

Overview of Turkey

Turkey links Europe and the Middle East, a genuine amalgamation of west and east. Suspended between the modern and the ancient, it bursts with life. City boutiques and exotic bazaars clamour for attention, while the weekly tolling of church bells interrupts the daily call of the muezzin. Roman ruins, early Christian histories, and the presence of the Ottoman Empire all enjoy significance in the country.

The different regions of Turkey offer an assortment of landscapes and activities. There's something for everybody, with enough cultural delights, urban treats, and beach comforts to satisfy the pickiest of travellers.

With one part in Europe and the other in Asia, the city of Istanbul is a fascinating metropolis of frenzied marketplaces, imperial residences, and climbing minarets. This is all set against a lively ambience of contemporary art and musical entertainment.

Out of the city, Cappadocia in Central Turkey offers an astounding landscape of eroded volcanic rock cones and fairy chimneys, remarkable subterranean cities and rock-hewn houses that merge harmoniously with the ochre-coloured landscape.

Further south, the Turquoise Coast is a haven for boat cruises. Here, visitors can enjoy a variety of water sports, sunbathe on golden sands, or explore the wonderful ancient cities of Troy and Ephesus along the shores of the Aegean Sea.

Most visitors concentrate on Western Turkey, with its picturesque seaside resorts along the Aegean and Mediterranean coasts, scenic and recreational attractions, well-preserved archaeological sites, and fascinating museums that bring its rich history to life. Wherever one ventures in Turkey there is certain to be a warm welcome and traditional hospitality, making this a deeply satisfying corner of the world in which to travel.

Key Facts

Language:

Turkish is the official language, but English is widely understood in the main tourist areas.

Passport/Visa:

All passports must be valid for at least the period of stay. All travellers to Turkey are required to hold return or onward tickets, documents for the next destination and sufficient funds for the period of their stay. It is highly recommended that travellers' passports have at least six months' validity remaining after the intended date of departure from their travel destination. Immigration officials often apply different rules to those stated by travel agents and official sources.

Currency:

The official currency is the Turkish lira (TRY), which is divided into 100 kuruş. Currency can be exchanged at banks, exchange booths, post offices, airports, and ferry ports. Travellers should note that banks have the worst rates but will exchange lesser known foreign currencies. Banks open mainly Monday to Friday, but some are open daily in tourist areas. Major credit cards are widely accepted; the most popular are Visa or MasterCard, but American Express is also accepted in some areas. Some hotels in the most popular destinations accept US dollars as payment.

Electricity:

220 volts AC, 50Hz. The European two-pin plug is standard.

Travel to Turkey

Overview

Turkey is a varied destination with plenty to see and do for adventurous travellers. The largest city of Istanbul features some unique and world-class sights such as the Blue Mosque and Topkapi Palace, not to mention the shopping paradise of the Grand Bazaar, the largest and oldest covered market in the world.

Further afield travellers can find the ancient attractions of Ephesus, Troy, and Augustus' Temple. Turkey is a year-round destination although it's at its hottest during the peak summer months of July and August. Getting around the country is a simple matter of hopping on a short-haul flight or scheduled bus service while, in Istanbul, travellers can negotiate the services of a taxi driver.

Climate in Turkey

The Aegean and Mediterranean coasts of Turkey have very hot and dry summers. Winters, between October and April, are mild and wet, and Turkey's coastal towns more or less shut down. Winter in Istanbul and Cappadocia can be very cold, sometimes with light snow cover.

The peak tourist season is during high summer, roughly between July and September, and this is the ideal time for a beach holiday in Turkey. The spring and autumn months are also a good time to visit, with warm days, cool evenings, and no mosquitos. Eastern Turkey should be visited during summer as roads and mountain passes may close due to winter ice and snow.

Health Notes when travelling to Turkey

There are no vaccination requirements for travelling to Turkey other than that everyone 12 years of age and older should get fully vaccinated for COVID-19 before visiting. Mosquitoes can be an irritation in mid-summer but malaria is not considered a risk in the main tourist areas of the west and south-west. Most tap water in the larger towns and cities has been chlorinated, but bottled water is still recommended for drinking. Food from street vendors should be treated with caution unless it is obviously fresh or hot. The standard of healthcare is not high in state hospitals but the private health sector is well-regarded, and modern facilities exist in private hospitals in Ankara and Istanbul. Travel insurance is recommended.

Safety Notes when travelling to Turkey

Street crime is low, but visitors should guard their valuables at all times. They should also avoid any public demonstrations and remember that many parts of Turkey lie on a major seismic fault line and are subject to earthquakes and tremors. As in many Western countries, there is a threat from terrorism in Turkey and there have been a number of incidents, including explosions in Istanbul, the capital Ankara, and in the coastal tourist resorts. The Istanbul Ataturk International Airport has been the most recent target. There are also continuing incidents of local terrorism in eastern Turkey, particularly the southeast.

Customs in Turkey

While it is difficult to make sweeping statements about a country that runs from Armenia to Greece, the Turkish people are generally welcoming and hospitable. Most visitors will stay in modern Istanbul or in one of the popular holiday resorts, where locals are likely to be fairly open-minded; however, tourists should respect religious customs, particularly during the month of Ramadan. Visitors should dress modestly when visiting mosques or religious shrines; there is a smoking ban on all forms of public transport and in outdoor venues.

Duty Free in Turkey

Travellers to Turkey do not have to pay duty on the following items: 200 cigarettes, or 50 cigars, or 200g tobacco; 1 litre of alcohol over 22 percent volume or 2 litres under 22 percent volume; 120 ml of perfume or eau-de-cologne; and 1,5 km of (instant) coffee and 500g of tea.

Doing Business in Turkey

In Turkey, business associates are addressed by their first names. If the associate is male, then his name is followed by 'bey', and 'hanım' is used for females. A formal, conservative dress code is observed in Turkey, and women should be careful to dress particularly conservatively. Gifts are common and are usually something the associate would use in business such as a pen or other office stationary. Business hours throughout Turkey are generally 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday with an hour taken over lunch.

Communication in Turkey

The international country dialling code for Turkey is +90. WiFi is increasingly easily available, and visitors can purchase local prepaid SIM cards for unlocked phones.

Tippling in Turkey

Tippling is a way of life in Turkey and it is customary to give some small change for most services, or a small percent of the bill. In bigger hotels and restaurants if a service charge is not added to the bill, it is customary to tip between 10 and 15 percent. For taxi fares it is enough to round up the bill. Attendants at Turkish baths expect to share between 10 to 20 percent of the total bill if service has been good.

Passport/Visa Note

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Entry Requirements

Entry requirements for Americans:

US passport holders must have a passport that is valid for six months beyond date of entry. A visa is required.

Entry requirements for Canadians:

Passports must be valid for at least 60 days beyond the duration of stay. Canadian nationals require visas to enter Turkey.

Entry requirements for UK nationals:

Passports should be valid for at least 6 months from the entry date. British Citizens travelling to Turkey for tourist or business purposes are able to travel without a visa for visits of up to 90 days in any 180-day period.

Entry requirements for Australians:

Australian passport holders must have a valid visa. Passports must be valid for at least 150 days from the date of arrival.

Entry requirements for Irish nationals:

Irish nationals require a visa to enter Turkey. Passports must be valid for at least six months longer than the expiry date on the requested visa.

Entry requirements for New Zealanders:

New Zealand nationals require a visa to enter Turkey. Passports must be valid for at least six months longer than the expiry date on the requested visa. Visas are required for stays longer than 90 days.

Entry requirements for South Africans:

South African passports must be valid for at least six months from the intended date of arrival. South African nationals require a visa to enter Turkey.

Tourist Offices

Turkish Tourist Office: +90 212 573 4136 (Istanbul) or <http://www.tourismturkey.org>

Turkey Embassies

In the United States:

Turkish Embassy, Washington DC, United States: +1 202 612 6700.

In Canada:

Turkish Embassy, Ottawa, Canada: +1 613 789 4044.

In the United Kingdom:

Turkish Consulate, London, United Kingdom: +44 20 7391 6900.

In Australia:

Turkish Embassy, Canberra, Australia: +61 2 6234 0000.

In Ireland:

Turkish Embassy, Dublin, Ireland: +353 1 668 5240.

In New Zealand:

Turkish Embassy, Wellington, New Zealand: +64 4 472 1290.

In South Africa:

Turkish Embassy, Pretoria, South Africa: +27 12 342 6055.

Foreign Embassies in Turkey

American Embassy

United States Consulate General, Istanbul: +90 212 335 9000.

Canadian Embassy

Canadian Embassy, Ankara: +90 312 409 2700.

British Embassy

British Embassy, Ankara: +90 312 455 3344.

Australian Embassy

Australian Embassy, Ankara: +90 312 459 9500.

Irish Embassy

Irish Embassy, Ankara: +90 312 459 1000.

New Zealand Embassy

New Zealand Embassy, Ankara: +90 312 446 3333.

South African Embassy

South African Embassy, Ankara: +90 312 405 6861.

Currency

The official currency is the Turkish lira (TRY), which is divided into 100 kuruş. Currency can be exchanged at banks, exchange booths, post offices, airports, and ferry ports. Travellers should note that banks have the worst rates but will exchange lesser known foreign currencies. Banks open mainly Monday to Friday, but some are open daily in tourist areas. Major credit cards are widely accepted; the most popular are Visa or MasterCard, but American Express is also accepted in some areas. Some hotels in the most popular destinations accept US dollars as payment.

Exchange rate for 1 TRY - Turkish Lira

0.34 BMD Bermudan Dollar	0.30 EUR Euro	0.34 USD U.S. Dollar	0.24 GBP U.K. Pound Sterling	36.91 JPY Japanese Yen	0.44 CAD Canadian Dollar
0.34 CHF Swiss Franc	0.47 AUD Australian Dollar	8.51 UAH Ukrainian Hryvnia	114.46 KZT Kazakhstani Tenge	510.40 LBP Lebanese Pound	0.24 LYD Libyan Dinar
2.33 BOB Bolivian Boliviano	36.57 NPR Nepalese Rupee	0.13 OMR Omani Rial	1.23 QAR Qatari Rial	0.47 SGD Singapore Dollar	2.81 SEK Swedish Krona
2.25 TTD Trinidad Tobago Dollar	3.38 VEF Venezuelan Bolivar	15.53 DOP Dominican Peso	2.28 HRK Croatian Kuna	6.32 MXN Mexican Peso	198.72 XOF West African CFA Franc
1.07 PGK Papua New Guinean kina	0.34 BSD Bahamian Dollar	0.72 FJD Fiji Dollar	7.67 HNL Honduran Lempira	37.46 DZD Algerian Dinar	403.79 MMK Myanma Kyat
3.79 BWP Botswana Pula	1.14 PEN Peruvian Nuevo Sol	235.07 CLP Chilean Peso	162.05 AMD Armenia Dram	8.19 CZK Czech Koruna	6.77 MDL Moldova Lei
42.13 ISK Icelandic Krona	996.07 UZS Uzbekistan Sum	1.31 ILS Israeli New Sheqel	0.24 JOD Jordanian Dinar	0.10 KWD Kuwaiti Dinar	10.63 UYU Uruguayan Peso
12.04 MUR Mauritian Rupee	9.66 NIO Nicaraguan Córdoba	2.83 NOK Norwegian Krone	1.33 PLN Polish Zloty	1.27 SAR Saudi Riyal	49.49 LKR Sri Lanka Rupee
12.07 THB Thai Baht	1.24 AED U.A.E Dirham	1.22 BRL Brazilian Real	1.37 RON Romanian New Leu	2.63 HKD Hong Kong Dollar	199.18 XAF Central African CFA Franc
7,617.66 VND Vietnamese Dong	4.73 ARS Argentine Peso	0.91 XCD East Caribbean Dollar	2.65 GTQ Guatemalan Quetzal	3.31 MAD Moroccan Dirham	0.13 BHD Bahrain Dinar
0.34 PAB Panamanian Balboa	0.51 AZN Azerbaijan Manat	1,056.76 COP Colombian Peso	23.15 KGS Kyrgyzstan Som	94.82 HUF Hungarian Forint	2.67 TJS Tajikistan Ruble
4,637.80 IDR Indonesian Rupiah	3.01 EGP Egyptian Pound	403.72 KRW South Korean Won	1,921.62 PYG Paraguayan Guaraní	1.41 MYR Malaysian Ringgit	182.61 CRC Costa Rican Colón
0.50 NZD New Zealand Dollar	35.50 PKR Pakistani Rupee	22.64 RUB Russian Rouble	5.29 ZAR South African Rand	0.72 TND Tunisian Dinar	0.68 BBD Barbadian Dollar
0.59 BGN Bulgarian Lev	15.80 PHP Philippine Peso	11.06 TWD New Taiwan Dollar	66.60 NGN Nigerian Naira	36.32 XPF CFP Franc	1.33 GHS Ghanaian Cedi
42.34 JMD Jamaican Dollar	0.61 ANG Neth. Antillean Guilder	0.47 BND Brunei Dollar	37.47 RSD Serbian Dinar	2.23 CNY Chinese Yuan	6,744.48 BYR Belarussian Ruble
2.25 DKK Danish Krone	1.16 TMT New Turkmenistan Manat	22.80 INR Indian Rupee			

Airports in Turkey

Istanbul Airport (IST)

Istanbul Airport

<http://www.istairport.com/en>

Location: Istanbul The airport is situated 25 miles (40km) northwest of Istanbul.

