information on **Horizons Unlimited** (www.horizonsunlimited.com/country/turkey/).

## Bring Your Own Vehicle

You can bring your vehicle into Turkey for six months without charge. However, the fact that you brought one in with you will be marked in your passport to ensure you take it back out again. Don't plan on selling it here, and be prepared to be charged a hefty fine for any time over the six months. Ensure you have your car registration and insurance policy on you. If you don't have insurance, you'll need to buy it at the border.

## Driving Licence

Drivers must have a valid driving licence. Your own national licence will be sufficient; an international driving permit is useful but not required.

## Fuel & Spare Parts

In Turkey there is little difference in price between *super benzin* (normal petrol) and *kurşunsuz* (lead-free); both cost around €1.6 per litre. You can usually pay with credit cards at petrol stations.

There are petrol stations everywhere, at least in western Turkey, and many are mega enterprises. All the same, it's a good idea to have a full tank when you start out in the morning across the vast empty spaces of central and eastern Anatolia.

*Yedek parçaları* (spare parts) are readily available in the big cities, especially for European models such as Renaults, Fiats and Mercedes-Benz. However, ingenious Turkish mechanics contrive to keep all manner of US models in daily service. Repairs are usually quick and cheap. Roadside repair shops can often provide excellent, virtually immediate service, although they (or you) may have to go somewhere else to get the parts. For tyre repairs find an *oto lastikçi* (tyre repairer). The

## FEZ BUS

A hop-on, hop-off bus service, **Fez Bus** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 0212-516 9024; www.feztravel.com; Akbiyik Cad-desi 15, Sultanahmet, İstanbul), links the main tourist resorts of the Aegean and the Mediterranean with İstanbul and Cappadocia. From Cappadocia a loop travels out east to include Şanlıurfa and Nemrut Dağı (Mt Nemrut). A 'Turkish Delight' bus pass, costing €230 (student €205), allows you to travel from İstanbul to Çanakkale, Selçuk, Köyceğiz, Fethiye, Olympos, Cappadocia and then back to İstanbul, with the option of add-on *gület* cruises, the 'Eastern Explorer' and/or a trip to Safranbolu. You can take as long as you like to do the circuit.

The big bonus of using Fez Bus is convenience – although you're not obliged to stay in the places Fez favours, if you do you'll be dropped right at the door. It's also a great way to hook up with fellow travellers, since you'll be following a similar route and maybe even a similar travelling timeframe. The downside to this is that you spend most of your time in Turkey with other travellers rather than with Turks, and it would probably be cheaper to do it yourself with point-to-point buses.

*sanayi bölgesi* (industrial zone) on the outskirts of every town will have repair shops.

It's always wise to get an estimate of the repair cost in advance. Repair shops are usually closed on Sunday.

If you bring your motorcycle to Turkey you're bound to have a fine time. Spare parts may be hard to come by everywhere except the big cities, so bring what you might need, or rely on the boundless ingenuity of Turkish mechanics to find, adapt or make you a part. If you do get stuck for a part you could also ring an İstanbul or Ankara repair centre and get the part delivered by bus. **Horizons Unlimited** ([www.horizonsunlimited.com/country/turkey/](http://www.horizonsunlimited.com/country/turkey/)) has a list of repair centres in İstanbul.

## Hire

You need to be at least 21 years old, with a year's driving experience, to be able to hire a car. If you don't pay with a major credit card you will have to leave around €500 cash deposit. Most hire cars have standard (manual) transmission; you'll pay more for automatic transmission. Note that most of the big-name companies charge a €100 to €140 drop-off fee (eg pick up in Antalya, and drop-off in Dalaman).

You can hire a car from the big international companies (Avis, Budget, Europcar, Hertz and National) in all main cities, towns and most airport. **Avis** ([www.avis.com.tr/english](http://www.avis.com.tr/english)) has the most extensive network of agencies, but **Europcar** ([www.europcar.com](http://www.europcar.com)) is often the best value for money and doesn't charge a drop-off fee. Recommended local companies include **Decar** ([www.decar.com.tr](http://www.decar.com.tr)), with no drop-off fee, **Car Rental İstanbul** (☎ 0533-467 0724; [www.carrentalturkey.info](http://www.carrentalturkey.info)) and **Green Car** ([www.greenautorent.com](http://www.greenautorent.com)), the largest operator in the Aegean region. **Turkey Car Hire Express** (<http://turkey.carhireexpress.co.uk>) is also a good place to start your search for a hire car.

If your car incurs any accident damage, or if you cause any, do not move the car before finding a police officer and asking for a *kaza raporu* (accident report). The officer may ask you to take a breath-alcohol test. Contact your car-hire company within 48 hours. Your insurance may be void if it can be shown that you were operating under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, were speeding, or if you did not submit the required accident report within 48 hours.

The total cost of a standard hire vehicle arranged during the summer months (for a

week with unlimited kilometres, including tax and insurance) ranges from €400 to €500. Daily hire is from €40 to €70, depending on the size and type of car and the hire location. Hiring on the spot tends to be cheaper than booking ahead, but you run the risk of there not being any cars available. Baby-seat hire is usually available for around €5.50 per day.

## Insurance

You *must* have third-party insurance, valid for the entire country (not just for Thrace or European Turkey), or a Turkish policy purchased at the border.

If you hire a car there will be two types of mandatory insurance included in the fee, the Collision Damage Waiver (CDW), which covers damage to the hire car or another, and the Theft Protection (TP) insurance. Personal accident insurance is usually optional; you may not need it if your travel insurance from home covers the costs of an accident.

## Parking

Parking around the country is fairly easy to find. You can find parking even in the largest cities – İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir, Antalya and so on – though in some cases it may be a short walk from your accommodation.

Top-end and a handful of midrange hotels offer undercover parking for guests, and most midrange and budget options have a road-side parking place or two that is nominally theirs to use. If they don't, car parking will be close by in an empty block overseen by a caretaker, or on the road, in which case it'll be free or you'll be required to pay an hourly rate to a fee collector. Your best bet is to ring your accommodation and, upon arrival, ask them to point out the nearest and/or cheapest option.

Note that car clamping is a fact of life in Turkey. Park in the wrong place and you risk having your car towed away, with the ensuing costs and hassle.

## Road Conditions

There are good *otoyols* (motorways) from the Bulgarian border near Edirne to İstanbul and Ankara, and from İzmir all the way around the coast to Antalya. Elsewhere, roads are being steadily upgraded, although they still tend to be worse in the east. Severe winters play havoc with the surfaces and it's hard for the highways department to keep up with the repairs.

If driving in winter be careful of icy roads. In bad winters you will need chains on your wheels almost everywhere except along the Aegean and Mediterranean coast and the police may stop you in more remote areas to check that you're properly prepared for emergencies.

If driving from İstanbul to Ankara you should be aware of a nasty fog belt around Bolu that can seriously reduce visibility even in summer.

## Road Rules

In theory, Turks drive on the right and yield to traffic approaching from the right. In practice, they often drive in the middle and yield to no-one. Be prepared for drivers overtaking on blind curves. If a car approaches from the opposite direction, all three drivers slam on the brakes and pray.

The international driving signs are there but rarely observed. Maximum speed limits, unless otherwise posted, are 50km/h in towns, 90km/h on highways and 130km/h maximum (40km/h minimum) on *otoyols*.

As there are only a few divided highways and many two-lane roads are serpentine, you must reconcile yourself to spending hours crawling along behind slow, seriously overloaded trucks. Try to avoid driving at night, but if you do, expect to encounter cars without lights or with lights missing, vehicles stopped in the middle of the road and oncoming drivers flashing their lights just to announce their approach.

## DOLMUŞ & MIDIBUSES

Dolmuş started life as shared taxis that operated on set routes for flat fares, but these days they are very often intercity minibuses. (They also provide local transport within a city – see right.) Some wait until every seat is taken before starting out, others operate at set times. You'll usually use them to get between small towns and villages.

To let the driver know that you want to hop out, say *'inecek var'* (someone wants to get out).

Midibuses generally operate on routes that are too long for dolmuş, yet not quite popular enough for full-size buses. They usually have narrow seats with rigid upright backs, not at all comfortable on long stretches. Try to avoid the midibuses that ply the long and winding road from Bodrum and Marmaris to Antalya via Fethiye.

## HITCHING

Hitching is never entirely safe in any country, and we don't recommend it. Travellers who decide to hitch should understand that they are taking a potentially serious risk.

If you must *otostop* (hitch), you should probably offer to pay something towards the petrol, although most drivers pick up foreign hitchhikers for their curiosity value. Private cars are not as plentiful as in Europe, so you could be in for a long wait on some routes.

