

Turkey

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Istanbul** The glorious one-time Byzantine and Ottoman capital and one of the world's truly great cities (p1149)
- **Cappadocia** Sleep in fairy chimneys and explore underground cities in this jaw-droppingly bizarre and beautiful region (p1168)
- **Selçuk** Enjoy new-found friends at the best *pensions* on the coast, with awesome Ephesus down the road (p1159)
- **Best Journey** Soak rays while sailing the crystal-clear Med from Fethiye to Olympos, or wherever... (p1163)
- **Off-the-beaten track** Mt Nemrut, keep your head where the gods lost theirs (p1170)

FAST FACTS

- **Area** 779,452 sq km (six times the size of Greece)
- **ATMs** Available everywhere
- **Budget** €20 to €30 per day
- **Capital** Ankara
- **Famous for** Turkish Delight, *hammams* (Turkish baths), carpets, moustaches, ancient history
- **Internet** Available everywhere
- **Language** Turkish
- **Money** Yeni Turkish Lira (YTL); €1 = TRL1.7 million; A\$1 = €0.59; CA\$1 = €0.69; ¥100 = €0.67; NZ\$1 = €0.49; UK£1 = €1.46; US\$1 = TRL1.4 million
- **Phrases** *merhaba* (hello), *tamam* (OK), *teşekkürler* (thank you), *bu akşam olmaz* (not tonight, thanks)



- **Population** 72.4 million
- **Telephone Codes** country code ☎ 90; international access code ☎ 00
- **Time** GMT + 2
- **Visas** available on entry

TRAVEL HINTS

Most accommodation along the Aegean, Mediterranean, Black Sea and in some parts of Cappadocia is closed from mid-October until late April.

ROAMING TURKEY

Head anticlockwise from Istanbul: Gallipoli, Efes (Ephesus), Fethiye, Kaş, Olympos, Antalya, Konya, Cappadocia and Ankara make a neat circle.

Turkey's landscape is dotted with battlegrounds, ruined castles and the palaces of great empires, and this history has left a deep legacy. People who've never had to suffer for an idea or fight for a patch of land can be overwhelmed by the passion of ordinary Turks for their country. But for Turks that passion finds its outlet, not in martial ardour, but in simple pleasures: family, food, music, football and friendship. Sharing their joy in the simple things is a highlight for every visitor.

Turkey's people make it compelling. But they are not its only attraction. If you want to unwind, spend an afternoon at a *hammam* (Turkish bath) or blissfully do nothing on the sizzling sundeck of a *gület* (wooden yacht). You can take it up a notch and check out the best place for your towel while paragliding over Ölüdeniz, thrash the white-water at Saklıkent Gorge or paddle over submerged ruins near Kaş. Bar and club devotees need look no further than Istanbul, fast becoming one of Europe's most dynamic and seriously fun scenes.

Spend a little time in Turkey and you, too, will understand why some visitors come for a week and end up staying a lifetime.

HISTORY

The greatest early Anatolian civilisation was the Hittites, who were a force to be reckoned with from 2000 to 1200 BC. After the collapse of the Hittite empire, parts of the country were not reunited until the Greco-Roman period.

In AD 330 the Roman emperor Constantine founded an imperial city at Byzantium. Renamed Constantinople, it became the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire and was the Byzantine Empire's heart for a thousand years. However invasion by the Seljuk Turks heavily reduced the empire's territory, and the Fourth Crusade (1202–04) basically ruined the city of Constantinople. The Byzantines eventually regained the ravaged city in 1261.

In 1453 Constantinople fell to Ottoman Turk Sultan Mehmet II (the Conqueror) and was renamed Istanbul. A century later, under Süleyman the Magnificent, the Ottoman Empire reached its zenith, spreading deep into Europe, Asia and North Africa.

By the 20th century European nationalism had led to widespread independence movements, and the Turks emerged from WWI stripped of their last non-Turkish provinces. Most of Anatolia itself was divided among the victorious Europeans, leaving virtually nothing for Turkey.

At this low point, Mustafa Kemal (later Atatürk), the father of modern Turkey, took

over. Under his rule, the Turks won their War of Independence by repelling the Greeks at Smyrna (İzmir), founding a new secular Turkish republic.

Since Atatürk's death in 1938 and the introduction of full democracy in 1950, Turkey has experienced three military coups and some considerable political turbulence, including the execution of Democratic Party leader Adnan Menderes. The army became a key force in national politics, stepping in roughly once a decade to restore national order and repair imbalances of power. The occupation and division of Cyprus became the major issue of the 1970s, while 1980 was marked by widespread civil unrest, a deadlocked parliament and yet another military intervention.

During the 1980s and '90s Turkey was wracked by conflict with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), fighting for Kurdish rights and the creation of a Kurdish state in the southeast.

In February 2001 the Turkish economy collapsed spectacularly, and the events of 9/11 hit the previously resilient tourist sector hard. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) pumped in funds to refloat the economy, and with the 2002 landslide election of the Islamic Justice and Development Party (AKP), things started to look up for the country. So far Prime Minister Erdoğan's new regime has proved reassuringly moderate and has trodden a remarkably skilful path through Turkey's minefield of vested interests. Accession talks with the EU began in October 2005.

EU-pushed government concessions have fostered a growing optimism – life for the Kurds of southeast Anatolia hasn't been this good since the formation of the Republic. However, sporadic bombings by a break-away group of Kurdish rebels throughout the country – and particularly coastal tourist resorts – remind that the Kurds problems are far from resolved.

READING UP

If you only read one book about Turkey, make it *Birds Without Wings* (Louis de Bernières); *Snow* (Orhan Pamuk) is a superb read by Turkey's most famous contemporary author; *Atatürk* (Andrew Mango) will put you in the know with the father of Turkey; and *Gallipoli* (Alan Moorehead) is the classic account of the tragic battle for the Dardanelles.



THE CULTURE

Turkey's population consists predominantly of Turks, with a large Kurdish minority (perhaps 14 million) and much smaller groups of Laz, Hemsin, Arabs, Jews, Greeks and Armenians. Arab influence is strongest in the Hatay (Antakya) area bordering Syria. Southeastern Turkey is solidly Kurdish.

Republican Turkey has predominantly adopted a Westernised lifestyle, at least on the surface. In smaller towns and villages, particularly in the east, you might encounter a more conservative people.

