



Western Anatolia

Look on the map and it may seem that Western Anatolia falls between at least two stools – it doesn't quite reach the Mediterranean or the Black Sea, stops just short of Ankara, and can only gaze across the Sea of Marmara at Istanbul. Luckily the diversity of the region comes together to create an identity all its own, relatable to Central Anatolia yet distinct from it, and once you've travelled through it and seen the many attractions, you'll start to see the natural progression that connects it to the rest of the country.

The key experiences here lie in the landscape, from the strange vagaries of calcium around Pamukkale to the rich wetlands of the southern lake district. There's no shortage of excuses to get to grips with the great outdoors, but even if you are cruising through on wheels, your senses will keep your brain busy absorbing the colours of poppy fields, the sounds of winds over waterfalls or the sensation of a good mineral bath.

Many of these sites are next to deserted even in season, but don't be fooled into thinking you're a pioneer: people have been treading this ground since ancient times, and whether it's Neolithic settlers near İznik, Phrygian cave carvers around Afyon or Roman pilgrims at Afrodiasias, you'll find traces of your predecessors everywhere. If you want to feel connected to the world at large, and Turkey at its best, take a breath, take a chance and take a trip into the hidden heart of the familiar yet alien west.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Blend ancient architecture and modern streetlife in bustling **Bursa** (p292)
- Take a walk through the city walls and catch sunset over **İznik** (p288)
- Sip a brew with a view from a hammock in the fortress at **Kütahya** (p308)
- Investigate the hidden delights and sights of the rock-strewn **Phrygian Valley** (p304)
- Pad or paddle up calcium travertine pools to visit the ruins of **Hierapolis** (p325)
- Relish remote ruins at **Afrodiasias** (p329) and at **Sagalassos** (p315)
- Reward yourself with a fish dinner after a day's walking or exploring around **Eğirdir Gölü** (Lake Eğirdir; p317)





ABANT GÖLÜ (LAKE ABANT) & AROUND

☎ 0374 / pop 6000

For many travellers, Western Anatolia is little more than the area they speed through on the motorway to get from İstanbul to Ankara. Should they wish to stop, though, the lake district nestling in lush, green countryside around Bolu is handily midway between the two metropolises.

The town of Bolu itself is not especially exciting. However, around 30km west is a turn-off south to Abant Gölü, a gorgeous spot for a picnic. It's a 5km walk round the shores of the lake, which is dotted with places to eat and accommodation ranging from a camp site to two five-star hotels.

Even if you don't divert to Abant you should plan to stop on the slopes of **Bolu Dağı** (Mt Bolu), where there are lots of good restaurants offering tasty food and panoramic views. Keen skiers may also want to investigate the resort at **Kartalkaya**, which has good powder from December to March.

MUDURNU

Another 25km southwest of Abant Gölü is the lovely small town of Mudurnu, which used to be famous for its chicken dinners, but is now being feted as an Ottoman revival town. Slowly but surely the old houses are being restored and repurposed to attract visitors. There's a lively old bazaar area and the **Yıldırım Beyazıt hamam** (Büyükcami Caddesi; ☎ 8am-7pm; Mon,

Wed, Sat for women) is a real find, charging just €1 if you forego the scrub and massage (not available to women anyway).

Sleeping

Prices at Mudurnu hotels are higher at weekends, when you should also book ahead.

Hacı Abdullahlar Konakları (☎ 421 2284; www.mudurnukonaklari.com, in Turkish; Belediye Yanı 3; s/d €28/39) Just off the main square, this hotel has gorgeous Ottoman-style rooms (some with shared bathroom) in a restored house. There's an inviting upstairs sitting area and a small garden.

Yarıskası Konakları (☎ 421 3604; www.yariskasi.com; r €20-30) On the edge of town as you come in from Bolu, this long hotel is in the old style but newly built, with mod cons such as wi-fi Internet. Rooms are comfortable if quite simple, but there's a large restaurant and some great forest views.

Değirmenyeri Konakları (☎ 421 2677; www.degirmenyeri.com; Kilözü Köyü, Dağ Mevkii; r €39-50) On the Bolu road 8km northeast of Mudurnu, this cluster of mountain cabins is an absolute gem if you want to stay in rustic splendour away from it all.

Getting There & Away

This is an area best explored with a car or motorbike. However, there are regular buses to Bolu from İstanbul and Ankara, and then from Bolu on to Mudurnu (€2, one hour). In summer, there are also several direct buses from Bolu to Abant Gölü.

YALOVA

☎ 0226 / pop 71,000

The town of Yalova is of little interest to travellers except as a terminal for the fast ferries across the Sea of Marmara, the quickest and easiest route between Bursa and İstanbul. Yalova was badly damaged in the earthquake of 1999 and even now has not yet managed to rehouse everyone displaced by the disaster.

Getting There & Away

BOAT

The dock for **İDO fast ferries** (☎ 444 4436; www.ido.com.tr) to İstanbul is just off Yalova's main square; most buses drop you right in front of it. Ferries leave roughly every two hours between 7.30am and 11.30pm for Yenikapı docks (€4.50, car and driver €28, additional passengers €6.70, one hour). A second service runs every 1½ hours for the port at Pendik

(€2.80, car and driver €22.50, additional passengers €2.25, 45 minutes), south of Bostancı – but if you take this you'll still have a 100km drive or three more pedestrian ferry hops into İstanbul itself.

A cheaper alternative is the older **car ferry** (car and driver €12, 25min), between Topçular, east of Yalova, to Eskihisar, near Gebze. Ferries run every 20 minutes around the clock. However, taking this route leaves even more driving into İstanbul.

BUS

Arriving by ferry from İstanbul you will find the main bus station immediately to the right of the terminal. This is where you pick up one of the frequent dolmuş (shuttle minibuses) to Termal (€0.55, 30 minutes). Buses to Bursa (€3.35, 1¼ hours) leave every 30 minutes.

Dolmuş to İznik (€2.80, one hour) leave from across the road roughly every hour.

TERMAL

☎ 0226 / pop 2600

About 12km southwest of Yalova, off the road to Çınarcık, Termal consists of a lovely spa resort and a very so-so village with cheap pensions and eateries.

First exploited by the Romans but developed by the Ottomans and then by Atatürk, the baths here take advantage of hot, mineral-rich waters that gush from the earth. They lie in the middle of a beautiful valley, which Atatürk developed as an arboretum, and there are several pleasant walking trails.

Sights & Activities

Termal offers all sorts of bathing possibilities. The main spa complex, the **Kurşunlu Banyo** (☎ 675 7400; ☎ 7am-10.30pm Mon-Wed & Fri-Sat, 7am-8pm Sun, 7am-noon Thu), features an open-air pool for €5, an enclosed pool and sauna for €4, and small private cubicles for €5 to €7.50. At the **Valide Banyo** (admission €1.50) men and women bathe separately in indoor pools, while at the **Sultan Banyo** (1 person/2 people €6/9) you can rent a private bath by the hour.

Sleeping & Eating

The Çınar and Çamlık **hotels** (☎ 675 7400; s/d from €20/35) in the middle of the spa are run by the same company, Yalova Termal Kaplıca Tesisleri. Rooms at the Çamlık are more expensive but both are quiet and inviting, if slightly old-fashioned and masculine in

decoration. Use of the baths is included in the room price. The Çınar has a plane tree-shaded courtyard café while the Çamlık has a proper restaurant.

The smaller hotels in Termal village mostly cater for visitors from the Gulf States.

Getting There & Away

There are frequent buses and dolmuşes (€0.75, 30 minutes) from Yalova. The İDO fast ferry (p287) makes it possible to visit Termal as a day trip from İstanbul.

İZNIK

☎ 0224 / pop 20,000

If all you know about İznik is its reputation for fine tile-making, chances are this isn't

what you were expecting. Far from being a commercial hub, today's town has changed surprisingly little since its Ottoman heyday, slumbering peacefully within its historic walls. The town's hilly, rustic surrounds are punctuated by tall, spiky cypress trees and peach orchards, cornfields and vineyards. Development has been largely kept under control here, and the whole place has a relaxed, traditional atmosphere even amid the more modern buildings.

Badly damaged in the War of Independence, İznik has since perked up and offers a welcome retreat for İstanbullular over summer weekends. An increasing number of shops now sell İznik ceramics, but many people still earn their living from either farming or forestry.

History

İznik may have been founded as early as 1000 BC, but it became a town of any significance only under one of Alexander the Great's generals in 316 BC. A rival general, Lysimachus, captured it in 301 BC and named it rather romantically after his wife, Nicaea. The name stuck, and Nicaea became the capital city of the province of Bithynia, which once spread out along the southern shore of the Sea of Marmara.

Nicaea lost some of its prominence with the founding of Nicomedia (today's Kocaeli/İzmit) in 264 BC, and by 74 BC the entire area had been incorporated into the Roman Empire. It flourished under the Romans, but invasions by the Goths and the Persians brought ruin by AD 300.

With the rise of Constantinople, Nicaea once again acquired importance. In AD 325, the first Ecumenical Council was held here, producing the Nicene Creed, the statement of the basic principles of Christianity. More than four centuries later, the seventh Ecumenical Council was held in Nicaea's Aya Sofya (Hagia Sofia) church.

During the reign of Justinian I (527–65), Nicaea was refurbished with grand new buildings and defences that served the city well when the Arabs invaded. Like Constantinople, Nicaea never fell to its Arab besiegers, but did eventually fall to the Crusaders. From 1204 to 1261, when a Latin king sat on the throne of Byzantium, the true Byzantine emperor, Theodore I (Lascaris), reigned over the empire of Nicaea. When the Crusaders left, the imperial capital returned to Constantinople.

On 2 March 1331, Sultan Orhan conquered İznik, and the city soon possessed the first Ottoman theological school. In 1514 Sultan Selim I captured the Persian city of Tabriz and sent all its artisans west to İznik. They brought with them their skill at making coloured tiles, and soon İznik's kilns were turning out faience (tin-glazed earthenware) unequalled even today. The great period of İznik tile-making continued almost to 1700, before going into a decline that lasted until 20th-century fashion (and business sense) brought about a revival.

Orientation & Information

Historic İznik is still neatly enclosed within its crumbling city walls and, with the exception of a few hotels and restaurants on the

lake-facing side of town, everything that a visitor is likely to want can be found inside the walls. Right in the centre of town, the ruins of the Aya Sofya stand at the intersection of the two main boulevards, Atatürk Caddesi and Kılıçaslan Caddesi. These two roads lead to the four principal gates (*kapılar*) in the city walls.

The otogar (bus station) is a few blocks southeast of the Aya Sofya.

The **tourist office** (☎ 757 1454; www.iznik.bel.tr; 130 Kılıçaslan Caddesi; ☎ 9am-noon & 1-5pm Mon-Fri) is in the *belediye* (town hall) building.

Sights & Activities

AYA SOFYA

What was once the **Aya Sofya** (Church of the Divine Wisdom; admission €3.50; ☎ 9am-noon & 1-6pm Tue-Sun) is now a crumbling ruin slumbering in an attractively landscaped rose garden. However, what looks on the outside like one building actually encompasses the ruins of three completely different ones. A mosaic floor and a mural of Jesus with Mary and John the Baptist survive from the original church. Built during the reign of Justinian and destroyed by an earthquake in 1065, it was later rebuilt with the mosaics set into the walls. With the Ottoman conquest, the church became a mosque, but a fire in the 16th century destroyed everything once again. Third time around, reconstruction was carried out under the supervision of the great architect Mimar Sinan, who added İznik tiles to the decoration.

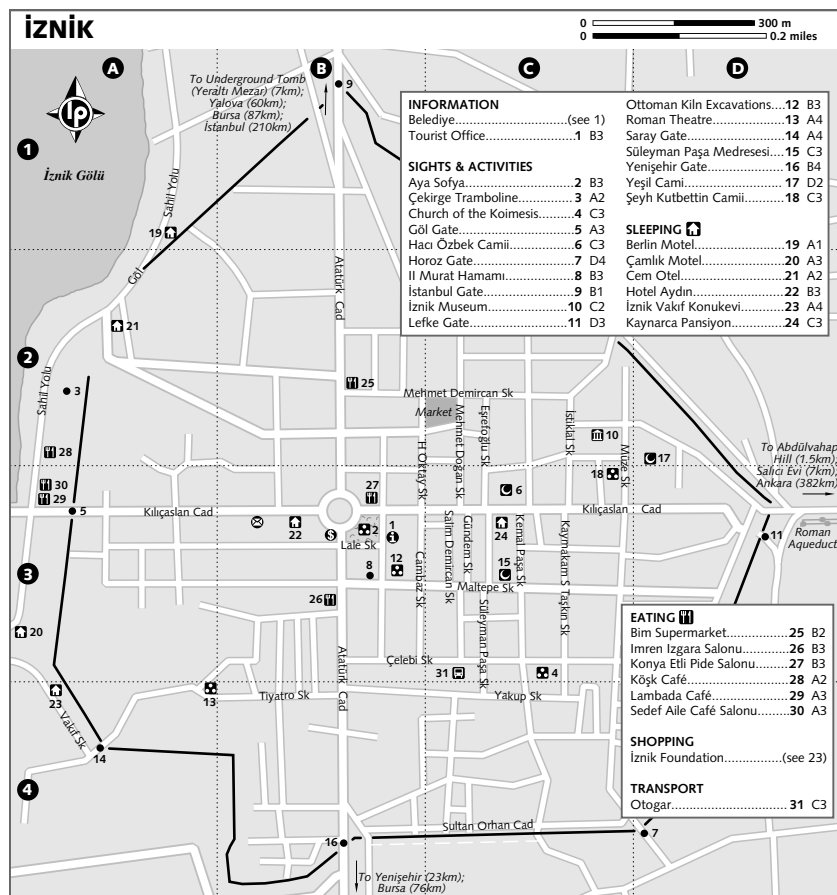
Unfortunately, the church isn't always unlocked during official opening hours.

YEŞİL CAMİ

Built between 1378 and 1387 under Sultan Murat I, the Yeşil Cami (Green Mosque) has Seljuk Turkish proportions influenced more by Iran (the Seljuk homeland) than by İstanbul. The green- and blue-glazed zigzag tiles of the minaret foreshadowed the famous industry that arose here a few decades later.

İZNIK MUSEUM

Opposite the Yeşil Cami is **İznik Museum** (İznik Müzesi; ☎ 757 1027; Müze Sokak; admission €1.10; ☎ 8am-noon & 1-5pm Tue-Sun) housed in the old soup kitchen that Sultan Murat I had built for his mother, Nilüfer Hatun, in 1388. Born a Byzantine princess, Nilüfer had been married to Sultan Orhan to cement a diplomatic alliance.



The grounds of the museum are filled with marble statuary and other archaeological flotsam and jetsam. Inside, the lofty whitewashed halls contain examples of original İznik tiles, with their milky bluish-white and rich 'İznik red'. Among the other displays are 8000-year-old finds from a nearby tumulus at İlipınar, believed to show links with Neolithic Balkan culture.

Across the road to the south of the museum is the restored **Şeyh Kutbettin Camii** (1492).

The museum also administers a beautiful, frescoed Byzantine **Underground Tomb** (Yeraltı Mezar) outside town, discovered by accident in the 1960s. Unfortunately staffing and funding problems mean it hasn't been open to the public for years.

CITY WALLS & GATES

It is still possible to make a 5km circuit round most of İznik's walls, which were first erected in Roman times, then rebuilt and strengthened under the Byzantines. Four main gates – İstanbul Kapısı, Yenişehir Kapısı, Lefke Kapısı and Göl Kapısı – still transect the walls. It is possible to make out the remains of another 12 minor gates and 114 towers, some round, some square. In places, the walls still rise to almost their original height of 10m to 13m.

The **Lefke Gate** to the east actually comprises three gateways dating from Byzantine times. The middle one bears a Greek inscription that says it was built by Proconsul Plancius Varus in AD 123. You can climb to the top of the walls here – a good vantage point for inspecting the lie of the land.

The **İstanbul Gate** is similarly imposing, with huge stone carvings of heads facing outwards. However, little remains of the **Göl (Lake) Gate**. To the southwest are the remains of the more minor **Saray (Palace) Gate** – Sultan Orhan (1326–61) had a palace near here in the 14th century. If you head back inside the walls from here you will come to the abandoned ruins of a 15,000-seat **Roman theatre**.

The walls between the **Yenişehir Gate** and the Lefke Gate still stand at a considerable height, and you can follow a footpath for some of the way beside them. However, this is a rather isolated area so it may be wise to explore it in company.

If you cut back inside the walls from the ruins of the minor **Horoz (Rooster) Gate** you will come to the scant ruins of the **Church of the Koimesis** (c AD 800) on the western side

of Kaymakam S Taşkın Sokak. Only some foundations remain, but the church was once famous as the burial place of the Byzantine emperor Theodore I (Lascaris). When the Crusaders took Constantinople in 1204, Lascaris fled to Nicaea and established his court here. It was Lascaris who built Nicaea's outer walls, supported by over 100 towers and protected by a wide moat – no doubt he didn't trust the Crusaders, having already lost one city to them. In a harsh final twist, the church was dynamited after the War of Independence.

OTHER SIGHTS

To the southeast of Aya Sofya, the brick-built **II Murat Hamamı** (☎ 757 1459; 🕒 6am-midnight, 1-5pm Mon, Thu & Sat for women; wash & massage from €5) was constructed during the reign of Sultan Murat II in the first half of the 15th century.

Across the road from the women's section are the overgrown remains of the 15th- to 17th-century **Ottoman kilns**. The finds are in the İznik Museum.

In the centre of town on Kılıçaslan Caddesi, **Hacı Özbek Camii**, dating from 1332, is one of İznik's oldest mosques.

For something more energetic, **Çekirge Tramboline** (Sahil Yolu; admission €0.85; 🕒 11am-midnight) runs a seasonal trampoline marquee, a surreal counterpoint to İznik's general gravitas. Admission buys you 10 minutes of bouncing.

There is a cluster of minor sights around **Abdülvahap Hill**, outside the Lefke Gate, including the remains of a Roman aqueduct, an open-air Arab *namazgah* mosque, several tombs and a shady cemetery. For a perfect evening stroll, head out an hour or so before sunset to peruse these features and climb the hill itself, where as well as great views you'll find the Berber Rock, a shattered monumental mausoleum carved from a single rock, and the tomb of Abdülvahap Sancaktari, the Turkish-Arab flag bearer who gave his name to the hill after dying during an 8th-century siege.

Sleeping

İznik has a couple of accommodation gems that are perfect for short stays, but they fill up quickly over summer weekends, when advance booking may be a good idea. Bursa has a bigger selection of hotels and restaurants, so you might prefer to stay there and visit İznik as a day trip.

BUDGET

Kaynarca Pansiyon (☎ 757 1753; www.kaynarca.net; Kılıçaslan Caddesi, Gündem Sokak 1; dm €8.50, s/d/tr €14/23/34; 📺) Local character Ali Bulmuş's cheerful, slightly eccentric pension is just the ticket for budget travellers. It's clean and central, the TVs show BBC World and there's a cute little rooftop terrace. Breakfast costs €2.30. No advance reservations are taken, but if it's full the staff will help you find an alternative.

Berlin Motel (☎ 757 3355; www.berlin-motel.com; Göl Sahil Yolu 36; s/d/tr €17/34/50; 📺) Don't worry, you haven't wandered into Germany by accident – the Turkish owners of this friendly four-storey block are long-term residents of the Teutonic capital, hence the name. There are some larger family rooms (€14 per person), the *Preis-Leistungsverhältnis* is *ausgezeichnet* (in other words, it's good value), and of course *man spricht hier Deutsch*.

Cem Otel (☎ 757 1687; www.cemotel.com; Göl Sahil Caddesi 34; s/d €23/34; 📺) Close to the lake and the city walls, a recent refit has made the Cem really good value, with TV, phone, minibar and plenty of space. If you can't land a room overlooking the lake, hang out for a seat on the restaurant terrace downstairs.

Hotel Aydın (☎ 757 7650; www.iznikhotelaydin.com; Kılıçaslan Caddesi 64; s/d/tr €23/34/45) The Aydın is best known locally for its excellent onsite *pastanesi* (patisserie/bakery), which also dishes up the hotel breakfasts on the front terrace. The smallish rooms come with TV, phone, balcony and chintzy bedspreads.

MIDRANGE

Çamlık Motel (☎ 757 1631; Göl Sahil Yolu; s/d €25/45; 📺) Quietly located at the southern end of the road along the lakeshore, this neat Western-style motel is a good modern choice with a licensed restaurant overlooking the lake. It's popular with tour groups.

İznik Vakıf Konukevi (☎ 757 6025; info@iznik.com; Vakıf Sokak 13; per person €34) A charming guesthouse set in a delightful rose garden just inland from the lake. The rooms are managed by the İznik Foundation, which was set up in 1993 to foster the art of İznik tile-making, and are as cool and stylish as you might expect. Bizarrely, Foundation staff don't always seem to know it's there.

Salıcı Evi (☎ 315 4536; www.salicievi.com; Çamoluk; cabins €56-195) If you have transport, this collection of three character-laden wooden cabins is

the ultimate rural retreat, squirreled away in the hills 7km southeast of İznik. Cabins sleep two to six people.

Eating

İznik has an adequate selection of places to eat but nowhere that really stands out.

İmren İzgara Salonu (☎ 757 3597; Atatürk Caddesi 75; mains from €1.70; 🕒 8am-9pm) A favourite lunchtime spot for locals, who fund a constant procession of juicy *köfte* and other grills with dense hunky bread and sweet, hot green peppers.

Konya Etli Pide Salonu (☎ 757 3156; Kılıçaslan Caddesi; meals €2-3; 🕒 8am-9pm) This is one of several small eateries opposite the Aya Sofya, serving among other things good, freshly made pide (Turkish-style pizza).

In summer the best places to dine (mosquitoes permitting) are the open-air cafés and restaurants on Sahil Yolu overlooking the lake. The Köşk Café, Sedef Aile Café Salonu and Lambada Café are all good for drinks or simple meals for around €4. In high summer more places open, and the best way to choose between them is probably to follow the crowds.

Self-caterers can stock up at the **Bim supermarket** (☎ 411 2216; Atatürk Caddesi; 🕒 8.30am-9.30pm Mon-Sat, 9am-9pm Sun).