Time: GMT +3

Contacts: Tel: +90 444 1 442.

Transfer between terminals: There is one large, modern terminal at the airport, consisting of seven entrances. Gates 1 and 2 serve domestic flights, while the rest serve international flights.

Getting to the city: While there are plans to connect the railway, shuttles are currently the only form of public transport serving the airport. Havaist and IETT offer shuttle services, and tickets can be purchased at the airport. Taxis are also readily available.

Car rental: Car rental companies include Europcar, Avec, Enterprise, Garenta, Hertz, Budget, Avis, and Cizgi.

Airport Taxis: Istanbul Airport is northwest of Istanbul and it takes around 45 minutes to an hour to reach the city centre by taxi. There are three main taxis: orange economy taxis, blue comfort taxis, and black premium taxis.

Facilities: The airport has shops, banks, a bureaux de change, prayer rooms, a large range of food and beverage outlets, bars, a duty free, and passenger lounges. It also offers an airport hotel and tourism information centres.

Parking: Istanbul Airport boasts one of the largest multi-storey car parks in the world, consisting of five blocks with low-cost to premium options.

Antalya International Airport (AYT)

Antalya International Airport

<http://www.antalya-airport.aero/homepage>

Location: Mediterranean Coast The airport is situated six miles (10km) from Antalya.

Time: GMT +2 (GMT +3 from the last Sunday in March to the last Sunday in October).

Contacts: Tel: +90 (0)242 444 7423.

Getting to the city: Taxis are available from outside Arrivals and there is a bus service to Antalya from the Domestic and International terminals.

Car rental: Car rental companies include National, Avis, Europcar, and Budget.

Airport Taxis:

Facilities: Bureaux de change and ATMs are available in Arrivals and Departures. Cafes, a variety of take-away establishments, and a pub offer snacks, meals, and drinks. Other facilities include duty-free shopping, a business lounge, baby-care facilities, medical facilities, travel agencies, and a post office. There are also good facilities available for those with special needs.

Parking: There are two parking lots near the terminals with long and short-term parking options. Visitors can park at the Domestic Terminal free of charge up to 15 minutes.

Departure Tax: None.

Izmir International Airport (ADB)

Izmir Adnan Menderes International Airport

<http://www.adnanmenderesairport.com>

Location: Aegean Coast The airport is located 11 miles (18km) from Izmir.

Time: GMT +2 (GMT +3 from the last Sunday in March to the last Sunday in October).

Contacts: Tel: +90 232 455 0000.

Getting to the city: The Havas airport shuttle bus to the centre of Izmir can be caught from the domestic terminal. Trains service the airport and leave from the International terminal; taxis are also available.

Car rental: Car rental companies include Avis, Hertz, Enterprise, Europcar, and Sixt, as well as some local car hire companies.

Airport Taxis:

Facilities: Foreign exchange can be found in both Arrivals and Departures. Shops are available, including duty free, and cafes, restaurants, and bars exist throughout the terminal building. Other facilities include a post office, ATM, hairdresser, tourist information, and hotel reservations. Facilities for those with special needs are good.

Parking: Parking at Izmir Adnan Menderes Airport is charged at TL 11 for the first hour, and TL 36 for 24 hours.

Departure Tax: None.

Dalaman International Airport (DLM)

ATM Dalaman Airport

<http://www.yda.aero/>

Location: Mediterranean Coast The airport is situated about four miles (6km) from Dalaman.

Time: GMT +2 (GMT +3 from the last Sunday in March to the last Sunday in October).

Contacts: Tel: +90 252 792 5555.

Getting to the city: Taxis are available outside the terminal, and there are bus services to Dalaman via Marmaris and Fethiye, which leave from the domestic terminal. Dalaman airport taxis connect passengers to the Otogar bus terminal.

Car rental: Avis, Central, Garenta and Enterprise have rental companies at the airport.

Airport Taxis:

Facilities: Banks and exchange bureaux are available. There is a variety of duty-free shops in arrivals and departures, as well as a food court, which offers a variety of takeaways, restaurants, and bars. Other facilities include places of worship, baby-care rooms, a post office, and internet access.

Parking: Parking is available at the airport.

Departure Tax: None.

Ankara International Airport (ESB)

Esenboga International Airport

<http://www.esenbogaaairport.com/en-EN/Pages/Main.aspx>

Location: Ankara The airport is located northeast of Ankara, 17 miles (28km) from the city centre.

Time: GMT +2 (GMT +3 from March to October).

Contacts: Tel: +90 312 590 4000.

Getting to the city: The Havas bus service operates between the airport and a central city terminal, stopping at various points en route. The fare for a one-way journey is TL9.50. Metered taxis are also available, and various private companies run shuttles.

Car rental: Several car rental companies are represented at the airport, including Budget, Hertz, Europcar, Sixt, and Avis.

Airport Taxis:

Facilities: There are banks with exchange facilities in both arrivals and departures, duty free shops, pubs, restaurants, cafes, and snack kiosks. In addition there is a hairdresser, shoe-shine kiosk, a florist, and bookstores. WiFi is freely available and the airport is accessible for the disabled.

Parking:

Departure Tax: None.

Bodrum Airport (BJV)

Bodrum Airport (Milas-Bodrum Airport)

<http://www.milas-bodrumairport.com/en-EN/>

Location: Aegean Coast The airport is situated 22 miles (36km) northeast of Bodrum, and 10 miles (16km) south of Milas.

Time: Local time is GMT +2 (GMT +3 from the last Sunday in March to the last Sunday in October).

Contacts: Tel: +90 252 523 0101

Transfer between terminals: The new international terminal and the old terminal, now used only for domestic flights, are just over half a mile away from one another, a 15 minute walk across a field.

Getting to the city: There is an airport shuttle bus that travels to and from Bodrum city centre, stopping at various points en route. Havas coaches operating from the domestic terminal are timed with Turkish Airlines flights to and from Istanbul. There are plenty of airport taxis available and their rates are fixed and generally quite fair.

Car rental: Hertz, Avis, and Europcar have rental desks at the airport.

Airport Taxis: There is a rate board at the terminals that shows current fares to 44 cities and towns in the region. The fare to Bodrum is around TL100 and roughly TL235 to Kusadasi, a 2-hour journey away.

Facilities: The airport has currency exchange facilities, restaurants, shops, car rental desks, taxi service, ATMs, and an information desk.

Parking: Ample short-term and long-term bays are available outside the main terminal.

Departure Tax: None.

Sabiha Gokcen International Airport (SAW)

Sabiha Gokcen International Airport

http://www.sabihagokcen.aero/home_page

Location: Istanbul The airport is 22 miles (35km) south-east of Istanbul.

Time: GMT +2 (GMT +3 from the last Sunday in March to the last Sunday in October).

Contacts: Tel: +90 216 588 88 88.

Transfer between terminals: Terminals are within one building.

Getting to the city: Buses connect the airport to various parts of Istanbul and shuttles run to the historical centre of Istanbul.

Car rental: Rental companies operating at the airport include Sixt, Payless, Central, Hertz, Europcar, Nord Travel, Budget, Avis, and Bostanci.

Airport Taxis: Round-the-clock taxi service can be found outside the arrivals section of the airport.

Facilities: The airport has ATMs, shops, restaurants, a first aid centre, pharmacies, a prayer room, hair salon, shoeshine stand, and meeting facilities. Currency exchange facilities and a post office are also available and there is a left-luggage desk.

Parking: The airport's multi-level car park has a capacity of 4,718 vehicles and 72 buses. There is also valet parking service with a capacity of 400 cars.

Departure Tax: None.

Dalyan

Mediterranean Coast

Unlike neighbouring holiday resorts, Dalyan is a largely undeveloped and tranquil village offering a significant number of natural and historical attractions. Due to the fact that nearby Iztuzu beach is one of the world's few remaining breeding grounds for loggerhead turtles, an effort has been made to conserve the area's astounding natural beauty.

The town is set on the winding Dalyan River that flows between the Mediterranean Sea and Lake Koycegiz, and on the other side of the river are the ruins of the ancient city of Caunos, dating back to the 3rd century.

A Dalyan holiday must be a boat trip to the 2.5 mile (4km) beach (about a 40-minute journey) that transports visitors through tall reeds, to 2,300-year-old Lycian cliff tombs and the ruins at Caunos, and finally to the large sandbar at the turtle beach in Koycegiz. A quicker, but less scenic ride is by *dolmus*.

Nearby thermal springs at Sultaniye, and the Dalyan mud baths are also not to be missed and make for an out-of-the-ordinary holiday experience. The surrounding wetlands are a haven for a variety of wildlife and birds, and the town is offset by a backdrop of pine-covered mountains and lush fields, making Dalyan a perfect destination for nature-lovers.

For those looking to party until dawn the busier holiday resorts such as Marmaris would be better suited, but for the more discerning traveller there are plenty of activities and excursions to enjoy, local delicacies to savour, and spectacular scenery to delight in while on holiday in Dalyan.

Nightlife in Dalyan

Dalyan is not the place to come on holiday for a buzzing nightlife, but there are several bars and a few clubs and many establishments have regular Turkish nights offering up a more traditional experience of belly dancing, traditional music, and special food.

Shopping in Dalyan

The Dalyan local market on Saturdays provides an excellent way to pick up bargains while on holiday. As with anywhere in Turkey, haggling is key and there are unbelievable deals to be had. There are several small shops, including local arts, crafts, and carpet dealers, and there is also the usual range of very cheap but fake designer goods. There are also several mini supermarkets.

Things to do in Dalyan

There is plenty to see and do on holiday in Dalyan. Boat trips are immensely popular, as are jeep safaris, mountain biking, sea kayaking, paragliding, fishing, snorkelling, and more. A definite holiday must is a microlight flight over the spectacular Dalyan Delta, providing incredible views and possible turtle spotting on the golden sands of Iztuzu Beach, home to the rare loggerhead turtle. Wildlife enthusiasts will also enjoy the fantastic bird-watching opportunities.

For the less active, the Dalyan hot springs and mud baths provide relaxation, as does a visit to a Turkish hammam for a massage and Turkish bath. Relaxing on the spectacular Iztuzu Beach and bathing in the warm, shallow water is also a must.

History buffs will enjoy the fascinating Lycian cliff tombs that house the kings of Caunos, and at Caunos itself the remains of this once large port can be seen, including a theatre, temples, churches, and baths.

For those looking for more action while on holiday in Dalyan, there are regular *dolmus* trips to neighbouring resorts and towns such as Marmaris. Beach BBQs are also a favourite and can usually be booked through a tour operator or hotel.

Things to be aware of in Dalyan

Dalyan can be a bit more expensive than neighbouring holiday resorts and, as it is a more family-orientated resort, party animals looking for late nights and pumping clubs should head elsewhere. Mosquitoes can be a problem.