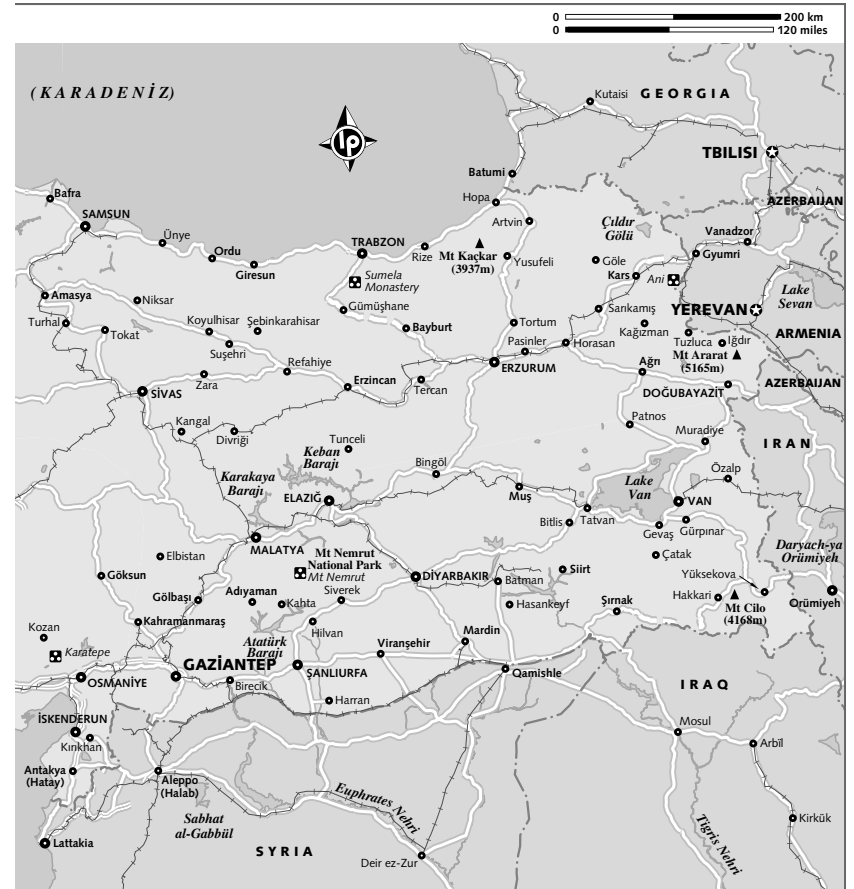
Things may be changing but Turkish society is still basically sexually segregated, especially once you get away from the big cities and tourist resorts. Although younger Turks

are questioning the old ways and women do hold positions of authority (there's even been a female prime minister), foreign women can find themselves being harassed. It's mostly just catcalls and dubious remarks, but serious assaults do occasionally occur.

Travelling with companions usually improves matters and it's worth remembering that Turkish women ignore men who speak to them in the street. Dressing appropriately (see Responsible Tourism, p1172) will also reduce unwanted attention.

ENVIRONMENT

The Dardanelles, Sea of Marmara and Bosphorus strait divide Turkey between Asia and Europe, but Eastern Thrace (European



Turkey) makes up only 3% of the total land area. The remaining 97% is Anatolia, a vast plateau rising eastward towards the Caucasus Mountains.

Large parts of Turkey's 8300km-long coastline are given over to tourism.

The Aegean and Mediterranean coasts have mild, rainy winters and hot, dry summers. The Anatolian plateau can be boiling in summer and freezing in winter. The Black Sea coast is mild and humid in summer, chilly and wet in winter.

Mountainous eastern Turkey is icy cold and snowy in winter, and only pleasantly warm during high summer. The southeastern parts are dry and mild in winter and baking hot during summer.

TRANSPORT

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air

The cheapest fares are almost always to Istanbul, but you can get cheap flights in summer to Antalya, Izmir, Bodrum and Dalaman. **Turkish Airlines** (code TK; www.thy.com) and European carriers fly to Istanbul from most major European cities. If you're planning a two- or three-week stay, it's also worth inquiring about charter flights.

The following cheap airlines fly to and from Turkey:

Atlasjet (code KK; www.atlastjet.com)

Corendon Airlines (code CAI; www.corendon.com)

easyJet (code U2; www.easyjet.com) Flies from London & Basil to Istanbul (no phone contacts in Turkey). London–Istanbul flights cost from £45 one way.

German Wings (code 4U; www25.germanwings.com)

Onur Air (code 8Q; www.onurair.com.tr)

Pegasus Airlines (code H9; www.pegasusaairlines.com)

Land

Bus services from Western Europe only run from Germany, Italy, Austria and Greece, so if you're travelling from other European cities, you'd need to catch a connecting bus. Two of the best Turkish companies – **Ulusoy** (www.ulusoy.com.tr) and **Varan** (www.varan.com.tr) – operate big Mercedes buses on these routes. Sample one-way fares to Istanbul are: Frankfurt (€130, 45 hours) and Athens (€68, 20 hours).

At the time of writing there were no direct trains between Western European cities, other than Greece, and Turkey. One of the best options for travelling between Greece and Turkey is the comfy overnight train between Thessaloniki and Istanbul, the *Filia-Dostluk Express*. For more information contact the **Turkish State Railways** (www.tcdd.gov.tr) and the **Hellenic Railways Organisation** (www.ose.gr).

Sea

The ferry company **Marmara Lines** (www.marmaralines.com) connects Brindisi and Ancona in Italy with Çeşme.

Private ferries link Turkey's Aegean and Mediterranean coasts and the Greek islands, which are in turn linked by air or boat to Athens. In summer you can expect daily boats connecting Lesvos–Ayvalık, Chios–Çeşme, Kos–Bodrum, Rhodes–Bodrum, Rhodes–Fethiye, Rhodes–Datça and nearby Simi, and Kastellorizo (Meis)–Kaş. The most frequent ferries serve the Samos–Kuşadası and Rhodes–Marmaris routes. See the individual chapter entries for information about the services.

There are daily services to Turkish Cyprus from Taşucu (near Silifke) and less frequent services from Alanya.

GETTING AROUND Bicycle

Riding a bike can be a good way of exploring, especially in backpacker areas, where many *pensions* loan them for free. Road surfaces are acceptable, if a bit rough, though many Turkish drivers regard cyclists as a curiosity and/or a nuisance.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Most emergency services have only Turkish-speaking operators, so your best bet is to find an English-speaking local to help.

- Ambulance ☎ 112
- Fire ☎ 110
- Police ☎ 155

Bus

Turkish buses go almost everywhere, cheaply, frequently, comfortably and free of smoke. Kamil Koç, Metro, Ulusoy and Varan are the better companies, offering greater speed and comfort for slightly higher fares (plus better safety records than many rivals).

A town's *otogar* (bus terminal) is often outside the centre, but the bigger bus companies usually offer a *servis* (free minibus) to the centre.

Local routes are usually operated by midibuses or *dolmuşes* (minibuses), which might run to a timetable or set off when full.

Fez Travel (Map p1152; ☎ 0212-516 9024; www.feztravel.com; Akbiyık Caddesi 15, Sultanahmet) is a hop-on, hop-off bus service linking the main resorts of the Aegean and the Mediterranean with Istanbul, Cappadocia and Nemrut Dağı.

Car & Motorcycle

Car hire in Turkey starts at €40 a day (insurance included), and driving can be hazardous. **Türkiye Turing ve Otomobil Kurumu** (Turkish Touring & Automobile Association; ☎ 0212-282 8140; www.turing.org.tr) can help with questions and problems. An International Driving Permit is handy, but not necessary.

Hitching

Hitching is possible but not common in Turkey, and works better over short distances. Commercial vehicles are most likely to pick you up, but will expect payment. Women should never hitchhike alone.

