
Turkey - The Facts & Figures

Country Profile

The Republic of Turkey (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti) is situated at the Eastern end of the Mediterranean, straddling both Asia and Europe. The European part of Turkey (Thrace) and the Asian part (Anatolia or Asia Minor) are divided by the Bosphorus, the Sea of Marmara and the Dardanelles. Because of its pivotal position, Turkey is known as the gateway to the Middle East and has a long and colourful history. Turkey's wealth of archaeological and architectural treasures makes it a popular tourist destination. It is often said that Turkey has more Greek ruins than Greece, and more Roman remains than Italy. From the stunning beaches and ancient ruins of its coast to its vibrant cities, Turkey offers something for everyone.

Turkey's landscape is dominated by lakes and mountain ranges rising to heights in excess of 5000 meters in the east of the country. Tourist resorts across the country usually have a view of these pine-forested mountain ranges in the background, and most of the mountains are easily accessible for day trips, affording spectacular views. Ankara, the capital of Turkey, is located on the plateau of central Anatolia, where much of the country's agriculture is based. All along the Black Sea coast you will also find cherry orchards, hazelnut groves and tobacco fields, whilst the rolling country of Thrace is famed for its vines and fruit orchards.

Climate

Turkey's climate is generally warm and sunny with long summers and little rain. Turkey is often preferred by tourists to countries like Spain and Greece because it does not experience the stifling heat associated with these places. The Aegean and Mediterranean coasts have a typical Mediterranean climate with hot summers and mild winters, whilst the Black sea Coast is more temperate and has higher rainfall. Central and East Anatolia has more of a continental climate with hot summers and cold winters. Spring lasts from April to mid June, and stays hot until September with some mild rain beginning in October.

Interesting Facts

Turkey stretches over 314,500 square miles with 4,350 miles of coastline. It is just over 1025 miles from east to west, and 400 miles north to south. The population was last

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recorded as 73.3 million, with 10 million people living in Istanbul, Turkey's largest city, and 4 million in the capital, Ankara. Istanbul, formerly Constantinople was the famous capital of both the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires.

Each year Turkey welcomes millions of visitors to its shores. Thanks to a new PR campaign, visitor numbers are expected to increase to a phenomenal 25 million in 2007. Over a million British tourists visit Turkey each year and increasing numbers are turning to Turkey as an ideal place to buy a holiday home or property investment.

Enchanting past

Everywhere you go in Turkey you will see and feel over 10,000 years of history around you in the ancient cities, ruins and monuments that adorn the prehistoric landscape. Until 1500 A.D., Turkey was the centre of world civilization and this rich cultural heritage has placed Turkey on the world heritage list as a site of historical as well as natural wonders.

Famous Landmarks: Ayasofya Museum, Topkapi Palace, Blue Mosque, Dolmabahce Palace, ancient City of Troy, Ephesus, Aphrodisias, Pergamon, Pamukkale, Goreme-Cappadocia, Mt.Nemrut, Safranbolu.

Currency

Turkish currency is the New Turkish Lira. However, you can pay nearly everywhere in Euros but will probably be given change in New Turkish Lira, based on the daily exchange rate. The best place to exchange your Euros into new Turkish Lira is in Turkey as the local exchange rate is far better than in the UK. In most places you can pay for your goods by credit card as Turkey becomes increasingly westernised in its business outlook.

Language

Turkey's official language is Turkish, although significant minorities speak Kurdish and Arabic as their first language. Turkish is a member of the Ural-Altaic language family, and is closely related to Mongolian and Korean. Turkish has a very different grammatical structure from English and Latin-based European languages, which can be a challenge when learning. English is widely spoken in most coastal resorts and main cities, although it is well worth learning some simple phrases and words.

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Where in Turkey?

Bodrum

Homer's description of Bodrum as "The land of eternal blue" captures the extreme beauty of the area, which has encouraged scores of invaders throughout history to annex this paradise for themselves. Each civilisation to inhabit Bodrum has left a footprint in the landscape and heritage of the area, providing a wealth of historical treasures. Known as Halicarnassos, in ancient times Bodrum was an important city and the birthplace of the famous historian Herodotus. The Mausoleum, Bodrum's oldest building, was one of the wonders of the ancient world built by the female warrior Artemisia.

Built on a peninsula formed by the meeting of the eastern and western harbours, Bodrum, with its narrow streets winding down to the sea, is famous for its 11th century castle, its world-renowned yachts, its shipyards and the dazzling white houses and tombs lining the shores and harbours. With its combination of natural and architectural beauty, Bodrum will meet the expectations of all tourists, whilst its facilities, ranging from chic to traditional, cater for any budget.

Antalya

Antalya is an area of great natural beauty with three national parks, which are home to all kinds of protected tropical plants and animal species. The landscape is famous for its dazzling beaches, bountiful caves and waterfalls and the rapids at Korprulu Canyon National Park, where rafting is possible. Saklikent, 50 km from Antalya, also offers winter sports on the northern slopes of Bakirli Mountain in spring. The city of Antalya stretches along the rocky coastline, which boasts a magnificent flora and fauna. You can explore Kaleici, the old town, with its narrow streets and wooden houses along the ancient city walls, or take a stroll in the modern quarter down palm-lined streets to the prize-winning marina.

Termessos is one of the most interesting cities in the region, built 1050 meters up into the mountains. The Psidian city was inhabited by the Solymys, a purely Anatolian race, who withstood invasion by Alexander the Great in 333 B.C. Amongst the extensive ruins, you can see Hadrian's triumphal arch and the theatre. Other areas of historical interest include Ariassos for its baths and architecture, and the mosques of Sarampol

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and Kalekapisı. More recent history can be explored in the numerous underwater wrecks around the coast, which is a popular diving area.

Izmir

Modern Izmir stretches from the innermost point of the gulf and over the heights and ridges to the south. The ancient city is one of the oldest settlements on the Mediterranean and is today the third largest city in Turkey, offering visitors numerous museums, Turkish baths, and facilities. Although the first habitation of Izmir is known to be dated from long before, excavations could only go back to 3000 B.C. to the Ancient Bronze Age settlement. The city is famous for being Homer's birthplace and home to many of the great ancient philosophers and poets.

Historical sites include the impressive tomb of Tantalus, ancient aqueducts, and the Agora of Smyrna but the area also encompasses three other ancient cities Pergamon, Sardis and Ephesus. Ephesus is known as the best-preserved classical city in the Eastern Mediterranean and is the location of the Temple of Artemis, one of the seven wonders of the antiquity.

The icon of the area is its famous public elevator connecting the lower streets with the upper terrace, which affords a breathtaking view of the city and bay. Izmir is also home to a Bird's Paradise with over 200 species of bird.

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