Shopping

Recently, tile-making in İznik has been undergoing a revival, and that the town is proud of this fact is evident from the posters of tiles on display in many of the town's restaurants and hotels. Original İznik tiles are antiquities and cannot be exported from Turkey, but new tiles make great, if not particularly cheap, souvenirs. Good places to start looking are the small workshops along Salim Demircan Sokak, and the workshop belonging to the **İznik Foundation** (☎ 757 6025; www.iznik.com; Vakıf Sokak 13).

The **Süleyman Paşa Medresei**, founded by Sultan Orhan shortly after he captured Nicaea, was the first Ottoman theological seminary, and it now houses half a dozen ceramic and craft workshops.

Getting There & Away

There are hourly buses from the otogar to Bursa (€2.25, 1½ hours) until about 7pm or 8pm, plus frequent buses to Yalova (€2.80, one hour).

BURSA

☎ 0224 / pop 1.2 million

Sprawling off the slopes of Uludağ (Great Mountain), Bursa may seem at first glance like a purely modern metropolis. In fact, as the first capital of the Ottoman Empire (during the 14th century), the city can be considered the birthplace of modern Turkish culture. Its innumerable ancient buildings, including those of the old spa suburb of Çekirge, a centuries-old tourist draw, are a reminder of Bursa's weighty past.

Today, automobile and textile factories provide the majority of local jobs, and there's affluence in abundance. The local government maintains an admirable record of environmental and progressive initiatives.

Besides its rich history, Bursa is renowned in Turkey for the Bursa, or *Iskender*, kebab – döner kebab on a bed of fresh pide bread, topped with tomato sauce, yogurt and melted butter. Yum... You'll find it all over the country, but here you can really go direct to the source.

History

Bursa dates back to at least 200 BC. According to legend, it was founded by Prusias, the King of Bithynia, but soon came under the sway of Eumenes II of Pergamum and thereafter under Roman rule.

Bursa first grew to importance in the early centuries of Christianity, when the thermal baths at Çekirge (p297) were first developed.

However, it was Justinian I (r AD 527–65) who really put Bursa on the map.

With the decline of the Byzantine Empire, Bursa's location near Constantinople attracted the interest of would-be conquerors, including Arabs and Seljuks. Having seized much of Anatolia by 1075, the Seljuks took Bursa (then Prusa) with ease. But 22 years later the First Crusade arrived, and the city entered a cycle of conquest and reconquest, changing hands periodically for the next 100 years.

After the Turkish migrations into Anatolia during the 11th and 12th centuries, small principalities arose around individual Turkish warlords. One such warlord was Ertuğrul Gazi, who formed a small state near Bursa. In 1317 Bursa was besieged by his son Osman's forces and was starved into submission on 6 April 1326. Under the rule of Osman Gazi, Bursa became the capital of the nascent empire that took Osman's name, Osmanlı (Ottoman).

Osman was succeeded by Orhan Gazi (r 1326–59), who expanded the empire to include everything from what is now Ankara to Adrianople (Edirne), effectively encircling the Byzantine capital at Constantinople. Orhan took the title of sultan, struck the first Ottoman coinage, and, near the end of his reign, was able to dictate to the Byzantine emperors, one of whom, John VI Cantacuzene, became his close ally and father-in-law.

Although the Ottoman capital moved to Edirne in 1402, Bursa remained an important city. Both Osman and Orhan were buried there; their tombs are still important monuments (p296).

With the founding of the Turkish Republic, Bursa started to develop as an industrial centre. In the 1960s and '70s boom times arrived as Fiat (Tofaş) and Renault established factories here. Today it's still a major commercial centre and one of Turkey's wealthiest cities.

Orientation

Bursa's main square is Cumhuriyet Alanı (Republic Sq), usually known as Heykel (Statue) because of its large Atatürk monument. Atatürk Caddesi runs west from Heykel through the commercial centre to the Ulu Cami (Great Mosque). Further west stands the striking blue-glass pyramid of the Zafer Plaza shopping centre, a handy landmark to look for as you approach the city centre.

Heading northwest, Atatürk Caddesi becomes Cemal Nadir Caddesi, then Altıparmak Caddesi and afterwards Çekirge Caddesi, which leads to the spa suburb of Çekirge, about a 10-minute bus ride away. Çekirge is where you'll find many of the spa hotels.

East of Heykel, at Setbaşı, Namazgah Caddesi crosses the Gök Stream (Gök Deresi), which tumbles through a dramatic gorge. Just after the stream, Yeşil Caddesi branches off to the left to the Yeşil Camii and Yeşil Türbe, after which it changes names to become Emir Sultan Caddesi.

From Heykel, Setbaşı and Atatürk Caddesi you can catch dolmuşes and buses to all parts of the city.

Information

There's a post office and numerous banks with ATMs on Atatürk Caddesi (Map pp294–5), and plenty of exchange offices in the Kapalı Çarşı (Covered Market; Map pp294–5).

Discover Internet Centre (Map pp294–5; Taşkapı Caddesi; per hr €0.70; ☎ 9am-midnight)

FİMa Bookshop (Map pp294–5; Atatürk Caddesi) Sells English-language newspapers.

Met Internet (Map p292; Yılmazsoy İşhanı 6, Hocalizade Caddesi; per hr €1.10; ☎ 9am-midnight)

Tourist Office (Map pp294–5; ☎ 220-1848; ☎ 8am-noon & 1-5pm Mon-Fri) Beneath Atatürk Caddesi, in the row of shops at the north entrance to Orhan Gazi Alt Geçidi.

Dangers & Annoyances

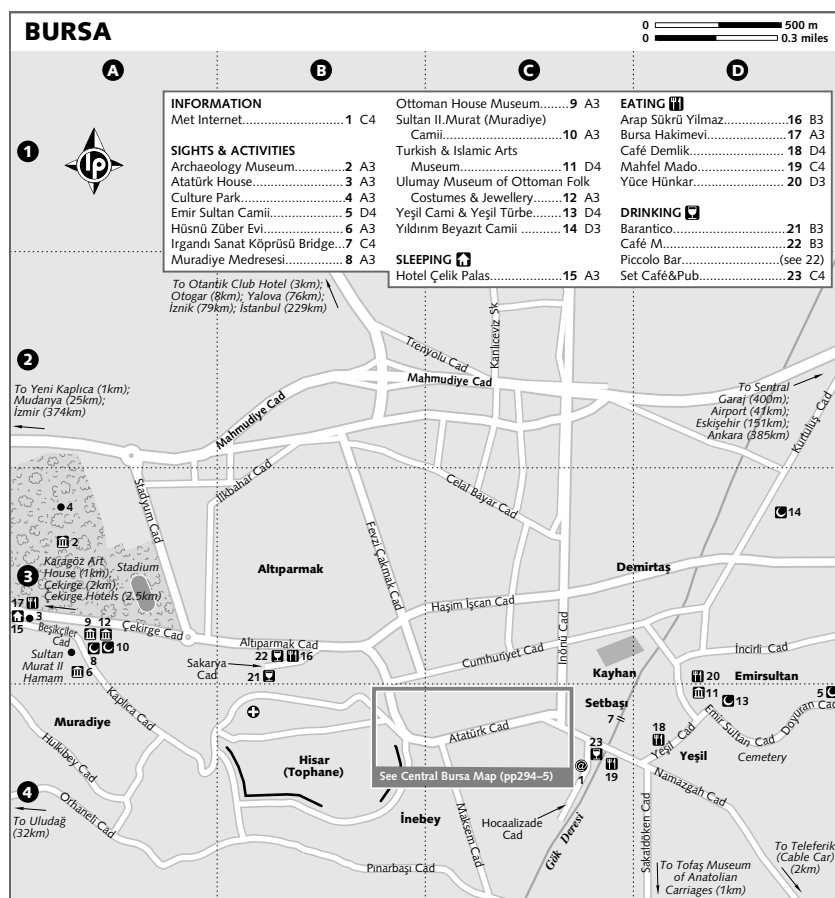
Heavy traffic makes it almost impossible to cross Atatürk Caddesi, so you will have to use the *alt geçidi* (pedestrian underpasses). The Atatürk Alt Geçidi (the one nearest to Heykel) has a lift for disabled people; the nearby florist has the key to operate it.

Sights & Activities

EMİR SULTAN CAMII

Rebuilt by Selim III in 1805 and restored in the early 1990s, the **Emir Sultan Camii** (Map p292) echoes the romantic decadence of Ottoman rococo style, rich in wood, curves and painted arches on the outside. The interior is surprisingly plain, but the setting, next to a large hillside cemetery surrounded by huge trees and overlooking the city and valley, is as pleasant as the mosque itself.

To reach the mosque, take a dolmuş heading for Emirsultan or any bus with 'Emirsultan' in its name. If you walk between here and



the Yeşil Camii and Yeşil Türbe, you'll pass a cemetery, which contains the **grave of Kebapçı İskender**, the kebab maestro himself.

YEŞİL CAMİİ & YEŞİL TÜRBE

A few minutes' walk uphill from Setbaşı, the **Yeşil Camii** (Green Mosque; Map p292), built for Mehmet I between 1419 and 1424, is a supremely beautiful building that represents a turning point in Turkish architectural style. Before this, Turkish mosques echoed the Persian style of the Seljuks, but in the Yeşil Camii a purely Turkish style emerged, and its influence is visible in Ottoman architecture across the country. Note the harmonious façade and the beautiful carved marble work around the central doorway.

As you enter, you pass beneath the sultan's private apartments into a domed central hall with a 15m-high *mihrab* (niche indicating the direction of Mecca). The greenish-blue tiles on the interior walls gave the mosque its name, and there are also fragments of a few original frescoes.

Inside the main entrance a narrow staircase leads up to the sumptuously tiled and deco-

rated *hünkar mahfili* (sultan's private box) above the main door. This was the sultan's living quarters when he chose to stay here, with his harem and household staff in less plush digs on either side.

In the small park surrounding the mosque is the **Yeşil Türbe** (Green Tomb; Map p292; admission free; ☎ 8am-noon & 1-5pm), which unlike the mosque is not actually green; the blue exterior tiles were added during restoration work in the 19th century, although the interior tiles are original. Walk round the outside to see the tiled calligraphy above several windows. Inside, the most prominent tomb is that of the Yeşil Camii's founder, Mehmet I (Çelebi), surrounded by those of his children. There's also an impressive tiled *mihrab*.

Down the road from the Yeşil Camii is its *medrese* (seminary), which now houses the **Turkish & Islamic Arts Museum** (Map p292; admission €1.10; ☎ 8am-noon & 1-5pm). The collection includes pre-Ottoman İznik ceramics, the original door and *mihrab* curtains from the Yeşil Camii, jewellery, embroidery, calligraphy and dervish artefacts, most with unusually coherent English captions.

YILDIRIM BEYAZIT CAMİİ

Gazing across the valley from the Emir Sultan Camii, you'll spot the twin domes of the **Yıldırım Beyazıt Camii** (Mosque of Beyazıt the Thunderbolt, 1391; Map p292), which was built earlier than the Yeşil Camii but forms part of the same architectural evolution.

Next to the mosque is its *medrese*, once a theological seminary, now a public health centre. Here, too, are the tombs of the mosque's founder, the thunderous Sultan Beyazıt I, and his son İsa.

IRGANDI SANAT KÖPRÜSÜ

Crossing the river just north of the Setbaşı road bridge, the **Irgandı Bridge** (Map p292) has been restored in Ottoman style as a charming dual row of tiny yellow shops, selling handicrafts and other items under their tiled roofs. A couple of little cafés make it a nice spot for a browse and a cuppa.

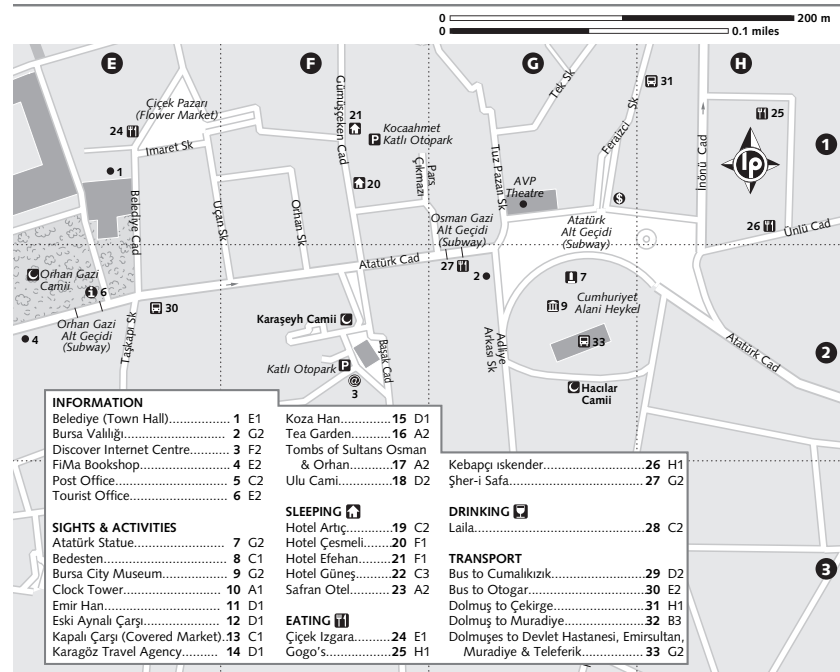
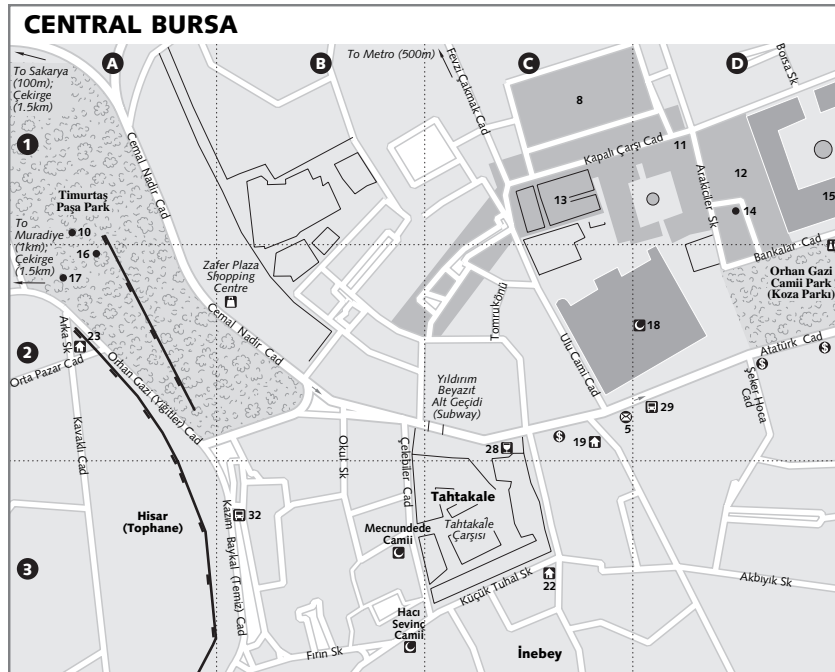
TOFAŞ MUSEUM OF ANATOLIAN CARRIAGES

A short uphill walk south from Setbaşı, along Sakaldöken Caddesi, will bring you to what was once a silk factory and is now a small

museum (Map p292; ☎ 329 3941; Kapıcı Caddesi, Yıldırım; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun). It exhibits old carts alongside old cars, and could be somewhere to bring the kids when they get tired of mosques. The museum grounds are laid out as an Ottoman garden – great for picnicking.

BURSA CITY MUSEUM

Bursa has a state-of-the-art **City Museum** (Bursa Kent Müzesi; Map pp294-5; ☎ 220 2486; www.bursakentmuzesi.gov.tr; admission €0.85; ☎ 9.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6.30pm Sat & Sun), housed in what was once the old courthouse at Heykel. Ground-floor exhibits whip through the history of the city, with information on the sultans most closely associated with it. Unfortunately, the labelling is in Turkish only, apart from the section headings. Luckily the cultural and ethnographical collections upstairs need little explanation, while down in the basement the reconstructions of old shops are wonderful, with films showing old-fashioned artisans at work. Newspaper clippings also show a couple of local characters to look out for: Deli Ayten, the banjo-playing bag lady, and 'Tarzan Ali', 59-year-old former action hero.



MARKETS

Behind the Ulu Cami, Bursa's sprawling **Kapalı Çarşı** (Covered Market; Map pp294-5) is a great place to while away a few hours, especially if you find İstanbul's Grand Bazaar too touristy. At the centre of the Kapalı Çarşı, the *bedesten* (vaulted, fireproof enclosure for valuable goods) was built in the late 14th century by Yıldırım Beyazıt, although it was reconstructed after an earthquake in 1855. The market is renowned for its high-quality towels and bathrobes, should you have space in your luggage for such bulky items.

As you wander around, look for the **Eski Aynalı Çarşı** (Old Mirrored Market), which was originally the Orhangazi Hamam (1335) – the bathhouse of the Orhan Camii Külliyesi – as indicated by the domed ceiling with its skylights. This is a good place to shop for Karagöz shadow puppets and other traditional items.

The Kapalı Çarşı tumbles out into the surrounding streets, but at some point you will find the gateway into the **Koza Han** (Cocoon Caravanserai), which was built in 1490. Unsurprisingly, the building is full of expensive *ipek* (silk) shops. In the courtyard is a small mosque constructed for Yıldırım Beyazıt in 1491.

Beside the Ulu Cami is the **Emir Han**, used by many of Bursa's silk brokers. Camels from the silk caravans used to be corralled here and goods stored in the ground-floor rooms, while drovers and merchants slept and conducted business in the rooms above. It has a lovely fountain in its courtyard tea garden.

ULU CAMI

Prominently positioned on Atatürk Caddesi is the huge **Ulu Cami** (Map pp294-5), which is completely Seljuk in style and easily the

most imposing of Bursa's mosques. Yıldırım Beyazıt put up the money for the monumental building in 1396. Twenty small domes and a minaret of daunting girth augment the exterior, while inside the size theme continues with immense portals and a forest of square pillars. Notice the fine work of the *mimber* (pulpit) and the preacher's chair, as well as the calligraphy on the walls.

TOMBS OF SULTANS OSMAN & ORHAN

A steep cliff riddled with archaeological workings overlooks Cemal Nadir Caddesi. This section of town, the oldest in Bursa, was once enclosed by stone ramparts and walls, parts of which still survive. From the Ulu Cami, walk west and up Orhan Gazi (Yığıtler) Caddesi, a ramplike street that leads to the section known as Hisar (Fortress) or Tophane.

In a little park on the summit are the **Tombs of Sultans Osman and Orhan** (Osman Gazi ve Orhan Gazi Türbeleri; Map pp294-5; admission by donation), founders of the Ottoman Empire. The original structures were destroyed in the earthquake of 1855 and rebuilt in Ottoman baroque style by Sultan Abdül Aziz in 1868. Osman Gazi's tomb is the more richly decorated of the two. Remove your shoes before entering either tomb.

Next to the tombs, one of those 'distance to everywhere' signs slightly undermines the gravitas of the monuments, though it's interesting to note that you're nearer Azerbaijan than Germany, and denizens of Tiffin, Ohio, are doubtless thrilled to learn they're 9,600km from home. In the grounds, a six-storey **clock tower** is the last of four that originally doubled as fire alarms. Beside the clock tower is a delightful **tea garden** with fine views over the valley.

MURADIYE COMPLEX

With a shady park in front and a quiet cemetery behind, the **Sultan II Murat (Muradiye) Camii** (Map p292) is a peaceful oasis in a busy city. The mosque itself dates from 1426 and imitates the style of the Yeşil Cami, with painted decorations and a very intricate *mihrab*.

Beside the mosque are 12 **tombs** (admission €2; ☎ 8.30am-noon & 1-5pm) that date from the 15th and 16th centuries, including that of Sultan Murat II (r 1421–51) himself. Like other Islamic dynasties, the Ottoman one was not based on primogeniture, so any son of a sultan could claim the throne upon his father's death. As a result the designated heir

KARAGÖZ & HACIVAT

Bursa is regarded as the birthplace of the Turkish Karagöz shadow puppet theatre, a Central Asian tradition brought to Bursa, from where it spread throughout the Ottoman lands. The puppets – cut from camel hide and treated with oil to make them translucent, then brought to life with coloured paint – are manipulated behind a white cloth onto which their images are cast by back-lighting.

Legend has it that one of the foremen working on Bursa's Ulu Camii was a hunchback called Karagöz. He and his straight man Hacivat indulged in such humorous antics that the other workers abandoned their tasks to watch. This infuriated the sultan, who had the two miscreants put to death. Their comic routines were immortalised, however, in the Karagöz shadow puppet shows. In 2006 the pair was brought to further prominence in Ezel Akay's film comedy *Hacivat & Karagöz* (released as *Killing the Shadows* in English), starring Haluk Bilginer and Beyazıt Öztürk.

In Bursa, Şinasi Çelikkol has worked hard to keep the tradition of Karagöz puppetry alive and was instrumental in the setting up of the **Karagöz Sanat Evi** (Karagöz Art House; Çekirge Caddesi; ☎ 233 8429; admission €5; ☎ shows 11am Wed & Sat, 7.30pm Fri), opposite the Karagöz monument. It houses a small museum of puppetry with some magnificent examples from Uzbekistan. Şinasi Çelikkol's ethnographical collection is also on display here. If you would like to see the collection privately call into his shop – called, inevitably, Karagöz – in the Eski Aynalı Çarşı for an appointment.

(or strongest son) would often have his brothers put to death rather than risk civil war, and many of the occupants of tombs here, including all the *şehzades* (imperial sons), were killed by close relatives.

The custodian will open certain buildings for you, and it's well worth having a look at the beautiful decoration in some of the tombs.

Across the park from the mosque is the **Ottoman House Museum** (Osmanlı Evi Müzesi; admission €1.30; ☎ 10am-noon & 1-5pm Tue-Sun), which should now be open, although it's pot luck whether you find anyone there even during normal opening hours. On the western side of the tombs is the 15th-century **Muradiye Medresesi**, a theological seminary restored in 1951 as a tuberculosis clinic.