Train

The **Turkish State Railways** (☎ 0216-337 8724; www.tcdd.gov.tr) runs services across the country. Although most people still opt for buses as train journey times are notoriously long, the system is being overhauled and several fast lines, such as Istanbul to Ankara, are now in service. The train network covers central

and eastern Turkey fairly well, but doesn't travel along the coastlines at all, apart from a short stretch running between İzmir and Selçuk. The sleeper trains linking Istanbul, İzmir and Ankara are well worth considering as an alternative to bus travel.

İSTANBUL

☎ 0212 / pop 16 million

On an afternoon stroll through Istanbul you can marvel at the greatest examples of Byzantine art and architecture in the world, submerge yourself in the mystique of the *seraglio* (harem) or lose yourself in the labyrinthine Grand Bazaar. You can join the throng at a *meyhane* (tavern) heaving with song and dance fuelled by the fiery aniseed liquor *raki*, dine alongside Prada-clad locals enjoying international fusion cuisine and dance 'til dawn in the city's remarkable outdoor clubs. Istanbul's tourist sights might emphasise tradition, but its inhabitants are set firmly on the cutting edge of everything that is modern Turkey.

HISTORY

Late in the 2nd century AD the Roman Empire conquered the small city-state of Byzantium, which was renamed Constantinople in AD 330 after Emperor Constantine moved his capital there. The city walls kept out barbarians for centuries while the western part of the Roman Empire collapsed. When the city fell for the first time in 1204, it was ransacked by the loot-hungry Europeans of the misguided Fourth Crusade.

Istanbul regained its former glory only after 1453, when it was captured by Mehmet

the Conqueror and made the capital of the Ottoman Empire. During the glittering reign of Süleyman the Magnificent (1520–66) the city was graced with many beautiful new buildings, and managed to retain much of its charm even during the empire's long decline.

Occupied by Allied forces after WWI, the city came to be regarded as the decadent playpen of the sultans, and when the Turkish Republic was proclaimed in 1923 Ankara became the new capital. Nevertheless, Istanbul remains a commercial, cultural and financial centre, and is still Turkey's number one city in all but name.

ORIENTATION

The Bosphorus strait, between the Black and Marmara Seas, divides European Istanbul from its Asian half. The European side is divided by the Golden Horn (Haliç) estuary into the 'newer' quarter of Beyoğlu in the north and Old Istanbul in the south; the Galata Bridge spans the two.

Sultanahmet, the heart of Old Istanbul, has the bulk of the tourist sites, exchange offices, cheap hotels and restaurants. Divan Yolu runs west through Sultanahmet past the Grand Bazaar to Aksaray. From Aksaray you can catch the train to Istanbul Otogar at Esenler, about 10km west of Old Istanbul.

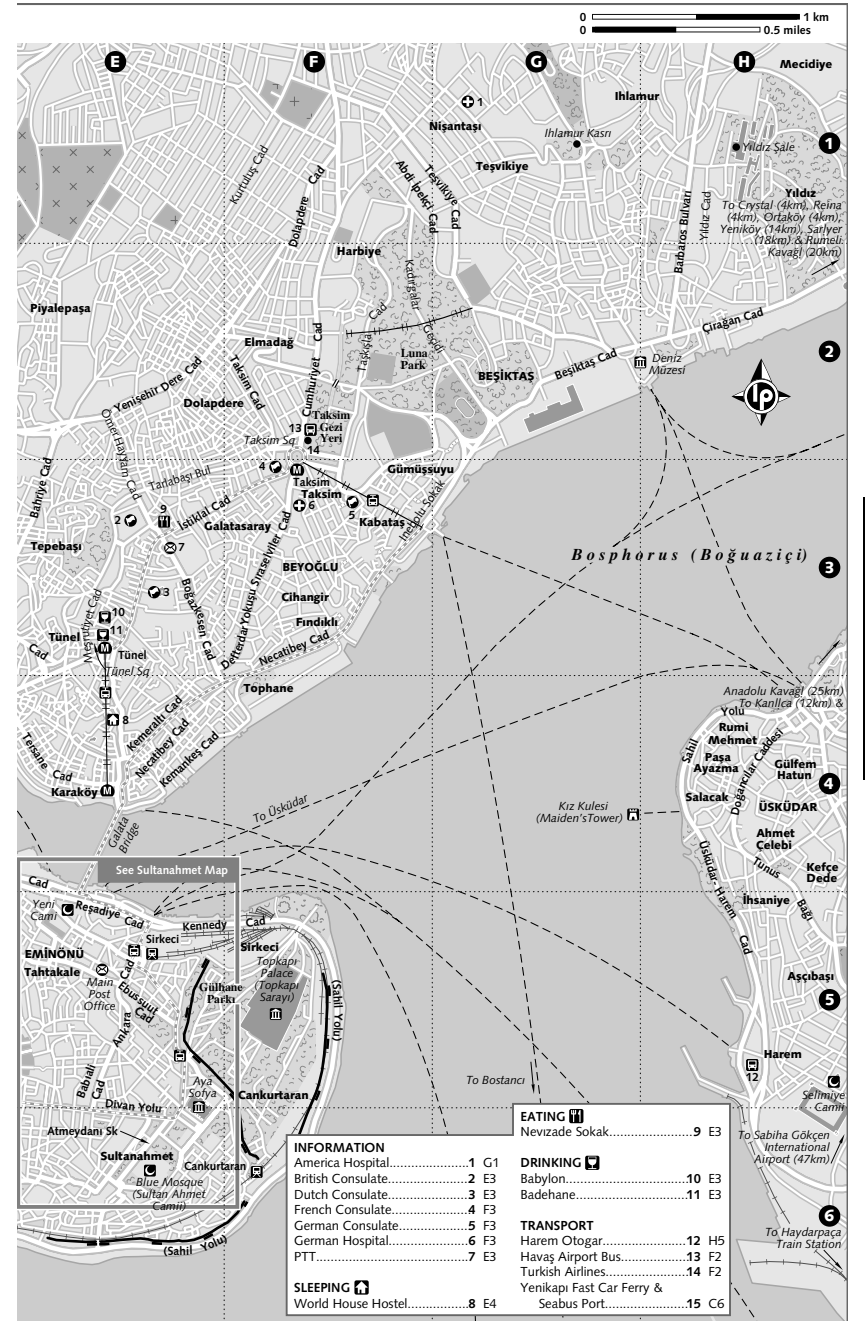
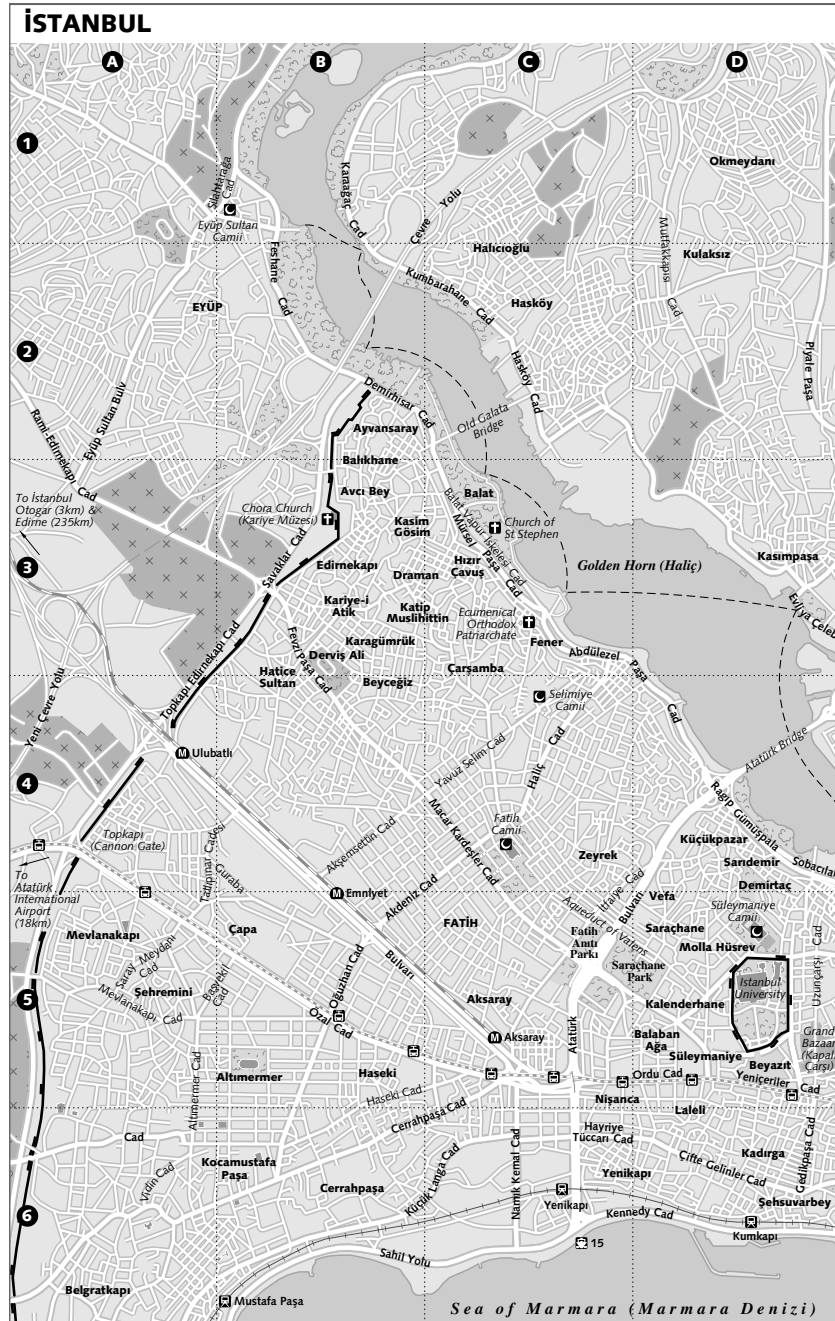
Eminönü, at the southern end of Galata Bridge, is the terminus for many buses and ferries. Sirkeci train station is 100m east.