Dining in Dalyan

There are a number of restaurants catering for a range of tastes in Dalyan, including several that offer tasty traditional Turkish dishes. Unlike many resorts, this is not the place to look for British style food or McDonalds. Paradise Restaurant is the best place to go for fish and chips, though. Some favourites include La Perla and Simarik cafe. Riverside Restaurant has beautiful views of Caunos.

Kalkan

Mediterranean Coast

The charming Mediterranean holiday resort and fishing town of Kalkan is situated on Turkey's Turquoise Coast, and is sought after by a crowd more in search of atmosphere and charisma than mere fun and sun.

Narrow twisting streets, historic Ottoman architecture, shuttered windows, and white-washed houses, as well as sweeping views over the harbour and sparkling bay, are all part of its unique character.

The genuine friendliness of Kalkan locals is a welcome change from the hassle experienced in most holiday towns. Untouched by mass tourism, Kalkan is small, unspoiled and laidback, but still has plenty to offer.

Holidaymakers can enjoy beautiful beaches, boat cruises, and watersports, or take in ancient Lycean history. Kalkan also boasts the highest number of restaurants and bars per square metre on the Turkish coast, and is renowned for its rooftop venues.

Nightlife in Kalkan

Kalkan's nightlife will keep all types of visitors busy. With plenty of restaurants, cafes, bars, and nightclubs to enjoy, the town comes to life after dusk. Travellers can head to one of the many rooftop terrace bars for sundowners, listen to a gypsy band while sipping on the local aniseed drink, 'raki', smoke a hookah pipe and recline on Ottoman-style cushions, or enjoy the local ladies putting on a belly dancing show.

Shopping in Kalkan

Kalkan's Thursday market is a great place to pick up souvenirs and mingle with the locals to get a true reflection of Kalkan life. Gold and silver jewellery, Turkish kilims (handwoven rugs), and a traditional blue-coloured glass 'evil eye', said to ward off evil spirits, are the main buys when enjoying a little retail therapy in the streets of Kalkan. Many of the shops stay open till at least midnight. Other popular purchases are tailor-made suits and other clothing.

Things to do in Kalkan

Kalkan's main beach is shingled and this may not appeal to many would-be beach-goers but the water sports and activities on offer off these shores still attract thousands of tourists each year. Nearby Kaputas Beach is sandy and much more pleasant for those longing to dig their toes in the sand.

Visitors can enjoy sailing, jet skiing, water skiing, scuba diving, parasailing, and banana boating, or plunge to the depths and discover what lies beneath the crystal clear waters on a snorkelling trip. The ruins at Xanthos Valley and the New Acropolis are popular attractions to visit, as is the ancient city of Patara.

Things to be aware of in Kalkan

Kalkan can often be packed with British tourists and the main beach is shingle, so shoes are advised for beach excursions. However, water depth drops off close to the shore, meaning travellers won't have to walk over the pebbles for long.

Dining in Kalkan

There is a high concentration of restaurants in Kalkan, most of which are peppered around the centre of town. There are over 100 restaurants ranging from trendy and market eateries to local lokantas (tavernas), and even rooftop restaurants, which offer breathtaking views over the harbour and serve a variety of cuisines, including traditional Turkish, locally caught seafood, and many classic Mediterranean favourites, while local meze (similar to tapas), cheese, and trout are popular features on restaurant menus. There are a number of eateries offering international cuisine, but visitors should note that they come with an international price tag.

Belek

Mediterranean Coast

Belek is a sprawling holiday resort town specifically developed for tourism, and over the last two decades has grown to encompass the neighbouring village of Kadriye. Boasting 300 days of sunshine and the warm, turquoise waters of the Mediterranean, the area has become a haven for those seeking the luxury of five-star hotel complexes, as well as some great golf courses.

Many Belek hotels have their own strip of private beach and some holiday visitors never leave the comforts of their seaside accommodation. Belek is, however, close to a number of interesting sites and there are several exciting activities on offer.

The ruins of the Roman town of Perge is an interesting excursion, as is the well-preserved ancient amphitheatre at Aspendos; its acoustics have stood the test of time and it still plays host to the occasional concert.

From Belek, jeep safaris into the mountains are another popular holiday outing, as are boat trips, watersports, and visits to nearby Manavgat waterfalls and the thermal baths at Pamukkale. Scuba diving, white-water rafting, horse riding, and more are also on offer to visitors on holiday. The town of Belek itself is compact and has a small shopping centre and some souvenir shops and some cafes to enjoy on holiday.

Kadriye has more to offer in the way of street markets and nightlife, but day trips to busier towns such as Alanya or Antalya are also available. Belek is the perfect holiday resort for golfers and those seeking lazy days lounging on a beach or by a swimming pool.

Nightlife in Belek

The nightlife in Belek is largely limited to the large hotels, many of which have their own nightclubs, bars, and entertainment. There are one or two popular clubs, however, including the large Club 29 on the waterfront.

Shopping in Belek

Most of the large Belek hotels have shops selling curios and holiday souvenirs, and the town has some lively street markets that are the perfect place to sample freshly cooked food and do a spot of gift shopping. There is also a huge bazaar every Saturday where shoppers can haggle to their heart's content. Holiday makers can head to the old town of Antalya for more extensive shopping.

Things to do in Belek

Belek has become a premier golf centre in Turkey and boasts over eight championship golf courses, catering for all levels of player, and was recently featured as one of the best places to go in Golf World's Golf Escapes 2007 supplement.

Besides golfing, Belek also offers a wide range of adventure sports like wind surfing, water skiing, sailing, rafting, and mountain climbing to enjoy on holiday. Belek's beaches have very calm water, making it ideal for small children.

The neighbouring beach resort of Side is also worth a visit, with a 2nd century theatre and Roman Baths, and further afield Antalya has museums, a beautifully preserved old town, and offers a good day-out for foodies.

Things to be aware of in Belek

Many shopkeepers can hassle visitors who enter their stores. Those who are not interested should give a polite but firm 'no'.

Dining in Belek

There is a limited choice of restaurants in Belek with most holiday visitors eating in their hotels, but the village of Kadriye is just two miles (4km) away, and easily reached by dolmus, and has a selection of shops, bars and restaurants. The nearby city of Antalya, 22 miles (35km) away, offers many restaurants that serve up some of the best of local Turkish food. Adana Ockbkbasi is a restaurant in Belek well worth a visit for its special Turkish fish and kebab dishes. Coco Bar, which serves the tastiest lamb shish kebabs around and has a cosy open-air terrace, is rated as one of the friendliest restaurants in town by tourists and locals alike.

Alanya

Mediterranean Coast

Situated on the Gulf of Antalya on Turkey's Mediterranean coast, Alanya has been a favoured seaside holiday resort for over 800 years. Today's European package tourist is drawn here for much the same reasons as the Seljuk Turks all those centuries ago: the sea is warm and gentle, the beaches stretch for miles, and the town has an interesting history.

The southern part of the town is the most tourist-orientated, although, fortunately, a height-restriction has limited the sprawl common to resort towns. There is, however, the usual collection of resort-style hotels and tourist-orientated fare in Alanya. The harbour is a hub of activity, particularly at night, and when tired of relaxing on the beach, there are several sites such as the Damlatas Caves, Alanya Castle and the Red Tower to visit.

Alanya is also backed by the pine-forested Taurus Mountains and while on holiday there, a half hour's drive out of town allows visitors to enjoy spectacular views, as well as the charm of small, rural villages where life continues much as it always has.

Nightlife in Alanya

Much of Alanya's nightlife is centred on the harbour, but several more locally frequented bars and clubs can be found tucked away in the side streets. Many of the clubs close relatively early, but a free shuttle ferries serious partiers to Auditorium, an enormous venue that stays buzzing until the wee hours and is away from the town centre. Other favourites include Robin Hood, and Bistro Bellman. Several venues also provide more traditional entertainment such as belly dancing, fire shows, and traditional music.

Shopping in Alanya

Alanya has a range of good shops, and part of the fun for visitors is perfecting their haggling skills. Barring food items, bargaining on everything is expected and patience is key. One can usually expect to get prices marked down by 30 to 50 percent. Touts can get annoying and it is best to avoid shops with aggressive salesmen. Alanya offers some excellent jewellery stores, as well as leather goods and clothing stores, a local market, and the usual tourist tat. Hookahs (water pipes) and tobacco are popular souvenirs from Alanya, as well as Turkish tea sets.

Things to do in Alanya

There are several interesting sights to explore while on holiday in Alanya, including the medieval Alanya Castle and remains of a Seljuk village, the Red Tower, and nearby Damlatas Caves. A favourite is also the Dim Valley and Dim Cave. Other than sunbathing and good swimming, there is also a water park, golfing, mountain biking, bungee jumping, river rafting on the Alara River, and excellent diving on offer. Visitors can also take boat trips to explore nearby caves.

Things to be aware of in Alanya

Alanya is a popular holiday resort and can get very noisy and crowded. The busy main highway runs through the resort, and causes pollution, noise, and congestion. An ancient lava field just below the water line can be hard to negotiate while swimming.

Dining in Alanya

Alanya has a large range of restaurants, catering for a variety of tastes, from traditional Turkish food to McDonalds. Some favourites include Memos, serving traditional Turkish dishes such as a delicious Ottoman stew, and Big Ben's for more English-style breakfasts and Sunday roasts. Visitors should try a kebab or mezze platter, followed by a cold Efes beer for an authentic Turkish experience. If travellers eat from street vendors, they should remember that they can haggle the price of their meal; haggling is frowned upon in restaurants and grocery stores, however. Local specialties such baklava and thick, sludgy Turkish coffee are highly recommended.

Bodrum

Aegean Coast

The popular holiday resort of Bodrum, called Halicarnassus in ancient times, is the South Aegean's most attractive resort, described by Homer as the 'Land of Eternal Blue'. The hillside is covered in painted villas adorned with bougainvillea, narrow streets wind their way down to the sea, and the peaceful setting of its twin harbours offer shelter for yachts.

Bodrum is a mustering point for local boats offering tailor-made daytrips to nearby islands or the pristine beaches and seaside restaurants along the magnificent coastline. From its position between the two harbours, the 15th century crusader Castle of St Peter dominates every part of the town, now home to the fascinating Museum of Underwater Archaeology. The other Bodrum holiday attraction is the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, the crumbling remains of one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

As Turkey's leading seaside holiday destination, Bodrum is packed with foreign visitors in summer. Yet it remains unspoilt and retains its charming Turkish character, perfecting the balance between authenticity and tourist comforts. Here, exotic bazaars, the wailing cry of the muezzin, and ancient history seamlessly blend with popular water sports, sunbathing, and a nightlife that is notorious throughout Turkey.

Nightlife in Bodrum

The nightlife on a Bodrum holiday is frenetic and varied, offering not only western-style decadent clubs but also the chance to sample local parties. Travellers can visit one of the meyhanes where the crowd joins in with the local artists, singing, dancing, eating, and drinking. There are several of these local nightclubs on the road to Konacik and Ortakent.

Most of the bars in Bodrum's mile long Bar Street offer belly dancing shows, live music, and outdoor seating (often on the beach) with a view of the illuminated castle. For clubbers, the main place to be is Halikarnas, one of the biggest and swankiest open-air clubs in the world, where the entrance charge may be high. There are plenty of other clubs, even one on a catamaran that sets sail late at night and takes the party out to sea until the dawn.

Shopping in Bodrum

Like everywhere in Turkey, shopping on a Bodrum holiday is quite an adventure. Dozens of shops line the busy narrow streets from the bus station down to the marina. Touts and vendors offer a variety of local goods, from carpets, leatherware, and kilims to fake designer clothing, and gold and silver jewellery.

Look out for Turkish meerscewbaum pipes and onyx. There is an extensive colourful craft market in operation on Tuesdays, and a fruit and vegetable market on Fridays. Bargaining is expected and it is customary to haggle down to about half the asking price. In Bodrum, some shops stay open late at night, some even all night.