Also nearby is the **Ulumay Museum of Ottoman Folk Costumes & Jewellery** (Osmanlı Halk Kıyafetleri ve Takıları Müzesi; İkinçimurat Caddesi; admission €2.80; ☎ 9am-7pm), an impressive private collection opened in the restored 1475 Sair Ahmet Paşa *medrese* in 2004. Affable owner-curator Esat Ulumay, a former economist and sword-dancer now considered a leading expert in Ottoman costume, likes to take visitors round the displays personally.

A short walk uphill behind the Sultan Murat II Hamam (follow the signs) brings you to the restored Ottoman **Hüsni Züher Evi** (Uzunyol Sokak 3; admission €1.30; ☎ 10am-noon & 1-5pm Tue-Sun). Like the Ottoman House it's sporadically staffed, but worth a try anyway.

To get to the complex from Heykel catch a bus or dolmuş to Muradiye. Some buses from Çekirge to Heykel also pass this way.

CULTURE PARK

The **Culture Park** (Kültür Parkı; Map p292) lies north of the Muradiye complex but some way down the hill. The whole park was re-landscaped in 2006, and may take a couple of seasons to recover. As well as tea gardens and playgrounds, the park houses the **Archaeological Museum** (Arkeoloji Müzesi; admission €1.10; ☎ 8am-noon & 1-5pm Tue-Sun), a predominantly classical collection of finds from local sites with little in the way of context or English signage.

Across the road is **Atatürk House** (Atatürk Evi; admission free; ☎ 8.30am-noon & 1.30-5pm Tue-Sun), a swish 1895 chalet in a pretty garden, with restored rooms set up as they would have been during the Father of Turkey's occasional visits (complete with freaky stuffed dog).

You can reach the Culture Park from Heykel by any bus or dolmuş going to Altıparmak, Sigorta or Çekirge.

ÇEKİRGE

An old suburb west of the busy city centre, **Çekirge** is Bursa's spa centre. The warm mineral-rich waters that spring from the slopes of Uludağ have been famous for their curative powers since ancient times, and even today the ailing and infirm come here for several weeks at a time to soak. Most people stay in hotels that have their own mineral

THE SILK TRADE

Silkworm-raising is a local cottage industry, with a history almost as long as the city itself. Each April, villagers buy silkworms from the cooperatives, take them home and feed them on mulberry leaves. Once the worms have spun their cocoons they are brought to the Koza Han to be sold. If you visit in June or September, you may see some of the 14,000 villagers who engage in the trade haggling over huge sacks of precious white cocoons.

baths, although there are several independent *kaphlıcalar* (thermal baths) as well.

The **Yeni Kaplıca** (☎ 236 6955; Mudanya Caddesi 10; ☎ 6am–11pm), on the northwestern side of the Culture Park, was renovated in 1522 by Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent's grand vizier, Rüstem Paşa, on the site of a much older bath built by Justinian. Besides the Yeni (New) bath itself, you'll also find the Kaynarca (Boiling) baths, limited to women; and the Karamustafa baths, with facilities for family bathing. Last admission is at 10pm; the full massage costs €11.10 per half hour.

Perhaps the most attractive bath is the beautifully restored **Eski Kaplıca** (Map p292; ☎ 233 9300; admission €11.10; ☎ 7am–10.30pm) on Çekirge's eastern outskirts, managed by the next-door Kervansaray Termal Hotel. The bath is done out in creamy marble, and the hot rooms have plunge pools. You'll be charged for everything right down to the soap, so figure on spending up to €30 for the full bath, scrub and massage.

For the lowdown on *hamam* etiquette, see p651.

Çekirge's other main feature is the unusual **I Murat (Hüdavendigar) Camii**, behind the Ada Palas Otel. Its basic design is the early-Ottoman inverted 'T' plan, which first appeared in the Nilüfer Hatun *imareti* (soup kitchen) in İznik (p289). Here, however, the 'T' wings are barrel-vaulted rather than dome-topped. On the ground floor at the front are the rooms of a *zaviye* (dervish hostel). The 2nd-floor gallery on the facade, built as a *medrese*, is not evident from within except for the sultan's loge (box) in the middle at the back of the mosque.

The huge **sarcophagus of Sultan Murat I** (r 1359–89), who died at Kosovo quelling a rebellion by his Albanian, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Hungarian and Serbian subjects, can be viewed in the tomb across the street.

Çekirge's main street is I Murat Caddesi (Birinci Murat Caddesi). To get here, take a bus or dolmuş from Heykel or Atatürk Caddesi to Çekirge or SSK Hastanesi. Bus No 96 goes direct from the otogar to Çekirge.

Festivals & Events

The renowned **Uluslararası Bursa Festivali** (www.bursafestivali.org, in Turkish), Bursa's long-standing citywide music and dance festival, runs for three weeks in June and July.

Every November the **Karagöz Festivali** draws Karagöz shadow puppeteers (see p297), West-

ern puppeteers and marionette performers to Bursa for five days of festivities and performances.

Tours

Karagöz Travel Agency (Map p294-5; ☎ 221-8727; www.karagoztravel.com; Kapalıçarşı, Eski Aynalı Çarşı 4) offers an interesting range of local tours, including city tours and trips to Cumalıkızık (p302).

Sleeping

Though a little pricier than elsewhere, Çekirge (3km east of Central Bursa) offers the most attractive sleeping options in Bursa. The majority of hotels here have their own bathing facilities. You may find that your bathroom runs only mineral water, or there may be private or public bathing rooms in the basement. Baths are usually included in the room price, so do take advantage of them.

ÇEKİRGE & SOĞANLI

Yeşil Yayla Termal Oteli (☎ 239 6496; Selvi Sokak 6) This original 1950s hotel was being renovated at time of research, but will hopefully remain Çekirge's cheapest choice.

Çekirge Termal Oteli (☎ 233 9335; Hamam Sokak 25; s/d/tr €23/39/50) It won't win any design prizes, but as big orange blocks go, you could probably do worse. The rooms are functional rather than impressive, so make the most of the free baths.

Termal Hotel Gold 2 (☎ 235 6030; www.otelgold.com; I Murat Camii Aralığı; s/d/tr €28/50/67; ☎) This restored 1878 house next to the I Murat Camii is a great choice in a quiet location, decked out in full wooden interiors, 'period' furniture and deep red drapery. Baths and parking are included, and the roof terrace is a bonus.

Boyuğuzel Termal Oteli (☎ 239 9999; www.boyuğuzel.com; Uludağ Caddesi; s/d/tr €39/62/75; ☎) Mostly modern but with a few character touches around the lobby bar; rooms here are smart and well put-together. Rates include a daily mineral bath.

Atlas Termal Oteli (☎ 234 4100; www.atlasotel.com.tr; Hamamlar Caddesi 29; s/d/tr €45/67/84; ☎) Another restored building blending modern and traditional style, with lots of pine fittings and a sunny internal courtyard. Prices include thermal bath.

Hotel Çelik Palas (Map p292; ☎ 233 3800; Çekirge Caddesi 79; s/d €134/150; ☎) Overlooking the Culture Park midway between Çekirge and Heykel, this is a huge, partially Art Deco

AUTHOR'S CHOICE

Hotel Gönülferah (☎ 233 9210; www.gonluferahotel.com; I Murat Caddesi 24, Çekirge; s/d €100/150; ☎) It's not often you can use the word 'stunning' without hyperbole, but this is one of those times. A complete internal refit has turned the Gönülferah into a fantastic 'modern classic' design corridor, from the seraglio feel of the tiled corridors to the pile carpets, flatscreen TVs and tasseled bolsters in the rooms, and the added benefit of gorgeous valley views. Rates can come down by up to 50%, which is an absolute bargain. Full spa service is available.

hotel with a gorgeous indoor swimming pool, a *hamam*, two restaurants and rooms with all mod cons. Atatürk had it built right beside his house to accommodate his guests, piping the mineral water all the way from Çekirge. Unfortunately, you'll usually wind up staying in the modern annexe.

Otantik Club Hotel (☎ 211 3280; www.otantikclubhotel.com; Soğanlı; d €78, ste €130; ☎) One of Bursa's best hotels, tucked away in a botanical garden in the suburb of Soğanlı. All the rooms are gorgeous, but the suites, with the sun streaming through their stained-glass windows onto gorgeous Ottoman-style fabrics, are exquisite. Extras include a children's play area, bicycles for loan and a small cinema.

CENTRAL BURSA

Hotel Güneş (Map pp294-5; ☎ 222 1404; otelgunes@yahoo.com; İnebey Caddesi 75; s/d/tr/q with shared bathroom €13/23/25/34) In a restored Ottoman house, the friendly family-run Güneş is Bursa's best budget pension. The small, neat rooms have new laminate floors, the bathrooms have squat toilets and the walls have tourist-board photos of Turkey. There's a pleasant sitting area downstairs with lots of information for travellers.

Hotel Çeşmeli (Map pp294-5; ☎ 224 1511; Gümüşşeken Caddesi 6; s/d €25/38) Named for the ablutions fountain outside, the Çeşmeli is friendly, clean and conveniently located, plus the entire staff is female, making it an excellent choice for women travellers. The buffet breakfast is excellent, and you even get a minibar and hairdryer.

Hotel Artıç (Map pp294-5; ☎ 224 5505; www.artichotel.com; Ulu Camii Karşısı 95; s/d/tr €28/45/62; ☎) A de-

cent new arrival towards the western end of Atatürk Caddesi. Rooms are light and fairly spacious, though the décor's drab and the singles standard. The communal areas are best, with Ulu Camii views from the breakfast salon. Posted rates are considerably higher and not really worth it.

Hotel Efehan (Map pp294-5; ☎ 225 2260; www.efehan.com.tr; Gümüşşeken Caddesi 34; s/d €31/48/56) Reveling in a spot of modern style with plenty of marble, the Efehan has all-round appeal and is definitely good value for the central location. At certain times school-age staff may barely register your presence, but the grown-ups are more professional.

Safran Oteli (Map pp294-5; ☎ 224 7216; safran_otel@yahoo.com; Arka Sokak 4, Tophane; s/d €31/56; ☎) Opposite the Osman and Orhan tombs, the Safran is housed in a characterful restored house in a historic neighbourhood. The Ottoman trappings don't extend to the rooms, but it's an inviting place and has a decent restaurant next door.

Eating

As well as the legendary *İskender* kebab, Bursa is well known for *İnegöl köftesi*, a rich grilled meatball named after nearby İnegöl. Other culinary specialities include fresh fruit (especially *şeftali* – peaches – in season) and *kestane şekeri* (candied chestnuts).

RESTAURANTS

It's surprisingly hard to find a good *İskender* in Bursa. Prices start around €3.50 for *bir porsyon* (one serving) or €4.50 if you pig out and order *bir buçuk porsyon* (1½ portions).

Çiçek İzgara (Map pp294-5; ☎ 221 6526; Belediye Caddesi 15; mains €1.70-6; ☎ 11am-9.30pm) One block from Koza Parkı, behind the half-timbered *belediye*, the Çiçek grillhouse is bright and modern (good for lone women), with a 1st-floor salon to catch the flower-market action.

Şehr-i Safa (Map pp294-5; ☎ 222 8080; Atatürk Caddesi 29; meals from €2.80; ☎ 9am-10pm) Get high on fast food: this popular canteen occupies a high-rise terrace up above the trees and houses of Atatürk Caddesi, overlooking Heykel. Meal deals usually include a main, salad and soft drink.

Bursa Hakimevi (Map p292; ☎ 233 4900; Çekirge Caddesi 10; mains €2.50-5; ☎ noon-10pm) It's taken a while, but this restored Ottoman house on the edge of the Culture Park has finally reopened in tastefully low-key restaurant form. The

menu's unchallenging but the garden terrace is perfect.

Gogo's (Map pp294-5; ☎ 223 1113; Kirişçi Kız Sokak; mains €2.80-5.50; 🕒 10.30am-10.30pm) It may sound like a strip club, but Gogo's is actually a characterful backroad restaurant with a lovely terrace full of random baroque Ottoman odds and ends. Occasional art shows and events are held here.

Kebabçı İskender (Map pp294-5; ☎ 221 4615; Ünlü Caddesi 7; mains €4-16.50; 🕒 10am-10pm) This legendary kebab shop dates back to 1867 and its owners claim to be descendants of İskender Usta himself. However, at €7.50 a portion you're paying a *lot* for a bit of history. There are several branches around town, including on Atatürk Caddesi, in Zafer Plaza and a 'museum restaurant' out in Soğanlı.

Yüce Hünkar (Map p292; ☎ 327 8910; Yeşil Cami Yanı 17-19; meals €9-17; 🕒 11am-10pm) The Hünkar has a wonderful location overlooking a valley in front of the Yeşil Cami, which just about makes up for the tourist-trap prices.

Formerly part of Bursa's Jewish quarter, **Sakarya Caddesi** (Map p292) acquired new fame from one Arap Şükrü, who opened a restaurant here decades ago. It was so successful that his descendants followed him into the business, and the street now has no less than five family restaurants of the same name, plus the inevitable copycat competitors. The whole upper end of the narrow lane is crammed with tables, so you can wander down and check the buzz before making your choice. Fish is the speciality, starting around €6 per portion, but meat and mezes are also available. **Arap Şükrü Yılmaz** (Map p292; Sakarya Caddesi 4; 🕒 11am-11pm) is reliably popular.

The street is on the northern side of the Hisar district, just south of Altıparmak Caddesi. It's about 10 minutes' walk from the Ulu Cami, or you can take a Çekirge-bound bus or dolmuş from Heykel to the Çatal Fırın stop, opposite the Sabahettin Paşa Camii.

CAFÉS & QUICK EATS

Café Demlik (Map p292; ☎ 326 4483; Yeşil Caddesi 25; dishes from €1; 🕒 11am-9pm) This charming old house has been converted into an Ottoman-style eatery where you can sit on floor cushions and get stuck into *gözleme* (savoury pancakes).

Mahfel Mado (Map p292; ☎ 326 8888; Namazgah Caddesi 2; mains €2.50-4.50; 🕒 8am-11pm) Now part of the national Mado chain, Bursa's oldest café is open from breakfast to dessert. It also

has live music at its riverside terrace and an art gallery in the basement.

SELF-CATERING

Self-caterers should head straight for **Tahtakale Çarsısı** (Tahtakale Market; Map pp294-5) near Hotel Güneş, for a great choice of fresh fruit, vegetables and cheeses.

Drinking & Entertainment

After eating in Sakarya Caddesi, amble down the road to take in one of its smart bars or studenty cafés. The bar clientele is often heavily male, and many places post signs reading 'Damsız Girilmez' (no men without ladies). However, this applies mostly to groups of young Turkish guys.

Barantico (Map p292; ☎ 222 4049; Sakarya Caddesi 55; drinks from €1; 🕒 11am-10pm) Tucked away in a courtyard, this is the place to dabble in all things occult, with tarot readings, séances and the reading of coffee grains the order of the day.

Café M (Map p292; ☎ 220 9428; Altıparmak Caddesi 9/D) Modern, orange and generally rather cool, M attracts a hip, mixed crowd of fashionable young folk.

Piccolo Bar (Map p292; ☎ 223 5658; Sakarya Caddesi 16) A cosy pub that has live music most nights, and seems to be popular with cigar-puffers.

Set Café&Pub (Map p292; ☎ 225-1162; Köprü Üstü) Across the stream from the Mahfel Mado, this multi-terraced pub has live music, Fosters lager and an entertainingly confusing layout.

Laila (Map pp294-5; Atatürk Caddesi 91) Pitched as a one-stop nightlife shop, Laila has an impressive four floors of self-contained entertainment, including all-day restaurant, café, internet, live music room and disco.

Getting There & Away

Bursa's otogar is 10km north of the centre on the Yalova road. See opposite for information on getting from the otogar to the city centre and Çekirge. Information on some major bus routes and fares is provided in the table, opposite.

The fastest way to get to İstanbul (€5, 2½ to three hours) is to take a bus to Yalova, then the **İDO fast ferry** (☎ 444 4436; www.ido.com.tr) to İstanbul's Yenikapı docks. Get a bus that departs Bursa's bus terminal at least 90 minutes before the scheduled boat departure.

Karayolu ile (by road) buses to İstanbul drag you all around the Bay of İzmit and take

four to five hours. Those designated *feribot ile* (by ferry) take you to Topçular, east of Yalova, and then by ferry to Eskihişar, a much quicker and more pleasant way to go.

The table below lists daily services on selected routes from Bursa.

Getting Around

TO & FROM THE OTOGAR

City bus No 38 crawls the 10km between the otogar and the city centre (€0.85, 45 minutes). Returning to the otogar, it leaves from stop 4 on Atatürk Caddesi. Bus No 96 from the otogar goes direct to Çekirge (€0.85, 40 minutes).

A taxi from the otogar to the city centre costs around €8, to Çekirge about €9.

CITY BUS

Bursa's city buses (BOİ; €0.85) have their destinations and stops marked on the front and kerb side. A major set of yellow bus stops is lined up opposite Koza Parkı on Atatürk Caddesi. Catch a bus from stop 1 for Emir-sultan and Teleferik (Uludağ cable car); from stop 2 for Muradiye; and from stop 4 for Altıparmak and the Culture Park. You can also pick up buses to the Botanik Parkı (No 15) and Cumalıkızık (No 22) from here.

All city buses now run on a prepay system; you can buy tickets from kiosks or shops near most bus stops (look out for the BursaKart sign). If you're staying for a few days there are various multi-trip options available.

DOLMUŞ

In Bursa, cars and minibuses operate as dolmuşes. The destination is indicated by an

illuminated sign on the roof. The minimum fare is €0.70.

Dolmuşes go to Çekirge via the Culture Park, Eski Kaplıca and I Murat Camii from a major dolmuş terminal immediately south of Heykel. Other dolmuşes wait in front of Koza Parkı.

METRO

Bursa has an efficient modern metro system, but as it serves only the outskirts of town rather than the centre, it is seldom used by visitors.

TAXI

A ride from Heykel to Muradiye costs about €2, to Çekirge about €4.

AROUND BURSA

Uludağ

☎ 0224

You may be surprised to discover that Turkey's nascent ski industry flourishes even this far west, with Uludağ (Great Mountain; 2543m), on the outskirts of Bursa, at its heart. A *teleferik* (cable car) runs up to Sarıalan, 7km from the town of Uludağ and the main hotel area, which springs to life during the ski season from December to early April and then slumbers throughout the summer. Even if you don't plan to go skiing or do the three-hour hike to the summit, you might still want to head up to take advantage of the view and the cool, clear air of Uludağ National Park. With pine forests and distant snowy peaks, the scenery is almost reminiscent of Scotland, apart of course from the 30°C summer temperatures here, which would really leave the

SERVICES FROM BURSA'S OTOGAR

Destination	Fare	Duration	Distance	Frequency (per day)
Afyon	€10	5hr	290km	8
Ankara	€11.50	6hr	400km	hourly
Bandırma	€5	2hr	115km	12
Çanakkale	€11.50	5hr	310km	12
Denizli	€11.50	9hr	532km	several
Eskişehir	€5.50	2½hr	155km	hourly
İstanbul	€8.50	3hr	230km	frequent
İzmir	€8.50	5½hr	375km	hourly
İznic	€2.80	1½hr	82km	hourly
Kütahya	€7	3hr	190km	several
Yalova	€3.50	1¼hr	76km	every 30 min

Scots wondering what to wear under their kilts.

At the cable-car terminus at Sarialan there are a few snack and refreshment stands and a national-park camp site (usually full).

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Cable Car

Take a Bursa city bus from stop 1 or a dolmuş marked 'Teleferik' (€0.60) from behind the city museum to the lower terminus of the cable car, a 15-minute ride from Heykel. The cable cars (€3.50 return, 30 minutes) depart every 40 minutes between 8am and 10pm in summer and between 10am and 5pm in winter, wind and weather permitting. At busy times they'll leave whenever there are 30 people on board.

The cable car stops first at Kadiyayla, then continues upwards to the terminus at Sarialan (1635m). Stand at the rear of the car for the best views of Bursa as you go up.

Dolmuş

Dolmuşes from central Bursa to Uludağ (€2.80) and Sarialan (€4) run several times daily in summer and more frequently in winter.

At the 11km marker you must stop and pay an admission fee for the **national park** (€0.30, car & driver €1). The hotel zone is 11km up from the entrance.

The return ride can be difficult in summer, with little public transport about. In winter dolmuşes and taxis are usually eager to get at least some money before they head back down, so you may be able to get back to Bursa for less.

Cumalıkızık

☎ 0224 / pop 700

This gorgeous slice of Turkeyana on the slopes of Uludağ, about 16km east of Bursa, was settled 700 years ago by the Turcoman Kızıks and is chock-full of superbly preserved early Ottoman rural architecture. Wander around to enjoy the peaceful atmosphere, see brightly painted traditional houses amid their crumbling unrestored neighbours, or watch local children chase ducks as water run-off cascades down the narrow cobbled streets.

Sadly TV tourism has put paid to some of the quiet – Cumalıkızık was the location for the popular series *Kınalı Kar* (*Henna in the Snow*), and countless fans now drop by to see where the magic happens, with a resultant

flurry of souvenir stalls springing up to try and cash in.

SLEEPING & EATING

There are only two accommodation options in the village, both of which serve food. A couple of small cafés and informal *gözleme* joints provide alternative eating.

Konak Pansiyon (☎ 372 4869; d €28) Take the right fork up into the village to reach this beautifully restored guesthouse, which has just eight rooms, ranging from Ottoman-style floor mattresses to some *huge* double beds. The restaurant opposite offers standard kebabs, salads, *mezes*, and *gözleme* for lunch.

Mavi Boncuk (☎ 373 0955; www.cumalikizik-mavi-boncuk.com; Saldede Sokak; d/tr €34/50) Heading left instead of right, signs lead you to another old house, less meticulously restored but swamped in appealing gardens. The six rooms are simple but inviting, the food gets great reports, and there are plenty of sitting areas both indoors and out.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

From Bursa take bus No 22 (€0.85, 50 minutes) from stop 3 on Atatürk Caddesi. Buses leave roughly every two hours between 7.30am and 9pm. The last bus back to Bursa usually leaves at 8.30pm. More frequent dolmuşes (€0.70) also run to and from the Sentral Garaj, which is connected to Atatürk Caddesi by other dolmuşes and buses.