As the country is large and vehicles relatively scarce, short hitches are quite normal. If you need to get from the highway to an archaeological site, you hitch a ride with whatever comes along, be it a tractor, lorry or private car.

Instead of sticking out your thumb for a lift you should face the traffic, hold your arm out towards the road, and wave it up and down as if bouncing a basketball.

## LOCAL TRANSPORT

### Bus

For most city buses you must buy your *bilet* (ticket) in advance at a special ticket kiosk, either at a major bus terminal or at a transfer point. Some shops near bus stops also sell local bus tickets, which normally cost around €0.65.

In some cities, notably İstanbul, private buses operate on the same routes as municipal buses. The private buses are usually older, accept either cash or tickets, and follow the same routes as municipal buses.

### Local Dolmuş

Dolmuş are minibuses that operate on set routes within a city. They're usually faster, more comfortable and only slightly more expensive than the bus. These days only a few cities still have old-fashioned, shared-taxi dolmuş (Bursa, Trabzon and İzmir are examples).

Once you've got to grips with a few local routes, you'll feel confident about picking up a dolmuş at the kerb. In the larger cities, stopping places are marked by signs with a black 'D' on a blue-and-white background reading *'Dolmuş İndirme Bindirme Yeri'* (Dolmuş Boarding and Alighting Place). They're usually conveniently located near major squares, terminals or intersections, but you may need to ask the driver: "[your destination] *dolmuş var mı?*"

## Metro

Several cities now have underground or partially underground metros, including İstanbul, İzmir, Bursa and Ankara. These are usually quick and simple to use, although you may have to go right through the ticket barriers before you find a route map. Most metros require you to buy a *jeton* (transport token) for around €0.65 and insert it into the ticket barrier.

## Taxi

All over Turkey taxis are fitted with digital meters, and most drivers routinely use them. If your driver doesn't, mention it right away by saying 'Saatiniz' (your meter). The starting rate is about the same as the local bus fare (around €0.65). Check to see the driver is running the right rate: *gündüz* in the daytime, and *gece* at night (which costs 50% more).

Some taxi drivers – particularly in İstanbul – try to demand flat payment from foreigners. Sometimes they offer a decent fare and pocket the money instead of giving the cab owners their share. But most of the time they'll ask an exorbitant amount, give you grief, and refuse to run the meter. If this happens find another cab and, if convenient, complain to the police. Only when you are using a taxi for a private tour involving waiting time (eg to an archaeological site) should you agree a set fare – and then it should always be confirmed in advance to avoid argument later.

## Tram

Several cities also have overground *tramvays* (trams), which are a quick and efficient way of getting around; normally you pay around €0.65 to use a tram.

## TOURS

Every year we receive complaints from travelers who feel that they have been fleeced by local travel agents, especially some of those operating in the Sultanahmet area of İstanbul. However, there are plenty of very good agents operating alongside the sharks, so try not to get too paranoid. Figure out a ball-park figure for doing the same trip yourself using the prices in this guidebook and shop around before committing.

The list of agents we recommend in İstanbul are on p135. Others are named in the relevant destination chapters. The following are some Turkish tour operators we believe offer a reliable service.

**Amber Travel** (☎ 0242-836 1630; www.ambertravel.com) Adventure travel specialist based in Kaş; see p371.

**Bougainville Travel** (☎ 0242-836 3737; www.bougainville-turkey.com) Adventure travel specialist based in Kaş; see p371.

**Fez Travel** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 0212-516 9024; www.feztravel.com; Akbıyık Caddesi 15, Sultanahmet, İstanbul) Backpacker tours around Turkey, including Gallipoli tours. Also operates the Fez Bus; see the boxed text, p680.

**Kirkit Voyage** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 0212-518 2282; www.kirkit.com) Customised tours around Turkey (Cappadocia specialists), including İstanbul city and Gallipoli tours; see p135. French spoken too.

**Olympica** (☎ 0242-836 2049; www.olympicatravel.com) Olympica specialise in 'build your own activity packages'. Based in Kaş; see p371.

## TRAIN

**Turkish State Railways** (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Devlet Demiryolları, TCDD; ☎ 0216-337 8724; www.tcdd.gov.tr) runs services across the country. Lines laid out during the late Ottoman era rarely follow the shortest route, though a few newer, more direct lines have since been laid, shortening travel times on the best express trains. However, with three nasty train crashes in the space of a few weeks in 2004, including one on the newly inaugurated high-speed İstanbul-Ankara run, some contest that the network needs a complete overhaul. Certainly the government is throwing money at the system, hoping to build a fast-rail network throughout the country. Fast-rail links between İstanbul and Ankara (a new line), Ankara and Konya, Sivas and Kars, and Edirne and Kars have started or are on the drawing board.

The train network covers central and eastern Turkey fairly well, but doesn't go along the coastlines at all, apart from a short stretch between İzmir and Selçuk. For the Aegean and Mediterranean coasts you could go by train to either İzmir or Konya, and take the bus from there.

In terms of what to expect, train travel through Turkey has a growing number of fans embracing the no-rush travel experience: stunning scenery rolling by picture windows, the rhythmic clickity-clacks through a comfy slumber and the immersion with friendly locals. The occasional unannounced hold-up and public toilets gone feral by the end of the long journey are all part of the adventure. And if you're on a budget, an overnight train journey is a great way to save accommodation costs.

## MAN IN SEAT 61

According to an old Turkish joke, the Germans were paid by the kilometre to build most of Turkey's railways, and they never used a straight line where a dozen curves would do! You'll certainly come to believe this as your train snakes its way across Turkey, round deep valleys and arid mountains, with occasional glimpses of forts on distant hilltops. Turkish train travel is incredibly cheap, but the best trains are air-conditioned and as good as many in Western Europe. The scenery is often better! Chilling out over a meal and a beer in the restaurant car of an İstanbul-Ankara express is a great way to recover from trekking round the sights of İstanbul, and the night trains from İstanbul to Denizli (for Pamukkale) or Konya are a most romantic and time-effective way to go. Other trains are slower and older, but just put your feet up, open a bottle of wine, and let the scenery come to you!

*With thanks to Mark Smith, aka the Man in Seat 61, a global rail travel authority and founder of the mighty fine website, www.seat61.com. If you're even remotely interested in travelling by train you'll want to check it out.*

The key to enjoying train travel in Turkey is to plan stops en route for long-haul trips and to know what to expect in terms of how long a journey will take. For example, the *Vangölü Ekspresi* from İstanbul to Lake Van (Tatvan), a 1900km trip, takes over 40 hours – and that's an express! The bus takes less than 24 hours, the plane less than two hours. Popular train trips include İstanbul to Ankara, and the overnight trains between İstanbul and Konya, İstanbul and Tehran (Iran), and İstanbul and Aleppo (Syria). Make sure you double-check all train departure times. See the table, p157, for timetable and costs of trains to/from İstanbul.

Note that train schedules usually indicate stations rather than cities. So most schedules refer to Haydarpaşa and Sirkeci rather than İstanbul. For İzmir, you will probably see Basmane and Alsancak, the names of the two main stations.

## Classes & Costs

Turkish trains have several seating and sleeping options. Most of the trains have comfortable reclining Pullman seat carriages. Some also have European-style compartments with six seats, usually divided into 1st- and 2nd-class coaches. Sometimes seats can be booked in these compartments, sometimes they're 'first come, best seated'.

There are three types of sleeper. A *küşetli* (couchette) wagon has shared four- or some-

times six-person compartments with seats that fold down into shelf-like beds. Bedding is not provided for these wagons unless it's an *örtülü küşetli* or 'covered' couchette. A *yataklı* wagon has private European-style sleeping compartments, with wash basin and all bedding provided, capable of sleeping one to three people – these are the best option for women travelling on their own on overnight trips.

There is usually a mix of these options on the same service. The *Doğu Express* from İstanbul to Kars, for example, has two pullman carriages, two covered couchettes, two unreserved seating compartments and a sleeper.

Train tickets are usually about half the price of bus tickets. Children, students, seniors, the disabled and return tickets get a 20% discount.

Inter-Rail, Balkan Flexipass and Eurodomino passes are valid on the Turkish railway network; Eurail passes are not.

## Reservations

Most seats and all sleepers on the best trains must be reserved. As the *yataklı* (sleeping-car) wagons are very popular, you should make your reservation as far in advance as possible, especially if a religious or public holiday is looming (see p659). Weekend trains tend to be busiest.

You can book and pay for tickets online at www.tcdd.gov.tr.