Things to do in Bodrum

The blue Aegean waters that wash the beaches of the peninsula on which Bodrum is perched lend themselves admirably to a vast range of watersports, from scuba diving to windsurfing and jet skiing. Local operators can be found all over the area renting out equipment, arranging excursions, or offering lessons. Aquatic thrills are also on offer at the town's two waterparks.

Those who grow tired of the sand and sea can go hiking, with local walking clubs offering programmes but generally not in the height of the summer season when it is too hot. There are numerous ways to get out of town and explore the enchanting villages, bays, and historic sites. The Castle of St Peter, Bodrum Amphitheatre, and windmills are all popular attractions.

Travellers can either hire a car, motorbike, or bicycle; take a boat or hydrofoil trip; book an organised excursion; a jeep safari; or simply hop on a dolmus (minibus). An absolute must is a trip to a hammam (Turkish bath), complete with massage. The Bodrum Museum of Underwater Archaeology has won many awards for its fascinating displays, including the famous Uluburun Shipwreck.

Things to be aware of in Bodrum

Bodrum beaches are shingled and can become very crowded during the height of the summer holiday season. The city's narrow streets become clogged with tourists, day and night, during peak periods. Women have complained of sexual harassment.

Dining in Bodrum

Warm, sultry evenings in Bodrum are best spent dining on fresh seafood or local specialities in one of the

numerous restaurants. There are plenty of familiar cuisines, such as Italian, Thai, Chinese, Mexican, and European.

Renowned as the top place in town for typical Turkish is Denizhan, a little out of town between Konacik and Ortakent, and easily reached in a dolmus or taxi. For excellent Aegean dishes, especially lamb, Epsilon in the old town is hard to beat. The best pizza in Bodrum is served up with a view on the rooftop terrace of Sunger Pizza, while a good blend of Mediterranean and Californian cuisine can be enjoyed at La Jolla Bistro at Xuma Beach.

Also very popular is the Secret Garden, near the Marina, where cooks prepare gourmet Mediterranean fare with flair. The Backpacker Bar & Grill caters to the expat crowd with traditional English food.

Fethiye

Mediterranean Coast

The small port town and holiday retreat of Fethiye occupies the site of the ancient city Telmessos, and has an impressive ancient theatre and numerous Lycian rock tombs. Situated at the head of a pretty island-strewn bay, Fethiye is a popular holiday destination on the stretch of the Mediterranean known as the Turquoise Coast.

The town absorbs the tourist traffic and still retains a sense of its old-fashioned rural character, with herds of goats and sheep blocking the roads on market days and the smell of herbs and spices in the air. Around Fethiye are numerous unspoiled rocky coves and beaches, crystalline seas, offshore islands, cliffs, and pine-covered mountains affording as much holiday relaxation or activity as one chooses.

Nightlife in Fethiye

Much of the nightlife in Fethiye is hosted by resorts and hotels. The Paspasir old town has a number of bars and clubs ranging from traditional Turkish music to live cabaret and discos, while the Belcegiz Beach promenade has a few loud clubs. There are also two cinemas in town.

Shopping in Fethiye

The Tuesday bazaar is the biggest in the area and is a must for bargain hunters. In the town centre there are craft shops making everything from carpets and kilims to lace and leather goods. The gold shopping presents opportunities for good deals. Visitors should be prepared to haggle, but be wary of touts who try to sell them antiques, which are illegal to export.

Things to do in Fethiye

Fethiye is home to several remarkable ancient sites. The most conspicuous are the Lycia rock tombs, which date from the 4th century BC and are carved in the hillside above the town. The Fethiye Museum is also highly regarded for its collections of ancient artefacts.

Beside the Fethiye Harbour is the Roman amphitheatre and the crumbling remains of a medieval castle built by the Knights of St John. Gulets (sturdy wooden yachts) can be hired in Fethiye's harbour for day trips around these coastal waters.

The beach resort of Oludeniz is just 25 minutes away by dolmus (local minibuses) and offers numerous activities, including parasailing, pedal boats, banana boating, diving, snorkelling, water-skiing, and most famously paragliding. Butterfly Valley and Kabak are nearby canyons that both feature good hiking and waterfalls.

Things to be aware of in Fethiye

A lack of signs in the city makes it difficult to find points of interest.

Dining in Fethiye

There is a good selection of restaurants on the harbour front and in the narrow streets of the old town, and there is an emphasis on local cuisine, though visitors will find plenty of English-style eateries as well. Cafe Genis is a great spot for people-watching. There are several good wine houses that offer a selection of local varietals.

Antalya

Mediterranean Coast

Antalya is the main city on the Mediterranean coast and one of the most popular holiday spots, with an attractive harbour setting and the picturesque old quarter of Kaleici enclosed within ancient Roman walls. Dominating the town is Antalya's symbol, the Yivli Minaret (Grooved Minaret) dating back to the 3rd century. The superb Archaeological Museum, housing one of the top collections in the country, is not to be missed.

Known as the Turkish Riviera, a holiday on the Antalya shoreline offers secluded coves, ancient cities and harbours, seaside towns, sparkling seas, and soaring cliffs. The city provides an excellent base for exploring the small towns nearby, as well as caves, waterfalls, and Roman ruins, including Perge and the mountain-top remains of Termessos.

A 30-minute drive east of Antalya is Aspendos, which boasts the finest example of a Roman theatre in the world. Built in the 2nd century AD, it is remarkably intact. In addition to the vast number of archaeological wonders, the area also has a wealth of outdoor activities. Antalya, lying at the foot of the Taurus Mountain range, is host to numerous sporting events throughout the year, including international beach volleyball, triathlons, and canoeing competitions.

Nightlife in Antalya

Antalya pulses after dark with what is undeniably the Turkish east coast's liveliest nightlife, centred on a wide variety of clubs and bars. Most bars double as discos, and most of the hotels offer floor shows, usually with belly-dancing, that are open to non-guests. Club 29 in Kaleici is among the hottest spots for all-night dancing, but those who just want a quiet, cool drink gravitate to the waterfront bars to catch a sea breeze, or relax at one of the city's nargile (water pipe) bars.

Shopping in Antalya

Shopping in Antalya can be an exhausting but exhilarating experience, with everything up for grabs from the famous local jams and jellies, made from a variety of fruits and vegetables, to antique jewellery, kilims, prayer rugs, leather ware, cotton clothing, traditional pottery, and wood carvings. Hagglng is expected and bargains can be had. The best shopping is in the Kaleici district near the city walls, along winding side streets in the old quarter and along the avenues of Ataturk, Cumhuriyet, and Isiklar. Shopping is not only entertaining in Antalya but offers plenty of picturesque photo opportunities too. There are also several large modern shopping malls around the old town, one of the largest and most popular being Migros. Visitors should be wary of those who try to sell them antiques, as it is illegal to export such items.

Things to do in Antalya

Antalya's lovely main beach, Konyaalti, is made for relaxing and fun in the sun while on holiday, and a wide spectrum of watersports are on offer. Both up and down the coast there are other beautiful beaches to explore. Local operators offer all sorts of sports activities, from mountain biking to bungee jumping. The area is full of possibilities for excursions, from magnificent waterfalls and mysterious caves to a plethora of archaeological sites. The city has some interesting museums and the narrow, high-walled streets of the old quarter are pleasant to wander through. Nature lovers will enjoy the Karaoglanoglu Park, and there are Mediterranean boat cruises offered from the harbour.

Things to be aware of in Antalya

As in most Turkish holiday resort towns, touts for Antalya's shops, stalls, restaurants, and bars can be bothersome.

Dining in Antalya

Although most tourists will head for one of the numerous restaurants in the Kaleici (old town) when on holiday in Antalya, the more adventurous gourmets would be better advised (for quality as well as price) to steer off the beaten track and try one of the restaurants favoured by locals. Although, the Kaleici restaurants are certainly atmospheric, with some even built into the ancient Roman walls. A good bet for Turkish food in Antalya, offering a delightful courtyard planted with lemon trees, is Restaurant Kirk Merdiven. Other recommendations are the Coco Bar, renowned for the tastiest lamb shish kebabs; Kismet Balikcisi, the local's choice for top seafood dishes; and the Develi Restaurant, where travellers may be forgiven for thinking the starter is the main meal as they wade through copious delicious Turkish specialities.

Calis

Mediterranean Coast

The holiday retreat of Calis (pronounced Chalish) in Turkey is renowned for its spectacular sunsets and its laidback atmosphere. Situated in the southwest of the country on the beautiful Mediterranean coast, Calis has a selection of hotels, bars, and restaurants that line the extensive beachfront road which designated a car-free strip.

The Calis beach is long and narrow, with a mix of sand and shingle, and, as in Dalyan, a population of loggerhead turtles gathers here to lay eggs at certain times of year. Calis is also a *dolmus* (minibus) or water-taxi ride away from neighbouring Fethiye for those seeking bigger crowds. The best way to enjoy a Calis holiday, however, is to grab a seat at a beachfront cafe with cameras at the ready, and enjoy a cocktail as the sun dips below the horizon.

Nightlife in Calis

The nightlife in Calis is very laidback with a few late-night bars which host events such as foam parties, karaoke and salsa nights, but for a wild party tourists can head to nearby Fethiye. Like most resorts, the most popular clubs are located along the beachfront.

Shopping in Calis

A little way out of town is a lovely market that takes place on Sundays, with the usual selection of very well priced fake designer items, as well as spices, teas and foods. There is also a small selection of shops selling beachwear, sporting equipment, and local handicrafts.

Things to do in Calis

The beach in Calis is ideal for sunbathing and swimming, and there are more active pursuits available, including scuba diving, windsurfing, and waterskiing. There are a number of activities to enjoy in Calis, including boat trips to nearby islands, jeep safaris, canoeing, horse riding, fishing, quad biking, and micro lighting.

The Sultans Aqua City waterpark, a stone's throw from the beach, provides a wealth of entertainment for families on holiday, and other watersports are also available during the day. A short distance from Calis, travellers will find the limestone hotspots of Pamukkale, the mud baths of Dalyan, the gorge in Saklikent, the deserted village of Kavakov, and the archaeological and ethnological Fethiye Museum.

Things to be aware of in Calis

Calis is quiet, and not suited to those looking for a lively nightlife. It's best suited to families and older couples.

Dining in Calis

Calis has a variety of restaurants, with an emphasis on Chinese, English, and local Turkish cuisine. The Sultan Bakery is known for its great baklava, or travellers can visit the fish market in Fethiye and choose their own fresh seafood.

Turunc

Mediterranean Coast

The little resort town of Turunc was once a sleepy fishing village, but has grown into a popular holiday resort over the years. The town is sheltered by forest-covered mountains, situated on a small, rounded bay and is near to the larger resorts of Marmaris and Icmeler. Turunc has managed to retain its charm and offers a more low-key resort experience to holiday makers than many of the other Turkish resorts. As the town grows, more amenities are sure to follow, but for now, Turunc offers a relaxing holiday and a chance to get away from it all.

Nightlife in Turunc

There are a few lively bars and clubs in Turunc, but nothing stays open very late and the town is not well-suited to anyone looking for a party.

Shopping in Turunc

Turunc also has a large range of shops, offering the usual fake designer goods, leather items, souvenirs, and jewellery, as well as a chance for holiday makers to improve their bargaining skills at the market on Mondays. The atmosphere is more laidback than some towns, but haggling is still a must if travellers want a good deal. Popular souvenirs include honey, Turkish delights, and 'evil eye' charms.

Things to do in Turunc

The beach is pleasant, with safe swimming in crystal clear water from April to October, and there are several watersports such as parasailing, pedal boating and jet skiing on offer. For those looking to step off the beach for a day trip or overnight stay, there are several interesting excursions such as trips to the historic sites of Ephesus and Aphrodisias, visits to traditional Turkish baths, boat rides or microlight flights in the Dalyan Delta and jeep safaris in the mountains. There is also a regular dolmus (minibus) service to Marmaris for those looking for more action, and a nice alternative to the bumpy mountain road is to get there by water.

Things to be aware of in Turunc

The resort doesn't have much in the way of a nightlife.