ESKİŞEHİR

☎ 0222 / pop 483,000

Ironically, Eskişehir (Old City) is a thoroughly modern town, built over the scant remnants of the Greco-Roman city of Dorylaeum. A small Ottoman district does still survive, but for the most part the city is staunchly new-built, and has a bustling atmosphere enlivened by a large student population.

Like Bursa, the area is rich in mineral springs, and the town centre has several hotels offering thermal water in their bathrooms, as well as innumerable *hamams* utilising the same springs. In 2003 Hamamyolu Caddesi was pedestrianised and landscaped, making the thermal district by far the most appealing place to stay.

Orientation & Information

Most people will want to stay around pedestrianised Hamamyolu Caddesi, which runs

north-south between Yunus Emre and İki Eylül Caddesi. Odunpazarı, the Ottoman old-town district, is just beyond the southern end of the street.

The train station is northwest of the centre, the otogar 3km east of the centre. Trams and buses run from the otogar to Köprübaşı, the central district just north of Hamamyolu Caddesi.

There are banks all over town, and several internet cafés at the south end of Hamamyolu Caddesi.

Sights & Activities

Eskişehir is famous for its 'white gold': **meerschau** (*luletaşı*), a light, porous white stone, which is mined in local villages and then shaped into pipes and other artefacts. To see some examples, head for the Yunus Emre Kültür Sarayı, next to the post office, which contains the **Lületaş Museum** (İki Eylül Caddesi). This informal collection includes fine old and new meerschau pipes and photos of the mining process. You may have to wait for someone to find the key, and having them hover while you look around hardly encourages you to linger.

Head south past the imposing yellow **Anadolu Üniversitesi Cumhuriyet Müzesi** (admission free; ☎ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat), a sepia-heavy collection of Atatürk memorabilia, to find *eski* Eskişehir, the old Ottoman quarter. At its centre, the large **Kurşunlu Camii** (1525) retains most of its *küllüye* (mosque complex), including an *aşevi* (cookhouse) bristling with chimneys and an *okuma odası* (reading room) with pillars that incorporate capitals from ancient Dorylaeum. It's surrounded by a pretty, flower-filled garden and old tombs.

The surrounding streets are lined with crumbling, colourful old Ottoman houses, many of which are being restored as part of an ongoing rejuvenation project. The **Baylerbeyi Konagi** (Kurşunlu Camii Sokak 28; ☎ 10am-noon) is supposedly open to the public, although you'll be lucky to find it unlocked.

Further west, the **Archaeological Museum** (Arkeoloji Müzesi; admission €1.10; Hasan Polatkan Bulvarı 86; ☎ 8.30am-noon & 1.30-5pm Mon-Fri) contains finds from Dorylaeum, including several crude mosaic floors and Roman statuettes of Cybele, Hecate and Mithras.

While in Eskişehir you may want to take a dip in one of the thermal baths around the north end of Hamamyolu Caddesi. Most of

them are men-only, but the **Kadinlar Kaplica** (admission €3; ☎ 5.30am-10pm), near the Has Termal Hotel, is open to women. And it gets the whole range: from breast-feeding mamas to arthritic old ladies.

Sleeping

Not many people stay in Eskişehir, but if you do want to linger, by far the best places to stay are the hotels with thermal baths in and around Hamamyolu Caddesi.

Termal Otel Sultan (☎ 231 8371; Hamamyolu Caddesi 1; s/d/tr €18/25/31) Everything about the Sultan looks a bit worn, but the bathrooms are clean and it's comfortable enough.

Has Hotel Termal (☎ 221 4030; www.hasotel.com; Hamamyolu Caddesi 7; s/d/tr €25/34/39; ☎ ☎) Unless you're a bull, or have some similar aversion to the colour red, the Has is a decent option, particularly the marble *kuvvet* (bathtub) for those long soaks in thermal water. Use of the in-house *hamam* costs €11.

Uysal Otel (☎ 221 4353; Asarçıklı Caddesi 7; s/d €28/39) Just off Hamamyolu Caddesi; the bedrooms here don't really live up to the flashy atrium, and the so-called 'minibars' are laughable, but it still has the edge on the Sultan, at least. Guests can use the *hamam* next door.

Eating

Other than the usual kebab and grill places, Eskişehir is virtually devoid of interesting restaurants – perhaps student budgets don't run to such luxuries.

Şomine Et Lokantası (☎ 220 8585; Köprübaşı Caddesi 18; mains €1.70-7; ☎ 9am-10pm) Smart, shiny and boasting an open-sided first-floor salon for warm evenings, this is the pick of the cafeteria restaurants, with an absolutely massive menu of Turkish dishes.

Osmanlı Evi (☎ 221 5460; Yeşil Efendi Sokak 22; mains €2-10; ☎ 11.30am-9pm) The Ottoman House was one of the first in Odunpazarı to be restored, and now functions as a fine café-restaurant. It's up a side street behind the Kurşunlu Camii.

Luckily, self-caterers fare much better than gourmands: there are numerous *pastirmacis* (delicatessens) piled high with local cheeses, *sucuk* (garlic sausage) and *salam* (salami), and even more *pastanes* (patisseries) for dessert.

Shopping

Eskişehir is the place to come to buy meerschau pipes, as well as cigarette-holders,

prayer beads and other items made out of *luletaşı*. Some of the hotels sell meerschaum but you would probably be better off looking in local shops.

Eskişehir is also stuffed full of sweet shops. If you want to try something local go for rolls of *med helvası* or chunks of *nuga helvası* (two types of nougat).

Getting There & Away

Like Bursa, all official city transport runs on a prepay system – buy tickets (€0.70) from a booth or kiosk before you travel. Trams, city buses and dolmuşes serve the vast otogar; look for signs saying 'Terminal' or 'Yeni Otogar'. A taxi from Köprübaşı costs around €3.

From the otogar there are regular buses to Afyon (€6.70, three hours), Ankara (€6.70, 3¼ hours), Bursa (€6.70, 2½ hours), İstanbul (€11, six hours), İznik (€7, three hours) and Kütahya (€3.50, 1½ hours).

Eskişehir **train station** (☎ 255 5555) is an important railway terminus, and there are various services from İstanbul (four to six hours) and Ankara (2½ to four hours) throughout the day and night.

AROUND ESKİŞEHİR Seyitgazi

☎ 0222 / pop 3300

This small town 43km southeast of Eskişehir is dominated by a hill on the top of which stands the vast 13th-century **Battalgazi mosque complex** (admission €1.10). The complex combines Seljuk and Ottoman architecture, and includes pieces of marble presumably taken from the ruins of

the Romano-Byzantine town of Nacolea. The mosque commemorates Seyit/Seyyid Battal Gazi, a warrior who fought for the Arabs against the Byzantines and was killed in 740. His tomb sits in a side chamber off the main mosque; it's so long it resembles a drag racer, although Battal Gazi himself was of normal height.

Features of the *küllüye* include an *aşevi* whose eight chimneys pierce the skyline; a *semahane* (dance hall) where dervishes would have gathered; and a *medrese* containing several grim *çilehanes*, or 'places of suffering' – cells in which the devout lived (and died) like hermits with only their Qurans for company. Numerous calligraphic inscriptions, mostly singing the praises of Battal Gazi, are also visible around the walls, with convenient translations for non-Arabic speakers.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

There are regular Seyitgazi Belediyesi buses from Eskişehir to Seyitgazi (€2, 45 minutes). Some buses from Eskişehir to Afyon also pass through.

PHRYGIAN VALLEY

The rock-hewn monuments in the so-called Phrygian Valley (Frig Vadisi) between Eskişehir and Afyon are some of the most impressive relics to survive from Phrygian times. It's not easy to explore them without a car, although certain parts can be reached by bus and/or taxi (see p306). Hitching would not be a good idea since vehicles are very thin on the ground.

THE PHRYGIANS

Emigrants from Thrace to central Anatolia around 2000 BC, the Phrygians spoke an Indo-European language, used an alphabet similar to Greek and established a kingdom with its capital at Gordion (p454), 106km west of Ankara. The empire flourished under its most famous king, Midas (c 725–675 BC), one of many Phrygian monarchs to have that name, until it was overrun by the Cimmerians (676–585 BC).

You might not think it, considering they lived in rock dwellings, but the Phrygians were a sophisticated, cultured people who set great store by the arts. Phrygian culture was based on that of the Greeks, but with strong Neo-Hittite and Urartian influences, and they're credited with inventing the frieze, embroidery and numerous musical instruments, including cymbals, double clarinet, flute, lyre, syrinx (Pan pipes) and triangle.

Phrygian civilisation was at its most vigorous around 585 to 550 BC, when the rock-cut monuments at Midas Şehri – the most impressive Phrygian stonework still in existence – were carved. Relics from the period can be seen in museums all over Anatolia, providing fascinating insights into a culture that bridged the gap between 'primitive' and 'advanced' amid the scrub and rocks of central Turkey.

It's well worth coming out here even if you're not much interested in the Phrygians, since this is a beautiful part of Turkey, virtually untouched by tourism. The scenery is as spectacular as anything in Cappadocia and can be even more varied, with inviting picnic places on all sides. To catch the unspoilt countryside at its best, visit in early June, when the opium poppies bloom in white and purple patches amid the green-grey-brown surrounds.

Midas Şehri

What archaeologists call Midas Şehri (Midas City) is actually the village of **Yazılıkaya** (Inscribed Rock), 32km south of Seyitgazi. Don't confuse this Yazılıkaya with the one near the Hittite capital of Hattuşa (p465), to the east of Ankara.

The sights at Yazılıkaya are clustered around a huge rock. Tickets (admission €1.10) are sold at the local library, in front of the steps leading up to the site; if your German's up to it you can also buy or borrow an excellent map-guide (€2.80) detailing 91 separate points of interest.

The so-called **Midas Tomb** is a 17m-high relief covered in geometric patterns, which is carved into the soft tufa and resembles the facade of a temple. At the bottom is a niche where an effigy of Cybele would be displayed during festivals. Inscriptions in the Phrygian alphabet – one bearing Midas' name – ring the tomb.

Opposite the inscribed rock is another huge rock riddled with caves that is believed to have been a **monastery**.

If you walk behind the Midas Tomb the path winds past worn steps leading down to a tunnel, then passes a second **smaller tomb**, high up in the rock, which was probably never finished. The path continues upwards until it emerges on top of the rock, which was an **acropolis**. Here you will find a stepped stone, labelled an **altar**, which may have been used for sacrifices, and traces of walls and roads. Even with a map following the paths can be confusing, but the main features are easy to spot.

As you head back down the steps notice a portion of the **ancient road**, identifiable from the wagon-wheel ruts worn into the rock.

Kümbet

Heading 15km west from Midas Şehri you'll come to the village of Kümbet, which boasts

a Seljuk *kümbet* (tomb) with old Byzantine marble carvings reused around its doorway and a storks' nest on the roof. Near the *kümbet* is a rocky outcrop into which are cut several magnificent **rock fireplaces**. Also nearby is the **Arslanlı Mezarı** (Lion Tomb), another rock-cut Phrygian tomb, which has lions carved into its pedimental facade.

Other Sites

The Phrygian Valley separates itself neatly into two sections, the northern area near Kütahya and the southern sector around Afyon, though you could conceivably travel its entire length in a day if you had your own transport.

Most of the sites are along dirt tracks and some can be hard to find, even when they're right beside you. Navigation should slowly be getting better in the southern Afyon section, as local authorities have designated the area a 'Turizm Kuşağı Yolu' (Tourism Zone Route) and embarked on a programme of road improvements along its 170km length.

We've organised the sites here in north-south order for ease of reference and a straightforward drive, but you can tackle the routes any way you like. Remember, these are just a selection of the treasures hidden in them there hills, so the more you explore, the more you'll find!

Heading south from Seyitgazi you will find yourself on a road with brown tourist signs pointing to left and right. One on the right leads 2km along a rough track to the **Doğankale** (Falcon Castle) and **Deveboyukale** (Camel-Height Castle), both of them plugs of rock riddled with caves that were obviously once inhabited.

A little further south another rough track to the right leads 1km to the **Mezar Anıtı** (Monumental Tomb), where a restored tomb resembling a tiny temple is cut into another chunk of rock.

Further south again you'll see yet another temple-like tomb, called the **Küçük Yazılıkaya** (Little Inscribed Stone), cut into the rock at Arezastis.

At the small village of Doğer, which boasts a *han* (caravanserai) dating back to 1434 (usually locked), the two tourist routes come together. From here, dirt tracks run out to beautiful, lily-covered **Emre Gölü** (Lake Emre), a perfect picnic place overlooked by a small stone building once used by dervishes, and a rock formation with a rough staircase called

the Kirkmerdiven Kayalıkları (Rocky Place with 40 Stairs). The dirt track then runs on to **Bayramaliler** and **Üçlerkaya**s where you can see dozens of the crazy rock formations called *peribacalar* (fairy chimneys), just like the more famous examples in Cappadocia.

After Bayramaliler you come to the **Göynüş Vadisi** (Göynüş Valley), where there are fine Phrygian rock tombs decorated with lions (Aslantaş) and snakes (Yılantaş). However, the valley is more easily accessible from the main Eskişehir to Afyon road (2km).

Continuing southeast, be sure to stop at **Ayazini** village, where there was once a rock settlement called Metropolis. Here there are more cave-riddled rock formations like those in Cappadocia. In particular, look out for a huge church with its apse and dome cut clear out of the rock face, and a series of rock-cut tombs with carvings of lions, suns and moons.

There are a number of sights around the village of Alanyurt, including some more caves at **Selimiye** and fairy chimneys at **Kurtyurdu**. Finally, another heavy concentration can be found around Karakaya, Seydiler and İncehisar; one must is the bunker-like rock **Seydiler Castle** (Seydiler Kalesi).

Getting There & Around

You really need a car to explore this area properly. The usual starting points are Afyon and Eskişehir, or it's just as easy to head east from Kütahya. Brown signs show the way to many sites, but they're not always as clear as they could be, so be prepared to get lost quite regularly. For the southern sites, it's worth picking up the excellent pictorial brochure and map provided at the Afyon tourist office (p312).

If you don't want to rent a car, you could hire a taxi from any fair-sized town in the region; Seyitgazi and İhsaniye are good bets and conveniently located. Rates start around €25 for a short tour, but are entirely negotiable depending on where you want to go and how long for.

It would be possible to visit Göynüş and Ayazini by hopping off buses between Eskişehir and Afyon, then walking or hitching (with all due caution) the last few kilometres. It is also possible to visit the area around İhsaniye and Doğer by taking a dolmuş or minibus north from Afyon. However, most other sites were inaccessible by public transport at the time of writing.

KÜTAHYA

☎ 0274 / pop 167,000

Like İznik, Kütahya is known for its coloured tiles (*çini*) and pottery. Where İznik claims the artistic high ground, however, Kütahya's factories take pride in the prosaic. Industrial ceramics are big business here, overshadowing the collectible trade. Even on the decorative side there's no kind of snobbery, with tiles cropping up on facades, floors, fountains, car parks and anywhere else they fit.

As a town, too, Kütahya is much nearer Bursa's modern urban energy than İznik's traditional rustic languor, throwing up enough hip cafés and bars to stay street-smart. History lovers are also catered to, with an imposing hilltop fortress and a charming old quarter, lined with crumbling Ottoman-era mansions.

The town's other big hitter is the fine Dumlupınar Fair (Fuarı), Turkey's largest handicrafts fair, held each year in the fairgrounds near the otogar.

History

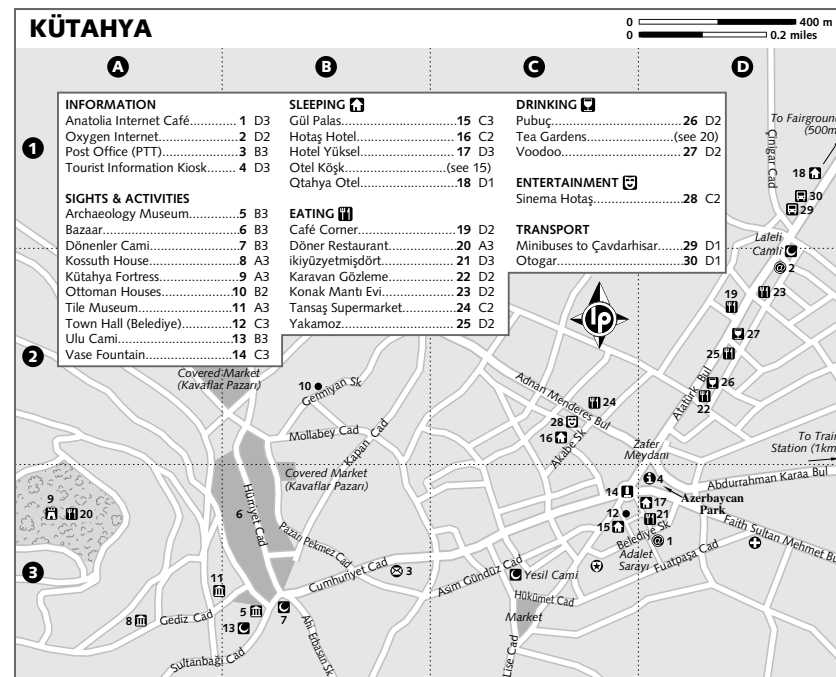
Kütahya's earliest known inhabitants were Phrygians. In 546 BC it was captured by the Persians, and then saw the usual succession of rulers, from Alexander the Great to the kings of Bithynia and the emperors of Rome and Byzantium, who called the town Cotiaem.

The first Turks to arrive were the Seljuks, in 1182. They were pushed out by the Crusaders, but returned to found the Emirate of Germiyan (1302–1428), with Kütahya as its capital. The emirs cooperated with the Ottomans in nearby Bursa, and when the last emir died his lands were incorporated in the growing Ottoman Empire. When Tamerlane swept in at the beginning of the 15th century, he upset everyone's apperception, made Kütahya his headquarters for a while and then went back to where he came from.

After Selim I took Tabriz in 1514, he brought all of its ceramic artisans to Kütahya and İznik and set them to work. Since then the two towns have consistently rivalled one another in the quality of their tilework.

Orientation

A huge vase-shaped fountain in the middle of a roundabout marks Zafer (Belediye) Meydanı, the town's main square, which is overlooked by the *vilayet* (provincial government building) and *belediye* (town hall). The



otogar, Kütahya Çiğnar (Tile Station – you'll see why), is less than 1km northeast of Zafer Meydanı, along Atatürk Bulvarı. Hotels, restaurants, banks with ATMs and tile shops cluster around the square.

The town's main commercial street is Cumhuriyet Caddesi, which runs southwest from the *vilayet*, past the PTT and on to the Ulu Cami.

Information

Anatolia Internet Café (Belediye Caddesi 9; per hr €0.50; ☎ 9am-midnight)

Oxygen Internet (Atatürk Bulvarı; per hr €0.50; ☎ 9am-midnight)

Tourist information kiosk (☎ 223 6213; Zafer Meydanı; ☎ 9am-1pm & 2-6pm) Little English spoken but a good map supplied and plenty of brochures.

Sights & Activities

The turreted **Ulu Cami**, at the far end of Cumhuriyet Caddesi, has been restored several times since it was built in 1410, and features some minor anachronisms such as modern doors, windows and a digital clock. Take a look at the fine marble panels incorporated

into its ablutions fountain and the lovely sunburst woodwork above the side door.

The **Archaeology Museum** (Arkeoloji Müzesi; ☎ 224 0785; admission €1.10; ☎ 9am-12.30pm & 1.30-5pm Tue-Sat) is next door to the Ulu Cami in the Vacidiye Medresesi, which was built by Umur bin Savcı of the Germiyan family in 1314. The centrepiece of the collection is a magnificent Roman sarcophagus from Aizanoi's Temple of Zeus (p309), carved with scenes of battling Amazons, but there are also finds from the Phrygian Valley and some interesting Roman votive stelae.

The **Tile Museum** (Çini Müzesi; ☎ 223 6990; admission €1.10; ☎ 9am-12.30pm & 1.30-5pm Tue-Sun) is housed in the İmaret Camii on the opposite side of the Ulu Cami, beneath a magnificent dome. Most of the collection consists of Kütahya pottery, including some work by the master craftsman Hacı Hafız Mehmet Emin Efendi, who worked on İstanbul's Haydarpaşa station. In deference to the town's main rival, there are also some wonderful İznik tiles and a lot of beautiful but unlabelled embroidery. To one side is the 14th-century, blue-tiled tomb of one Yakup Bey.

Nearby is the **Dönenler Cami**, which was built in the 14th century and later served as a *mevlevihane* or home to a group of Mevlevi dervishes. Inside it has a wonderful, galleried *semahane* with paintings of tall Mevlevi hats on the columns.

Northeast of the Ulu Cami is a sprawling **bazaar** area and, tucked away nearby, Germiyan Sokak, where restored **Ottoman houses** rub shoulders with their crumbling fellows. To find the bazaar head north up Hürriyet Caddesi.

Follow the signs behind the Ulu Cami to **Kossuth House** (Kossuth Evi; ☎ 223 6214; admission €1.10; ☎ 8am-noon & 1.30-5.30pm Tue-Sun), also called Macar Evi (Hungarian House). It's roughly 250m straight on up the hill; look for the wood-and-stone house on the left, marked by plaques in Turkish and Hungarian.

Lajos Kossuth (1802–94) was a prominent member of the Hungarian parliament. In 1848, chafing at Hapsburg rule from Vienna, he and others rose in revolt, declaring Hungary an independent republic in 1849. When Russian troops intervened on the side of the Austrians he was forced to flee. The Ottomans offered him a refuge, and he lived in Kütahya from 1850 to 1851.

The house is a little dusty, but it's still fun to peer into the various rooms and get an idea of how upper-class Kütahyans lived in the mid-19th century. The 1st-floor veranda, overlooking a rose garden with a statue of Kossuth, offers lovely views of the encircling hills.

Looming above the town, **Kütahya fortress** was built in two stages by the Byzantines, then restored and used by the Seljuks, the Germiyan emirs and the Ottomans. The latest building work seems to have taken place in the 15th century, the most recent restoration in the 1990s. One look at the remains of dozens of round towers makes it clear what a formidable obstacle this would have been to any army. It's a long walk up to the fortress so you might want to take a taxi (around €3). Afterwards you can walk back down along a steep, scree-covered path that eventually deposits you near the Ulu Cami.