# Health

Dr Caroline Evans

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Prevention is the key to staying healthy while travelling in Turkey. Infectious diseases can and do occur in Turkey, but they are usually associated with poor living conditions and poverty, and can be avoided with a few precautions. The most common reason for travellers needing medical help is as a result of accidents – cars are not always well maintained, and poorly lit roads are littered with potholes. Medical facilities can be excellent in large cities, but in remoter areas they may be more basic.

## BEFORE YOU GO

A little planning before departure, particularly for pre-existing illnesses, will save you a lot of trouble later. See your dentist before a long trip; carry a spare pair of contact lenses and glasses (and take your optical prescription with you); and carry a first-aid kit with you.

It's tempting to leave it all to the last minute – don't! Many vaccines don't ensure immunity until two weeks after they are given, so visit a doctor four to eight weeks before departure. Ask your doctor for an International Certificate of Vaccination (otherwise known as the yellow booklet), which will list all the vaccinations you've received. This is mandatory for countries that require proof of yellow fever vaccination upon entry, but it's a good idea to carry it wherever you travel.

Travellers can register with the **International Association for Medical Advice to Travellers** (IAMAT; [www.iamat.org](http://www.iamat.org)). Its website can help travellers to find a doctor with recognised training.

Bring medications in their original, clearly labelled, containers. A signed and dated letter from your physician describing your medical conditions and medications, including generic names, is also a good idea. If carrying syringes or needles, be sure to have a physician's letter documenting their medical necessity.

### MEDICAL CHECKLIST

Here is a list of items you should consider packing in your medical kit.

- Antibiotics (if travelling off the beaten track)
- Antidiarrhoeal drugs (eg loperamide)
- Acetaminophen/paracetamol (Tylenol) or aspirin
- Anti-inflammatory drugs (eg ibuprofen)
- Antihistamines (for hay fever and allergic reactions)
- Antibacterial ointment (eg Bactroban) for cuts and abrasions
- Steroid cream or cortisone (allergic rashes)
- Bandages, gauze, gauze rolls
- Adhesive or paper tape
- Scissors, safety pins, tweezers
- Thermometer
- Pocket knife
- DEET-containing insect repellent for the skin
- Permethrin-containing insect spray for clothing, tents and bed nets
- Sun block (it's very expensive in Turkey)
- Oral rehydration salts
- Iodine tablets (for water purification)
- Syringes and sterile needles (if travelling to remote areas)

## INSURANCE

Find out in advance if your insurance plan will make payments directly to providers or reimburse you later for overseas health expenditures (in Turkey doctors generally expect payment in cash). If you are required to pay upfront, make sure you keep all documentation. Some policies ask you to call a centre in your home country (reverse charges) for an immediate assessment of your problem. It's also worth ensuring your travel insurance will cover ambulances or transport either home or to better medical facilities elsewhere. Not all insurance covers emergency medical evacuation home by plane or to a hospital in a major city, which may be the only way to get medical attention in a serious emergency.

Your travel insurance will not usually cover you for anything other than emergency dental treatment.

## RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS

The World Health Organization recommends that all travellers, regardless of the region they are travelling in, should be covered for diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella and polio, as well as hepatitis B. While making preparations to travel, take the opportunity to ensure that all of your routine vaccination cover is complete. The consequences of these diseases can be severe and outbreaks do occur in the Middle East. Rabies is also endemic in Turkey, so if you will be travelling off the beaten track you might want to consider an anti-rabies jab.

## INTERNET RESOURCES

There is a wealth of travel health advice on the internet. For further information, the Lonely Planet website ([www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com)) is a good place to start. The **World Health Organization** ([www.who.int/ith/en](http://www.who.int/ith/en)) publishes a superb book, *International Travel and Health*, which is revised annually and is available online at

### TRAVEL HEALTH WEBSITES

It's a good idea to consult your government's travel health website before departure, if one is available.

**Australia** ([www.smarttraveller.gov.au](http://www.smarttraveller.gov.au))

**Canada** ([www.travelhealth.gc.ca](http://www.travelhealth.gc.ca))

**United Kingdom** ([www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAdviceForTravellers/fs/en](http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAdviceForTravellers/fs/en))

**United States** ([www.cdc.gov/travel/](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/))

no cost. Another website of general interest is MD Travel Health ([www.mdtravelhealth.com](http://www.mdtravelhealth.com)), which provides complete travel health recommendations for every country, updated daily, also at no cost. The website for the **Centers for Disease Control & Prevention** ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) is a very useful source of traveller's health information.

## FURTHER READING

Lonely Planet's *Travel With Children* is packed with useful information on topics such as pretrip planning, emergency first aid, immunisation and disease information and what to do if you get sick on the road. Other recommended references include *Traveller's Health* by Dr Richard Dawood, *International Travel Health Guide* by Stuart R Rose MD and *The Travellers' Good Health Guide* by Ted Lankester, an especially useful health guide for volunteers and long-term expatriates working in the Middle East.

## IN TURKEY

### AVAILABILITY & COST OF HEALTH CARE

The standard of the health care system in Turkey is very variable. Although the best private hospitals in Istanbul and Ankara offer world-class standards of care, they are expensive to use. Elsewhere, even private hospitals don't always offer particularly high standards and their state-run equivalents even less so. Some patients may have contracted hepatitis during their stay in hospital.

For basic care for things such as cuts, bruises and jabs you could ask for the local *sağlık ocağı* (health centre), but don't expect anyone to speak anything but Turkish. The travel assistance provided by your insurance may be able to locate the nearest source of medical help, otherwise ask at your hotel. In an emergency, contact your embassy or consulate.

Medicine, and even sterile dressings or intravenous fluids, may need to be bought from a local pharmacy. Nursing care is often limited or rudimentary, the assumption being that family and friends will look after the patient.

Standards of dental care are variable and there is a risk of hepatitis B and HIV transmission via poorly sterilised equipment, so watch the tools in use carefully. Your travel insurance will not usually cover you for anything other than emergency dental treatment.

### AVIAN INFLUENZA

The H5N1 avian influenza virus was confirmed in Turkey in late 2005 and there were four fatalities, the last in early 2006. All fatalities were linked with ongoing close contact with birds. The risk to humans is considered very low unless the virus develops the ability to spread sustainably and efficiently between humans. For the latest outbreak news and general information log on to the **World Health Organization** ([www.who.int](http://www.who.int)).

For minor illnesses, such as diarrhoea, pharmacists can often provide advice and sell over-the-counter medication, including drugs that would require a prescription in your home country. They can also advise when more specialised help is needed.

## INFECTIOUS DISEASES

### Diphtheria

Diphtheria is spread through close respiratory contact. It causes a high temperature and severe sore throat. Sometimes a membrane forms across the throat requiring a tracheostomy to prevent suffocation. Vaccination is recommended for those likely to be in close contact with the local population in infected areas. The vaccine is given as an injection alone, or with tetanus, and lasts 10 years.

### Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A is spread through contaminated food (particularly shellfish) and water. It causes jaundice, and although it is rarely fatal it can cause prolonged lethargy and delayed recovery. Symptoms include dark urine, a yellow colour to the whites of the eyes, fever and abdominal pain. Hepatitis A vaccine (Avaxim, VAQTA, Havrix) is given as an injection: a single dose will give protection for up to a year while a booster 12 months later will provide a subsequent 10 years of protection. Hepatitis A and typhoid vaccines can also be given as a single-dose vaccine (hepatyrix or viatim).

### Hepatitis B

Infected blood, contaminated needles and sexual intercourse can all transmit hepatitis B. It can cause jaundice and affects the liver, occasionally causing liver failure. All travellers should make this a routine vaccination,

especially as the disease is endemic in Turkey. (Many countries now give hepatitis B vaccination as part of routine childhood vaccination.) The vaccine is given singly, or at the same time as the hepatitis A vaccine (hepatyrix). A course will give protection for at least five years. It can be given over four weeks or six months.

### HIV

HIV is spread via infected blood and blood products, sexual intercourse with an infected partner and from an infected mother to her newborn child. It can be spread through 'blood to blood' contacts such as contaminated instruments during medical, dental, acupuncture and other body-piercing procedures and sharing used intravenous needles.

### Leishmaniasis

Spread through the bite of an infected sandfly, leishmaniasis can cause a slowly growing skin lump or ulcer. It may develop into a serious, life-threatening fever usually accompanied by anaemia and weight loss. Infected dogs are also carriers of the infection. Sandfly bites should be avoided whenever possible.

### Leptospirosis

Leptospirosis is spread through the excreta of infected rodents, especially rats. It can cause hepatitis and renal failure that may be fatal. It is unusual for travellers to be affected unless living in poor sanitary conditions. It causes a fever and jaundice.