Karaköy, on the other side of the bridge, is another ferry terminus. Up the hill is the southern end of Beyoğlu's pedestrian shopping street, İstiklal Caddesi; at its northern end is Taksim Sq, heart of 'modern' Istanbul.

GETTING INTO TOWN

Getting from the Atatürk International Airport to Sultanahmet by public transport is cheap and easy. Take the LRT service from the airport six stops to Zeytinburnu (€0.65), from where you connect with the tram that takes you directly to Sultanahmet – about 50 minutes all up. Shuttle buses also operate, including the Havaş airport bus (€5, 35 minutes to one hour, half-hourly), which goes to Taksim Sq via Aksaray. Sultanahmet travel agencies and hostels book minibuses in the other direction for around €4 a head. A taxi between the Atatürk International Airport and Sultanahmet or Taksim Sq costs around €13, more between midnight and 6am or if there's heavy traffic.

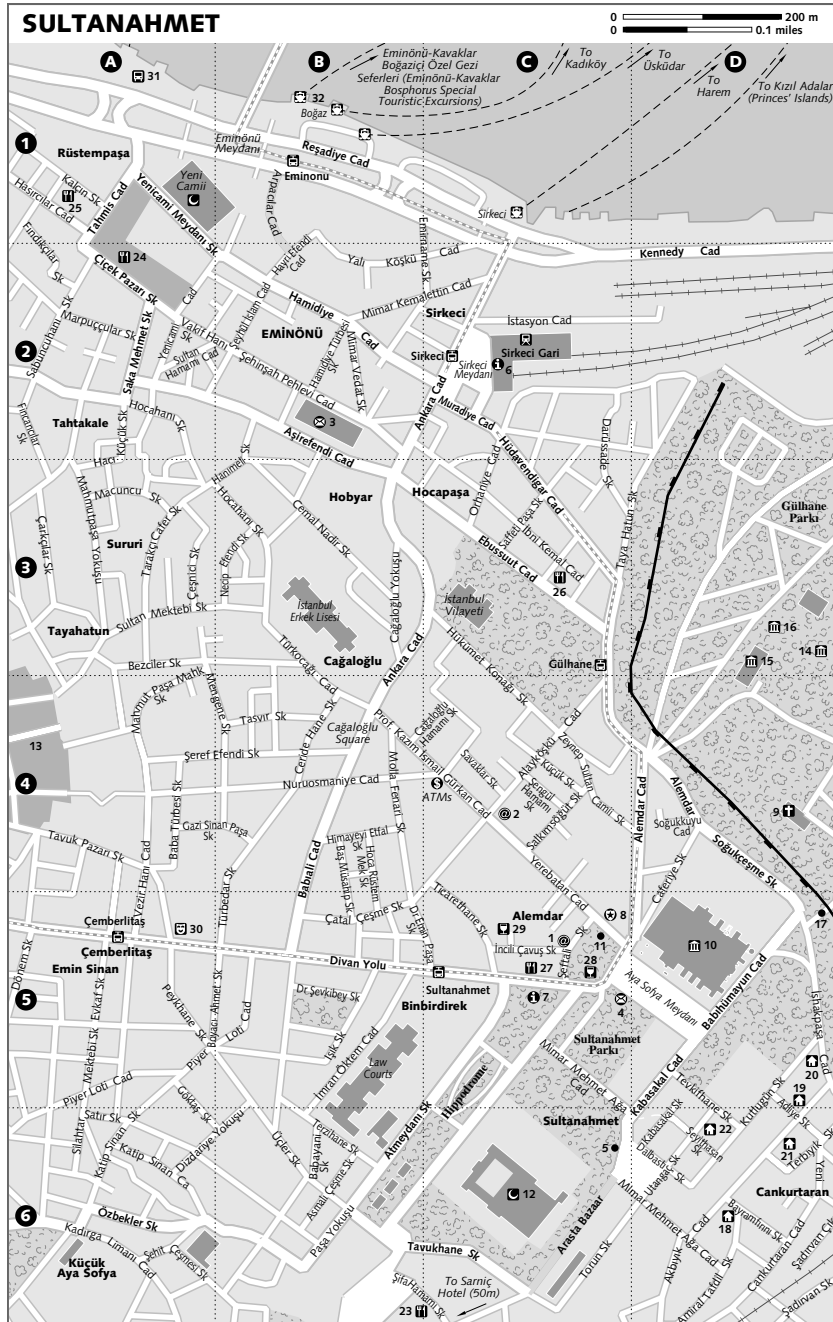
Sabiha Gökçen International Airport is a lot less convenient to get to than Atatürk. Public transport is limited, so most airlines organise service buses to connect with their flights. A taxi between Sabiha Gökçen International Airport and Sultanahmet or Taksim Sq costs around €45.