Sleeping

Kütahya isn't exactly overrun with accommodation options, but you can generally find a bed without having to resort to the worst cheapies.

Hotel Yüksel (☎ 212 0111; Afyon Caddesi 2; s/d/tr with shared bathroom €12/15/21, s/d/tr €18/24/34) Neat rooms and bright linen distinguish this fairly friendly hotel opposite the clock tower. Breakfast isn't included, but prices are flexible and there's a bakery right next door.

Otel Köşk (☎ 216 2024; Lise Caddesi 1; s/d/tr €14/19.50/28) Despite the tiled reception and spacious rooms, the Köşk isn't as nice as the Yüksel, suffering from dodgy showers, plywood beds and pink walls. Breakfast is included, but the dining room is so dim you might prefer to head out.

Hotaş Hotel (☎ 224 8990; Menderes Caddesi 5; s/d €23/34/45) A step up in quality from the cheaper places: an attractive lobby, cable TV, floral counterpanes, sauna, souvenir shop and an industrial-size lift all provide a boost.

Gül Palas (☎ 216 2325; Zafer Meydanı; s/d/tr €23/36/45) The tiled facade can't compete with the *bel-ediyeye* opposite, but the Gül Palas definitely takes design honours over any hotel in town, inside and out – who couldn't love a lobby with chandeliers and a rock garden? The rooms and facilities are equally high quality.

Qtahya Otel (☎ 226 2010; www.q-tahya.com; Atatürk Bulvarı 56; s/d/tr €28/45/62) If tiles are just a bit too retro for you, this ultramodern sleepery opposite the otogar might float your décor boat. Western hotel standards reign, and the roof restaurant's an asset.

Eating

Kütahya is a good place to do a deal on a döner, with dozens of shops and restaurants vying for business. A basic kebab can start at €0.40, while a set meal with drink, salad, side order and dessert could be as little as €1.40. There's a good range of other options, especially down Atatürk Bulvarı.

RESTAURANTS

Konak Mantı Evi (☎ 223 9209; Hafız Müezzinz Sokak 3/A; dishes €0.50-2; ☎ 8am-8pm) Omelettes, breakfasts, *börek* and of course *mantı* (ravioli) are the mainstays at this little café. It's done up like the outside of an Ottoman street, so you can get that street-seating feel whatever the weather.

Karavan Gözleme (☎ 226 4045; Atatürk Bulvarı 12/A; set meals €1.10-4.50; ☎ 9am-10pm) It may serve 15 types of *gözleme*, from *haşhaşlı* (poppy-seed) to chocolate, but the Karavan is more than just a pancake place, offering a full menu of snacks and mains. Pop upstairs to find a

small terrace with kitschy fake greenery and an inviting *nargileh* (water pipe) lounge with wireless internet.

Café Corner (☎ 224 0078; Atatürk Bulvarı 53/B; dishes €1.70-5; ☎ 9.30am-9.30pm) One of the quirkiest manifestations of coffeehouse culture outside İstanbul, resplendent in fuchsia tones with a logo suspiciously close to Chanel. Light meals, flavoured coffees, music, TV and wi-fi are the order of the day.

Döner Restaurant (☎ 226 2176; mains €2.50-6; ☎ 11am-9pm) Inside the ruins of the fortress, the Döner used to be a revolving nightclub (no, really), but is now simply the most atmospheric eatery in Kütahya. Run by the Karavan chain, the food's decent and the garden area's superb, dotted with hammocks, chimeneas (ceramic with a bulbous base and chimney that is filled with charcoal for use as a heater) and one perfect spot on a turret. And yes, it does still revolve occasionally.

Yakamoz (☎ 223 0926; Atatürk Bulvarı; mains from €3; ☎ 11am-11pm) This vast café-restaurant, with indoor and outdoor tables, is extremely popular with young Kütahyalis. Its extensive menu covers everything from pizzas to Turkish puddings.

ikiyüzyetmişdört (☎ 224 0200; Belediye Sokak 3; mains €2.80-6; ☎ 6pm-11pm) About as sophisticated as a kebab restaurant can ever get, the '274' is favoured by men in suits for its indoor charcoal grill, copious mezes, extensive wine list and enclosed outdoor terrace. Try the sausage-studded special kebab.

SELF-CATERING

For fresh fruit, vegetables and picnic supplies, browse the open-air **market** up the hill on Lise Caddesi; it's at its liveliest on Saturday. Alternatively, there's a **Tansaş supermarket** (Adnan Menderes Bulvarı; ☎ 9am-10pm).

Drinking & Entertainment

Atatürk Bulvarı is Kütahya's drinking strip, with a handful of venues crammed together around Yakamoz. On busy nights they may stay open until 1 or 2am.

Voodoo (☎ 226 4146; Atatürk Bulvarı 26) The most publike of the bars, complete with wooden beams, 0.7-litre beers and clear blues leanings.

Pubuç (Atatürk Bulvarı) Proclaiming itself Kütahya's prime spot for 'public drink and dance', this is more of a bar-club, with a big dancefloor.

There are several good **tea gardens** around Zafer Meydanı and Azerbaijan Parkı, but the best views are from the outdoor cafés inside Kütahya fortress.

The three-screen **Sinema Hotaş** (☎ 216 6767; admission €3.50) is opposite the Hotaş Hotel.

Shopping

You can find Kütahya pottery in just about any Turkish souvenir shop, but it's still fun to browse the small stores around Zafer Meydanı. Beside the usual tourist stuff, shops have fine, midrange pieces in a variety of designs, and often a few masterworks for connoisseurs. Out of town towards Eskişehir or Afyon, you'll find vast porcelain warehouses geared to the coach-party trade.

Getting There & Away

Kütahya is a provincial capital with a busy otogar. There are regular services to Afyon (€3.50, 1½ hours), Ankara (€10, five hours), Bursa (€7.50, three hours), Eskişehir (€3.50, 1½ hours), İstanbul (€13.50, six hours) and İzmir (€11, six hours).

Minibuses to Çavdarhisar, for Aizanoi (€2.50, one hour), leave from the local bus stand next to the otogar.

AIZANOI (ÇAVDARHİSAR)

☎ 0274 / pop 4100

The pretty but fading farming village of Çavdarhisar, about 60km southwest of Kütahya, is home to c, the site of one of Anatolia's best-preserved Roman temples. Long after the Romans had vanished, a group of Çavdar Tartars used the site as a citadel, giving the village its present name: 'Castle of the Çavdars'.

There are virtually no facilities here, but it shouldn't take much more than an hour or two to have a good look at all the ruins.

Temple of Zeus

The great **Temple of Zeus** (admission €1.10; ☎ 8am-5.30pm) dates from the reign of Hadrian (r AD 117–138), and was dedicated to the worship of Zeus (Jupiter) and the Anatolian fertility goddess Cybele.

The temple stands in proud isolation on a raised hill in a bare field, founded on a broad terrace created to serve as its precinct. Like some ancient Hollywood set, the north and west faces of the temple have their double rows of Ionic and Corinthian columns intact,

UŞAK MUSEUM THEFTS

In 2006 Turkey's cultural establishment was shaken when an inspection of the Uşak museum's Lydian Hoard collection revealed that certain priceless items had been removed and replaced with copies. The story made headlines instantly, especially when nine people (including the director of the museum) were arrested in connection with the crime, and despite threats of 28-year sentences, so far no sign of the original pieces has been uncovered. Uşak wasn't the only place to suffer, either: subsequent checks revealed a similar switch incident at the much more high-profile Topkapı Palace in Istanbul.

Ironically, this isn't the first time these objects were 'stolen' – the original 1960s American excavators removed them from tumuli in the valley of the Gediz River and promptly dispatched them back to the States, where they stayed until 1993, when a landmark court ruling that they should be returned to their country of origin. As many commentators have observed, it's ironic that Turkey should put so much effort into retrieving its lost treasures, only to lose them from its own museums.

but the south and east rows have fallen into a picturesque jumble. The three columns at the northeastern corner were toppled by the disastrous Gediz earthquake of 1970, but have since been re-erected. The cella (inner room) walls are intact enough to give a good impression of the whole. An enclosure beside the ticket office holds some of the best pieces of sculpture found here, and a small exhibition hut has displays, diagrams and photos of the original 1926 excavations. Sadly, as these first digs were undertaken by German archaeologists, the informative explanatory captions and the accompanying booklet are in German or Turkish only!

If the ticket office is empty, the custodian will catch up with you to sell you a ticket. He'll also take you into the cryptlike sanctuary of Cybele beneath the temple, and may be able to show you around the various ruins nearby, assuming there are no other visitors around.

Other Ruins

When you've finished at the temple, leave the precinct and turn left then right along a path into the fields opposite the temple. You'll quickly come across the remnants of a 2nd-century AD **Roman bath**, then the more substantial ruins of a splendid **theatre** and **stadium**. The stones have crumbled badly and now provide a home for innumerable wheatears and the odd woodpecker. Look out on the right for a stretch of wall with the names of ancient Olympic winners inscribed in medallions.

Çavdarhisar village is dotted with chunks of fallen Roman masonry. Black-on-yellow signs also point to more specific sights such

as a **Roman bridge** over a small stream (go down beside it and you'll see that much of the stonework dates back to Hadrian's reign). Follow the signs into the village and you'll come to the remains of a 2nd-century AD **bath complex**. The shed contains a fine mosaic pavement, mostly covered with geometric patterns but also with a picture of a satyr and maenad. It's kept locked, so you'll need the temple custodian to let you in; he'll also throw some water on the mosaic to bring out the colours, which should probably not be encouraged.

Another sign near the temple points to what it calls a colonnaded street but which is probably the remains of the Roman **forum**, or marketplace, with fine standing columns and a marble pavement. Nearby is an unusual **circular market building** with a little turret reconstructed beside it, which dates back to 301 AD, during the reign of Diocletian. Look closely at the walls and you'll see fixed prices for market goods inscribed in Roman numerals, an attempt to combat inflation. One of these prices apparently reads 'two horses for a strong slave, three slaves for a horse, both equalling 30,000 dinars'. This is one of the earliest known buildings of its type.

There's some English signage around these sites, but they're hopeless translations of the Turkish and, as at the temple, the German captions are far better.

Getting There & Away

Çavdarhisar is on the Kütahya–Gediz road. There are minibuses to Çavdarhisar from Kütahya otogar (€2.50, one hour) or you can take a Gediz or Emet bus, which passes through Çavdarhisar; tell the driver you're

going to Aizanoi and they'll drop you right at the site.

UŞAK

☎ 0276 / pop 137,000

Few visitors stop in the provincial town of Uşak, but those who do can seek out a pair of unexpected treats, best appreciated on an overnight stay.

The first is the fine collection of Lydian art, gold and silver treasures on display in the **Archaeology Museum** (Doğan Sokak; admission €1.10; ☎ 8.30am–noon & 1.30–5pm Tue–Sun), just off the main square. The beautiful silver bowls, incense burners, jugs and vases were discovered in tumuli around the Gediz river valley, and date back to the second half of the 6th century BC. Even more evocative are the eerily Egyptian-style wall paintings from the tombs. For added spice, there's still the whiff of recent scandal at the place – see the boxed text, opposite.

At the far end of the town centre, past the 1406 Ulu Camii, discerning sleepers can find Uşak's second selling point, the **Otel Dülgeroğlu** (☎ 227 3773; Cumhuriyet Meydanı 1; s/d €39/56, ste €73; ☎). Housed in a *han* designed by a 19th-century French architect, it's a superbly conceived and executed project, offering extremely comfortable rooms in a gallery overlooking a courtyard pierced by convincing fake palm trees. Rooms fill up with business travellers midweek but are empty at weekends.

Getting There & Away

Frequent minibuses connect Uşak with Afyon (€4.50, 1½ hours), and there are periodic buses from İzmir (€7.50, 2½ hours). If you

get dropped on the highway (Dörtyöl) follow the signs for the *şehir merkezi* (city centre); it's about 1.5km to the Otel Dülgeroğlu. From the otogar, a taxi should cost around €3.

AFYON

☎ 0272 / pop 129,000

Sometimes known by its full name of Afyonkarahisar, modern Afyon is a provincial capital lounging in the shadow of its ancient castle, which occupies a vast rock at the back of town. If you can tear your gaze away from this mighty citadel, Afyon also boasts a fine museum, a magnificent mosque and some original Ottoman housing.

Despite its reputation as a conservative town, Afyon has a young population and is governed by people who like to get in on the ground floor of any trend. It's one of the first towns in Turkey to have recycling bins on every street corner, cycle racks, and posters exhorting its citizens to abandon their cigarettes (not that anyone takes much notice of that one).

Turkey's current president, Ahmet Necdet Sezer, was born in Afyon. His name is now attached to the local research hospital and one campus of Afyon Kocatepe University.

History

As with so many Anatolian towns, Afyon's history started some 3000 years ago. After occupation by the Hittites, Phrygians, Lydians and Persians, it was settled by the Romans then the Byzantines. Following the Seljuk victory at Manzikert in 1071, Afyon was governed by the Seljuk Turks. The important Seljuk vizier Sahip Ata took direct control of

OPIATE OF THE PEOPLE

Afyon's proper name, Afyonkarahisar, actually means Black Fortress of Opium, an epithet that not only characterises the castle's appearance but also tips its hat to the area's main cash crop. As unlikely as it may seem, the peaceful countryside around Afyon produces more than a third of the world's legally grown pharmacy-grade opium, and for two weeks in mid-June the fields dance with white and mauve *haşhaşlı çiçekleri* (hash or opium poppies).

The trade is of course strictly regulated, and Afyon is one of only 12 provinces permitted to cultivate the poppies. Most growers are small-scale farmers who use the flowers as a convenient spring crop to bridge the gap between autumn grain harvests. It's not easy work, either: it will take an average labourer 72 hours to pick and process enough poppies to produce 1kg of opium. The end product is then bought by the government and used to manufacture morphine.

Visitors, too, can benefit from the opium trade: Afyon is renowned for its *kaymak* (thick cream), which is said to be so good because the cows from which it comes have been grazing on the magic poppies. So if you find yourself jonesing for another dairy fix, you'll know why...

the town, and it was called Karahisar-i Sahip through Ottoman times (1428–1923).

During the War of Independence, Greek forces occupied the town on their push towards Ankara. During the Battle of Sakarya, in late August 1921, the republican armies under Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) stopped the invading force within earshot of Ankara in one of history's longest pitched battles. The Greek forces retreated and dug in for the winter near Eskişehir and Afyon.

On 26 August 1922 the Turks began their counteroffensive along an 80km front, advancing rapidly on the Greek army. Within days Atatürk had set up his headquarters in Afyon's *belediye* building and had half the Greek army surrounded at Dumlupınar, 40km to the west. This decisive battle destroyed the Greek army as a fighting force and sent its survivors fleeing towards İzmir. Like Gallipoli, the battlefields are now protected, forming the Başkomutan National Historical Park.

Orientation

The main square, called Hükümet Meydanı and marked by a statue of Atatürk, is north-east of the citadel, at the intersection of Ordu Bulvarı and Milli Egemenlik (Bankalar) Caddesi. About 250m to the southeast another traffic roundabout marks the starting point for Kadınana Caddesi, which runs 2km north-east to the otogar.

Almost everything important lies between the two traffic roundabouts, including the PTT, banks with ATMs, and several hotels and restaurants.

The train station is 2km from the centre, at the northeastern end of Ordu Bulvarı.

Information

AVM Kadınana Internet (Bankalar Caddesi 19; per hr €0.55; ☎ 9.30am–11pm) In Afyon's central department store.

Ferah Internet Café (Bankalar Caddesi; per hr €0.55; ☎ 10am–11pm)

Tourist office (☎ 213 5447; Hükümet Meydanı; ☎ 8am–noon & 1.30–5.30pm Mon–Fri) An unusually useful office with decent city maps and a detailed brochure on the Phrygian Valley; can help arrange day trips to Midas Şehri and other Phrygian sites.

Sights & Activities

CITADEL

Jutting up from otherwise flat surroundings, the craggy rock with the *kale* or *hisar* (citadel)

on top dominates Afyon like a giant with a bullwhip. If you want to get a closer look you'll need to find the lane across the street from the Ulu Cami, where brown signs and green paint point the way. At the end of the lane is the first of some 700 steps to the summit, passing through a series of guard towers – there's no easier way up, and it seems incredible that people managed, voluntarily, to build such a large fortress somewhere so inaccessible.

The Hittite king Mursilis II is thought to have built the first castle by around 1350 BC, and every subsequent conqueror added their own features. However, despite its eventful history, there's little left to see inside, and recent restorations broke clumsily with the original *kara hisar* (black citadel) look by using white stones.

The views from the summit (226m) are spectacular, and it's well worth coming up here at prayer time to listen to the wraparound calls of the muezzins from Afyon's many mosques. Note that the castle isn't lit at night, which is surely missing a trick in PR terms, and can also make it tricky coming down if you leave it too late.

For the best photos of the castle from below, head to the **Kültür ve Semt Evi** (Zaviye Türbe Caddesi), a restored *hamam* with unobstructed views from its raised terrace.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

Take a dolmuş along Kurtuluş Caddesi, the continuation of Bankalar Caddesi, and eventually you'll arrive at Afyon's **Archaeological Museum** (Arkeoloji Müzesi; admission €1.10; ☎ 8am–noon & 1.30–5pm Tue–Sun), near the intersection with İsmet İnönü Caddesi. Externally, there's not much to distinguish this museum from many other run-of-the-mill local collections. However, for once your money will be well spent since the collection here is both extensive and varied, with the Hittite, Phrygian, Lydian and Roman finds among the most interesting. There are lots of marble statues, a reflection of the fact that the marble quarries at what was then Dokimeon (now İscehisar) were the most important in Anatolia back then, as indeed they still are today. Outside, price-less chunks of marble litter the grounds like discarded gravel.

OTHER SIGHTS

The **İmaret Camii**, Afyon's major mosque, is just south of the traffic roundabout at the

southern end of Bankalar Caddesi. Built for Gedik Ahmet Paşa in 1472, its design shows the transition from the Seljuk to the Ottoman style, with the spiral-fluted minaret decorated, Seljuk-style, with blue tiles. The entrance on the eastern side is like an *eyvan* (vaulted recess) and leads to a main sanctuary topped by two domes, front and back, a design also seen in the early Ottoman capitals of Bursa and Edirne. The shady park beside it provides a peaceful refuge from bustling Bankalar Caddesi.

Next door, the **İmaret hamamı** (☎ 5am–midnight for men, 8am–8pm for women), housed in a former church, is still well patronised and retains some of the precious old stone basins. Look for the strange 'rusty screwdriver' pillar protruding from the roof.

The **Mevlevihane Camii** was once a dervish meeting place and dates back to Seljuk times (13th century), when Sultan Veled, son of dervish founder Celaleddin Rumi, established Afyon as the empire's second-most important Mevlevi centre after Konya. The present mosque, with twin domes and twin pyramidal roofs above its courtyard, dates from only 1908, when it was built for Sultan Abdül Hamit II.

Afyon's **Ulu Cami** (1273) is one of the most important surviving Seljuk mosques, so it's a shame that it's usually locked outside prayer times. If you do manage to get inside you'll find 40 soaring wooden columns with stalactite capitals and a flat-beamed roof. Note the green tiles on the minaret.

The area around the Ulu Cami has many old **Ottoman wooden houses**. Safranbolu (p455) may be in better repair, but Afyon showcases an interesting variety of styles, and still teems with everyday life. If you're feeling really flush, some of the old residences are even up for sale.

Just along from the tourist office, the **Zafer Müzesi** (Victory Museum; Hükümet Meydanı; admission €0.30; ☎ 8am–noon & 1.30–5.30pm) was the first building Atatürk stayed in after liberating Afyon in 1922, and it now has some modest displays of photos, battle plans and military relics from the battlefields.

Sleeping

Sinada Oteli (☎ 212 1250; Ambaryolu 25; s/d €11/20) Just off Kadınana Caddesi above an Arçelik electrical store, most things about the Sinada have seen better days, but staff are friendly and the rooms are a decent size (especially the corner ones).

Otel Hocaoğlu (☎ 213 8182; Kadınana Caddesi, Ambaryolu 12; s/d/tr €12.50/23/25) Five storeys of surprisingly bright accommodation near the İmaret Camii. The lift's a bit coffin-like but it's all in a marginally better state than the Sinada.

Hotel Soydan (☎ 215 2323; Turan Emeksisiz Caddesi 2; s/d/tr €20/28/34) Behind the calming green façade, this nominal two-star has little to justify the extra expense besides a dim but comfy bar-salon and a good grocer's next door.

Çakmak Marble Otel (☎ 214 3300; www.cakmak-marblehotel.com; Süleyman Gonçer Caddesi 2; s/d €33/59, ste €84–92; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) One block east of Hükümet Meydanı, the Çakmak, formerly the Grand Ozer, is the only option that even vaguely pulls its weight, offering four-star Western standards throughout the spacious rooms, marble bathrooms and refined public areas. Family rooms come with cute cots, there's a swimming pool and Jacuzzi in the basement, and the *hamam* is wonderfully tricked out in Kütahya tiles and Afyon marble.

Eating & Drinking

İkbal Lokantası (☎ 215 1205; Uzunçarşı Caddesi 21; mains €1–3; ☎ 9am–10pm) Southwest of Hükümet Meydanı, the İkbal first opened its doors in 1922, and still holds its own against neighbouring competition. There's a good choice of kebabs, stews and desserts, and a separate deli shop opposite.

Emreyunus Art Centre Café (☎ 212 1011; mains €1.10–4; ☎ 10am–midnight) In the former İmaret *medrese*, the leafy courtyard here must be the most romantic spot in town, though it's mysteriously underfrequented. The menu's fairly limited, concentrating on snacks and a few grills.

AVM Kadınana (☎ 214 7900; Bankalar Caddesi 19; mains €2–4; ☎ 9.30am–11pm) The top two floors of this department store cater for a multitude of whims, incorporating a restaurant, *pastane*, big-screen TV lounge and rooftop *café-nargileh* terrace with live music. It's hugely popular, and not just for the great views.