Dining in Turunc

Most restaurants in Turunc offer both Turkish and English food. Fish and lamb are local specialties, and sweet and savoury pancakes in the tea gardens are pleasant. Bondjuk is popular for its lamb kleftikos and live jazz music, and Sahin is a well-known steakhouse.

Kas

Mediterranean Coast

Delightfully situated among towering vertical cliffs, Kas is the region's second major holiday resort. Although lacking in idyllic stretches of beach, the dramatic rocky coastline creates easy access to clear and unpolluted Mediterranean waters. Kas also boasts an abundance of outdoor activities and a lively nightlife, ensuring its reputation as a satisfying holiday destination.

It is the centre for glass-bottomed boat trips to the sunken cities around Kekova Island, where remains of mysterious civilisations can be viewed just below the surface of the water. Visits can also be arranged to the surrounding archaeological sites at Demre, Myra, and the Xanthos Valley. The town is built around the remains of ancient Antiphellos, and there are ruins of a Hellenistic theatre, the monumental Lion Tomb, and some hillside rock tombs in and around the town.

Despite attracting thousands of holidaymakers every year and the tourist development of what was once a simple fishing village, Kas still preserves its small-town charm with narrow cobbled streets and novel boutique shops.

Nightlife in Kas

When the sun sets on the fishing town of Kas, the streets come to life with bars and cafes emitting warm glows of light, laughter, and local music. The romantic feel to the town makes it a popular choice for couples, meaning there are not as many trendy dance clubs as other Turkish resorts and young singles should head elsewhere if looking for a lively night out.

Shopping in Kas

With plenty of good shopping available, travellers will have to sift through the dozens of carpet shops, souvenir stalls, and counterfeit sportswear to find the true gems. The best places to shop in Kas are the little boutiques that sell tools, hand-carved artefacts, local silver and gold jewellery, and plenty of Turkish kilims (handwoven rugs).

Things to do in Kas

With all the picturesque hillsides and breathtaking views over the Turquoise Sea, it's no wonder paragliding is such a popular activity in Kas. Other activities include scuba diving, sea kayaking, banana boat rides, snorkelling, swimming, and parasailing. Jeep safaris are also a popular activity for more adventurous travellers. A walk up to the castle provides a fantastic view of the Aegean, while there are a number of interesting villages and ruins in the surrounding area.

Things to be aware of in Kas

The two main beaches in Kas, Buyuk Cakil (Big Pebble Beach) and Kucuk Cakil (Little Pebble Beach) are both shingled, so many visitors tend to visit the nearby beach of Patara.

Dining in Kas

Kas is home to a growing number of cafes, restaurants, and patisseries. Visitors will be spoilt for choice when it comes to dining out. Boasting all kinds of cuisine from around the Mediterranean, including fresh local seafood to meze (similar to Spanish tapas). Eating out in Kas is a culinary experience to remember and one that will linger on visitors' taste buds for hours afterwards.

Kusadasi

Aegean Coast

Once a small fishing village, Kusadasi is now one of the most popular holiday resort towns on the southern Aegean Coast. It is situated amid splendid coastal scenery and several significant archaeological sites, including the ruins of the ancient city Ephesus, which are just half an hour from the town. The beaches are the main pull during the day, and after dark the town comes to life, with vibrant bars and clubs setting an upbeat pace. If travellers are in search of old Turkey, they've got cobbled streets, mosques, old-school tavernas and bustling bazaars. Kusadasi is a popular stop on Mediterranean cruises from Venice, Piraeus, or the Greek island of Samos. Ferries link the town with the nearby Greek islands of Samos and Mykonos.

Nightlife in Kusadasi

Nights in Kusadasi throb with action, particularly along the town's pulsating Bar Street in the old town centre, lined with pubs and clubs. One of the hottest spots is the huge open air club, Ecstasy Bar, featuring top European DJs. Jimmy's Irish Bar at the start of Bar Street is a favourite gathering place for young British holidaymakers. Those looking for something more sedate will find cabaret bars, Turkish folk taverns, or cosy jazz clubs tucked away.

Shopping in Kusadasi

The Grand Bazaar in Kusadasi, near the harbour, is one of Turkey's largest shopping treasure troves for holidaymakers to rummage through, crammed with 1,000 or more stores and stalls open seven days a week from 9am until midnight. Bargaining for a variety of attractive items, such as leather jackets, sandals, carpets, and hand-made jewellery, is a fun experience, usually accompanied by a glass of tea. Despite the traditional trading atmosphere, most merchants accept credit cards, travellers cheques, and even some foreign currency for purchases. Visitors should be prepared to bargain their way to a good price, however.

Things to do in Kusadasi

Kusadasi's clean, sandy beaches are the main attraction for holidaymakers, whether simply for sunbathing and swimming, or for indulging in a myriad of watersports that are on offer through local operators at the numerous beach clubs. Ladies Beach has a long stretch of golden sand that's backed by a bustling promenade lined with restaurants and cafes. Long Beach and Kustar Beach are further from the centre of Kusadasi and are a little quieter.

The turquoise Aegean waters are particularly popular for scuba diving and snorkelling. A variety of boat trips are also available, as well as Kusadasi's three thrilling aqua parks: Aquafantasy, Adaland and Longbeach Aquaresort.

Away from the water, active holidaymakers can indulge in a horseback trip, or head off on a jeep safari to get down and dirty on muddy nature trails in nearby Dilek Peninsula National Park. The surrounding region of Anatolia is crammed with interesting historical and archaeological sites and dozens of excursions are available for visitors to explore these, most famously the ruins of the ancient city of Ephesus.

Things to be aware of in Kusadasi

Kusadasi's beaches become extremely crowded during the height of the summer season. Touts outside restaurants and bars can be annoying.

Dining in Kusadasi

All holidaymakers' budgets and tastes are amply catered for among Kusadasi's dozens of restaurants, cafes, and lokantas (local bars). Most visitors opt for sampling Turkish cuisine or enjoying the sumptuous seafood on offer, but there are numerous alternatives, which range from curry and Chinese to burgers. For top-class Turkish specialities, the Konyali Restaurant, opposite the marina, and the Erzincan, near the post office, are hard to beat, while the Avlu Restaurant and Cafe is also decent and well-priced. Kalyon is popular with expats for their western menu, which includes full English breakfasts.

Marmaris

Mediterranean Coast

One of the larger holiday resorts, Marmaris is probably the most European of the Turkish resort towns on the Mediterranean coast and is a bustling cosmopolitan tourist centre in the summer months. Marmaris also marks the start of the Turquoise Coast along the Mediterranean Sea. Built around an extensive natural bay at the foot of forested mountain slopes, the town is the best base for some of the finest sailing in the Mediterranean. Its modern marina caters for private yachts and holiday cruise business. According to legend, the town got its name when, not finding the castle he had commissioned on the hill to his liking, Suleyman the Magnificent muttered '*mimari as*' ('hang the architect').

Nightlife in Marmaris

Marmaris' wild nights are centred on Bar Street around the waterfront, packed with nearly one hundred nightclubs and bars that rock until about 4am, attracting hundreds of holidaymakers. Although the atmosphere is fun, travellers should be aware that the price of drinks in Bar Street is significantly higher than other parts of town. Many restaurants stay open all night to cater for early morning revellers.

Shopping in Marmaris

To enjoy shopping in Marmaris, holiday visitors need to be clued up and prepared. Vendors can be annoying, particularly in the bazaars, while there are a large number of fake designer goods on sale and many counterfeit products are of surprisingly good quality. Prices are low and haggling is expected, except in the larger stores. It's possible to knock about 30 percent off the asking price. Bearing all this in mind, Marmaris can be a shopper's delight, particularly for items such as leather, ceramics, jewellery, and carpets. Best value goods are to be found in the Carsi Market in the Ottoman Castle, where 200-odd shops and a flea market are open seven days a week. The Thursday Market is a colourful experience where locals sell fruit, vegetables, fabric, and clothing. Netsel Marina is a good place to find original designer clothing. 'Cam Bali' is a locally produced pine-scented honey and is a popular souvenir. Duty free goods are also on offer.

Things to do in Marmaris

Holidaymakers who prefer to spend their beach time being active will be spoilt for choice at Marmaris, where dozens of watersports operators service the sea front, offering everything from banana boat rides and paragliding to jet-skiing and scuba diving, all at very reasonable prices (which can usually be bargained down even more). The local Atlantis waterpark is a must for families. Those who want to sightsee or explore can choose from a variety of excursions, including guided horse safaris through the countryside or jeep safaris to visit nearby country villages, with visits to verdant untouched forests where crystal waterfalls beckon one to have a dip. The ancient site of Ephesus and the spring waters of Pamukkale are also popular outings, as are a variety of boat trips, including the excursion to the nearby Greek island of Rhodes.

Things to be aware of in Marmaris

Touts for everything from restaurants to excursions and souvenir stalls can be annoying in Marmaris. Many have also reported on various tourist rip-offs, and visitors should be alert. The summer months can be incredibly crowded, swelling the town population from around 28,000 to nearly 250,000.

Dining in Marmaris

Whether travellers want to go international, or try local fare at a lokanta (Turkish restaurant), Marmaris' hundreds of dining establishments will have something to suit any holidaymakers' appetite and any pocket. Travellers will find fish 'n chips, good Chinese, satisfying German, or the ubiquitous Italian. Visitors should not balk at sampling Turkish cuisine, particularly, popular doner kebabs and seafood meze platters.

Oludeniz

Mediterranean Coast

Oludeniz is situated just a few minutes from Fethiye and has a crystal-clear lagoon and a beautiful beach that adorns almost every Turkish travel brochure. Despite being developed with many hotels and apartment blocks, the scenery in Oludeniz is spectacular and the town is a lively place to spend a holiday. Perched on the mountain plateau overlooking Oludeniz, the resort town of Hisaronu is packed with bars, nightclubs, shops, and restaurants. With their rugged surrounds, both Oludeniz and Hisaronu are fast becoming realised for their potential as outdoor activity destinations. For example, the beach at Oludeniz offers a huge variety of watersports, such as paragliding from Babadag Mountain onto the beach below, and a selection of boat trips depart regularly from Oludeniz or Fethiye for a day exploring the scenic coastline. The numerous paths that wind their way along the hillsides offer spectacular views and sights, including the fascinating Greek Village, which was evacuated during the Greco-Turkish War.

Nightlife in Oludeniz

Nightlife in Oludeniz is more low-key than in the nearby holiday resorts, concentrated more on chilling out in beachside bars than frenetic clubbing. Those looking to party the night away can take a short trip to Hisaronu, or a little further to Fethiye, and find plenty of action. Among the most popular seafront bars are Buzz Beach Bar, the Sugar Shack, and Crusoe's. Most of the local resort establishments offer live evening entertainment for guests as well.

Shopping in Oludeniz

Oludeniz has several souvenir shops sprinkled along the Belcekiz beach seafront, and many of the resort hotels and holiday apartment complexes boast their own gift stores. For honest to goodness shopping, however, travellers should catch a dolmus into nearby Hisaronu or Fethiye, where it is possible to haggle for bargains. Good buys are leather goods, carpets, jewellery, as well as knock-off designer sunglasses and watches.

Things to do in Oludeniz

Oludeniz, with its stunning blue lagoon, is renowned as the most beautiful beach in Turkey, and therefore the water is the main attraction for holidaymakers and particularly paragliders, who come from all over the world to glide over the turquoise waters from atop the Babadag Mountain. Most visitors try out the sport with reliable local operators. Diving and snorkelling are other popular activities. If watersports and sunbathing are not enough, there are dozens of possibilities for excursions in the surrounding area, including a 12-island boat trip, visits to various interesting Greek and Roman archaeological sites, the famous 'Butterfly Valley', or the ghost town of Kayakoyu. Another essential experience is to enjoy a Turkish bath, available in many of the resort hotels.

Things to be aware of in Oludeniz

Many visitors have complained about overzealous touts becoming a nuisance, and prices in the resort town have risen in recent years, making it rather expensive by Turkish standards. The weather tends to be extremely hot and humid in the height of summer and mosquitoes can be a nuisance.