### Malaria

You stand the greatest chance of contracting malaria if you travel in southeastern Turkey. The risk of malaria is minimal in most cities, but you should check with your doctor if you are considering travelling to any rural areas. It is important to take antimalarial tablets if the risk is significant. For up-to-date information about the risk of contracting malaria in a specific country, contact your local travel health clinic.

If you're travelling in southeastern Turkey it's as well to be aware of the symptoms of malaria. It is possible to contract malaria from a single bite from an infected mosquito. Malaria almost always starts with marked shivering, fever and sweating. Muscle pain, headache and vomiting are common. Symptoms may occur anywhere from a few days to three

weeks after a bite by an infected mosquito. The illness can start while you are taking preventative tablets if they are not fully effective, and may also occur after you have finished taking your tablets.

### Poliomyelitis

Generally, poliomyelitis is spread through contaminated food and water. It is one of the vaccines given in childhood and should be boosted every 10 years, either orally (a drop on the tongue) or as an injection. Polio may be carried asymptotically, although it can cause a transient fever and, in rare cases, potentially permanent muscle weakness or paralysis.

### Rabies

Spread through bites or licks on broken skin from an infected animal, rabies is fatal. Animal handlers should be vaccinated, as should those travelling to remote areas where a reliable source of post-bite vaccine is not available within 24 hours. Three injections are needed over a month. If you have not been vaccinated and you suffer a bite, you will need a course of five injections starting within 24 hours or as soon as possible after the injury. Vaccination does not provide you with immunity, it merely buys you more time to seek appropriate medical help.

### Tuberculosis

Tuberculosis (TB) is spread through close respiratory contact and occasionally through infected milk or milk products. BCG vaccine is recommended for those likely to be mixing closely with the local population. It is more important for those visiting family or planning on a long stay, and those employed as teachers and health-care workers. TB can be asymptomatic, although symptoms can include a cough, weight loss or fever months or even years after exposure. An X-ray is the best way to confirm if you have TB. BCG gives a moderate degree of protection against TB. It causes a small permanent scar at the site of injection, and is usually only given in specialised chest clinics. As it's a live vaccine it should not be given to pregnant women or immunocompromised individuals. The BCG vaccine is not available in all countries.

### Typhoid

This is spread through food or water that has been contaminated by infected human faeces.

The first symptom is usually fever or a pink rash on the abdomen. Septicaemia (blood poisoning) may also occur. Typhoid vaccine (typhim Vi, typherix) will give protection for three years. In some countries, the oral vaccine Vivotif is also available.

### Yellow Fever

Yellow fever vaccination is not required for any areas of the Middle East; however, any travellers coming from a yellow-fever-endemic area will need to show proof of vaccination against yellow fever before entry to the Middle East – this normally means if a traveller is arriving directly from an infected country or has been in an infected country during the previous 10 days.

The yellow-fever vaccination must be given at a designated clinic, and is valid for 10 years. It is a live vaccine and must not be given to immunocompromised or pregnant travellers.

## TRAVELLER'S DIARRHOEA

To prevent diarrhoea, avoid tap water unless it has been boiled, filtered or chemically disinfected (with iodine tablets). Eat only fresh fruits or vegetables if they're cooked or if you have peeled them yourself, and avoid dairy products that might contain unpasteurised milk. Buffet meals are risky since food may not be kept hot enough; meals freshly cooked in front of you in a busy restaurant are more likely to be safe.

If you develop diarrhoea, be sure to drink plenty of fluids, preferably an oral rehydration solution containing lots of salt and sugar. A few loose stools don't require treatment, but if you start having more than four or five motions a day, you should start taking an antibiotic (usually a quinolone drug) and an antidiarrhoeal agent (such as loperamide). If diarrhoea is bloody, persists for more than 72 hours or is accompanied by fever, shaking chills or severe abdominal pain, you should seek medical attention.

## ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

### Heat Illness

Heat exhaustion occurs following heavy sweating and excessive fluid loss with inadequate replacement of fluids and salt. This is particularly common in hot climates when taking unaccustomed exercise before full acclimatisation. Symptoms include headache,

dizziness and tiredness. Dehydration is already happening by the time you feel thirsty – aim to drink sufficient water such that you produce pale, diluted urine. The treatment of heat exhaustion consists of fluid replacement with water, fruit juice, or both, and cooling by cold water and fans. The treatment of the salt-loss component consists of consuming salty fluids such as soup or broth, and adding a little more table salt to foods than usual.

Heat stroke is much more serious. This occurs when the body's heat-regulating mechanism breaks down. An excessive rise in body temperature leads to sweating ceasing, irrational and hyperactive behaviour, and eventually loss of consciousness and death. Rapid cooling by spraying the body with water and fanning is an ideal treatment. Emergency fluid and electrolyte replacement by intravenous drip is usually also required.

### Insect Bites & Stings

Even if mosquitoes do not carry malaria, they can cause irritation and infected bites. Using DEET-based insect repellents will prevent bites. Mosquitoes also spread dengue fever.

There is a risk of bee stings along the Aegean and Mediterranean coastal areas. Bees and wasps only cause real problems for those with a severe allergy (anaphylaxis). If you have a severe allergy to bee or wasp stings you should carry an adrenaline injection or something similar. There is a particularly higher risk of bee stings in the area around Marmaris in southwest Turkey.

Sandflies are located around the Mediterranean beaches. They usually only cause a nasty, itchy bite, but can carry a rare skin disorder called cutaneous leishmaniasis (p688); use a DEET-based repellents to avoid bites.

Scorpions are frequently found in arid or dry climates. Turkey's small white scorpions can give a painful bite which will bother you for up to 24 hours, but they won't kill you.

### Snake Bites

Do not walk barefoot or stick your hand into holes or cracks. If bitten by a snake, do not panic. Half of those bitten by venomous snakes are not actually injected with poison (envenomed). Immobilise the bitten limb with a splint (eg a stick) and apply a bandage over the site, with firm pressure, similar to applying a bandage over a sprain. Do not apply a tourniquet, or cut or suck the bite. Get the

victim to medical help as soon as possible so that antivenin can be given if necessary.

### Water

It's probably not wise to drink Turkey's tap water if you're only here on a short visit. Stick to bottled water, boil water for 10 minutes or use water-purification tablets or a filter. Do not drink water from rivers or lakes since it may contain bacteria or viruses that can cause diarrhoea or vomiting.

### TRAVELLING WITH CHILDREN

All travellers with children should know how to treat minor ailments and when to seek medical treatment. Make sure children are up to date with routine vaccinations, and discuss possible travel vaccines well before departure as some vaccines are not suitable for children aged under one year. You may want to consider giving children the BCG vaccine for tuberculosis (TB) if they haven't already had it – see p689 for more information.

In hot, moist climates any wound or break in the skin may lead to infection. The area should be cleaned and then kept dry and clean. Remember to avoid contaminated food and water. If your child is vomiting or experiencing diarrhoea, lost fluid and salts must be replaced. It may be helpful to take rehydration powders for reconstituting with boiled water. Ask your doctor about this.

Children should be encouraged to avoid dogs or other mammals because of the risk of rabies and other diseases. Any bite, scratch or lick from a warm-blooded, furry animal should immediately be thoroughly cleaned. If there is any possibility that the animal is infected with rabies, seek immediate medical assistance.

It always pays to double-check the drug and dosage your child has been prescribed by doctors or pharmacists in Turkey as they may be unsuitable for children. Some information on the suitability of drugs and recommended dosage can be found on the websites listed on p687.

### WOMEN'S HEALTH

Emotional stress, exhaustion and travelling through different time zones can all contribute to an upset in the menstrual pattern. If you're using oral contraceptives, remember that some antibiotics, diarrhoea and vomiting can stop the pill from working and lead

to the risk of pregnancy. Remember to take condoms with you just in case. Condoms should be kept in a cool, dry place or they may crack and perish.

Emergency contraception is most effective if taken within 24 hours after unprotected sex; ask at a pharmacy for the *ertesi gün hapı* (the morning-after pill). The **International Planned Parent Federation** ([www.ippf.org](http://www.ippf.org)) can advise you about the availability of contraception in Turkey and other countries. Sanitary pads are fairly readily available in the country, but tampons are not always available outside major cities and are expensive – bring your own from home.