TURKEY

TURKEY

EATING 🍴	Nevzade Sokak.....	9	E3
INFORMATION	America Hospital.....	1	G1
	British Consulate.....	2	E3
	Dutch Consulate.....	3	E3
	French Consulate.....	4	F3
	German Consulate.....	5	F3
	German Hospital.....	6	F3
	PTT.....	7	E3
SLEEPING 🛏	World House Hostel.....	8	E4
	Harem Otagar.....	12	H5
	Havaş Airport Bus.....	13	F2
	Turkish Airlines.....	14	F2
	Yenikapı Fast Car Ferry & Seabus Port.....	15	C6



INFORMATION
Emergency

Tourist Police (Map p1152; ☎ 527 4503; Yerebatan Caddesi 6, Sultanahmet)

Internet Access

Internet cafés are all over İstanbul, the following places have ADSL connections, English-speaking staff and charge €2 per hour:

Anatolia Internet Café (Map p1152; İncili Çavuş Sokak 37/2, Sultanahmet; ☎ 9am-9pm)

Otantik Internet Café (Map p1152; Alayköşkü Caddesi 2/B, Sultanahmet; ☎ 9am-midnight)

You can get wi-fi access at the international arrivals terminal at the Atatürk International Airport and at the **Sultan Pub** (Map p1152; Divan Yolu Caddesi 2, Sultanahmet; per hr €3.50; ☎ 9.30am-1am).

Internet Resources

Biletix (www.biletix.com) Entertainment listings and tickets.

Gay Istanbul (www.istanbulgay.com) Gay chat, accommodation and tours.

Mymerhaba (www.mymerhaba.com)

Medical Services

German Hospital (Alman Hastanesi) (Map pp1150-1; ☎ 293 2150; Siraselviler Caddesi 119, Taksim; ☎ 24hr)

American Hospital (Amerika Hastanesi) (Map pp1150-1; ☎ 311 2000; Güzelbahçe Sokak 20, Nişantaşı; ☎ 24hr)

Money

ATMs and exchange offices are common.

Post

PTT Sirkeci (Map p1152; Büyük Postane Caddesi, Eminönü); **Taksim** (Map pp1150-1; Boğazkesen Caddesi); **Sultanahmet** (Map p1152; Booth, Aya Sofya Meydanı)

INFORMATION		Blue Mosque (Sultan Ahmet Camii)		Egyptian Bazaar (Mısır Çarşısı)	
Anatolia Internet Café.....	1 C5	Camii)	12 C6	Çarşısı).....	24 A2
Fez Travel.....(see 21)		Grand Bazaar (Kapalı Çarşı).....	13 A4	Hamdi Et Lokantasi.....	25 A1
Otantik Internet Café.....	2 C4	Istanbul Archaeology		Hatay.....	26 C3
PTT.....	3 B2	Museum.....	14 D3	Tarihi Sultanahmet Köftçisi Selim Usta.....	27 C5
PTT Booth.....	4 C5	Museum of the Ancient Orient.....	15 D3		
Senkron Travel.....	5 C6	Tiled Pavilion (Çinili Köşk).....	16 D3	DRINKING ☎	
Sultan Pub	(see 28)	Topkapı Palace Gate.....	17 D5	Sultan Pub.....	28 C5
Tourist Office.....	6 C2			Şah Pub & Bar.....	29 C5
Tourist Office.....	7 C5				
Tourist Police.....	8 C5	SLEEPING ☎		ENTERTAINMENT ☎	
		Bahaus Hostel.....	18 D6	Çemberlitaş Hamamı.....	30 A5
		Hotel Empress Zoe.....	19 D5		
		Mavi Guesthouse.....	20 D5	TRANSPORT	
		Orient International Hostel.....	21 D6	Beyoğlu & Bosphorus Buses.....	31 A1
		Side Hotel & Pension.....	22 D6	Bosphorus Special Touristic Excursion Boats.....	32 B1
SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES					
Aya İrini (Church of Divine Peace).....	9 D4	EATING ☎			
Aya Sofya (Church of Holy Wisdom).....	10 D5	Doy Doy.....	23 B6		
Basilica Cistern (Yerebatan Sarnıcı).....	11 C5				

Telephone

İstanbul has two area codes: 0212 for the European side, 0216 for the Asian zone. All numbers listed here use the 0212 code unless otherwise indicated.

Tourist Information

Tourist information offices in İstanbul can be fairly helpful; they do provide free city sheet maps.

Atatürk International Airport (International Arrivals Terminal)

Sirkeci train station (Map p1152; ☎ 511 5888)

Tourist Office (Map p1152; ☎ 518 8754; Divan Yolu, Sultanahmet)

Travel Agencies

Fez Travel (Map p1152; ☎ 516 9024; www.feztravel.com; Akbiyık Caddesi 15, Sultanahmet)

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES
Old İstanbul

Sultanahmet is 'Old İstanbul', a Unesco-designated World Heritage site packed with so many wonderful sights you could spend several weeks here and still only scratch the surface.

AYA SOFYA (CHURCH OF HOLY WISDOM)

When the Emperor Justinian ordered work to start on **Aya Sofya** (Map p1152; ☎ 522 0989; Aya Sofya Meydanı; admission adult/child under 7yr €5.50/free; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun) in 532 AD, he meant to create the grandest church in the world. For a thousand years it was certainly Christendom's largest place of worship, and despite the scaffolding, the interior is still impressive.

Climb up to the **gallery** to see temporary exhibitions and the splendid mosaics that

TURKEY

TURKEY

survive from the Christian period. When the church was captured by the Ottomans and converted into a mosque in 1453, the mosaics were actually plastered over, as Islam prohibits images of living creatures. They were not revealed until the 1930s, when Atatürk declared Aya Sofya a museum.

BLUE MOSQUE

With his eponymously named mosque, Sultan Ahmet I (r 1603–17) set out to build a monument that would rival and even surpass the nearby Aya Sofya in grandeur and beauty. Today it's more widely known as the **Blue Mosque** (Sultan Ahmet Camii; Map p1152; Hippodrome; ☞ closed during prayer times). The nickname comes from the luminous blue impression created by the tiled walls and painted dome of the interior. Make a small donation and leave your shoes outside.

TOPKAPI PALACE

Northeast of Aya Sofya, the sprawling **Topkapı Sarayı** (Map p1152; ☞ 512 0480; Soğukçeşme Sokak; admission adult/child under 7yr €5.50/free; ☞ 9am–7pm Wed–Mon Apr–Sep, 9am–5pm Wed–Mon Oct–Mar) was the lush seat of the sultans from 1462 until they moved to Dolmabahçe Palace in the 19th century. Topkapı is not just a single palace but a massive group of courtyards, houses and libraries, and it includes an intriguing 400-room harem.