Dining in Oludeniz

No-one need go dissatisfied in Oludeniz, no matter what their taste in food, and if they do manage to exhaust the holiday resort's possibilities, there is always Hisaronu just a few kilometres inland with a vast array of restaurants. Some recommendations are Blue Star Pide and Sultan Ahmet, both offer good Turkish cuisine; and the Belcekiz Beach Club A la Carte for an exclusive Mediterranean night out.

Hisaronu

Mediterranean Coast

The charming hill town of Hisaronu, a short distance inland from Turkey's Mediterranean coast, has boomed into a popular holiday resort. Bristling with hotels, bars, restaurants, shops, and tour operators, it is ideally situated for those intent on exploring the region and enjoying an active holiday.

Hisaronu is centrally located on the Turquoise Coast, within a short *dolmus*(local taxi) ride from the busy centre of Fethiye, the beautiful seaside resort of Oludeniz with its blue lagoon and crescent beach, and numerous sites of interest.

The town of Hisaronu itself is a bit of a hodgepodge of buildings, but the surrounding area offers a ruggedly beautiful landscape covered in pine forest, ideal for holidaymakers keen on walking, and a coast filled with secluded bays and coves accessed through winding forest paths. Being set at high altitude the town also has the advantage of being cooler and less humid than the coast, a pleasant refuge to retreat to after a day in the summer sun.

Nightlife in Hisaronu

The nightlife of Hisaronu on the Turquoise Coast is legendary, its clubs and pubs rocking until the early hours during the summer season. Holidaymakers will find everything from Turkish-themed nights to British soccer, 60s discos, or full-on nightclubs. Most clubs are centred round the main street of town.

Shopping in Hisaronu

The main street of Hisaronu is well supplied with a variety of stores selling everything holidaymakers look for in Turkey, including fake designer wear, carpets, and leather goods. Hagglng is expected and part of the shopping experience, and there is a beachfront minimarket that offers a number of bargains.

Things to do in Hisaronu

There is no need to spend all day lying on the beautiful Oludeniz Beach or beside a hotel pool. Hisaronu is packed with opportunities to get out and about, with popular activities including paragliding from Babadag Mountain to land on the beach, canoeing down the Xanthos River to Patara, pitching paintballs in the pine forests, and visiting the bazaar in nearby Fethiye. Visitors can take a glass-bottom boat trip to the Greek island of Rhodes or an excursion to the ghost town of Kayakoy, and watersports such as scuba diving and waterskiing are also on offer.

Things to be aware of in Hisaronu

During the summer months the beaches can be a little crowded so it's best to secure a spot early.

Dining in Hisaronu

Hisaronu has a veritable smorgasbord of restaurants to cater for the tastes of international tourists, including traditional English, sizzling pizzas, and spicy Mexican. Most are along the main street, including favourites such as the Shine Indian Restaurant and the Dragonara Chinese Restaurant. For traditional Turkish delights the Olive Tree is hard to beat, while Malibu offers a mixture of English and Turkish cuisine. Travellers shouldn't overlook the street vendors and their delicious kebabs.

Side

Mediterranean Coast

Situated on a peninsula and flanked by two stretches of golden beach, the pretty holiday resort town of Side is a jumble of old and new, with an extensive range of tourist accommodation, shops, late-night bars, and restaurants mixed in among the ruins of the ancient city. In the centre of town is the magnificent 2nd-century theatre with beautiful views towards the sea, and the remains of the Roman Baths contain an impressive collection of artefacts.

Nightlife in Side

Most of Side's nightlife is concentrated along the beachfront. There are a few lively bars and clubs, but they don't stay open very late.

Shopping in Side

The shopkeepers in Side have a reputation for pestering tourists, especially in the city centre. Many shops will not display prices so be prepared to haggle. Busy streets that lead down to the sea are lined with souvenir shops selling typical Turkish handicrafts such as carpets, jewellery, and leather goods. Visitors can take a bus to the Manavgat market on Thursdays, which has the usual souvenir options such as t-shirts and leather goods. The main markets are fun and have a lively atmosphere, but the best deals can usually be found in quieter areas.

Things to do in Side

Side is full of antique ruins, but the Aspendos theatre and Apollon Temple are the most popular. The harbour is full of interesting boat tours and activities, including trips around Side or to neighbouring towns. The turtles can be visited on a daily tour, and the white sand beaches provide activities such as scuba diving, parasailing, horse riding, and swimming. Nearby Manavgat has some beautiful natural sights, including a lovely waterfall.

Things to be aware of in Side

Side can be very crowded on weekends, when many local tourists visit.

Dining in Side

Side has a variety of restaurants, ranging from Western style food to local delicacies such as dolmades and kebabs. Anatolia Cafe is a popular place for English breakfasts and roasts.

Icmeler

Mediterranean Coast

Set on the southeast coast of Turkey where the Aegean Sea meets the Mediterranean, the purpose-built beach resort of Icmeler has a distinctly European flavour. Luxury yachts bob in the bay while a cosmopolitan crowd of holidaymakers sipping cocktails at the seafront bars.

Icmeler's package holiday aura is tempered by its scenic setting, with steep hills clad in pine forests plunging into the turquoise waters all around the town. Unlike its close neighbour of Marmaris just a few miles south, Icmeler has a relaxed village atmosphere, while lacking none of the modern amenities.

The resort is scrupulously clean and well maintained, from its regularly raked shingly sand beaches to its litter-free promenade. The town is also resplendent with well-kept gardens, which soften the lines of the dozens of hotel and apartment blocks.

Nightlife in Icmeler

Icmeler is not a clubbing holiday resort but there are plenty of pubs, which keep hopping with a lively atmosphere until the wee hours. The nightlife may be low key, but those who want something more frenetic have only to grab a dolmus and ride a short distance to Marmaris, where the pace is hotter; some of the bars have discos, karaoke, and live shows. Like many resorts, the more popular bars are clustered by the beachfront.

Shopping in Icmeler

Icmeler does have a central shopping mall, which is adequate for acquiring essentials and holidaymakers can have a pleasant browse for souvenirs. For more local flavour, there is a market on Wednesdays where bargain hunters and hagglers can test their skills. Serious shoppers, though, would be better advised to take a short dolmus ride into nearby Marmaris where it is possible to shop for hours, especially in the fascinating covered bazaar of the old town.

Things to do in Icmeler

Having a magnificent beach, Icmeler is primarily a sun, sea, and sand holiday destination, with a wide variety of watersports on offer at the resort hotels and along the sea front, including sailing, scuba diving, and waterskiing.

Those who feel inclined to make excursions will find plenty to be of interest. Favourites are boat trips to Cleopatra's Isle, the waterfalls of Pamukkale with their therapeutic spring waters, and the archaeological site of Ephesus.

Things to be aware of in Icmeler

The beach in Icmeler is shingle and travellers should be aware of this before booking their holiday.

Dining in Icmeler

Icmeler is well-supplied with restaurants of all sorts, but most holidaymakers particularly enjoy local specialities such as guvec, a clay-pot casserole, or tasty kebabs, washed down with some Turkish wine or raki, the traditional aniseed spirit. A good choice for Turkish cuisine is the Turkish House in Turunc Road, where the food is served up to the tune of traditional music. For good steaks a favourite is the Love Boat at the Devamli Hotel. For variety the menu at the Majestic Restaurant is a mix of Chinese, Indian, and Italian.

Altinkum

Aegean Coast

Like Bodrum and Kusadasi, its neighbours on Turkey's south Aegean Coast, Altinkum is heavily frequented by British holiday package tourists. But unlike these other frenetic resorts, Altinkum is small and quiet, making it perfect for families with young children and those seeking a relaxed, easy-going beach holiday.

The resort town's main attraction are its three long sandy beaches that stretch from the small harbour at one end of a gently shelving bay to a rocky cliff at the other end. Little wonder that the name Altinkum means 'golden sands'.

In this resort devoted to leisure and lazy days on the beach, visitors can also indulge in water sports. Alternatively, evenings are spent trying out the laidback restaurants and bars, many of them serving British fair. Those yearning for sightseeing will find Altinkum perfectly placed to visit two major ancient sites, the Temple of Apollo at Didyama and the vast Roman ruins at Ephesus.

Nightlife in Altinkum

While it is not as rowdy as the major Turkish holiday resorts, those who wish to indulge will find plenty of after-dark entertainment and fun in Altinkum, where nightlife is centred mainly in Dolphin Square and in the bars along the sea front promenade. Everything from disco dancing, karaoke, and belly-dancing to bingo and pool is on offer, the entertainment fuelled by cheap drinks and cocktails. Clubbers are catered for during the height of the summer season at Medusa, an open-air night club that is regarded as Altinkum's best party. Another hot favourite for young people is the Dolphin Bar.

Shopping in Altinkum

Holidaymakers should brush up on their haggling skills as shopping opportunities abound along the pedestrianised seafront of Altinkum, which is packed with souvenir shops, jewellery stores, and boutiques selling copies of designer clothing.

The main centre is Dolphin Square, and there is a modern shopping complex called the Didyma Shopping Mall not far away. Self-caterers will find all the provisions they need at the two main supermarkets, Gima and Migros, between the seafront and town centre.

Things to do in Altinkum

There are sunbeds and umbrellas aplenty for holidaymakers to rent on Altinkum's lovely beaches, where the turquoise waters lap the coast gently and allow for safe bathing. Those who are more energetic can try their hand at windsurfing, jet-skiing, pedal boats, a banana boat ride, or perhaps a scuba diving lesson.

A variety of tours, boat trips and excursions to surrounding resorts, islands, towns, and historic sites are available. Alternatively, visitors can hop on a dolmus (mini-bus) and explore on their own places such as the Roman ruins at Ephesus, the Pamukkale spas and calcium deposits, or the lively resorts of Kusadasi and Bodrum. For a peaceful yet active afternoon, visitors can take a stroll around the scenic Bafa Lake.

Things to be aware of in Altinkum

During the local Turkish summer break in August, Altinkum is a favourite destination and can become rather overcrowded. Visitors should also be aware that temperatures can be extremely high in summer.

Dining in Altinkum

Altinkum is bursting with good restaurants serving most forms of international cuisine, although Turkish and traditional English predominates to cater to the demand of holidaymakers. With such a feast of eateries it is difficult to single out any particular establishment, but for the best of British it is hard to beat Ali Baba's for friendliness, price, and quality. Barney's Restaurant prides itself in introducing visitors to the delights of Turkish cuisine.

Izmir

Aegean Coast

Turkey's third largest city, Izmir is a busy port, commercial centre, and gateway to the Aegean Coast. Despite its size and importance, it still retains enough holiday atmosphere to cause visitors to stay amongst the population of around three million.

Lively and cosmopolitan, Izmir is also scenic thanks to its palm-lined promenades lining the bay, backed by graceful avenues with attractive horizontal terraces rising up the slopes of the surrounding mountains.

Visitors come to see the sights, haggle in the colourful bazaar, and dine on delicious meals at the many waterfront restaurants. Formerly known as Smyrna, Izmir is ancient and dates back to around 3,000 BC. But today it is thoroughly modern having been almost obliterated by a fire in 1922 and subsequently rebuilt.

There is some worthy sightseeing to be done in the city, such as the 19th century clock tower, the 18th century Konak Cami Mosque, and an archaeology museum. A must-see is the city's landmark public elevator, linking Mithatpasa Street with the summit of the hill at Halil Rifat Pasa, from where there is a stunning view across the city and the bay. The best way to enjoy Izmir is a balmy evening stroll or horse-drawn carriage trip along its promenade between Konak Meydan and Alsancak.

Nightlife in Izmir

Holidaymakers will find that the nightlife in Izmir can be as hectic or as sedate as they wish. Most of the after dark action for visitors is centred on the Kordon Boyu, Passport Pier, and Karsiyaka, where nightclubs and bars stay open until the early hours. 1448 Sokak in Alsancak has a number of clubs, and is a popular area for gay nightlife. More cultural entertainment is on offer too, such as performances of the Aegean Philharmonic Orchestra. The city is particularly lively during the annual International Arts Festival, which takes place between June and July.

