



Essential Information about Turkey

Republic of Turkey, Founded in 1923 by M. K. Atatürk

- ▶ **Capital** : Ankara
- ▶ **Population** : 71 Million
- ▶ **Religion**: Officially 98% of Turks are Sunni Muslim, and 2% are Orthodox, Catholic or Protestant Christians and Jews
- ▶ **Time**: Turkish Standard Time is 2 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time. It advances by one hour in summer (Apr-Oct) to GMT +3.
- ▶ **Government Type** : Republican Parliamentary Democracy
- ▶ **Currency** : Turkish Lira (TL)
- ▶ **Official Language** : Turkish, Ural-Altay origin, the closest European Languages are Finnish and Hungarian
- ▶ **Calendar** : Gregorian Calendar
- ▶ **Alphabet** : Latin Alphabet
- ▶ **Major Cities** : Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Bursa, Adana, Antalya
- ▶ **Borders** : Greece, Bulgaria, Georgia, Armenia, Iran, Iraq, Syria

Turkey is a long-time member of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) since 1952.

- ▶ **Climate** : Three climate zones; Mediterranean, Continental and Black sea (Hot Dry summers with mild, wet winters, harsher in interior)

Facts:

- ▶ You've heard about the endless glasses of tea, the kebabs, gozleme and how to haggle in the bazaar. But if you really want to get under the country's skin, here are some facts about Turkey.
- ▶ The only city in the world located on two continents is Istanbul, which has been the capital of three great empires, Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman for more than 2000 years.
- ▶ According to Turkish tradition a stranger at one's doorstep is considered "A Guest from God" and should be accommodated accordingly.
- ▶ The famous **Trojan Wars** took place in Western Turkey Truva town, around the site where a wooden statue of the Trojan Horse rests today.
- ▶ The first church built by man (St. Peter's Church) is in **Antioch** (Antakya), Turkey.
- ▶ Early Christians escaping Roman persecution nearly 2000 years ago sheltered in Cappadocia in Central Anatolia.
- ▶ The oldest known human settlement in Turkey is **Catalhoyuk** (7th Millennium B.C.)
- ▶ Ephesus and **Halicarnasus** - two of the most famous places of the ancient world - are both in Turkey.
- ▶ **St. Nicholas**, also known as Santa Clause, was born in Demre, on Turkey's Mediterranean Coast.
- ▶ **Noah's Ark** landed on Mount Ararat (Agri Dagi) in Eastern Turkey.
- ▶ The last meal on Noah's Ark, a pudding of sweet and sour taste (**Asure**), is still served throughout Turkey.
- ▶ Virgin Mary's House in Ephesus is visited by **Pope the 6th Paul** and **Pope Jean Paul** as well.
- ▶ The Turks were who introduced **coffee** to Europe.
- ▶ Turkey provides 70% of the world's hazelnuts; the nut in your chocolate bar was most probably grown in Turkey
The famous **Dutch Tulip** comes from Turkey.
- ▶ **The First Ecumenical Council** was held in Iznik, Turkey. Anatolia is the birthplace of historic legends, **Homer** (the poet), **King Midas**, **Herodotus** (the father of history), **St. Paul** the Apostle and Santa Claus
- ▶ **Julius Caesar** proclaimed his celebrated words, "Veni, Vidi, Vici (I came, I saw, I conquered)" in North Anatolia when he defeated the Pontus, a formidable kingdom in the Black Sea region of Turkey.
- ▶ Female goddesses dominated the Central Anatolian pantheon for thousands of years before these supernatural powers were transformed to male gods.
- ▶ The Hittites sold Abraham the cave where he buried his wife Sarah, when the Israelites came to Palestine.
- ▶ Virgin Mary's house where she spent her last days, situated on the top of Bülbüldag (Ephesus), is considered as a holy place for all religions.
- ▶ Seven Churches of Revelation are all in Aegean Region in Turkey (Ephesus, Sardis, Tyatira, Pergamon, Philadelphia, Smyrna, Collosae).
- ▶ Turkey houses one of the richest **flora** and almost every year new plant species are gained to the world literature.
- ▶ The Colour "**Turquoise**" comes from the clean sea colour on the Aegean Coast in Turkey.
- ▶ The **millennium stone** at Sultanahmet square Istanbul was the zero meridian point of the world once upon a time.
- ▶ Istanbul has a 540-year-old covered shopping mall of 64 streets, 4000 shops, 22 entrances and 25,000 workers, -the famous Grand Bazaar.
- ▶ Three of the 10 remaining icons of the world and according to the belief of Orthodox, Jesus Christ's cross which he was crucified are in Hagia Yorghy church.
- ▶ **Hereke** which is in the world carpeting literature with the quality of the wool and silk rugs is in Izmit (Kocaeli) Turkey.
- ▶ Lydia which is one of the greatest civilization lived in Anatolia has still got some remainings around Salihli (Sardis) and it's the first civilization which **coined money**.

Turkish cuisine: Turkey is noted for having one of the three (together with French and Chinese) most famous and distinctive traditional cuisines in the world.

Turkish cuisine is largely the heritage of Ottoman cuisine, which can be described as a fusion and refinement of Central Asian, Middle Eastern and Balkan cuisines. Turkish cuisine has in turn influenced those and other neighboring cuisines, including those of Western Europe. The Ottomans fused various culinary traditions of their realm with influences from Middle Eastern cuisines, along with traditional Turkic elements from Central Asia (such as yogurt), creating a vast array of specialties — many with strong regional associations.

Turkish cuisine varies across the country. The cooking of Istanbul, Bursa, Izmir, and rest of the Aegean region inherits many elements of Ottoman court cuisine, with a lighter use of spices, a preference for rice over bulgur, and a wider use of seafood. The cuisine of the Black Sea Region uses fish extensively, especially the Black Sea anchovy (hamsi), has been influenced by Balkan and Slavic cuisine, and includes maize dishes. The cuisine of the southeast — Urfa, Gaziantep and Adana — is famous for its kebabs, mezes and dough-based desserts such as baklava, kadayıf and künefe (kanafeh).