In the vast First Court is the **Aya İrini** (Church of Divine Peace; Map p1152), dating from around AD 540. Within the Second Court are exhibits of priceless porcelain, silverware and crystal, arms and calligraphy.

Right beside the Imperial Council Chamber (Kubbealtı) is the entrance to the **harem** (admission adult/child under 7yr €5.50/free), a succession of sumptuously decorated rooms that served as the sultan's family quarters – don't miss it.

On show in the Third Court are the sultan's ceremonial robes and the **Imperial Treasury**, with its incredible wealth of gold and gems. The catchily named **Sacred Safekeeping Rooms** hold a solid gold casket containing the Prophet Mohammed's cloak and other Islamic relics.

GRAND BAZAAR

Just north of Divan Yolu is the **Grand Bazaar** (Kapalı Çarşı; Map p1152; ☞ 8.30am–7pm Mon–Sat), a labyrinthine medieval shopping mall also known

as the Covered Market, with 22 entrances and 4500 shops, crammed with punters and promoters. It's a fun place to wander around and get lost – which you can bet your *arasta* you will!

BASILICA CISTERN

Across the tram lines from Aya Sofya is the entrance to the underground **Basilica Cistern** (Yerebatan Sarnığı; Map p1152; ☞ 522 1259; Yerebatan Caddesi 13; admission €5.50; ☞ 9am–6.30pm Apr–Sep, 9am–5.30pm Oct–Mar), built by Constantine and enlarged by Justinian. This vast, atmospheric cistern filled with columns held water not only for regular summer use but also for times of siege.

İSTANBUL ARCHAEOLOGY MUSEUM

Downhill, west of Topkapı Palace is the **İstanbul Arkeoloji Müzesim** (Map p1152; ☞ 520 7740; Osman Hamdi Bey Yokuşu, Gülhane; admission €3; ☞ 8.30am–5pm Tue–Sun). The main building houses an outstanding collection of Greek and Roman statuary, including the magnificent sarcophagi from the royal necropolis at Sidon in Lebanon.

In a separate building, the **Museum of the Ancient Orient** (Map p1152) houses Hittite and other older archaeological finds. Also on the grounds is the graceful **Tiled Pavilion** (Çinili Köşk; Map p1152), one of İstanbul's oldest Ottoman buildings.

The Bosphorus

In summer there's no finer way to soak up the city than a ferry ride up the Bosphorus (Map pp1150–1). State-run excursion ferries depart from Eminönü daily, stopping at Beşiktaş, Kanlıca, Yeniköy, Sarıyer, Rumeli Kavağı and Anadolu Kavağı (the turnaround point). The journey takes 90 minutes each way, with a three-hour stop for lunch and exploration of the ruined hilltop citadel, Anadolu Kavağı. The return fare is €4. Private ferries will take you as far as Rumeli Hisarı (about €14, three hours), and depart from Eminönü, just east of Galata Bridge.

Beyoğlu

Beyoğlu (Map pp1150–1) is the heart of modern İstanbul, ground-zero for galleries, cafés and boutiques, with hip new restaurants opening almost nightly, and more bars than a bar-hopper could hope to prop themselves in for a lifetime. It's a showcase of cosmopolitan Turkey at its best – miss Beyoğlu and you haven't seen İstanbul.

Stretching from Tünel Sq to Taksim Sq, **İstiklal Caddesi** (Independence Ave; Map pp1150–1) was known in the late 19th century as the Grande Rue de Pera, carrying the life of the modern city up and down its lively promenade. It's still the life and soul of the party, and a stroll along its length is a must.

TOURS

Senkron Travel (Map p1152; ☞ 638 8340; www.senkrontours.com; Arasta Caddesi 51, Sultanahmet) Well-priced tours (€20 to €45), including a combined Golden Horn and Bosphorus boat trip.

SLEEPING

The most convenient place to stay for sight-seeing is the Sultanahmet–Cankurtaran district, where there's a dense selection of hostels and *pensions* competing for business. In high summer even the hostels fill up, and roof space becomes available for around €7 per person. Beyoğlu is a better option for wining, dining and bar-hopping, but there are fewer accommodation options.

Camping in İstanbul is inconvenient and costs about as much as staying in a cheap hotel, with transport fares on top.

Orient International Hostel (Map p1152; ☞ 518 0789; www.orienthostel.com; Akbıyık Caddesi 13, Cankurtaran; dm €10–11, r €45–65; ☞ ☑) The most popular of the many Sultanahmet hostels, thanks to its top-floor café overlooking the Sea of Marmara and the basement bar with belly-dancing nights. Newer rooms are best.

World House Hostel (Map pp1150–1; ☞ 293 5520; www.worldhouseistanbul.com; Galipedede Caddesi 117, Galata, Beyoğlu; dm €10–14, s/d €35/40; ☞ ☑) With an unbeatable foothold between the sights of Sultanahmet and the commotion of Beyoğlu, this colourful hostel is the best new kid on the block.

Mavi Guesthouse (Map p1152; ☞ 517 7287; www.maviguesthouse.com; Kutluğün Sokak 3, Sultanahmet; dm €7–11, s €20, d €24–28; ☞ ☑) Teeny Mavi is a perennial favourite. Don't come for partying, but for night-long backgammon battles in the pint-sized *killim*-clad lounge. Rooms are basic but clean enough.

Bahaus Hostel (Map p1152; ☞ 638 6534; www.travelinistanbul.com; Bayramfınn Sokak 11–13, Cankurtaran; dm €10–12, s €25, d €32–40; ☞ ☑) Laid-back, fun and very friendly, the Bahaus is a great choice. Assets include the lovely rooftop terrace, the inviting lounge and the rooftop BBQs.

SideHotel&Pension (Map p1152; ☞ 517 2282; www.sidehotel.com; Utangaç Sokak 20, Sultanahmet; hotel s/d €45/60,

SPLURGE

Hotel Empress Zoe (Map p1152; ☞ 518 2504; www.emzoe.com; Adliye Sokak 10, Cankurtaran; budget s/d €50/60, standard s/d €70/95, ste €105–200; ☞ ☑) Immaculate and supremely tasteful rooms in adjoining buildings share a gorgeous pebbled garden and a wisteria-bedecked terrace offering terrific views. The suites are best value. Book well ahead.

pension s/d €35/45, apt €60–80; ☞ ☑) Friendly and comfortable, the Side is grown-up enough to appeal to the whole spectrum of independent travellers without losing all the sociable elements of the 'youth' backpacker places.

EATING

Options for eating in Sultanahmet are fairly limited; you'll find the best food in the city in Beyoğlu. Just saunter along İstiklal Caddesi and take your pick, or head into the back streets and **Nezivede Sokak** (Map pp1150–1), crammed with *meyhanes* (taverns) and where locals go for a *rakı*-soaked night on the town. Lots of fun. For fresh and dried fruit, nuts and Turkish delight head to the **Egyptian Bazaar** (Misir Çarşısı; Map p1152; ☞ 9am–7pm Mon–Sat).

Tarihi Sultanahmet Köftecisi Selim Usta (Map p1152; ☞ 520 0566; Divan Yolu 12; mains €2.50–5) Don't get this place confused with the other *köfte* (meatballs) places along this strip purporting to be the *meşhur* (famous) *köfte* restaurant: No 12 is the real McCoy. Hungry locals in-the-know flock here for a serve of the best *köfte* you'll ever grease your palate with.