Shopping in Izmir

Like any modern city and holiday destination, Izmir has its share of shopping centres, and here the best stores are to be found lining the Kordon Promenades in Alsancak, Karsiyaka, and Cumhuriyet Avenue. Visitors, however, would do better to head for the atmospheric old district with its narrow streets and hidden doorways.

There are bustling markets in Konak Square and Kemeraltı. There is a larger mall called the Forum in nearby Bornova. Shopping here is a fascinating experience, and travellers can buy anything from antiques and dried figs (for which Izmir is famous), to fine jewellery, hand-made shoes, and a variety of clothing.

Things to do in Izmir

Izmir boasts some interesting archaeological sites and museums, including the Izmir Museum of Archaeology, while the city's parks are perfect to relax in after a visit. Kulturpark, site of the annual International Fair, provides a good day out all year round with its amusement park, zoo, restaurant, and tranquil gardens.

Fuar has many restaurants, bars, and kebab stalls, and Kadifekale Castle is also a popular attraction. Visitors can walk along the waterfront promenade or wander the small streets of Alsancak. There are numerous opportunities for excursions out of the city.

Just a short dolmuş (minibus) ride away to the west is the beautiful Cesme Peninsula with its stretches of sandy beach, where visitors can enjoy watersports or take a boat trip along the coast. Various local operators offer day trips into the surrounding countryside, taking in a variety of interesting destinations from thermal baths and fishing villages to the famous Roman ruins of Ephesus.

Things to be aware of in Izmir

Visitors should be aware that temperatures can be extreme in the height of summer.

Dining in Izmir

The holiday destination of Izmir is renowned for its many seafood restaurants. However, all tastes are catered for in this city, which is well supplied with extremely affordable and good eateries, particularly along the Kordon Boyu Promenade. The local speciality is the delectable fish *Cipura*. It's so popular that it is farmed and served up in dozens of city restaurants. It is best enjoyed grilled, with a salad of fresh greens and herbs and sprinkled with olive oil. Reputedly Izmir's top seafood restaurant is the *Deniz*, while for traditional Turkish, spiced up with belly dancing, head to *Sini Sofrasi* or *Topcu'nun Yeri*, a down-to-earth sidewalk cafe.

Port of Call - Istanbul

Featuring a natural harbour of the Golden Horn, the port of Istanbul is a popular stop for most Eastern Mediterranean cruises and an exciting city for travellers to visit. Steeped in history, this city that spans across two continents would take a matter of years to explore, but cruise passengers can still discover some exciting sides of this mystical city. Sights to see include the Blue Mosque, Hagia Sophia, Topkapi Palace, Roman ruins at the Hippodrome, the Turkish and Islamic Art Museum, and the Prince's Islands with its many attractions. Cruise ships dock at the Yolcu Salonu in Karakoy, which is centrally located and only a short journey from town.

Shopping in Istanbul

The Grand Bazaar is a must for shop-a-holics and many a bargain can be found here in plenty of the 4,000 shops, while Beyolgu is to Istanbul what Fifth and Madison Avenues are to New York. The Egyptian market and the flea market in Beyazit Square are also worth a visit and Nuruosmaniye Caddesi is the place to buy jewellery.

Best Buy: Turkish rug.

Dining in Istanbul

360 Istanbul - trendy rooftop restaurant with amazing views and fusion food. Cezayir - traditional Turkish cuisine in a relaxed setting. Feriye Lokantasi - Waterfront eatery serving Turkish fare cooked in Ottoman tradition

Best Dish: Doner kebab.

Port of Call - Kusadasi

One of the biggest cruise ports in Turkey, Kusadasi is a popular stop on Mediterranean cruises from Venice, Piraeus, or the Greek island of Samos. The city is blessed with roughly 300 days of sunshine each year, making it an ideal port of call or holiday destination for sun-starved vacationers. Formerly a sleepy fishing village, Kusadasi owes its huge tourism industry to its proximity to archaeological sites like the ancient city of Ephesus, one of the best-preserved sites in the Eastern Mediterranean. Kusadasi itself is not without charm however, with attractions like Turkish baths, beaches, bustling markets, and waterfront cafes which serve mouth-watering meze platters. Cruise ships in Kusadasi dock at a terminal in the main harbour, walking distance from the city centre.

Shopping in Kusadasi

The main bazaar has a bustling atmosphere, but cruise passengers should be aware that prices are inflated just for them. Better bargains are to be had in less-busy areas. Bargaining is a necessity if you want a good deal, so starting from one third of the stated price is a good place to begin. Touts can be persistent, and will go to great lengths to entice you into their shops.

Best Buy: Silver jewellery and fragrant Turkish honey.

Dining in Kusadasi

Selam Restaurant - Good seafood and steaks for reasonable prices. Chez Maurice - Local Turkish cuisine served right on the beach. Saray Restaurant - Tourist-friendly restaurant with an eclectic menu.

Best Dish: Meze platters.

Overview of the Attractions in Turkey

Turkey is a varied destination with plenty to see and do for adventurous travellers. The largest city of Istanbul features some unique and world-class sights such as the Blue Mosque and Topkapi Palace, not to mention the shopping paradise of the Grand Bazaar, the largest and oldest covered market in the world.

Further afield travellers can find the ancient attractions of Ephesus, Troy, and Augustus' Temple. Turkey is a year-round destination although it's at its hottest during the peak summer months of July and August. Getting around the country is a simple matter of hopping on a short-haul flight or scheduled bus service while, in Istanbul, travellers can negotiate the services of a taxi driver.

Hagia Sophia (Aya Sofya)

Istanbul

The massive Hagia Sophia is one of Istanbul's most popular attractions, famous for its impressive size, remarkable architecture, and beautiful mosaics and frescoes. It was commissioned as a cathedral in the 6th century and remained the most important church in Christianity for over 900 years. In the 15th century Mehmet II conquered the city and converted it into a mosque, adding the minarets and fountains. It functioned as such for the next 481 years until the founding of the secular Turkish Republic in 1934, when it was declared a museum. Hagia Sophia is one of the greatest Byzantine buildings in the world, and the vast interior, with its huge, soaring dome, is extraordinary. The interior contains different features from its time as a cathedral and then as a mosque, including incredible Byzantine mosaics, icons, and marble columns, a mihrab (niche indicating the direction of Mecca), and Islamic calligraphy inscriptions on the dome from the Ottoman period.

Website: <http://www.muze.gen.tr/muze-detay/ayasofya>

Blue Mosque (Sultan Ahmet Camii)

Istanbul

Commonly known as the Blue Mosque, the Sultan Ahmet Camii is one of the most striking structures on the Istanbul skyline. Constructed as an Islamic rival to the Hagia Sophia in 1609, its tiers of magnificent domes and six graceful minarets are immediately distinguishable. It is one of the finest examples of Ottoman architecture and is still used by hundreds of worshippers. The interior is splendidly decorated with thousands of blue and white Iznik tiles embellished with traditional Ottoman flower patterns, and it is this special feature that gives the mosque its name. Its design of successively descending smaller domes, soaring columns, and 260 stained glass windows leaves a lasting impression of graceful accord and open space. At the back of the mosque is a Carpet and Kilim Museum exhibiting antiques from all over Turkey.

Website: <http://www.sultanahmetcamii.org>

Topkapi Palace Museum

Istanbul

Built by Mehmet the Conqueror as a sultan's palace, the Topkapi Sarayi consists of a collection of buildings arranged around several interconnecting courtyards. Situated on one of the seven hills of Istanbul with uninterrupted views over the Bosphorus River and the Golden Horn, it was the seat of the Ottoman Empire for almost four centuries. Home to nearly 3000 people, it served as a royal residence, harem, administration building, and military barracks. One of the most popular sections is the harem, once the quarters of about 300 women who were the sultans' wives and concubines, and their children. Visitors can view the apartments, halls, and terraces of the harem, and see the lavish royal bedchamber and imperial hall. No expense was spared in decorating the palace and its exquisitely designed rooms, intricately detailed fountains, and splendid treasury housing one of the greatest collections of treasure in the world. It affords insight into the opulent lifestyle of the sultans of the Ottoman Empire.

Website: <http://www.muze.gen.tr/muze-detay/topkapi>

Turkish and Islamic Art Museum

Istanbul

The grand 16th century palace of the sultan's Grand Vizier, Ibrahim Pasa, today houses the Turkish and Islamic Art Museum, containing what many consider to be the greatest collection of Islamic artefacts in the world. The palace itself was the finest private residence ever built in the Ottoman Empire. From its supreme position overlooking the Hippodrome, the sultan could enjoy excellent views of the celebrations in the square below. The museum is well laid out and contains more than 40,000 examples of Selcuk, Mamluk, and Ottoman Turkish art, including ceramics, Koran cases, calligraphy, textiles, metalwork, and illuminated manuscripts. Its antique carpet exhibit is renowned, with the carpets, kilims, and prayer rugs forming one of the richest and oldest collections in the world.

Website: <http://www.muze.gen.tr/muze-detay/tiem>

Grand Bazaar (Kapalicarsi)

Istanbul

The oldest and biggest enclosed bazaar in the world, Kapalicarsi is one of the most enticing and mesmerizing attractions in Istanbul. Also known as the Grand Bazaar, it consists of a vast labyrinth of twisting streets crammed with more than 4,000 shops, teahouses, Turkish baths, mosques, storehouses, and fountains. It's a fascinating experience to wander around the alleyways, looking at and bargaining for an array of goods and services. Here visitors can find almost anything, from meerschaum pipes, carpets, jewellery, and Turkish delight, to textiles, spices, clothing, and hand-painted ceramics. Protracted bargaining over a cup of tea is an important institution. Built during the rule of Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror in 1461, the bazaar grew by covering an increasingly large area of shops and streets with roofs, arches, and domes. Eventually it became the centre of trading during the Ottoman Empire. Caravans of silk traders traditionally stayed here and rested their camels while selling their merchandise, and many of these caravanserais still exist as storehouses today.

Website: <http://www.kapalicarsi.com.tr>

Ephesus

Aegean Coast

Ephesus is the biggest and best-preserved ancient city in Turkey and is one of the world's most spectacular historical sites. The city and its harbour were established on the mouth of the Cayster River and, in the 2nd century BC, became the most important port and commercial trading centre in Anatolia. Alexander the Great ruled over it during the Hellenistic period and it was once capital of Roman Asia under Augustus in 133 BC. Ephesus declined during the Byzantine Era and by 527 AD it was deserted. Ephesus is also important as the early seat of Christianity, visited by Saint Paul, whose letters to the Ephesians are recorded in the New Testament. Guides are available and can offer a rich insight into the history and architecture of the ruins. Chariot-worn streets contain amphitheatres, murals, and mosaics, as well as baths, fountains, and columns. Highlights include the enormous Library of Celsus, the Temple of Hadrian, and the Grand Theatre where Paul preached to the Ephesians. The city was originally dedicated to the goddess Artemis and her once-magnificent temple is considered one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

Pamukkale

Aegean Coast

Calcium-rich mineral springs have surged over the edges of this mountain plateau edges for thousands of years, resulting in an intriguing natural masterpiece. Meaning 'Cotton Castle', the rock formations of Pamukkale are a series of natural shelves, ridges, and terraces turned white from the solidified chalky calcium deposits of the thermal waters. From a distance it appears to be a dazzling white fairytale castle, with a formation of tiers rising from the ground containing warm water pools. The hot springs have been used since Roman times and are believed to cure certain ailments. Additionally, visitors should not miss the bubbling Sacred Pool of the Ancients, the main source of the springs that created the white terraces. Fortunately, its mineral waters are open for public bathing. Pamukkale is also the site of the ancient Roman spa-city of Hierapolis, and there are several ruins scattered about the area, including an impressive Roman theatre. It was considered a sacred site for its magic healing waters and was the holiday destination of kings and emperors of the Pergamum and Roman Empires.