Self-caterers should head straight to the daily **market** beside the otogar for fresh fruit and veg. Otherwise, every other shop around town is draped with necklaces of locally made *sucuk* (sausage) and padded out with pillows of cheese.

Don't forget to pop into one of the local *şekerleme* (sweet shops) for a taste of Afyon's famous *lokum* (Turkish delight). To try something, just point and say *Deneyelim!* (Let's try it!)

WIT VS WISDOM

Nasreddin Hodja (or Hoca) is a semi-legendary figure, central to the Turkish sense of humour, whose quirky epigrammatic tales could be compared to Aesop's fables or the antics of Central European character Till Eugenspiegel. He is often depicted riding backwards on a donkey, a reflection of the off-kilter but acerbic world view he represents. Or, as the man himself would put it: 'It's not me that is sitting backwards, but the donkey that is facing the wrong way'...

More than 350 stories are attributed to Hodja, but very little is known about the man himself. The historical imam on whom the myth centres is believed to have been born near Sivrihisar in 1208, then moved to Akşehir in 1237, where he stayed until he died. However, there is little or no biographical evidence to back this up, and the legend has quickly surpassed reality, a situation that a true Hodja would doubtless have relished.

Whether or not the man was real, his idiom has become an entrenched part of Turkish culture, and you'll find plenty of books recounting favourite tales, some of which have quite patently been written by more modern wags. A typical Hodja story will see the turbaned one using his trademark counterintuitive twists of logic to befuddle greedy neighbours, save his own cash or explain away a tricky situation. Beggars, *qadis* (magistrates), Hodja's own wife (or wives) and even the local sultan are favourite butts of the jokes, as is Hodja himself.

For instance, when asked about the noise from his house the previous night, Hodja says that he had a fight with his wife, who threw his robe down the stairs.

'Really? A robe made that much noise?'

'Well, of course it did,' says Hodja. 'I was wearing it at the time.'

There are pleasant **çay bahçesi** (tea gardens) in Anıt Parkı, overlooking Hükümet Meydanı.

Getting There & Away

Afyon is on the inland routes connecting İstanbul with Antalya and Konya, and İzmir with Ankara and the east. There are regular buses from the otogar to Ankara (€8, four hours), Antalya (€9.50, five hours), Denizli/Pamukkale (€7.50, four hours), Eskişehir (€7, three hours), Isparta (€5.50, three hours), İstanbul (€16, eight hours), İzmir (€9.50, 5½ hours), Konya (€9.50, 3¼ hours) and Kütahya (€4.50, 1½ hours).

The **train station** (☎ 213 7919) is 2km north of the town centre. Three or four express trains a day run to İstanbul Haydarpaşa (€5.50, nine hours), mostly at night; a sleeping compartment costs from €27. There are also daily services to Eskişehir (three hours), via Kütahya (two hours), and Konya (five hours).

To get to the centre from the otogar look for dolmuşes marked 'Çarşı' (€0.60); a taxi would cost about €3. To get to the otogar look for a dolmuş marked 'Garaj' in Gazlıgöl Cad-desi, near the tourist information kiosk.

AKŞEHİR

☎ 0332/62,000

Heading southeast from Afyon, the main road passes through **Sultandağı**, which has the

remains of an imposing caravanserai right in the town centre, before arriving in Akşehir, a pleasant small town ringed with hills.

Not many places in the world feature an outside cooking pot as a monument, but then Akşehir was the long-time home of Nasreddin Hodja, Turkey's original funny man (see above). The pot is a reference to one of his best-known tales; ask any local to fill you in. There are lots of other statues of the famous storyteller, on and off his donkey, and devotees can visit his **tomb** (admission €0.25; ☎ 6.30am-8pm) in the local cemetery. The date reads 386, which should be reversed to give his death as 683 (1284) – apparently the eternal joker couldn't resist one final Hodja twist.

Sleeping & Eating

Grand Bal Oteli (☎ 811 0270; Anıt Meydanı; s/d €23/34; 🚿) If you want to stay over, the Grand Bal is a comfortable modern hotel with colour-coordinated fabrics, decent bathrooms, sauna and Jacuzzi.

Eating options are fairly limited, but if you follow signs down the back streets you'll find the **Akşehir Evi**, a late-19th-century house open to visitors, where you can tuck into home cooking in a pleasant courtyard garden.

Getting There & Away

There are regular minibuses to Akşehir from Afyon otogar (€4.50, two hours).

LAKE DISTRICT

As if having over 7000km of coastline wasn't enough, Turkey also enjoys a swathe of inland waterlife. The Anatolian Lake District consists of three main lakes (*göller*) – Burdur, Eğirdir and Beyşehir – and several smaller ones. The town of Eğirdir, on the lake of the same name, is a popular holiday haven ringed with mountains. Beyşehir is worth a visit for its wonderful 13th-century lakeside mosque and old town.

The ruined cities of Antiocheia-in-Pisidia and Sagalassos provide interest for the historically minded, while outdoor enthusiasts can trek or ski in the nearby mountains, visit Çandır Canyon in the Yazılı Nature Park or Lake Kovada National Park, and embark in the footsteps of an apostle along the St Paul's Trail.

Compared with the dusty plains further east, this water-rich region is a lush haven of varied greenery, and all its best features are highlighted by the seasons. Spring is a great time to visit the lakes: the apple trees burst into blossom in April, while the annual rose harvest begins in mid-May. By mid-July, however, much of the area fills with holidaying Turkish families, so plan ahead if you prefer flowers to crowds.

ISPARTA

☎ 0246 / pop 149,000

A largely functional town famous for its attar of roses (see boxed text, below), Isparta marks an important junction on the road east to Eğirdir, though there's little to stop for in itself. Turkey's ninth president, Süleyman Demirel, was a local boy, and there's a quirky statue of him in the town centre.

ROSE TOURS

Every May and June the roses in the fields around Isparta come into flower, and the farmers make haste to pluck the petals at daybreak so that they can be made into attar of roses, a valuable oil used in making perfume. The petals are placed in copper vats, and steam is passed over them. This is then drawn off and condensed, leaving a thin layer of oil floating on the surface of the water that is skimmed off and bottled. A hundred kilos of petals produces just 25g of attar of roses, leaving a vast amount of by-product rosewater, which is sold locally.

If you would like to see the process in action, the Lale Pension (p320) in Eğirdir organises factory tours for around €20 per person, or you may be able to arrange something direct with a manufacturer. **Gülbirlik** (☎ 218 1288; www.gulbirlik.com) is the world's biggest source of rose oil and the main player in Isparta, with four processing plants handling – so they claim – 320 tonnes of petals every day! Tours usually take place in May each year, at the height of the rose season.

If you end up with some spare time here, look at the **Ulu Cami** (1417) and the **Firdevs Bey Camii** (1561) with its neighbouring **bedesten** (covered market), the latter two buildings attributed to the great Mimar Sinan (see boxed text, p117). Also wander into the huge **Hali Saray** (Carpet Palace; Mimar Sinan Caddesi). Four days a week, between 8am and 10am, you can watch fine Isparta carpets being auctioned to dealers.

Getting There & Away

Although Isparta's otogar is the main transit point for the lakes, the most frequent services to Eğirdir leave from the Çarşı terminal (also called the *köy garajı*) in the town centre, as do dolmuşes for Ağlasun (for Sagalassos). Coming north from Antalya you may find yourself dropped on the outskirts of Isparta and ferried to the otogar in a *servis* (minivan).

To get to Eğirdir (€1.70, 30 minutes) from the otogar, take any Konya-bound bus. Minibuses from the Çarşı terminal run every 30 minutes (€1.40).

There are daily services from Isparta otogar to Afyon (€5.60, three hours), Antalya (€4.50, two hours), Burdur (€2.25, 45 minutes), Denizli (€5.60, three hours), İzmir (€11, six hours) and Konya (€8.50, four hours).

To get to the Çarşı terminal catch a Çarşı city bus (€0.30) from in front of the otogar. Note that the hourly minibuses service to Burdur leaves from the otogar.

SAGALASSOS

Dramatically sited on the terraced slopes of Ak Dağ (White Mountain), **Sagalassos** (admission €2.80; ☎ 7.30am-6pm) is a ruined ancient city backed by sheer, ragged rock. Since 1990 a Belgian team of archaeologists has been

excavating parts of the city, making it one of the largest archaeological projects in the Mediterranean region, and it's hoped the site may one day rival Ephesus or Pergamum in splendour. The researchers are also reconstructing some of the buildings, taking advantage of the fact that the site was never pillaged for material. Surrounded on three sides by mountains, the spectacular backdrop and views down over the fertile valley are unforgettable, but the rugged geography comes with its own problems, and quite a number of the ruins are inaccessible to visitors.

Sagalassos dates back to at least 1200 BC, when it was founded by a warlike tribe of 'Peoples from the Sea'. Later it became an important Pisidian city, second only to Antiocheia-in-Pisidia near Yalvaç. The Pisidians liked their cities perched high up on easily defensible mountains; Termessos (p392) is another example. The oldest ruins on the site date from Hellenistic times, although most of the surviving structures are Roman. Though the Roman period was the city's most prosperous, plague and earthquakes blighted its later history, and Sagalassos was largely abandoned after a massive quake in the 7th century.

The ticket office at the car park sells an informative map-guide (€2.50). From the entrance the path leads along a path to the **lower agora**, with massive reconstructed Roman **baths**, dating from AD 180, to the left. A flight of steps lead down from the lower agora to a paved street and the **Temple of Antoninus Pius**, built to honour the cult of the Roman emperors. Heading back to the lower agora, you can climb up the slope to the **upper agora**. Facing the agora is a huge **fountain complex**, while on the hillside to the right lies the **bouleuterion** (council meeting-place), with some of its seating intact. The **heroon** (hero's shrine) used to be decorated with carvings of dancing girls. Copies are slowly being reinstated at the site while the originals await rehousing in an annex to Burdur Museum (right). It may once have housed a statue of Alexander the Great, who captured the city in 333 BC.

Sagalassos's biggest structure is the 9000-seat Roman **theatre**, one of the most complete in Turkey, on a slope below the area known as the Potters' Quarter. Earthquakes have disturbed the rows of seats but otherwise it is largely intact. Nearby is the late-Hellenistic **fountain house** and the Roman **Neron library**

with a fine mosaic floor. Both have been rebuilt, and the fountain house is functioning again using the original water supply, but the shedlike structure protecting the library is usually locked.

The stark cliffs above Sagalassos are dotted with tombs. Except during the summer months when the archaeologists are at work, you're likely to share the site only with wheatears and corn buntings. It's treeless and exposed, so aim for an early start to avoid the midday sun. There are soft drinks for sale at the ticket office. Walking the entire site via the 'scenic' route could take up to 3½ hours, or you can see the most significant structures near the ticket office in about an hour.

Getting There & Away

To get to Sagalassos take a dolmuş south from Isparta's Çarşı terminal to Ağlasun (€1.10, one hour, hourly from 6am to 5pm). The last dolmuş from Ağlasun to Isparta leaves at 8pm in summer.

From Ağlasun a signposted turn-off points 7km up the mountain. If you're fit, you could walk up, but it's probably easier to pay the dolmuş driver an extra €8.50 to drive you there, wait for an hour and bring you back down again. To get the driver to wait longer you will probably have to agree on a higher fee.

BURDUR

☎ 0248 / pop 63,400

Despite its proximity to saltwater Burdur Gölü (Lake Burdur), Burdur is an unexciting, entirely modern small town you're likely to want to visit only to see the finds from Sagalassos in the museum. Buses from Isparta drop you on the eastern outskirts. Come out of the otagar, turn right and walk along Gazi Caddesi for 15 minutes to the town centre, or catch a city bus from just outside.

To find the **Burdur Museum** (Burdur Müzesi; admission €1.10; ☎ 8am-noon & 1.30-5pm Tue-Sun), turn right opposite the Hacı Mahmut Bey Camii in Gazi Caddesi. If you can cope with the irritating auto-timer lighting, the most impressive exhibits are ceramics and Hellenistic and Roman statues from Kremna and Sagalassos (p315), although there are also Neolithic bits and pieces from the nearby Hacilar and Kuruçay mounds, a 2nd-century bronze torso of an athlete, some fine bronze jugs and several carved 'man and wife' sarcophagi. The

terrace **çay bahçesi** in the front is great for a relaxing drink once you've finished with the museum.

Hourly minibuses run to Burdur from Isparta (€2.25, 45 minutes).

DAVRAZ DAĞI (MT DAVRAZ)

The skiing season on the slopes of Mt Davraz (2635m) usually runs from mid-December to March, depending on the snow. Both Nordic and downhill skiing are possible and there's one 1.2km-long chairlift. A day's skiing, with equipment hire and lift pass, costs around €30; summit treks are also possible, or, if adrenaline's more your thing, you could try out 'slope parachute' (paragliding).

Accommodation is available at the main ski centre and the five-star Sirene Davraz Mountain Resort, though, unless you're a hardcore dusk-to-dawn skier it's just as easy to stay in Isparta and Eğirdir.

In season there are regular dolmuşes from Isparta and less frequent ones from Eğirdir (€1, 30 minutes) on weekends. At other times, a taxi up to the resort should cost around €23.

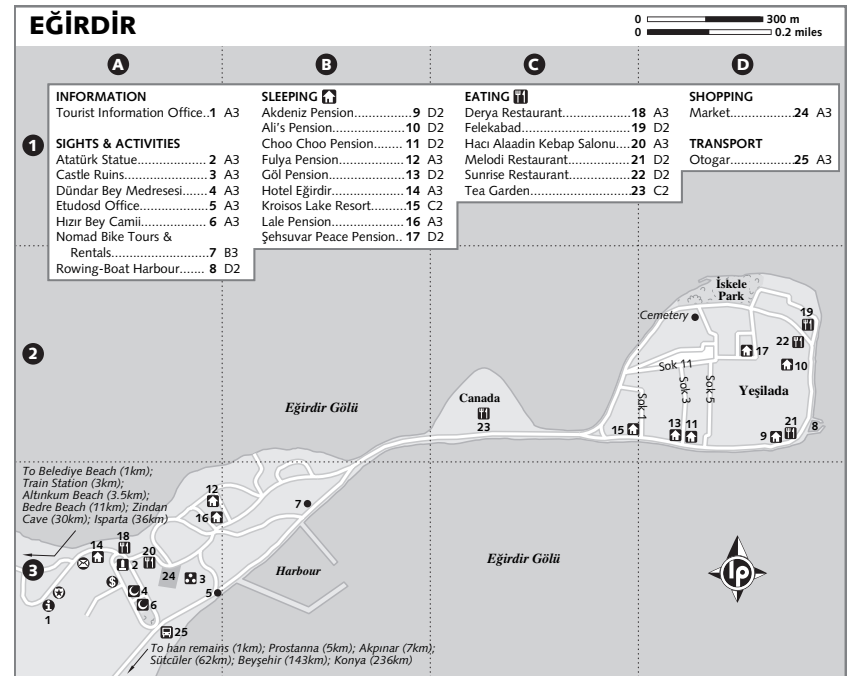
EĞİRDİR

☎ 0246 / pop 107,000

While many of the lake towns here come as a disappointment, you could hardly wish for a setting as perfect as Eğirdir (eh-yeer-deer), which lies contentedly near the southern tip of Eğirdir Gölü (Lake Eğirdir), overlooked by Davraz Dağı (Mt Davraz; 2635m). In Lydian times it straddled the Royal Road, the main route between Ephesus and Babylon, and since it was a beautiful and convenient place to stop, Eğirdir quickly prospered.

Today it's still handily placed, on the road from Konya to the Aegean, and tourism has become a major part of the local economy. The main selling points are the sweeping views, fresh fish dinners and boat trips on the silvery-blue waters of Turkey's fourth-largest lake (517 sq km). However, Eğirdir is also increasingly important as a trekking and climbing base for people who want to explore Sivri Dağı (Mt Sivri), walk through the Yazılı Kanyon or trek some part of the St Paul Trail (see p83).

As you approach from Isparta you'll pass a large Turkish mountain commando training base with a slogan emblazoned in



gigantic letters on the scree slope above: Komandoyuz – Güçlüyüz, Cesuruz, Hazırız (We're Commandos – We're Strong, We're Brave, We're Ready). On their days off, these army tough guys are a common sight about town, and over summer weekends their visiting parents often fill the pension rooms.

History

Founded by the Hittites, Eğirdir was taken by the Phrygians (c 1200 BC) and then the Lydians, captured by the Persians and conquered by Alexander the Great. Alexander was followed by the Romans, who called the town Prostanna. Contemporary documents suggest that it was large and prosperous, but no excavations have been done at the site, which lies within a large military enclave.

In Byzantine times, as Akrotiri (Steep Mountain), it was the seat of a bishopric. Later, it became a Seljuk city (c 1080–1280) and then the capital of a small principality ruled by the Hamidoğulları tribe (1280–1381). The Ottomans took control in 1417, but the population of Yeşilada remained mostly Greek Orthodox until the 1920s.

Under the Turks, Akrotiri became Eğirdir, meaning 'crooked' or 'bent'. In the 1980s, this was changed to Eğirdir, which means 'she is spinning' – the new name was intended to remove the negative connotations of the old one (and stop the constant jokes), but is also supposedly a reference to an old folk tale about a queen who sat at home spinning, unaware that her son had just died.

Orientation & Information

Eğirdir stretches for several kilometres along the shore of Eğirdir Gölü. Its centre is at the base of a promontory jutting into the lake, marked by an Atatürk statue and a small otogar.

A few hundred metres northeast of the centre, the castle walls rise up at the beginning of the causeway that leads to Canada (*jahn-ah-da*, or 'Soul Island' – no relation to North America, eh) and Yeşilada ('Green Island'). Most of the town's best pensions are on Yeşilada or around these walls.

The **tourist information office** (☎ 311 4388; 2 Sahilyolu 13; ☹ 8am–6pm Mon–Fri) is on the main road coming into town.

Sights & Activities

You can stroll round Eğirdir's sights in an hour or so, starting from the **Hızır Bey Camii**,

built as a Seljuk warehouse in 1237 but turned into a mosque in 1308 by the Hamidoğulları emir Hızır Bey. The mosque is quite simple, with a clerestory (row of windows) above the central hall and new tiles around the *mihrab*, but note the finely carved wooden doors and the bits of blue tile on the minaret.

Opposite the mosque, the **Dünder Bey Medresesi** was built as a caravanserai by the Seljuk sultan Alaeddin Keykubat in 1218 but converted into a *medrese* in 1285 for the Hamidoğulları emir, Felekeddin Dünder Bey. In the modern era it's lost its religion entirely and is now a bazaar filled with shops. An unusual walk-through minaret with an arch in its base connects the complex to the mosque.

A few hundred metres out towards Yeşilada stand the massive walls of the ruined **castle**. Its foundations were probably laid during the reign of Croesus, the cash-happy 5th-century BC king of Lydia, but it was restored by the Byzantines, the Hamidoğulları, the Seljuks and the Ottomans.

As you head out of town towards Konya you will pass the crumbling walls of an old **han** and then a sign pointing towards the scant remains of ancient **Prostanna**.

The local mountain club, **Etudod** (☎ 311 6356), which has its office on the road out to Yeşilada, can advise on treks to Mt Davraz, the Barla massif and other good spots. Alternatively, ask about the possibilities at the Lale Pension (p320).

MARKETS

Eğirdir's normal weekly market takes place every Thursday, but for the 10 Sundays between August and October the Yörük people from the mountain villages also come to Eğirdir to sell their apples, goats and yogurt, and to buy supplies for the winter. It's an important opportunity for people from different villages to meet and mix, and was also traditionally the crux of the inter-village dating scene.

On the Saturday before the last Sunday market, when the trading was nearly done, there used to be a market attended only by women. On that day, mothers with sons of marriageable age approached the mothers of acceptable potential daughters-in-law and offered them a handkerchief. If the handkerchief was accepted, then the process of introductions between the families and the

prospective bride and groom could begin, and if all went well, the marriage took place in the spring of the following year.

BEACHES

Yeşilada has no real beaches, although there's nothing to stop you swimming off the rocks around the island. To sunbathe you need to head out of the centre. The following local beaches have changing cabins and food stands or restaurants.

The free, sandy **Belediye Beach** is at Yazla, less than 1km from the centre on the Isparta road.

Pebbly **Altinkum Beach** (admission €0.40) is several kilometres further north, near the train station. In high summer, *dolmuş*es run here every 15 minutes (€0.30) from in front of the otogar.

Even further north, 11km out on the road to Barla, **Bedre Beach** with 1.5km of sand is the best of all. You can walk or cycle here, or a taxi costs about €4.50 each way.

Tours

Most pensions offer **boat trips** with the brother, cousin or son of a pension owner, and if you don't plump for one of them then chances are you'll be offered a trip by anyone who stops you near the waterfront. Some such jaunts are fishing trips, at night or in the early morning. How much you enjoy them may depend more on the weather and the force of the wind than on the boat or owner, but most people seem to have fun. Some trips are free with accommodation, though usually you'll pay up to €17 per person.

Cycle hire is available at many pensions or from **Nomad Bike Tours & Rentals** (☎ 311 6688; www.nomadbiketours.com; Ata Yolu Üzeri), who can suggest itineraries and organise custom tours as well as hiring out mountain bikes at €11 per day.

For information on local rose tours, see p315.

Sleeping

You can choose between staying on Yeşilada, at the end of the promontory, or in the mainland part of town. Handy yellow signs point the way to most of the different pensions.

If you arrive at the start or end of the season, remember that nights can be cold, so look for a pension with central heating. Most places have hot water, although you may need to ask your host to turn it on.

In high season (from mid-June to mid-September), Eğirdir pension owners, especially on Yeşilada, are reluctant to take single travellers. Even if you offer to pay the double rate, they may still turn you down because they won't be able to sell two meals.

YEŞİLADA

Yeşilada has a dozen or so family-run pensions and restaurants, interspersed with second homes for the Istanbul elite who come here for a fortnight every year. It may seem immediately appealing because of its island position, but it's a long walk every time you want to get off it. Most of the pensions are fairly similar and none is in a particularly inspiring building, but the island is small enough to walk around in 15 minutes so you could make a quick circuit before choosing.