Doy Doy (Fill up! Fill up!; Map p1152; ☞ 517 1588; Şifa Hamamı Sokak 13; mains €3–8) You'd have to describe the food as stodgy, but the fans don't care at this no-fuss traveller-friendly stalwart. Backpackers come for the superb top-floor terrace views and the extensive menu, which has something for everyone, including vegetarians. No alcohol is served.

Our pick **Hamdi Et Lokantası** (Map p1152; ☞ 528 0390; Kalçın Sokak 17, Eminönü; kebaps €4.50–8) A favourite İstanbul haunt since 1970, Hamdi's phenomenal views, overlooking the bustling Golden Horn and Galata, are matched by some of the city's best kebaps. The kebaps are all so good it's impossible to choose, but luckily you don't have to with the excellent mixed kebab (€6). For that special meal, book ahead and request a spot on the terrace.

Hatay (Map pp1152; ☎ 522 8513; İbni Kemal Caddesi 9-11, HocaPaşa; mains €5-11) Known for its fresh, quality meze (hors d'oeuvres) – try the meze platter (€8.50) to sample a bit of everything – this is one of the few restaurants around here that caters as much for locals as it does for travellers.

DRINKING & CLUBBING

The Sultanahmet bar scene is concentrated on Akbıyık Caddesi, catering to the denizens of the surrounding hostels. Dedicated bar and club goers should head to the side streets of Beyoğlu, where the flashier local hipsters groove to cutting-edge electronic and sensational live music. Check the monthly *Time Out İstanbul* (€2.80) and **Biletix** (☎ 0216-556 9800; www.biletix.com) to see what's on.

Note that some parts of Beyoğlu can be pretty seedy. Ignore 'friendly' locals who try to lure you into trouble with promises of free drinks etc.

Babylon (Map pp1150-1; ☎ 292 7368; www.babylon.com.tr; Şehbender Sokak 3, Tünel, Beyoğlu; admission varies; 🕒 9.30pm-2am Tue-Thu, 10pm-3am Fri & Sat) Babylon is İstanbul's number-one live venue: any international and local act worth listening to has played in its dark recesses.

Badehane (Map pp1150-1; ☎ 249 0550; General Yazgan Sokak 5, Tünel; 🕒 9am-2am) This teeny (unsigned) watering hole is a favourite with locals, and no wonder. On a balmy evening the laneway is heaving with chattering, chain-smoking artsy folk, sipping a beer or three.

Sultan Pub (Map pp1152; ☎ 528 1719; Divan Yolu 2, Sultanahmet; 🕒 9am-midnight) Popular pub-restaurant opposite the Hippodrome, with a less rowdy atmosphere than some of the backpacker bars.

Şah Pub & Bar (Map p1152; ☎ 519 5807; İncili Çavuş Sokak 11, Sultanahmet; 🕒 10am-3am) Another good choice with cheaper beer and more atmosphere when it's busy.

The biggest and brightest clubs are **Crystal** (☎ 229 7152; www.clubcrystal.org; Muallim Naci Caddesi 65, Ortaköy; admission Fri & Sat €17; 🕒 11pm-5.30am Fri & Sat) and **Reina** (☎ 259 5919; www.reina.com.tr; Muallim Naci Caddesi 44, Ortaköy; admission free Mon-Thu & Sun, Fri & Sat €14; 🕒 7pm-3am).

ENTERTAINMENT

İstanbul's most interesting historical *hammams* (Turkish baths) are pricey and touristy, but are worth visiting nonetheless. **Çemberlitaş Hamamı** (Map p1152; ☎ 522 7974; Vezir

Hani Caddesi 8, Çemberlitaş; bath €13.50, bath & massage €20; 🕒 6am-midnight) is the best choice for first-timers.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air

İstanbul's busiest international airport is the **Atatürk International Airport** (code IST; ☎ 465 3000; www.dhmiata.gov.tr), 23km west of Sultanahmet. There is also an increasingly popular smaller airport, **Sabiha Gökçen International Airport** (code SAW; ☎ 0216-585 5000), some 50km east of Sultanahmet and Taksim, on the Asian side of the city.

Boat

Yenikapı (Map pp1150-1), south of Aksaray Sq, is the dock for *hızlı feribot* (fast car ferries) across the Sea of Marmara.

Bus

At Esenler, İstanbul Otogar is a monster, with 168 ticket offices and buses leaving for all parts of Turkey and beyond. Buses depart for Ankara (€25, five hours) about every 15 minutes, day and night; buses for most other cities depart at least every hour.

There is a much smaller bus station on the Asian shore at Harem (Map pp1150-1). If you're arriving in İstanbul by bus from anywhere in Anatolia (the Asian side of Turkey), it's always quicker to get out at Harem and take the car ferry to Sirkeci (€0.65).

Train

The train station for services to Edirne, Greece and Eastern Europe is Sirkeci (Map p1152). The nightly *Dostluk/Filia Express* is an excellent service between Athens/Salonika and İstanbul (from €48, 12 hours).

On the Asian shore, Haydarpaşa is the terminus for trains to Anatolia, Syria and Iran. Several express trains a day run to Ankara (€12, 6½ to 9½ hours), but services along coastal Turkey are not well set up.

GETTING AROUND

Boat

The cheapest and nicest way to travel any distance in İstanbul is by ferry. Short ferry hops cost €0.65. The main ferry docks are located at the mouth of the Golden Horn (Map p1152; Eminönü, Sirkeci and Karaköy) and at Kabataş (Map pp1150-1), just before Dolmabahçe Palace.

Bus

The most useful bus service for travellers is the T4, which runs between Sultanahmet (just behind the Tourist office by Sultanahmet Parkı) and Taksim Sq. You must have a ticket (€0.65) before boarding; stock up from the white booths near major stops.

Funicular Railway

The Tünel (Map pp1150-1), İstanbul's ancient funicular system, mounts the hill from Karaköy to Tünel Meydanı and İstiklal Caddesi (€0.50, 7am to 9pm).

A funicular railway (Map pp1150-1) also runs from the Bosphorus shore at Kabataş up the hill to Taksim Sq (€0.65, around every three minutes).

Light Rail Transit (LRT)

A LRT service connects Aksaray with the airport, stopping at 16 stations including the otogar along the way. It departs every 10 minutes or so from 6am until 12.40am and cost €0.65.

Taxi

İstanbul is full of yellow taxis, all of them with meters (although not every driver wants to run them). A trip from Sultanahmet to Taksim costs around €5.

Train

To get to Sirkeci station (Map p1152), take the *tramvay* (tram) from Aksaray or Sultanahmet, or any bus for Eminönü. Haydarpaşa station is connected by ferry to Karaköy (€0.65, at least every half-hour).

Suburban trains from Sirkeci (€0.65) run along the southern walls of Old İstanbul and the Marmara shore at least twice an hour.

Tram

The useful *hızlı tramvay* (fast tram) runs between Kabataş, via Eminönü and Sultanahmet, to Zeytinburnu (from where you can catch the LRT to Atatürk International Airport). Tickets cost €0.65.