Olympos and the Fires of the Chimaera

The ancient site of Olympos dates back to Hellenistic times when it was an important Lycian city, becoming famous as a place for worship honouring Hephaestus, the God of Fire. Located on a beautiful sandy bay, the ruins are spread out on either side of the Ulupinar River and include a Byzantine bathhouse with mosaic floors, a marble temple entrance, a theatre, and some excavated tombs. The shoreline is also a major protected nesting site for sea turtles. On the rocky slopes above the ancient city are a series of eternal flames issuing from cracks in the rock, caused by the combustion of natural gas seeping out of the mountain. It is possible to extinguish them briefly, but they will always reignite and are most impressive in the dark when at their most visible. The fire that comes out of the ground is said to be coming from the mouth of the Chimera, a mythical fire-breathing monster with the head of a lion, the body of a goat, and a snake's tail, who was slain by the Lydian hero, Bellerophon, on his winged horse Pegasus.

Goreme Open-Air Museum

Cappadocia

The Goreme Open-Air Museum is the most visited of the monastic communities in Cappadocia and is one of the most famous sites in central Turkey. It is a complex comprising more than 30 rock-hewn churches and chapels, which contain some superb frescoes, dating from the 9th to the 11th centuries. Inconspicuous from the outside, the interiors are characteristically Byzantine with a central dome and a floor plan in the shape of a cross. The three columned churches, the Elmali, Karanlik, and Carikli churches are the best known, and are superbly painted. The largest and best preserved is the Tokali Church, its interior walls covered in some of the richest frescoes in the region, depicting scenes from the New Testament.

Underground Cities of Cappadocia

Cappadocia

Cappadocia was overlooked by most as a dusty and barren landscape, making it a perfect refuge for the Christians who established the first communities here. They carved chambers, vaults, and labyrinthine tunnels into the soft volcanic rock for use as churches, stables, and homes. Of the 40 underground settlements, Derinkuyu and Kaymakli are the biggest and most interesting, inhabited by Christians fleeing persecution in the 7th century from Arab invasions. These cities were well-hidden complexes, a safe and self-sufficient environment that could accommodate up to 30,000 people. The most thoroughly excavated is Derinkuyu, consisting of eight floors with stables, a school room and dining hall, churches, kitchens, living quarters, wine cellars, store rooms, and a dungeon. Original airshafts still function and the maze of tunnels and rooms are well lit.

Ancient Troy

Aegean Coast

For about 3,000 years the legendary battle of Troy pervaded Western culture. The story, told by Homer in the Iliad, was regarded as just a myth, until the ruins of the city were found at Hisarlik, in western Turkey, in the mid-19th century. Today the romantic story draws tourists and archaeologists alike to the site, where not a great deal remains to be seen beyond the ancient walls and a replica of the famed Trojan horse that enabled the final conquering of the city by the ancient Greeks. The setting is also spectacular, offering views of the Dardanelles and the hills of Gallipoli.

Goreme

Cappadocia

The small town of Goreme is situated in the middle of the Valley of Fairy Chimneys, surrounded by the eerie shapes and fantastic rock formations that have made the region famous. It is one of the few remaining villages where fairy chimneys and rock-hewn houses are still inhabited, and several restaurants and cafes are carved into the rock. Its biggest attraction is the Goreme Open-Air Museum, which has over 30 beautifully frescoed Byzantine rock churches. The town makes an excellent base from which to explore the surrounding rock formations, villages, and vineyards. For shoppers, carpets and kilims are plentiful.

Anitkabir

Ankara

A revered monument in the city accessed by a wide avenue lined with lion statues, Anitkabir is the mausoleum of the founder of the Turkish Republic, Ataturk. It draws Turks from all over the country who come to pay their respects to their hero. It is also a fascinating attraction for visitors to Ankara, its stark but imposing colonnaded aspect giving onto a courtyard that contains a museum. The ceiling of the main hall is decorated with beautiful gold leaf mosaics, and there are plenty of reliefs and statues to be admired.

Museum of Anatolian Civilizations

Ankara

The museum charts the history of Asia Minor and is housed in a lovely 15th-century restored building close to the centre of Ankara. Originally a market and caravanserai close to the centre of Ankara, it's the ideal place to visit for anyone intending to travel through Turkey and delve into the past. It is filled with fascinating collections of archaeological finds, from monolithic statues to delicate jewellery, including some from Catal Huyuk, believed to be the earliest known human social community in the world. From the Palaeolithic and Neolithic, and through all the great civilisations since, this museum is like a time machine for ancient history buffs.

Temple of Augustus

Ankara

The Roman Temple of Augustus was built by the Romans in the 2nd century AD, and contains the best-preserved copy of Emperor Augustus' last will and testament, inscribed on the vestibule walls. After the death of Augustus in 14 AD, a copy of the text of the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* was inscribed in Latin on both walls inside the pronaos, with a Greek translation on an exterior wall of the cella. The inscriptions are the primary surviving source of the text, since the original inscription on bronze pillars in front of the Mausoleum of Augustus in Rome has long been lost, and two other surviving inscriptions of the text are incomplete. The temple itself is in ruins and not open to the public, but together with other Roman ruins in the vicinity (including the Roman baths and the column of Julian) it is an exciting port of call for classical history addicts.

Ethnographic Museum

Ankara

When the founder of the Turkish Republic, Ataturk, died in 1938, he was buried in the courtyard of the building that now houses the Ethnographic Museum. Although he was moved to his final resting place at the imposing Mausoleum in Ankara, the museum is still well worth the visit. Guarded by an imposing bronze statue of the national hero astride his horse, inside is contained a vast collection of historical artefacts that include costumes, arts, and crafts.

Natural History Museum

Ankara

Anyone with an interest in the natural world will enjoy Ankara's Natural History Museum, which contains some fascinating exhibits and dioramas detailing the (often extinct) wildlife of Anatolia, as well as a large collection of fossils and minerals. Most interesting are the fossilized footprints of humans who walked the Anatolian steppes 25,000 years ago, and the skeleton of a Maras elephant, which lived in the area 193 million years ago.

Sunken Palace

Istanbul

Also known as the Underground Cistern or Yerebatan Saray, this eerie cavern was built by Constantine the Great around 532 AD and is supported by 336 columns below ground. Once as a location for the James Bond film, *From Russia with Love*, today the cavern sees tourists crossing over 2 acres of 12 inch deep water on wooden walkways, taking in the occasional art exhibit or intricate designs on the columns themselves. There is a pleasant little cafe above where the eyes can adjust over some tea.

Website: <http://www.yerebatansarnici.com/>

Galata Tower

Istanbul

The Galata Tower is a medieval stone tower in the Galata, Karakoy quarter of Istanbul, sitting north of the Golden Horn inlet to the Bosphorus. Called Galata Kulesi in Turkish, it was erected as a bastion for the walls of the 14th century colony of Galata. One of the city's most striking landmarks, the high cone-capped cylinder dominates the skyline and offers panoramic vistas of Istanbul's historic peninsula and old town. Today it is a sought-after conference venue, offering fine dining at its restaurant and belly dancing displays in its very own night club.

Website: <http://www.muze.gen.tr/muze-detay/galatakulesi>

Dolmabahce Palace

Istanbul

The Dolmabahce Palace was home to six Sultans from 1856, when it was first inhabited, up until the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924. The last royal to live here was Caliph Abdulmecid Efendi, before a law in 1924 transferred the ownership of the palace to the national heritage of the new Turkish Republic. Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the founder and first President of the Republic of Turkey, used the palace as a presidential residence during the summers and enacted some of his most important works here. Ataturk spent the last days of his medical treatment in this palace, where he died in 1938. The palace has an ostentatious interior of crystal chandeliers, while the exterior of the palace has a vast and beautiful garden.

Istanbul Dolphinarium

Istanbul

Kids on holiday in Istanbul will jump at a chance to visit the dolphinarium. Its six pools are home to a collection of dolphins and seals, as well as white whales and walrus. Children will have the opportunity of a lifetime to swim with the dolphins and learn about sea life while they're there. The restaurant and cafe are great places for a snack or lunch break and there is also a gift store to buy a souvenir to cap off a visit.

Website: <http://www.istanbuldolphinarium.com>

Museum of the History of Science and Technology

Istanbul

The Museum of the History of Science and Technology is located in the Gulhane Park, one of the most beautiful areas of Istanbul. It extends over 3500 square meters along the old palace wall, on the former stables of the Sultan's Has Ahirlar. In front of the entrance, the visitor encounters a large globe, which is a reconstruction of one of the most important achievements of the Islamic scientific tradition. Decades of intensive research in the history of Arabic-Islamic manuscripts were necessary as a preparation for the creation of the wealth of objects in the museum. Visitors to the museum can obtain unique insight into the Islamic scientific tradition by looking at the details of the exact replicas of the scientific and technical achievements from the ninth through the seventeenth centuries.

Website: <http://www.ibttm.org>

Hippodrome

Istanbul

The ancient Hippodrome of Constantinople was built between 200 and 300 as a stadium for horse racing, chariot racing, and other amusements. Seating up to 100,000 people, there isn't much remaining of the structure today. Now the site of the Hippodrome in Istanbul is a beautiful public park with a few remaining columns hinting at its grand past. The Obelisk of Tutmosis III, the Basilica Cistern, the Fountain of Wilhelm II, and the Serpentine and Constantine Columns are popular landmarks within the park, which also offers free wireless internet.

Mount Ararat

Ankara

In the far east of Turkey lies Mount Ararat, the twin peaks of this dormant volcano boast the highest summit in the country and legend has it that the remains of Noah's Ark lie on the snow-capped slopes. Many tours are available to climb or even ski Mount Ararat, with solo climbing without a guide and permit not permitted. The climb to the top is relatively easy and requires a basic level of fitness, but is suitable for non-professional climbers. For those not wishing to climb Mount Ararat, the local Kurdish villages situated on the foot of the mountain can be a great cultural experience while the nearby town of Dogubayazit provides stunning views of the mountain and is home to the second largest meteor crater in the world. Noah's Ark National Park at Mount Ararat is home to a museum dedicated to what is believed to be the fossilised remains of the ark.

Yacht cruises

The coastline along the Aegean and Mediterranean Sea holds a wealth of islands, hidden coves and inlets, rocky peninsulas, bays, and secluded beaches that are ideally explored by yacht. A Blue Voyage, or cruise along Turkey's Aegean or Mediterranean shores, is one of the most favoured ways of seeing the coast.

Tours can last from a few days to a few weeks aboard traditional Turkish 'gulets' (sturdy wooden yachts), which can be chartered with experienced crews, and well-established marinas provide yachtsmen with the services and provisions they require. Bodrum, Marmaris and Fethiye are the main yacht charter ports.

Hot Air Ballooning

With so many 'must-see' places in Cappadocia, one of the most exciting ways to enjoy this fascinating and historic destination is by via a hot air balloon ride. Travellers will able to enjoy the tranquillity, serenity, and sheer peace and quiet high up above the ground where the breathtaking landscape of Cappadocia unfolds below.

Take in the iconic attractions such as the 'fairy chimneys', the stone carved houses and churches, Goreme National Park, the Uchisar and Ortahisar rock fortress, and then view the Red Valley and Soganli Valleys. What could be better than a romantic sunset high above the ground in one of the most mystical destinations in the world?

Horse Riding

The name 'Cappadocia' is derived from the old Persian name 'Katpatuka', meaning 'The Land of Beautiful Horses', so what better way to explore this land than on horseback? Visitors can enjoy a scenic ride along the banks of the Kizilirmak (Red River), visit the 13th century Caravanserai (road side inn) of Sarihan, ride through Cappadocia's famed fairy chimneys, visit the natural springs at Kalker Lake or enjoy spectacular views from the top of Ziyaret Mountain.

Public Holidays in Turkey

	2023	2024
New Year's Day	Mon. January 1	Mon. January 1
National Sovereignty and Children's Day	Tue. April 23	Tue. April 23
May Day	Wed. May 1	Wed. May 1
Commemoration of Atatürk	Sun. May 19	Sun. May 19
Victory Day	Fri. August 30	Fri. August 30
Ramadan	Sun. April 21	Tue. April 9
Republic Day	Tue. October 29	Tue. October 29
Feast of the Sacrifice	Sat. June 29 to Tue. July 2	Sun. June 16 to Wed. June 19