Şehsuvar Peace Pension (☎ 311 2433; www.peacepension.com; r €8–20) Aiming at the backpacker end of the market, the name reflects the slightly hippy family ethos here: real budget types can even sleep on the roof terrace for €4. The quiet courtyard is a treat, and there's a bar for louder nights. Breakfast costs around €3.

Akdeniz Pension (☎ 311 2432; s/d €14/20) This pension is run by an elderly couple who don't speak much English. It has four simple but spotless balcony rooms with a light, homey feel to them and a vine-shaded terrace.

Choo Choo Pension (☎ 319 4926; s/d/tr €14/23/28) Eğirdir's newest arrival, the Choo Choo steams its way onto the scene in a vaguely castle-like building. The rooms are typically simple and well formed, but the best feature is the big Halikarnas conservatory restaurant out front.

Ali's Pension (☎ 311 2547; www.alispension.com; s €14–17, d €25) Ali's is a comfortable little pension on the far side of the island with nine attractive, wooden-floored rooms and a pleasant terrace. Run by a genuine fishing family, it's one of the most welcoming places here.

Kroisos Lake Resort (☎ 311 5006; www.kroisoshotel.com; s/d €28/36) This conventional hotel, done out in a few too many dubious shades of green, lacks the personal family atmosphere of the better pensions but makes up for it with the selection of facilities, including ski and bike hire, a lounge with piano and regular live music in the restaurant.

Göl Pension (☎ 311 2370; ahmetdavraz@hotmail.com; r €28–39; ☑) With just six rooms you'll have to get in early to bag the best spots here – the

two upstairs rooms with private terrace are nicer but pricier than the downstairs shared-bathroom alternatives. It's a family place, and owner Ahmet is invariably popular with guests.

MAINLAND

Lale Pension (☎ 311 2406; www.lalehostel.com; Kale Mahallesi 5 Sokak 2; dm €5.60, r €11-23; 📺) One of several options up behind the castle, the Lale dominates Eğirdir's backpacker market thanks to its neat, compact rooms, family atmosphere and savvy management by the helpful and knowledgeable Ibrahim. There are great lake views from the narrow pine-striped rooftop lounge, where guests meet and mingle like old friends over a nargileh. You can also get plenty of info on local excursions, tours and treks. Bike hire is €7 per day, boat tours start at €14 per person, breakfast is €2.80 and set meals cost €7.

Fulya Pension (☎ 311 2175; dm €8, s/d €13/17; 📺) The Fulya, operating much like the Lale, has the advantage of a roof terrace offering a 360-degree panorama, perfect for star-gazing and lake-snapping. Rooms are spacious, and the owner is a fisherman who takes guests out on his boat. Breakfast costs €2.80.

Hotel Eğirdir (☎ 311 3961; www.hotelegirdir.com; 2 Sahil Yolu 2; s/d/tr €25/34/46) The main port of call for tour groups, this big three-star block has an impressive lobby and modest but adequate rooms with appealing linen and small balconies overlooking the lake. The large restaurant has three old trees actually growing through the ceiling.

Eating

Virtually every pension and hotel has a restaurant attached, and these often provide the best-value meals, but there are other dining options if you want a bit of variety. Don't miss the chance to eat *istakoz* (crayfish) straight from the lake in season.

Hacı Aladdin Kebap Salonu (☎ 311 4154; Belediye Caddesi 17; mains €1-4; 🍴 9am-10pm) Tucked in amid the shops in the town centre, this reliable kebab joint also sells that weird Eğirdir speciality, *şekerli pide* (cheese pide sprinkled with sugar).

Derya Restaurant (☎ 311 4047; mains €2-5; 🍴 9am-10pm) Across the street from the Hotel Eğirdir, the Derya has outdoor tables set by the water and a rather mauve dining room serving a standard range of grills and salads.

Felekabad (☎ 311 5881; Yeşilada; mains €2-6; 🍴 11am-10pm) A simple family restaurant with a conservatory section and lakefront seating enjoying a faint garden ambience.

Sunrise Restaurant (☎ 311 5852; Yeşilada; mains €4-8; 🍴 11am-10pm) Next to the Felekabad, the Sunrise is a slightly slicker affair popular with Turkish visitors from the city and, unlike its neighbour, serves alcohol.

Melodi Restaurant (☎ 311 4816; Yeşilada; mains €4-8; 🍴 11am-10pm) Next to the Akdeniz Pension at the tip of the island, the Melodi is often regarded as the best restaurant in town, with a range of fresh mezes and delicious grilled fish. The lake views are pretty good too.

The popular *çay bahçesi* on Canada makes a fine place to stop for a drink or a snack, and also has a children's playground.

Getting There & Away BUS

There are daily buses to Ankara (€11, seven hours), Antalya (€5.60, 2½ hours), Denizli (€6, three hours), İstanbul (€17, 11 hours), İzmir (€11, seven hours), Konya (€9.50, four hours), Nevşehir (€14, eight hours), Sütçüler (€4, 1½ hours) and Yalvaç (€2.80, one hour).

If there's no bus leaving straightaway for your destination, hop on a minibüs to Isparta (€1.40, 15 minutes) and catch one from there (see p315).

TRAIN

The **train station** (☎ 311 4694) is on the Isparta road 3km from the centre. Daily trains go to İstanbul (€12, 13 hours) and İzmir (€8.50, 10 hours) via Isparta.

AROUND EĞİRDİR

Sivri Dağı (Mt Sivri) & Akpınar

Sivri Dağı ('Sharp Mountain'; 1749m) dominates views southwest of Eğirdir. High up on its steep slopes, the tiny village of Akpınar offers apple orchards and photogenic views over the lake. To get there, head 3km south of Eğirdir along the lakeshore road to the suburb of Yeni Mahalle, where a road starts to wind 4km up the mountain to the village. It's a steep walk, which should take about two hours if you're in reasonable shape. The village has two small tea houses poised to scoop the lake views; one has a battered old tent to shelter in, though you can't actually see anything from it! Both places serve *ayran* (yogurt drink) and freshly made *gözleme*.

Serious hikers can continue to the top of the mountain, but some of the rocks are unstable and there have been fatalities in the past – seek local advice before setting out and take great care. Don't try climbing from the commando base (north) side, as chances are the boys in green won't appreciate it.

Kovada Gölü National Park, Yazılı Nature Park & Çandır Kanyon

Noted for its flora and fauna, **Lake Kovada National Park** (Kovada Gölü Milli Parkı) surrounds a small lake connected to Lake Eğirdir by a channel. It's a pleasant place for a hike and a picnic. The St Paul's Trail passes nearby (see p83 for details). Close by is the **Kasnak Forest**, visited by botanical enthusiasts for its rare orchids.

About 73km south of Eğirdir, the **Yazılı Canyon Nature Park** (Yazılı Kanyon Tabiat Parkı; admission €0.55, car €0.70) protects a forested gorge deep in the mountains separating the Lake District (ancient Pisidia) and the Antalya region (Pamphylia). After paying the admission fee at the car park, you follow a path 1km upstream through the glorious **Çandır Kanyon** to some shady bathing spots; the water is icy cold even in late spring. In July and August the canyon heaves with sunbathing Turkish families; at other times you may well have it to yourself.

The park takes its name from the inscriptions carved in the rocks lining the gorge (*yazılı* means 'written'), which are still clearly visible, though most have been vandalised. Look out for a slightly self-aggrandising poem on the origins and nature of man by the 1st-century poet Epiktitus; whatever his virtues, it's unlikely he lived to be 188, as the dates on the signboard suggest!

The **Yazılı Canyon Restaurant and Kamping Alanı** (2-person tent €8.50), in the car park at the entrance, offers meals of fresh trout, salad and a drink for €3. When it's not busy, the entrance fee may be waived if you're eating or staying here.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

The easiest way to get to Kovada Gölü and the Çandır Kanyon is to sign up with a tour from one of the pensions. Out-of-season taxi tours, including a three-hour wait, will cost around €28 to the lake or €40 to the lake and the canyon. You could also try hitching on a summer Sunday when locals head out for picnics.

Zından Mağarası (Zından Cave)

Another possible excursion is to Zından Mağarası, 30km southeast of Eğirdir and 1km north of the village of Aksu, across a fine Roman bridge. The 1km-long cave has Byzantine ruins at its mouth, lots of stalactites and stalagmites, and a curious room dubbed the Hamam. There's a pleasant walk along the river if caves aren't your thing.

Pensions organise tours to the cave in summer, or taxis charge about €28 per carload.

Sütçüler

☎ 0246 / pop 3700

The area around Eğirdir is increasingly popular with walkers, particularly now the newly waymarked St Paul Trail (see p83) passes through the area. Easily accessible from Eğirdir, Sütçüler is a fairly unremarkable small town spread out along a winding mountain road. The views, though, should really whet the appetite for a good trek, and the location makes it a good base for a few days' walking.

As well as the walking possibilities, buses from Eğirdir pass within 1km of the romantically deserted ruins of the Roman town of **Adada**, where recognisable remnants include a dramatic Roman road entrance, a 1000-seat agora and the temple of Trajan.

Sütçüler's single pension, **Pension Karacan** (☎ 351-2411; Atatürk Caddesi; gulaykaracan@myynet.com; half board r€11-23; 📺), has spacious rooms, some with shared bathroom, a garden terrace and an indoor restaurant with big windows to take in the green vistas below. Meals are prepared with organic produce, and the owners are thoroughly helpful.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Seven daily buses run between Isparta and Sütçüler (€3.50, 1½ hours), passing through Eğirdir.

YALVAÇ & ANTIOCHEIA-IN-PISIDIA

☎ 0246 / pop 31,000

You might want to pause in the market town of Yalvaç to visit the extensive ruins of Antiocheia-in-Pisidia, located on a stark mountainside to the northeast.

Antiocheia-in-Pisidia

About 1km from Yalvaç centre lies the site of **Antiocheia-in-Pisidia** (admission €2.80; 🍴 9am-6pm), an ancient city that was abandoned in the

8th century after Arab attacks. Unfortunately, there are no signs on the site.

From the gate, a Roman road leads uphill past the foundations of a triumphal archway, then turns right to the **theatre**. Further uphill, on a flat area surrounded by a semicircular wall of rock, is the city's main **shrine**. This was originally dedicated to the Anatolian mother goddess Cybele, then later to the moon god Men, but in Roman times it featured an imperial cult temple dedicated to Augustus. A path heads left to the **nymphaeum**, once a permanent spring but now dry.

Several arches of the city's **aqueduct** are visible across the fields. Downhill from the nymphaeum are the ruins of the **Roman baths**. Several large chambers have been excavated and much of the original ceiling is intact. On the way back to the entrance you pass the foundations of **St Paul's Basilica**, built on the site of the synagogue. The itinerant tent-maker and apostle's preaching here provoked such a strong reaction that he and St Barnabas were expelled from the city.

After exploring the site you may want to drop into **Yalvaç Museum** (Yalvaç Müzesi; admission €1.10; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm Tue-Sun) in the town centre, which has a plan of the ruins and a modest collection of finds from the ruins. Its ethnography section has a fine recreation of the Ottoman-era living room of a wealthy household.

Getting There & Away

A few daily buses link Yalvaç with Eğirdir (€2.80, one hour) and Akşehir (€2, 45 minutes).

BEYŞEHİR

☎ 0332 / pop 41,700

The main town on this region's third major lake, fast-growing Beyşehir has preserved its Ottoman heart against the waves of modernity, and is home to one of Anatolia's best medieval mosques. Founded around the 6th century BC, Beyşehir has changed hands innumerable times in the course of history (including 20 times between just 1374 and 1467!), but was most favoured under the 13th-century Seljuks, who considered it a second capital.

In 1296 Şeyheddin Süleyman Bey was responsible for creating the newly restored **Eşrefoğlu Camii**, which, with its 42 soaring wooden pillars, coloured mosaics and beautiful blue-tiled mihrab, is second only in architec-

tural importance to Afyon's Ulu Cami. Originally, it was open to the skies and used only on Friday; nowadays, however, the roof has been covered over. Süleyman Bey is buried beside the mosque. Other key old-town buildings are nearby, including the many-domed **Dokumaclar Hanı bedesten** (Cloth Hall; storage chamber), the **Çifte Hamamı** and the **İsmail Ağa Medrese**.

The mosque is right on the lakeshore, reached from the town centre by crossing the impressive arched 1908 railway bridge and following the waterline. You could also take an evening boat tour with **Eşrefoğlu Yat** (☎ 0542 841 8784; tour €1.70), which lets you see the lake-facing side mosque while nibbling some dirt-cheap *köfte* (€0.85).

There are a couple of accommodation options in town if you need to stay over; the **Beyaz Park Motel** (☎ 512 4535; €11, d €20-25), by the bridge, has a great terrace café-restaurant.

Getting There & Away

There are regular buses to Eğirdir (€5, two hours) and Konya (€3.50, one hour). City buses (€0.30) serve the otogar twice hourly, passing near the mosque.

PAMUKKALE REGION

The region around Pamukkale and Denizli is the natural spa centre of Turkey, encompassing no fewer than 17 different thermal springs at temperatures between 36°C and 100°C. Of these, Pamukkale itself must be the most heavily marketed attraction in the whole of Western Anatolia, with endless tourist posters flashing brighter-than-life images of bathers in clear blue water on the sparkling white travertines that make the town famous.

Sadly the hype worked just a bit too well in the days before conservation was a business concept, and the reality is somewhat different these days as local authorities struggle to undo the damage, or at least prevent any further degradation of a truly unique site. Luckily the extensive ruins of the Roman spa town of Hierapolis still make Pamukkale well worth a visit, whether you paddle (but not bathe) in the ridges or not.

NYSSA (NYSSA)

East of the dull modern town of Aydın, you're deep into the fertile farming country of the Büyük Menderes River valley. Cotton

fields sweep away from the road, and during the late October harvest the highways are jammed with tractors hauling trailers laden with the white puffy stuff. Other important crops grown locally include pomegranates, pears, citrus fruits, apples, olives and tobacco.

About 31km east of Aydın stands the town of Sultanhisar. A 3km uphill walk to the north brings you to ancient **Nyssa** (admission €1.10; ☎ daylight hr), set on a hilltop amid olive groves. On arrival you'll find public toilets, a soft-drink stand and a custodian who will show you around the **theatre**. There's also a 115m-long **tunnel** beneath the road and parking area that was once the ancient city's main square. Walk another five minutes up the hill, along the road and through a field, and you'll come to the **bouleuterion**, with some attractive sculpture fragments. But what you'll probably remember most about Nyssa is the site's peaceful beauty, so different from the hubbub at Ephesus.

Getting There & Away

İzmir-Denizli trains stop in town, and many east-west buses run along the highway. Dolmuşes run to Sultanhisar from Nazilli every 15 minutes (€0.55).

NAZİLLİ & AROUND

pop 113,000

If you're driving to Afrodiasis you might transit the market town of Nazilli, 14km east of Nysa and Sultanhisar. However, most people visit Afrodiasis from Pamukkale.

On the road between the main Nazilli-Denizli highway and Karacasu, look for signs pointing to **Antiocheia**. To get there, turn north at the centre of Başaran village, 18km northwest of Karacasu, and drive 1km to the impressively sited and extensive but completely unexcavated and unrestored ruins of an ancient hilltop city.

Return to the Nazilli-Denizli highway, 6km to the north, by continuing past Antiocheia across the fertile floodplain of the Büyük Menderes River and through the farming village of **Azizabat**, which has some fine stone houses. You regain the highway at a point 5.6km east of the Karacasu turn-off, 21km east of Nazilli. Turn right for Denizli.

Alternatively, continue on to the town of **Karacasu**, which is surrounded by tobacco fields, fig trees and orchards. Karacasu is famous for its potters; to see them at work, ask to be directed to the *çanakçı ocakları* (potter's kiln).

DENİZLİ

☎ 0258 / pop 275,500

The prosperous town of Denizli is famous for its textiles. For most travellers, however, it's just a place to hop off a bus or train and onto a bus or dolmuş heading north to Pamukkale.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Turkish Airlines has daily flights to Denizli, although most travellers arrive by bus or train.

SERVICES FROM DENİZLİ'S OTOGAR

Destination	Fare	Duration	Distance	Frequency (per day)
Afyon	€6.70	4hr	240km	8
Ankara	€11	7hr	480km	frequent
Antalya	€8.50	5hr	300km	several
Bodrum	€11	4hr	290km	several
Bursa	€1418.50	9hr	532km	several
Fethiye	€7.50	5hr	280km	several
Isparta	€5.60	3hr	175km	several
İstanbul	€20	12hr	665km	frequent
İzmir	€6.70	4hr	250km	frequent
Konya	€14	6hr	440km	several
Marmaris	€8.50	3hr	185km	several
Neveşehir	€17	11hr	674km	at least 1 nightly
Selçuk	€8.50	3hr	195km	several, or change at Aydın

BUS

There are frequent buses between İzmir and Denizli via Aydın and Nazilli. The Denizli otogar has an *emanetçi* (left-luggage office) next to the PTT.

You can catch a bus from Denizli to virtually any major city in Turkey. Some daily services are listed in the table on the previous page.

The local bus service to Pamukkale leaves from inside the otogar and runs roughly every 30 minutes, with no waiting about for it to fill up. Touts taking commissions from hotels may try to get you to take the dolmuşes that wait beside the otogar instead of the bus. In summer these fill up quickly, but at other times you'll be waiting around. Buses and dolmuşes to Pamukkale cost exactly the same (€0.85).

TRAIN

The train station is on the main highway, across the road from the otogar and a short distance from the Üçgen roundabout.

On arrival at the train station, walk out of the front door, cross the highway, turn left

and walk one block to the otogar to catch a dolmuş or bus to Pamukkale.

The nightly *Pamukkale Ekspresi* (seat €12, couchette €16.50, sleeper €27 to €55, 15½ hours) travels between Denizli and İstanbul via Afyon (€5.30, six hours). It leaves from İstanbul (Haydarpaşa) at 5.35pm and from Denizli at 5pm.

Many people enjoy the relatively short run from Denizli to Selçuk (€3.60, two hours), which passes through attractive countryside and leaves/arrives during sensible daylight hours.

Four trains a day connect Denizli with İzmir (€5, 4½ to 5½ hours), also via Afyon.

PAMUKKALE

☎ 0258 / pop 2500

Calcium's not just good for bones. If the many habitués of the spa town of Pamukkale are to be believed, it works wonders on muscles and sinews too. 'Cotton Castle', 19km north of Denizli, has built a centuries-long reputation on the restorative qualities of its calcium-rich waters. The unique formations of travertine (calcium carbonate) shelves, pools and sta-

lactites, which hug the ridge above town like a white scar, were created by the area's warm mineral water, which cools as it cascades over the cliff edge and deposits its calcium. It's a strange piece of landscape unlike anything else you'll see in Turkey, and it now appears on the Unesco World Heritage list.

Long before Unesco, the Romans recognised the appeal of the site and built a large spa city, Hierapolis, to take advantage of the water's curative powers. The tourist boom of the 1980s and 1990s had a detrimental effect on the site, as a line of hotels above the travertines drained away the waters, leaving the travertines dry, dull and dirtied. In a drastic attempt to preserve the site, all the hotels have been demolished and visitors can no longer bathe in the pools; however, the flow of water is still very slow, and it may be that the real culprits are the many swimming pools in the village below.

Pamukkale village has some charming hotels and pensions, and despite the constant coach parties it's a good place to get a taste of village life, if you steer clear of the main road. Several other attractions are within easy reach, including Afrodiasis (p329), one of Turkey's most complete and absorbing archaeological sites, and Laodicea (p328), one of the biblical Seven Churches of Asia.

Orientation & Information

Together Pamukkale and Hierapolis make up a national park, with entrances to north and south. Cars can reach the southern entrance (*güney girişi*) via Pamukkale village (1km), or the northern entrance (*kuzey girişi*) via the dismal resort of Karahayıt. It's a short walk from the southern entrance to the centre of the site, but 2.5km from the northern entrance.

Pamukkale **tourist office** (☎ 272-2077; www.pamukkale.gov.tr; ☎ 8am-noon & 1-5.30pm Mon-Sat) is on the plateau above the travertines, along with a PTT, ATM, police and first-aid post. The nearest banks are in Denizli.

Travertines

Most people come to Pamukkale to see its famous **travertines** (admission €2.80; ☎ 24hr). Walking around them is enjoyable even now that access is restricted – though you'll never get a photo quite like the ones on the postcards. The route up to the northern entrance is about 3km long but is on tarmac, whereas from the

southern ticket kiosk you have to walk 250m barefoot up to the plateau, along a calcium path through the travertines themselves. Tiny ridges of calcium make this tough on tender feet. Since the site is open 24 hours you can visit for sunrise and sunset. Some pensions also organise trips to view the Hierapolis theatre and the travertines after dark.

You can swim in the Antique Pool in Hierapolis (see below), or there are several pleasant **public swimming pools** with views of the travertines on the main road past Pamukkale village.