Travelling during pregnancy is usually possible, but there are important things to consider. Have a medical check-up before embarking on your trip. The most risky times for travel are during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy, when miscarriage is most likely, and after 30 weeks, when complications such as high blood pressure and premature delivery can occur. Most airlines will not accept a traveller after 28 to 32 weeks of pregnancy,

and in the later stages long-haul flights can be very uncomfortable. Antenatal facilities vary greatly in Turkey and you should think carefully before travelling in out-of-the-way places, bearing in mind the cultural and linguistic difficulties, not to mention poor medical standards you might face if anything goes wrong. Take written records of the pregnancy, including details of your blood group, which is likely to be helpful if you need medical attention while away (in Turkey you have to pay for blood infusions unless a friend supplies the blood for you). Ensure your insurance policy covers birth and postnatal care, but remember that insurance policies are only as good as the facilities available.

If you are pregnant or breastfeeding it always pays to double-check the drug and dosage you have been prescribed by doctors or pharmacists in Turkey. The appropriateness of some drugs and correct dosage for pregnant or lactating women is sometimes overlooked. You can use the earlier websites (p687) to check the generic drug and its recommended dosage.

# Language

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Turkish is the dominant language in the Turkic language group, which also includes lesser-known tongues such as Azeri, Kirghiz and Kazakh. Although distantly related to Finnish and Hungarian, the Turkic languages are now seen as comprising their own unique language group. You can find people who speak Turkish, in one form or another, from Belgrade all the way to Xinjiang in China.

In 1928, Atatürk did away with Arabic script and adopted a Latin-based alphabet that was better suited to easy learning and correct pronunciation. He also instituted a language reform process to purge Turkish of Arabic and Persian borrowings, returning it to its 'authentic' roots. The result is a logical, systematic and expressive language with only one irregular noun, *su* (water), one irregular verb, *olmek* (to be) and no genders. It's so logical, in fact, that Turkish grammar formed the basis for the development of Esperanto, an ill-fated artificial international language.

Word order and verb formation in Turkish are very different from what you'll find in Indo-European languages like English. Words are formed by agglutination, meaning affixes are joined to a root word – one scary example is *Avustralyalılaştıramadıklarımızdanmışınız?*, which means 'Are you

one of those whom we could not Australise?' This makes it somewhat difficult to learn at first, despite its elegant logic.

In larger cities and tourist areas you'll usually have little trouble finding someone who speaks English, but a few hints will help you comprehend signs, schedules and menus. For more information on language courses, see p654, and for a comprehensive language guide get Lonely Planet's *Turkish Phrasebook*. You may also want to check out the excellent websites [www.turkishclass.com](http://www.turkishclass.com) and [www.practicalturkish.com](http://www.practicalturkish.com).

## PRONUNCIATION

Pronouncing Turkish is pretty simple for English speakers as it uses sounds that are very similar to ones you already use. You'll hear some variation in pronunciation in different parts of Turkey, but this language chapter is based on standard pronunciation so you'll be understood wherever you go.

## Vowels

Most Turkish vowel sounds can be found in English, although in Turkish they're generally shorter and slightly harsher. When you see a double vowel, such as *saat* (hour) you need to pronounce both syllables separately. Be careful of the symbols **ı** and **i** – the **ı** is undotted in both lower and upper case (like *İğridır*), while the **i** has dots in both cases (like *İzmir*). It's easy to read both of these as an English 'i', but you can be misunderstood if you don't pronounce the two sounds distinctly – *sık* means 'dense', 'tight' or 'frequent' but *sik* is the Turkish equivalent of a certain 'f' word meaning 'to copulate'. The same care should be taken with **o/ö** and **u/ü**.

## TURKISH PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

<b>a</b>	a	as in 'father'
<b>ay</b>	ai	as in 'aisle'
<b>e</b>	e	as in 'red'
<b>ey</b>	ay	as in 'say'
<b>ı</b>	uh	as the 'a' in 'ago'
<b>i</b>	ee	as in 'bee'
<b>o</b>	o	as in 'go'
<b>ö</b>	er	as in 'her' with no 'r' sound

<b>u</b>	oo	as in 'moon'
<b>ü</b>	ew	like 'ee' with rounded lips

## Consonants

Most Turkish consonants sound the same as their English counterparts, but there are a couple of exceptions. The Turkish **c** is pronounced like English 'j', **ç** is like English 'c' and **ş** is like English 'sh'. The letter **h** is never silent, so always pronounce it as in 'house'. The **ğ** is a silent letter that extends the vowel before it – it acts like the 'gh' combination in 'weigh', and is never pronounced. The letter **r** is always rolled and **v** is a little softer than the English sound.

## TURKISH PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

<b>b</b>	b	as in 'big'
<b>c</b>	j	as in 'jam'
<b>ç</b>	ch	as in 'church'
<b>d</b>	d	as in 'day'
<b>f</b>	f	as in 'fun'
<b>g</b>	g	as in 'go'
<b>h</b>	h	as in 'house'
<b>j</b>	zh	as the 's' in 'pleasure'
<b>k</b>	k	as in 'kilo'
<b>l</b>	l	as in 'loud'
<b>m</b>	m	as in 'man'
<b>n</b>	n	as in 'no'
<b>p</b>	p	as in 'pig'
<b>r</b>	r	a strong, rolled 'r'
<b>s</b>	s	as in 'sea'
<b>ş</b>	sh	as in 'ship'
<b>t</b>	t	as in 'tin'
<b>v</b>	v	as in 'van' but softer
<b>y</b>	y	as in 'you'
<b>z</b>	z	as in 'zoo'

## Word Stress

Word stress is quite light in Turkish, and generally falls on the last syllable of the word. Most two-syllable place names (eg Kibris) are stressed on the first syllable, and in three-syllable names the stress is usually on the second syllable (eg İstanbul).

## ACCOMMODATION

### Where can I find a ...?

<i>Nerede ... bulabilirim?</i>	<i>ne-re-de ... boo-la-bee-lee-reem</i>
<b>camping ground</b>	
<i>kamp yeri</i>	<i>kamp ye-re</i>
<b>guesthouse</b>	
<i>misafirhane</i>	<i>mee-sa-feer-ha-ne</i>

## MAKING A RESERVATION

(for written and phone inquiries)

<b>To ...</b>	<i>Alıcı ...</i>	<i>a-luh-juh ...</i>
<b>From ...</b>	<i>Gönderen ...</i>	<i>germ-de-re ...</i>
<b>Date</b>	<i>Tarih</i>	<i>ta-reeh</i>
<b>in the name of ...</b>	<i>... adına</i>	<i>... a-duh-na</i>
<b>credit card number</b>	<i>kredi kartı numara</i>	<i>kre-dee kar-tuh noo-ma-ra</i>
<b>expiry date</b>	<i>son kullanma tarihi</i>	<i>son kool-lan-ma ta-ree-hee</i>

### I'd like to book ...

*... ayırtmak istiyorum lütfen.*  
*... a-yurt-mak ees-tee-yo-room lewt-fen*

### From (2 July) to (6 July).

*(2 Temmuz'dan) (6 Temmuz'a) kadar.*  
*(ee-kee tem-mooz-dan) (al-tuh tem-moo-za) ka-dar*

### Please confirm availability and price.

*Lütfen fiyatı ve mal mevcudiyetini teyit eder misiniz?*  
*lewt-fen fee-ya-tuh ve mal mev-joo-dee-ye-tee-nee te-yeet e-der mee-see-nee*

## hotel

<i>otel</i>	<i>o-tel</i>
<b>youth hostel</b>	
<i>gençlik hosteli</i>	<i>gench-leek hos-te-lee</i>
<b>pension</b>	
<i>pansiyon</i>	<i>pan-see-yon</i>
<b>pension (in a private home)</b>	
<i>ev pansiyonu</i>	<i>ev pan-see-yo-noo</i>

## Can you recommend somewhere cheap?

*Ucuz bir yer tavsiye edebilir misiniz?*  
*oo-jooz beer yer tav-see-ye e-de-bee-leer mee-see-nee*

## What's the address?

*Adresi nedir?*  
*ad-re-see ne-der*

## Could you write it down, please?

*Lütfen yazar mısınız?*  
*lewt-fen ya-zar muh-suh-nuh*

## Do you have a ...?

<i>... odanız var mı?</i>	
<i>... o-da-nuz var mı?</i>	
<b>single room</b>	
<i>Tek kişilik</i>	<i>tek kee-shee-leek</i>
<b>double room</b>	
<i>iki kişilik</i>	<i>ee-kee kee-shee-leek</i>
<b>twin room</b>	
<i>Çift yataklı</i>	<i>cheeft ya-tak-luh</i>
<b>dormitory room</b>	
<i>Yatakhane</i>	<i>ya-tak-ha-ne</i>



**How much is it per night/person?**

*Geceliği/Kişi başına ne kadar?* ge-je-lee-ee/kee-shee ba-shuh-na ne ka-dar

**May I see it?**

*Görebilir miyim?* ger-re-bee-leer mee-yeem

**Where's the bathroom/toilet?**

*Banyo/Tuvalet nerede?* ban-yo/too-va-let ne-re-de

**I'm leaving now.**

*Şimdi ayrılıyorum.* sheem-dee ai-ruh-luh-yo-room

**CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS****Hello.**

*Merhaba.* mer-ha-ba

**Goodbye.**

*Hoşçakal.* hosh-cha-kal (person leaving)  
*Güle güle.* gew-le gew-le (person staying)

**Yes.**

*Evet.* e-vet

**No.**

*Hayır.* ha-yuhr

**Please.**

*Lütfen.* lewt-fen

**Thank you.**

*Teşekkür ederim.* te-shek-kewr e-de-reem

**You're welcome.**

*Birşey değil.* beer-shay de-eel

**Excuse me.**

*Bakar mısınız.* ba-kar muh-suh-nuhz

**Sorry.**

*Özür dilerim.* er-zewr dee-le-reem

**What's your name?**

*Adınız nedir?* a-duh-nuhz ne-deer

**My name is ...**

*Benim adım ...* be-neem a-duhm ...