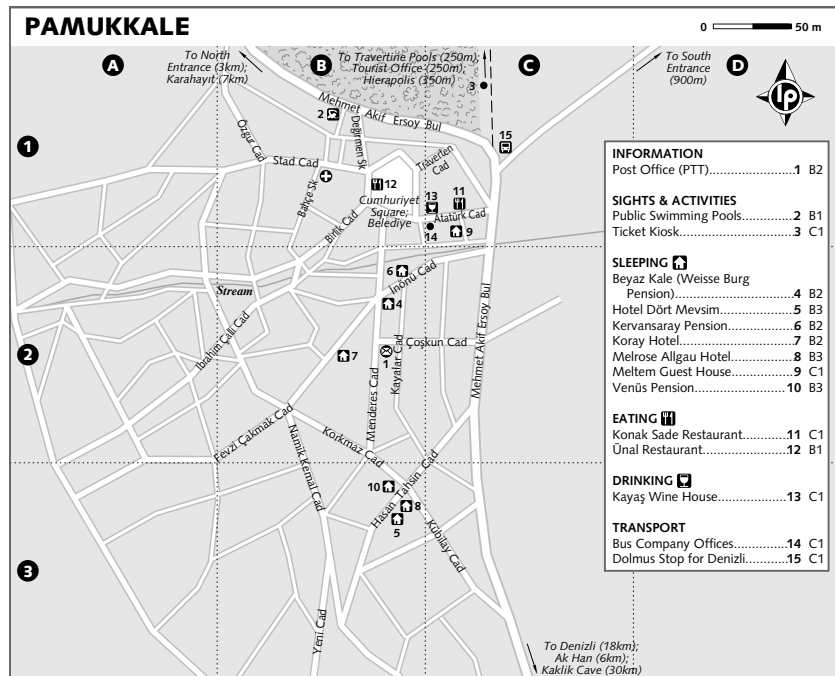
Hierapolis

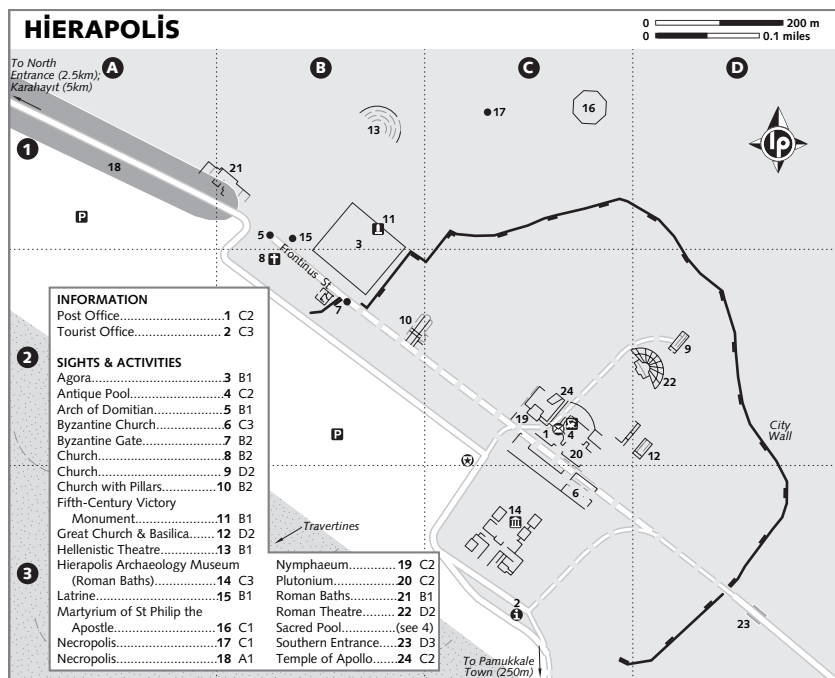
If you're disappointed by the state of the travertines, the ruins of Hierapolis should more than make up for it, since they brilliantly evoke life in the early centuries of the modern era. It was here that the mix of pagan, Roman, Jewish and early Christian elements evolved into a distinctly Anatolian whole. The ruins sprawl over a wide area. To inspect everything carefully could take the best part of a day, although most visitors settle for an hour or two.

Founded around 190 BC by Eumenes II, King of Pergamum, Hierapolis was a cure centre that prospered under the Romans and even more under the Byzantines, when it gained a large Jewish community and an early Christian congregation. Sadly, recurrent earthquakes regularly brought disaster, and after a major one in 1334 the locals called it a day and moved away.

The centre of Hierapolis may originally have been the sacred pool, which is now the swimming pool in the courtyard of the Antique Pool spa. You can still bathe in the **Antique Pool** (adult/child €10/4) amid submerged sections of original fluted marble columns. The water temperature is a languid 36°C. There are lockers for your gear, and the pool is surrounded by a number of café-bar kiosks.

Near the Hierapolis Archaeology Museum stand a ruined **Byzantine church** and the foundations of a **Temple of Apollo**. As at Didyma and Delphi, the temple had an oracle tended by eunuch priests. The source of inspiration was an adjoining spring called the Plutonium, dedicated to Pluto, god of the underworld. As if to confirm its direct line to Hades, the spring gave off toxic vapours, lethal to all but the priests, who would demonstrate its potent





powers by tossing small animals and birds in to watch them die.

To find the spring, walk up towards the Roman theatre, enter the first gate in the fence on the right, then follow the path down to the right. To the left, in front of the big, block-like temple, is a small subterranean entrance closed by a rusted grate and marked by a sign reading 'Tehlikelidir Zehirli Gaz' (Dangerous Poisonous Gas). Listen and you will hear the gas bubbling up from the waters below. Note that it is still deadly poisonous, and before the grate was installed there were several fatalities among those with more curiosity than sense.

The spectacular **Roman theatre**, capable of seating more than 12,000 spectators, was built in two stages by the emperors Hadrian and Septimius Severus. Much of the stage survives, along with some of the decorative panels and the front-row 'box' seats for VIPs. It was restored by Italian stonecutters in the 1970s. The new wooden rails are intended to stop people toppling down the tiers.

From the theatre, take one of the rough tracks heading uphill and eventually you'll come to the extraordinary octagonal **Martyrium**

of **St Philip the Apostle**, built on the site where it's believed that St Philip was martyred. The arches of the eight individual chapels are all marked with crosses. Views from here are wonderful, and few of the regular tours bother to bring visitors up this far.

Hack across the hillside in a westerly direction and eventually you'll come to a completely ruined **Hellenistic theatre** along unmarked goat tracks. Looking down you'll see the 2nd-century **agora**, one of the largest ever discovered. Marble porticoes with Ionic columns surrounded it on three sides, while a basilica closed off the fourth.

Walk down the hill and through the agora, and you'll re-emerge on the main road along the top of the ridge. Turn right towards the northern exit and you'll come to the remains of the marvellous colonnaded **Frontinus Street**, with some of its paving and columns still intact. Once the city's main north-south commercial axis, this street was bounded at both ends by monumental archways. The ruins of the **Arch of Domitian**, with its twin towers, are at the northern end, but just before them don't miss the surprisingly large **latrine** building,

with two channels cut into its floor, one to carry away sewage, the other for fresh water.

Beyond the Arch of Domitian you come to the ruins of the **Roman baths**, then to the Appian Way of Hierapolis, an extraordinary **necropolis** (cemetery), extending several kilometres to the north, with many striking, even stupendous, tombs in all shapes and sizes. In particular, look out for a cluster of circular tombs, supposedly topped with phallic symbols in antiquity. In ancient times Hierapolis was a place where the sick came for a miracle cure, but the size of the necropolis suggests the local healers had mixed success.

HIERAPOLIS ARCHAEOLOGY MUSEUM

Housed in what were once the Roman baths, right by the travertines, this excellent **museum** (admission €1.10; ☎ 9am-12.30 & 1.30-7.15pm) has three separate sections, one housing spectacular sarcophagi, another small finds from Hierapolis and nearby Afrosdias, and the third friezes and Roman-era statuary from the Afrosdias school. Those depicting Attis, lover of the goddess Cybele, and a priestess of the Egyptian goddess Isis, are especially fine.

Festivals & Events

If you're here in early June, look out for the annual **Turkish-Greek Friendship Festival** (Türk-Yunan Dostluk Festivali), now in its sixth year. Pamukkale is twinned with Samos in Greece, and a series of talks, concerts and performances are held in both locations over several days, often using the travertines as a venue.

Sleeping

At first glance it seems like almost every building in Pamukkale village is a hotel or pension, and most visitors will stay here, although larger tour groups tend to put up in Karahayit. Prices vary according to season, reaching their peak in July and August, but heavy competition ensures surprisingly good value for money, with services such as internet access, book exchanges, multilingual TV, in-house catering and swimming pools all commonplace. You'll have no problem finding a room, as pension owners will crowd around your bus and flood you with offers, and anyone with rooms still available after this initial onslaught will intercept you on the street. If you have your heart set on somewhere specific, call in advance and they'll probably collect you from Denizli otogar for free.

CAMPING

There are several **camp sites** (camping per person about €3) set around swimming pools beside the highway as you come into Pamukkale from Denizli. Some pensions also allow camping on their grounds.

PENSIONS & HOTELS

Several welcoming, family-run pensions are clustered at the junction of İnönü and Menderes Caddesi. As you come into town from Denizli there are several more pensions grouped together in a quiet location.

Hotel Dört Mevsim (☎ 272 2009; www.hoteldortmevsim.com; Hasan Tahsin Caddesi 19; s/d €6/12; 📶 📺 🚿) The 'Four Seasons' bears very little relation to its top-end namesakes, but does provide simple, cheap family-run accommodation and food. Camping is possible at €5.50 for two people, internet access is free and you can hire scooters for €11 per day.

Meltem Guest House (☎ 272 2413; www.meltemguesthouse.com; Kuzey Sokak 9; dm €6, budget s/d/tr €8.50/17/23, deluxe s/d/tr €14/28/34; 📶 📺 🚿) Aimed firmly at backpackers, the Meltem has a slightly dodgy air when it's not busy, but gives you a choice of reasonably comfortable rooms and plenty of services, including free bike hire and 'bloody cold beer'. Trading up to deluxe gets you air-con, bathtub and basic minibar.

Melrose Allgau Hotel (☎ 272 2767; www.allgauhotel.com; Hasan Tahsin Caddesi; s/d €8.50/17; 📶 📺 🚿) Unusual name, unusual building. A touch of alpine style informs everything about this yellow-hued German-run pension, and the rooms have a touch of charm in the simple décor and shady gardens.

Venus Pension (☎ 272 2152; www.venushotel.net; Hasan Tahsin Caddesi; s/d/tr €8.50/17/25; 📶 📺 🚿) Our personal favourite right now, this lovely pink house is run by a friendly young Turkish-Australian couple, and it's hard to imagine the eponymous Aphrodite not smiling on a bit of romance beneath the wood ceilings. Home-cooked food and a nice terrace and lounge add to the appeal.

Kervansaray Pension (☎ 272 2209; kervansaray2@superonline.com.tr; İnönü Caddesi; s/d €10/15; 📶 📺 🚿) Mevlüt Kaya's pension is a honeysuckle-scented place offering cheerful rooms and a friendly, family atmosphere. It's been a favourite for years, and the central-heating system makes it a year-round possibility.

Be yaz Kale (Weisse Burg Pension; ☎ 272 2064; weisberg@yahoo.com; Menderes Caddesi; s/d €10/20; 📶 📺 🚿)

Whether you prefer it in Turkish or German, the 'White Castle' is handy for town without being too close, and has a long record of keeping its guests happy, particularly in the rooftop restaurant. All the rooms have fans.

Koray Hotel (☎ 272 2300; www.hotelkoray.com; Fevzi Çakmak Caddesi 27; s/d €23/34; ♿ ♿) With the facilities of a hotel but much of the charm of a pension, the Koray Hotel could sell itself just on its inviting courtyard pool, restaurant and bar. The hotel stays open year-round and offers tour services to all the surrounding sites.

Eating & Drinking

Pensions and group travel dominate the market here so much that conventional restaurants have struggled to hold their own. There are a couple worth trying, but it's not a bad idea to take a room with dinner included – chances are that your pension will serve you better food with larger portions at lower prices than the restaurants.

Ünal Restaurant (☎ 272 2451; Belediye Altı; mains €3.50-7.50; ☎ 11am-10pm) By the main square, this smartish licensed restaurant has all the usual standards such as *şiş kebap* and grills, as well as daily specials.

Kayaş Wine House (☎ 272 2267; Atatürk Caddesi 3; mains €3.50-7.50; ☎ from noon) As well as a wide-ranging multilingual menu, the Kayaş' terrace offers plenty of scope for a night out, with cocktails (€5.50 to €11), a nargileh corner and satellite TV coverage of big football matches.

Konak Sade Restaurant (☎ 272 2002; mains €3.50-8; ☎ 9am-10pm) Attached to the hotel of the same name; travertine views and garden water features add a little flavour to more of the usual dishes.

Getting There & Away

BUS

In summer, Pamukkale has several direct buses to and from other cities. At other times of year it's best to assume you'll have to change in Denizli.

Pamukkale has no proper otogar. Buses drop you at the Denizli dolmuş stop. Ticket offices are on the main street.

Buses run between Denizli and Pamukkale every 30 minutes or so, more frequently on Saturday and Sunday (€0.85, 30 minutes). The last bus runs at 10pm for most of the year, but check before leaving it late. A few buses

continue to the top of the ridge for minimal extra charge.

In summer dolmuşes run more frequently, but see p324 for a warning on pension touts and delays.

TAXI

A taxi between Denizli and Pamukkale costs about €10, but don't take one until you're sure the bus and dolmuş services have stopped for the day, as drivers will probably try to take you to a hotel where they can claim commission.

AROUND PAMUKKALE Laodicea (Laodikya)

Once a prosperous commercial city at the junction of two major trade routes, Laodicea was famed for its black wool, banking and medicines. It had a large Jewish community and a prominent Christian congregation, and was one of the Seven Churches of Asia mentioned in the New Testament Book of Revelation. Cicero lived here for a few years before being put to death at the behest of Mark Antony.

Although the spread-out ruins (admission free; ☎ daylight hr) suggest a city of considerable size, there's not much of interest left for the casual visitor. The outline of the **stadium** is visible, although most of the stones were purloined to construct the railway. One of the two **theatres** is in better shape, with most of the upper tiers of seats remaining – though the bottom ones have collapsed. More striking are the remains of the **agora**, with the ruins of the **basilica church** mentioned in the Bible right beside it. The site is littered with discarded chunks of beautifully carved marble, each one of which would be a major exhibit anywhere not so overflowing in antiquities.

Heading from Pamukkale to Denizli by bus you'll pass two signs to Laodicea leading off on the right. If you take the first of these it will bring you to a large explanatory sign and then to the agora after about 1km. The second sign leads you to the stadium first – it's quite a walk from there to the agora.

Alternatively, you might want to sign up for a tour from Pamukkale, which will take in other local sites as well.

Kaklık Mağarası (Kaklık Cave) & Ak Han Inconspicuously hidden away beneath a field, **Kaklık Mağarası** (admission €1.10) is like a second Pamukkale tucked away underground. Here,

calcium-rich water flows from near the surface into a large sinkhole, creating a bright, white pyramid, with warm travertine pools at the bottom, which you walk past on a metal walkway. Guides claim that the deposits became white only after the local earthquake of the mid-1990s. Afterwards, drinks are on sale around a small pool where you can swim (although it doesn't look especially inviting).

En route to or from the cave, pause to inspect the **Ak Han** (White Caravanserai; admission free; ☎ daylight hr), a Seljuk *han* just 1km past the Pamukkale turn-off on the main Denizli–Isparta highway. It's in great shape considering that it dates from around 1251, and has a beautifully carved gateway.

Getting to the cave without your own transport is time-consuming, and it's usually easiest to take a tour from Pamukkale. To visit independently, catch a bus or dolmuş (€1.70) west from Denizli on the Isparta highway until you approach the village of Kaklık, where a huge sign points left (north) to the cave. Unless you can hitch a ride on a farm vehicle, you face a 4km walk along this road to the cave.

Afrodiasias

Afrodiasias is one of Turkey's finest archaeological sites. Some people even prefer it to Ephesus, if only because it is less overrun with coach parties. While there are certainly finer individual ruins elsewhere, it's the scope of the surviving remains that distinguishes Afrodiasias, as so much of it is preserved that

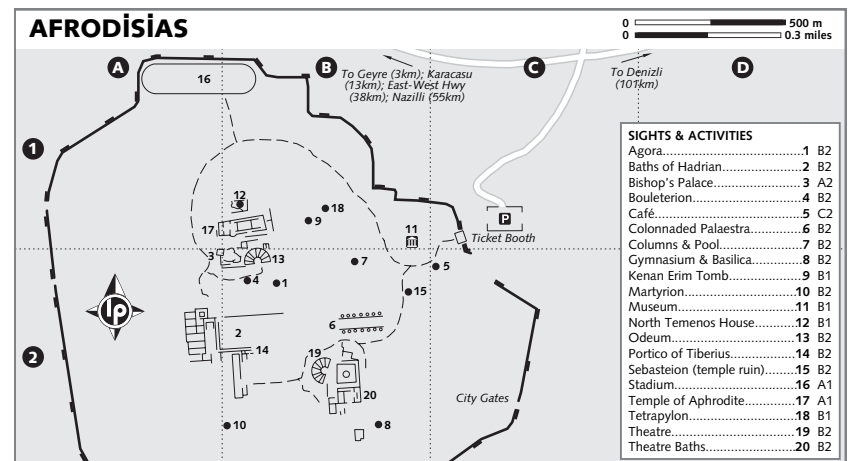
you can get a real sense of the grandeur and extent of the lost classical cities. Come in May or June and you'll find the ruins awash with blazing red poppies.

HISTORY

Excavations have proved that the Afrodiasias acropolis is a prehistoric mound built up by successive settlements from around 5000 BC. From the 6th century BC its famous temple was a popular pilgrimage site, but it wasn't until the 2nd or 1st century BC that the village grew into a town that steadily prospered. By the 3rd century AD Afrodiasias was the capital of the Roman province of Caria, with a population of 15,000 at its peak. However, under the Byzantines the city changed substantially: the steamy Temple of Aphrodite was transformed into a chaste Christian church, and ancient buildings were pulled down to provide stone for defensive walls (c AD 350).

During the Middle Ages Afrodiasias continued as a cathedral town, but it seems to have been abandoned in the 12th century. The village of Geyre sprang up on the site some time later. In 1956 an earthquake devastated the village, which was rebuilt in its present westerly location, allowing easier excavation of the site. The pleasant plaza in front of the museum was the main square of pre-1956 Geyre.

Although other archaeologists worked on the site before him, Afrodiasias will always be associated with the work of Professor Kenan T Erim of New York University, who directed work at the site from 1961 to 1990. His book



MIGHTY APHRODITE

The name Afrodias quickly evokes the word 'aphrodisiac', which is hardly surprising since both are derived from the Greek name for the goddess of love, Aphrodite. Known as Venus to the Romans, Aphrodite was many things to many people. As Aphrodite Urania she was the goddess of pure, spiritual love, but as Aphrodite Pandemos she was the goddess of sensual love and lust – married to Hephaestus but lover also of Ares, Hermes, Dionysus and Adonis. Her children, Harmonia, Eros, Hermaphroditus, Aeneas (the founder of Troy) and Priapus, the phallic god, reflect aspects from both sides of Aphrodite's dual nature.

Unsurprisingly, these qualities didn't always sit well together, and while Aphrodite could be a champion of true lovers and a defender of humanity, she could also be a mischievous, capricious force in the lives of men. Her presence in classical legend almost always serves to shake up a situation and, often enough, introduce a little chaos. Most notably the entire Trojan war can be attributed to her manipulation of Paris, who was 'persuaded' to declare her the winner in a celestial beauty contest when she promised him the love of the beautiful Helen.

Taken as a whole, the message of the Aphrodite legend is a clear and familiar one: love is a powerful thing, with the potential to change the world or make fools of us all. Small wonder that the Romans here chose to dedicate their city to the goddess they saw pulling those strings.

Afrodias: City of Venus Aphrodite (1986) tells the story. After his death, Professor Erim was buried at the site that he had done so much to reveal.

RUINS

Most of what you see at **Afrodias** (admission €4; ☞ 9am-7.30pm May-Sep, 9am-5pm Oct-Apr) dates back to at least the 2nd century AD. The site is well laid out, with good, clear notices in English and Turkish, and a suggested route marked by yellow-and-black arrows. If you follow the route we give here you will be going against the flow of the regular tour groups, which arrive around 11am most days.

Turn right beside the museum and on the left you'll see the site of a grand **house** with Ionic and Corinthian pillars. Further along on the left is the magnificently elaborate **tetrapylon** (monumental gateway) that once greeted pilgrims as they approached the Temple of Aphrodite, reconstructed almost entirely from the original blocks. The tomb of Professor Erim is on the lawn nearby.

Follow the footpath until you come to a right turn that leads across the fields to the 270m-long **stadium**, one of the biggest and best preserved in the classical world. The stadium has a slightly ovoid shape to give spectators a better view of events. Most of its 30,000 seats are overgrown but still in usable condition, and you can easily imagine the football-crowd atmosphere when games were in progress. Some seats were reserved for individuals or guilds, whose names they

still bear. At some stage, the eastern end of the stadium was converted into an arena for gladiatorial combats.

Return to the main path and continue to the once-famous **Temple of Aphrodite**, completely rebuilt when it was converted into a basilica (c AD 500). Its cella was removed, its columns shifted to form a nave and an apse added at the eastern end, making it hard to imagine how it must have been in the years when orgies in celebration of Aphrodite were held here. Near the temple-church is the **Bishop's Palace**, a grand house that may have accommodated the Roman governor long before any bishops turned up.

Just after the Bishop's Palace, a path leads east to the beautiful marble **bouleuterion**, preserved almost undamaged for a thousand years in a bath of mud.

South of the odeum was the **north agora**, once enclosed by Ionic porticoes but now little more than a grassy field where excavations were taking place at the time of writing. The path then leads through the early 2nd-century AD **Hadrianic Baths** to the **southern agora**, with a long, partially excavated pool, and the grand **Portico of Tiberius**.

Climb the earthen mound (where a prehistoric settlement existed) to find the white marble **theatre**, a 7000-capacity auditorium complete with stage and individually labelled seats. South of it stood the large **theatre baths** complex.

The path then wraps round and brings you onto the site of the **Sebasteion**, originally

a temple to the deified Roman emperors. In its heyday this was a spectacular building, preceded by a three-storey-high double colonnade decorated with friezes of Greek myths and the exploits of the emperors; 70 of the original 190 reliefs have been recovered, an excellent ratio for an excavation of this size.

When you've finished looking at the ruins it's worth wandering round the **museum**, admission to which is included in the entry price. During Roman times, Afrodias was home to a famous school for sculptors – who were attracted by the beds of high-grade marble 2km away at the foot of Babadağ (Mt Baba). The museum collection reflects the excellence of their work, and the birds flying around the rafters add a bit of atmosphere! Noteworthy

works include a 2nd-century cult statue of Aphrodite, a series of shield portraits of great philosophers (deliberately vandalised by early Christians), and depictions of the mysterious Caius Julius Zoilos, a former slave of Octavian who not only won his freedom but also gained enough wealth to become one of Afrodias' major benefactors.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Afrodias is 55km from Nazilli and 101km from Denizli. You can get there by public transport, but only by taking one bus from Denizli to Nazilli, then another to Karacasu and then a dolmuş to the site. It's more sensible to arrange a tour or private transport (€15, 1½ hours) from Pamukkale.

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