**Where are you from?**

*Nerelisiniz?* ne-re-lee-see-nee

**I'm from ...**

*Ben ...* ben ...

**I like ...**

*... seviyorum.* ... se-vee-yo-room

**I don't like ...**

*... sevmiyorum.* ... sev-mee-yo-room

**DIRECTIONS****Can you show me (on the map)?**

*Bana (haritada) gösterebilir misin?* ba-na (ha-re-te-da) gers-te-re-bee-leer mee-seen

**Where is ...?**

*... nerede?* ... ne-re-de

**It's straight ahead.**

*Tam karşıda.* tam kar-shuh-da

**Turn left.**

*Sola dön.* so-la dern

**Turn right.**

*Sağa dön.* sa-a dern

**SIGNS**

<b>Ada</b>	Island
<b>Belediye</b>	Town Hall
<b>Cami</b>	Mosque
<b>Deniz</b>	Sea
<b>Göl</b>	Lake
<b>Harabeler</b>	Ruins
<b>Havaalanı</b>	Airport
<b>Kale</b>	Castle/Fortress
<b>Kilise</b>	Church
<b>Köprü</b>	Bridge
<b>Liman</b>	Harbour/Port
<b>Meydan</b>	Town Square
<b>Müze</b>	Museum
<b>Otogar</b>	Bus Station
<b>Plaj</b>	Beach
<b>Şehir Merkez</b>	Town Centre

<b>Giriş</b>	Entrance
<b>Çıkışı</b>	Exit
<b>Açık</b>	Open
<b>Kapalı</b>	Closed
<b>Yasak</b>	Prohibited
<b>Sigara İçilmez</b>	No Smoking
<b>Boş Oda</b>	Rooms Available
<b>Boş Yer Yok</b>	Full (No Vacancies)
<b>Tuvaletler</b>	Toilets/WC
<b>Bay</b>	Male
<b>Bayan</b>	Female

**at the corner**

*köşeden* ker-she-den

**at the traffic lights**

*trafik ışıklarından* tra-feek uh-shuhk-la-ruhn-dan

**behind**

*arkasında* ar-ka-suhn-da

**in front of**

*önünde* er-newn-de

**far (from)**

*uzak* oo-zak

**near (to)**

*yakınında* ya-kuh-nuhn-da

**opposite**

*karşısında* kar-shuh-suhn-da

**HEALTH****I'm ill.**

*Hastayım.* has-ta-yuhm

**It hurts here.**

*Burası ağrıyor.* boo-ra-suh a-ruh-yor

**antiseptic**

*antiseptik* an-tep-sep-teek

**condoms**

*kondom* kon-dom

**contraceptives**

*doğum kontrol ilaçları* do-oom kon-trol ee-lach-la-ruh

**diarrhoea**

*ishali* ees-ha-lee

**EMERGENCIES****Help!**

*İmdat!* eem-dat

**There's been an accident!**

*Bir kaza oldu.* beer ka-za ol-doo

**I'm lost.**

*Kayboldum.* kai-bol-doom

**Leave me alone!**

*Git başımdan!* geet ba-shuhm-dan

**Call ...!**

*... çağırın!* ... cha-uh-ruhn

**a doctor**

*Doktor* dok-tor

**the police**

*Polis* po-les

**an ambulance**

*Ambulans* am-boo-lans

**medicine**

*ilaç* ee-lach

**nausea**

*mide bulantım* mee-de boo-lan-tuhm

**sunblock cream**

*güneş kremi* gew-nesh kre-mee

**tampons**

*tampon* tam-pon

**I'm ...**

*... var.* ... var

**asthmatic**

*Astımım* as-tuh-muhm

**diabetic**

*Şeker hastalığı* she-ker has-ta-luh-uhm

**I'm allergic to ...**

*... alerjim var.* ... a-ler-zheem var

**antibiotics**

*Antibiyotiklere* an-tee-bee-yo-teek-le-re

**aspirin**

*Aspirine* as-pee-ree-ne

**penicillin**

*Penisiline* pe-nee-see-lee-ne

**bees**

*Arlara* a-ruh-la-ra

**nuts**

*Çerezlere* che-rez-le-re

**peanuts**

*Fıstığa* fuhs-tuh-a

**LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES****Do you speak English?**

*İngilizce konuşuyor musunuz?*  
een-gee-leez-je ko-noo-shoo-yor moo-soo-nooz

**Does anyone here speak English?**

*İngilizce bilen var mı?*  
een-gee-leez-je bee-len var muh

**How do you say ...?**

*... nasıl söylüyorsunuz?*  
... na-seel say-lew-yor-soohn

**Could you write it down, please?**

*Lütfen yazar mısınız?*  
lewt-fen ya-zar muh-suh-nuhz

**I understand.**

*Anlıyorum.*  
an-luh-yo-room

**I don't understand.**

*Anlamıyorum.*  
an-la-muh-yo-room

**NUMBERS**

0	<i>sıfır</i>	suh-fuhr
1	<i>bir</i>	beer
2	<i>iki</i>	ee-kee
3	<i>üç</i>	ewch
4	<i>dört</i>	dert
5	<i>beş</i>	besh
6	<i>altı</i>	al-tuh
7	<i>yedi</i>	ye-dee
8	<i>sekiz</i>	se-keez
9	<i>dokuz</i>	do-kooz
10	<i>on</i>	on
11	<i>on bir</i>	on beer
12	<i>on iki</i>	on ee-kee
13	<i>on üç</i>	on ewch
14	<i>on dört</i>	on dertt
15	<i>on beş</i>	on besh
16	<i>on altı</i>	on al-tuh
17	<i>on yedi</i>	on ye-dee
18	<i>on sekiz</i>	on se-keez
19	<i>on dokuz</i>	on do-kooz
20	<i>yirmi</i>	yeer-mee
21	<i>yirmi bir</i>	yeer-mee beer
22	<i>yirmi iki</i>	yeer-mee ee-kee
30	<i>otuz</i>	o-too
40	<i>kırk</i>	kuhrk
50	<i>elli</i>	el-lee
60	<i>altmış</i>	alt-muhsh
70	<i>yetmiş</i>	yet-meesh
80	<i>seksen</i>	sek-sen
90	<i>doksan</i>	dok-san
100	<i>yüz</i>	yewz
200	<i>ikiyüz</i>	ee-kee-yewz
1000	<i>bin</i>	been
1,000,000	<i>bin milyon</i>	been meel-yon

**PAPERWORK**

<b>name</b>	<i>ad</i>	ad
<b>nationality</b>	<i>uyrukluk</i>	ooy-rook-look
<b>date of birth</b>	<i>doğum günü</i>	do-oom gew-new

<b>place of birth</b>	<i>doğum yeri</i>	do-oom ye-ree
<b>sex/gender</b>	<i>cinsiyet</i>	jeen-see-yet
<b>passport</b>	<i>pasaport</i>	pa-sa-port
<b>surname</b>	<i>soyad</i>	soy-ad
<b>visa</b>	<i>vize</i>	vee-ze

## QUESTION WORDS

<b>Who?</b>	<i>Kim?</i>	keem
<b>What?</b>	<i>Ne?</i>	ne
<b>When?</b>	<i>Ne zaman?</i>	ne za-man
<b>Where?</b>	<i>Nerede?</i>	ne-re-de
<b>Which?</b>	<i>Hangi?</i>	han-gee
<b>How?</b>	<i>Nasıl?</i>	na-seel

## SHOPPING & SERVICES

**I'd like to buy ...**  
... almak istiyorum. al-mak ees-tee-yo-room

**How much is it?**  
*Ne kadar?* ne ka-dar

**May I look at it?**  
*Bakabilir miyim?* ba-ka-bee-leer mee-yeem

**I'm just looking.**  
*Sadece bakıyorum.* sa-de-je ba-kuh-yo-room

**The quality isn't good.**  
*Kalitesi iyi değil.* ka-lee-te-see ee-ye-e de-eel

**It's too expensive.**  
*Bu çok pahalı.* boo chok pa-ha-luh

**I'll take it.**  
*Tutuyorum.* too-too-yo-room

**Do you accept ...?**  
... kabul ediyor musunuz?  
... ka-bool e-dee-yor moo-soo-nooz

**credit cards**  
*Kredi kartı* kre-dee kar-tuh

**travellers cheques**  
*Seyahat çeki* se-ya-hat che-kee

<b>more</b>	<i>daha fazla</i>	da-ha faz-la
<b>less</b>	<i>daha az</i>	da-ha az
<b>smaller</b>	<i>küçük</i>	kew-chewk
<b>bigger</b>	<i>büyük</i>	bew-yewk

**Where's a/the ...?** ... nerede? ... ne-re-de

<b>bank</b>	<i>Banka</i>	ban-ka
<b>... embassy</b>	<i>... elçilik</i>	... el-chee-leek
<b>hospital</b>	<i>Hastane</i>	has-ta-ne
<b>market</b>	<i>Pazar yeri</i>	pa-zar ye-ree
<b>police</b>	<i>Polis</i>	po-lees
<b>post office</b>	<i>Postane</i>	pos-ta-ne
<b>public phone</b>	<i>Telefon</i>	te-le-fo-n
	<i>kulübesi</i>	koo-lew-be-see
<b>public toilet</b>	<i>Umumi</i>	oo-moo-mee
	<i>tuvalet</i>	too-va-let

## TIME & DATES

**When?** *Ne zaman?* ne za-man  
**What time is it?** *Saat kaç?* sa-at kach  
**It's (10) o'clock.** *Saat (on).* sa-at (on)  
**in the morning** *öğleden evvel* er-le-den ev-vel  
**in the afternoon** *öğleden sonra* er-le-den son-ra  
**week** *hafta* haf-ta  
**year** *yıl* yuhl  
**today** *bugün* boo-gewn  
**tomorrow** *yarın* ya-ruhn  
**yesterday** *dün* dewn

<b>Monday</b>	<i>Pazartesi</i>	pa-zar-te-see
<b>Tuesday</b>	<i>Salı</i>	sa-luh
<b>Wednesday</b>	<i>Çarşamba</i>	char-sham-ba
<b>Thursday</b>	<i>Perşembe</i>	per-shem-be
<b>Friday</b>	<i>Cuma</i>	joo-ma
<b>Saturday</b>	<i>Cumartesi</i>	joo-mar-te-see
<b>Sunday</b>	<i>Pazar</i>	pa-zar

<b>January</b>	<i>Ocak</i>	o-jak
<b>February</b>	<i>Şubat</i>	shoo-bat
<b>March</b>	<i>Mart</i>	mart
<b>April</b>	<i>Nisan</i>	nee-san
<b>May</b>	<i>Mayıs</i>	ma-yuhs
<b>June</b>	<i>Haziran</i>	ha-zee-ran
<b>July</b>	<i>Temmuz</i>	tem-mooz
<b>August</b>	<i>Ağustos</i>	a-ooos-tos
<b>September</b>	<i>Eylül</i>	ay-lewl
<b>October</b>	<i>Ekim</i>	e-keem
<b>November</b>	<i>Kasım</i>	ka-suhm
<b>December</b>	<i>Aralık</i>	a-ra-luhk

## TRANSPORT

### Public Transport

#### What time does the ... leave/arrive?

... ne zaman kalkacak/varır?

... ne za-man kal-ka-jak/va-ruhr		
<b>boat</b>	<i>Vapur</i>	va-poor
<b>bus</b>	<i>Otobüs</i>	o-to-be-ws
<b>plane</b>	<i>Uçak</i>	oo-chak
<b>train</b>	<i>Tren</i>	tren

#### I'd like a ... ticket.

... bir bilet lütfen.

... beer bee-let lewt-fen

<b>one-way</b>		
<b>Gidiş</b>		gee-deesh
<b>return</b>		
<b>Gidiş-dönüş</b>		gee-deesh-der-newsh
<b>1st-class</b>		
<b>Birinci mevki</b>		bee-reen-jee mev-kee
<b>2nd-class</b>		
<b>İkinci mevki</b>		ee-keen-jee mev-kee

## ROAD SIGNS

<b>Dur</b>	Stop
<b>Girilmez</b>	No Entry
<b>Park Etmek Yasaktır</b>	No Parking
<b>Yol Ver</b>	Give Way
<b>Ücret Ödenir</b>	Toll
<b>Tehlikeli</b>	Danger
<b>Yavaş</b>	Slow Down
<b>Çıkışı</b>	Exit
<b>Giriş</b>	Entry
<b>Otoyol</b>	Freeway
<b>Park Yeri</b>	Parking Garage
<b>Tek Yön</b>	One Way

<b>delayed</b>	<i>ertelendi</i>	er-te-len-dee
<b>cancelled</b>	<i>iptal edildi</i>	eep-tal e-deel-dee
<b>the first/the last</b>	<i>ilk/son</i>	eelk/son
<b>platform</b>	<i>peron</i>	pe-ron
<b>ticket office</b>	<i>bilet gişesi</i>	bee-let gee-she-see
<b>timetable</b>	<i>tarife</i>	ta-ree-fe
<b>train station</b>	<i>istasyon</i>	ees-tas-yon

## Private Transport

### I'd like to hire a ...

*Bir ... kiralamak istiyorum.*

beer ... kee-ra-la-mak ees-tee-yo-room

<b>car</b>	<i>araba</i>	a-ra-ba
<b>4WD</b>	<i>dört çeker</i>	dert-che-ker
<b>motorbike</b>	<i> motosiklet</i>	mo-to-seek-let
<b>bicycle</b>	<i>bisiklet</i>	bee-seek-let

### Is this the road to ...?

... giden yol bu mu? ... gee-den yol boo moo

### Where's a service station?

*Benzin istasyonu nerede?* ben-zeen ees-tas-yo-noo ne-re-de

### Please fill it up.

*Lütfen depoyu doldurun.* lewt-fen de-po-yoo dol-doo-roon

### I'd like ... litres.

... litre istiyorum. ... leet-re ees-tee-yo-room

<b>diesel</b>	<i>dizel</i>	dee-zel
<b>leaded petrol</b>	<i>kurşunlu</i>	koor-shoon-loo
<b>unleaded petrol</b>	<i>kurşunsuz</i>	koor-shoon-sooz

### (How long) Can I park here?

*Buraya (ne kadar süre) park edebilirim?*

boo-ra-ya (ne ka-dar sew-re) park e-de-bee-lee-reem

### Do I have to pay?

*Park ücreti ödemem gerekli mi?*

park ewj-re-tee er-de-mem ge-rek-lee mee

### I need a mechanic.

*Tamirciye ihtiyacım var.*

ta-meer-jee-ye eeh-tee-ya-jum var

## The car/motorbike has broken down at ...

*Arabam/motosikletim ...de bozuldu.*

a-ra-bam/mo-to-seek-le-teem ...de bo-zool-doo

## I have a flat tyre.

*Lastığım patladı.*

las-tee-eem pat-la-duh

## I've run out of petrol.

*Benzinim bitti.*

ben-zee-neem beet-tee

## I've had an accident.

*Kaza yaptım.*

ka-za yap-tuhm

## TRAVEL WITH CHILDREN

### Do you have a/an ...?

... var mı? ... var muh

### baby change room

*Alt değiştirme odası* alt de-eesh-teer-me o-da-shu

### baby seat

*Bebek koltuğuna* be-bek kol-too-oo-na

### child-minding service

*Çocuk bakım hizmeti* cho-jook ba-kuhm heez-me-tee

### children's menu

*Çocuk menüsü* cho-jook me-new-sew

### disposable nappies/diapers

*Bebek bezi* be-bek be-zee

### highchair

*Mama sandalyesine* ma-ma san-dal-ye-see-ne

### potty

*Oturağa* o-too-ra-a

### pusher (stroller)

*Pusete/Bebek arabası* poo-se-te/be-bek a-ra-ba-suh

## Where's the nearest toy shop?

*En yakın oyuncakçı nerede?*

en ya-kuhn o-yoon-jak-kuh ne-re-de

## Do you mind if I breast-feed here?

*Burada çocuk emzirmemin bir sakıncası var mı?*

boo-ra-da cho-jook em-zeer-me-meen beer sa-kuhn-ja-shu var muh

## Are children allowed?

*Çocuklar girebilir mi?*

cho-jook-lar gee-re-bee-leer mee



Also available from Lonely Planet:  
Turkish Phrasebook

# Glossary

See p74 in the Food & Drink chapter for useful words and phrases dealing with food and dining. See the Language chapter (p692) for other useful words and phrases.

**acropolis** – hilltop citadel and temples of a classical Hellenic city

**ada(sı)** – island

**agora** – open space for commerce and politics in a Graeco-Roman city

**aile salonu** – family dining room, for couples, families and single women in a Turkish restaurant

**Anatolia** – the Asian part of Turkey; also called Asia Minor

**arabesk** – Arabic-style Turkish music

**arasta** – row of shops near a mosque, the rent from which supports the mosque

**Asia Minor** – see Anatolia

**bahçe(sı)** – garden

**banliyö treni** – suburban train lines

**baraj** – dam

**bedesten** – vaulted, fireproof market enclosure where valuable goods are kept

**belediye (sarayı)** – municipal council, town hall

**bey** – polite form of address for a man; follows the name

**birahane** – beer hall

**bouleuterion** – place of assembly, council meeting place in a classical Hellenic city

**büfe** – snack bar

**bulvarı** – often abbreviated to ‘bul’; boulevard or avenue

**cadde(sı)** – often abbreviated to ‘cad’; street

**cami(i)** – mosque

**caravanseraı** – large fortified way-station for (trade) caravans

**çarşı(sı)** – market, bazaar; sometimes town centre

**çay bahçesi** – tea garden

**çayhane** – teahouse

**çayı** – stream

**çeşme** – spring, fountain

**cicim** – embroidered rug

**Cilician Gates** – a pass in the Taurus Mountains in southern Turkey

**dağ(i)** – mountain

**damsız girilmez** – sign meaning that men unaccompanied by a woman will not be admitted

**deniz** – sea

**deniz otobüsü** – literally ‘seabus’; hydrofoil or catamaran

**dere(sı)** – stream

**derviş** – member of Mevlevi Muslim brotherhood

**dolmuş** – shared taxi; can be a minibus or sedan

**döviz (burosu)** – currency exchange (office)

**emanet(çi)** – left-luggage (baggage check) office

**emir** – Turkish tribal chieftain

**eski** – old (thing, not person)

**ev pansiyonu** – private home that rents rooms to travellers

**eyvan** – vaulted hall opening into a central court in a *medrese* or mosque

**ezan** – the Muslim call to prayer

**fasıl** – Ottoman classical music, usually played by gypsies

**feribot** – ferry

**GAP** – South-East Anatolia Project, a mammoth hydroelectric and irrigation project

**gazino** – Turkish nightclub, not a gambling den

**geçit, -di** – (mountain) pass

**gişe** – ticket booth

**göl(ü)** – lake

**gület** – traditional Turkish wooden yacht

**hamam(i)** – Turkish bathhouse

**han(i)** – caravanseraı

**hanım** – polite form of address for a woman

**haremlık** – family/women’s quarters of a residence; see also *selamlık*

**heykel** – statue

**hisar(i)** – fortress or citadel

**Hittites** – nation of people inhabiting Anatolia during 2nd millennium BC

**hükümet konağı** – government house, provincial government headquarters

**ilkokul** – primary school

**imam** – prayer leader, Muslim cleric

**imaret(i)** – soup kitchen for the poor, usually attached to a *medrese*

**işhanı** – office building

**iskele(sı)** – jetty, quay

**jandarma** – gendarme, paramilitary police force/officer

**jeton** – transport token

**kale(sı)** – fortress, citadel

**kapı(sı)** – door, gate

**kaplica** – thermal spring or baths

**kahvaltı salonu** – breakfast room

**Karagöz** – shadow-puppet theatre

**kaya** – cave

**kazı** – archaeological excavations

**KDV** – katma değer vergisi, Turkey’s value-added tax

**kebabçı** – place selling kebabs

**kervansaray(i)** – Turkish for caravanseraı

**keyif** – relaxation, refined to a fine art in Turkey

**kilim** – flat-weave rug

**kilise(sı)** – church

**köfteci** – *köfte*-maker or -seller

**konak, konağı** – mansion, government headquarters

**köprü(sü)** – bridge

**köşk(ü)** – pavilion, villa

**köy(ü)** – village

**kule(sı)** – tower

**külliyeye(sı)** – mosque complex including seminary, hospital and soup kitchen

**kümbet** – vault, cupola, dome; tomb topped by this

**küşet(li)** – couchette(s), or shelf-like beds, in a six-person train compartment

**liman(i)** – harbour

**lise** – high school

**lokanta** – restaurant

**mağara(sı)** – cave

**mahalle(sı)** – neighbourhood, district of a city

**medrese(sı)** – Islamic theological seminary or school, attached to a mosque

**mescit, -di** – prayer room, small mosque

**Mevlâna** – also known as Celaleddin Rumi, a great mystic and poet (1207–73), founder of the Mevlevi whirling *dervish* order

**meydan(i)** – public square, open place

**meyhane** – tavern, wine shop

**mihrab** – niche in a mosque indicating the direction of Mecca

**milli parkı** – national park

**mimber** – pulpit in a mosque

**minare(sı)** – minaret, tower from which Muslims are called to prayer

**müezzin** – cantor who sings the *ezan*, or call to prayer

**müze(sı)** – museum

**nargileh** – traditional water pipe (for smoking); hookah

**necropolis** – city of the dead, cemetery

**oda(sı)** – room

**odeon** – odeum, small classical theatre for musical performances

**öneyeri** – ruins

**ortaokul** – secondary school

**otobus** – bus

**otogar** – bus station

**otoyol** – motorway, limited-access divided highway

**Ottoman** – of or pertaining to the Ottoman Empire which lasted from the end of the 13th century to the end of WWI

**pansiyon** – pension, B&B, guesthouse

**pastane** – pastry shop (patisserie); also *pastahane*

**pazar(i)** – weekly market, bazaar

**peribacalar** – fairy chimneys

**peron** – gate (at the otogar); platform (train station)

**peştimal** – *hamam* cloth

**petrol ofisi** – petrol station

**pideci** – pide-maker or -seller

**PTT** – Posta, Telefon, Telegraf; post, telephone and telegraph office

**Ramazan** – Islamic holy month of fasting

**saat kulesi** – clock tower

**şadırvan** – fountain where Muslims perform ritual ablutions

**samovar** – tea urn

**saray(i)** – palace

**sarcophagus** – a stone or marble coffin or tomb, especially one with inscription

**sebil** – public fountain or water kiosk

**sedir** – bench seating that doubled as a bed in Ottoman houses

**şehir** – city; municipality

**şehir merkezi** – city centre

**selamlık** – public/male quarters of a residence (see also *haremlık*)

**Seljuk** – of or pertaining to the Seljuk Turks, the first Turkish state to rule Anatolia from the 11th to 13th centuries

**sema** – *dervish* ceremony

**serander** – granary

**servis** – shuttle minibus service to and from the otogar

**sinema** – cinema

**sokak, sokağı** – often abbreviated to ‘sk’; street or lane

**Sufi** – Muslim mystic, member of a mystic (*dervish*) brotherhood

**tabiat parkı** – nature park

**tavla** – backgammon

**TC** – Türkiye Cumhuriyeti (Turkey Republic); designates an official office or organisation

**TCDD** – Turkish State Railways

**Tekel** – government alcoholic beverage and tobacco company

**tekke(sı)** – *dervish* lodge

**TEM** – Trans-European Motorway

**tersane** – shipyard

**THY** – Türk Hava Yolları, Turkish Airlines

**TML** – Turkish Maritime Lines

**tramvay** – tram

**TRT** – Türkiye Radyo ve Televizyon, Turkish broadcasting corporation

**tuff, tufa** – soft stone laid down as volcanic ash

**tuğra** – sultan's monogram, imperial signature

**türbe(si)** – tomb, grave, mausoleum

**valide sultan** – mother of the reigning sultan

**vezir** – vizier (minister) in the Ottoman government

**vilayet, valilik, valiliği** – provincial government headquarters

**yalı** – grand waterside residence

**yarım pansiyon** – half-pension, ie breakfast and dinner included

**yayla** – highland pastures

**yeni** – new

**yol(u)** – road, way

**yüzyıl** – century