AEGEAN COAST

Turkey's Aegean coast can convincingly claim more ancient ruins per square kilometre than any other region in the world. Here you'll see the famous ruins of Troy, Ephesus and Bergama (Pergamum), and here you can con-

template the devastation of war at the battlefield sites of Gallipoli. Ruins aside, it isn't as scenic as the Med, but it doesn't have as many resort developments either – a definite plus for independent travellers.

GALLIPOLI (GELIBOLU)

To most Europeans Gallipoli (Gelibolu) is little more than a footnote in WWI events, but to generations of Turks, Australians and New Zealanders the battle for the Dardanelles represents one of the most poignant moments in their history. On 25 April 1915 the first Anzac (Australia and New Zealand Army Corps) and British troops landed on the Gallipoli peninsula, hoping for a quick victory against Turkish defences. However, strategic blunders turned the operation into a protracted stalemate, and after nine months of horrendous casualties the Allied forces withdrew.

The Turkish officer responsible for the defence of Gallipoli was none other than Mustafa Kemal, later Atatürk, and his success is commemorated in Turkey on 18 March. The big draw for most foreign travellers, however, is Anzac Day on 25 April, when a dawn service commemorates the anniversary of the Allied landings, attracting thousands of travellers from Australia and beyond.

The scenic peninsula is now a national park, scattered with moving memorials to the dead of the various nations that fought here. If time is tight, the easiest way to see the sights is on a minibus tour from Çanakkale with **Hassle Free Tours** (☎ 0286-213 5969; www.hasslefreetour.com; €27) or **Troy-Anzac Tours** (☎ 0286-217 5849; www.troyanzac.com; €23). If you're less pressed, it's cheaper to take a ferry from Çanakkale to Eceabat across the strait and a *dolmuş* to the Information Centre & Museum at Kabatepe (3km or so south of Anzac Cove), then follow the heritage trail.

You could also stay at Eceabat, on the Thracian (European) side of the strait. **Eceabat Hotel** (☎ 0286 814 2458; www.anzacgallipolitours.com; Cumhuriyet Meydanı 20; dm €8.35, hostel s/d/tr €18/24/35, hotel s/d/tr €28/39/50; 🍷 🍷 🍷) has rooms to suit every budget, and also runs its own highly rated tours.

Hourly car ferries cross the strait from Çanakkale to Eceabat (€0.85). In summer there are several *dolmuşes* daily from Eceabat to the ferry dock at Kabatepe (€1.10, 15 minutes). These can drop you at the Kabatepe Information

Centre & Museum, or at the base of the road up to Lone Pine and Chunuk Bair.

ÇANAKKALE

☎ 0286 / pop 75,900

While it's mainly used as a base for excursions to Gallipoli and Troy, there's enough in the town of Çanakkale itself to keep you busy in between tours, although it can get pretty crowded on summer weekends and particularly around Anzac Day.

Information

Maxi Internet (Fetvane Sokak 51; per hr €0.55;

🕒 10am-1am)

Tourist office (☎ 217 1187; 🕒 8am-noon & 1-7pm Mon-Fri) By the harbour.

Sights

Built by Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror in 1452, the **Ottoman castle** at the southern end of the waterfront now houses a **Military Museum** (Askeri Müze; admission €1.70; 🕒 9am-noon & 1.30-5pm Tue-Wed & Fri-Sun). Just over 2km south of the ferry pier, on the road to Troy, the **Archaeological Museum** (admission €1.10; 🕒 9am-5pm Tue-Sun) holds artefacts found at Troy and Assos.

Sleeping & Eating

Çanakkale has hotels to suit all pockets, except on Anzac Day, when rip-offs and complaints are rife. If you do intend to be in town around 25 April, check prices carefully in advance.

Anzac House (☎ 213 5969; www.anzachouse.com; Cumhuriyet Bulvarı; dm €5, s/d/tr with shared bathroom €8.50/14/17; 🍷) Not to be confused with the smarter Anzac Hotel round the corner, Anzac House is the first place most backpackers head for, because it's big, cheap and is the base for Hassle Free tours (p1157). Unfortunately many of the rooms are not much more than cupboards.

Yellow Rose Pension (☎ 217 3343; www.yellowrose.4mg.com; Yeni Sokak 5; dm €5.50, s/d/tr €14/22.50/25; 🍷) Increasingly popular with travellers, this bright, attractive guesthouse has a quiet location and lots of extras, from laundry and kitchen access to a book exchange and video library. It's also the local agent for Fez Travel and Trooper Tours.

Çanakkale's harbour area is full of atmospheric tea gardens and eateries. The town also has an unusually busy bar scene clustered around Fetvane Sokak.

Köy Evi (Yalı Caddesi 13; dishes €0.85-1.70; 🕒 8am-9pm) Proper home cooking rules in this tiny

shop, where you can watch headscarved local women making *manti* (ravioli) and *börek* (filled pastry).

Getting There & Away

There are regular buses to İstanbul (€14, 5½ hours) and İzmir (€14, 5½ hours). *Dolmuşes* to Troy (€1.65, 35 minutes) leave from under the bridge over the Sari River.

TROY

Ask any classicist: Troy is one of the most evocative names in legend, conjuring up images from Homer's great saga of the Trojan War. According to the *Odyssey*, the Greeks besieged Troy for 10 years trying to win back King Menelaus' wife Helen, who had been lured away by the charms of Prince Paris. Eventually victory was secured when the Greeks pretended to retreat and hid soldiers inside a wooden horse; the Trojans fell for it, wheeled the horse inside the city and were duly defeated.

To get the most out of a visit to the **site** (☎ 0286 283 0536; admission per person/car €5.55/2.25; 🕒 8.30am-5pm 16 Sep-30 Apr, 8.30am-7pm summer) it's well worth hiring a guide. Two guides are available for tours (€40 to €50 per group depending on the size, 1½ hours); inquire at the ticket booth or restaurants. Highly recommended is **Mustafa Askin** (troyguide@hotmail.com), author of one of the guidebooks.

In summer frequent *dolmuşes* run from Çanakkale (€1.65, 35 minutes).

BERGAMA

☎ 0232 / pop 50,000

From the 3rd century BC to the 1st century AD, Bergama (formerly Pergamum) was a powerful and cultured kingdom. A line of rulers beginning with one of Alexander the Great's generals reigned over this small but wealthy kingdom; it's now a charming, old-fashioned city famous for its extensive ruins. The **tourist office** (☎ 631 2851; İzmir Caddesi 54) is midway between the *otogar* and the market.

The **Acropolis** (admission €6; 🕒 8.30am-5pm), a windswept hilltop site 6km from the city centre, is the part everyone comes to see, with its commanding location, reconstructed columns and spectacular sloping amphitheatre. The **Asclepion** (Temple of Asclepius; admission €6; 🕒 8.30am-5pm), 3.5km from the city centre, is the remains of a famous medical school. In the centre itself, the **Red Basilica** (admission €3;

🕒 8.30am-5pm) is the crumbling remains of a vast temple mentioned in both the *Iliad* and the Bible.

In the excellent **Archaeology Museum** (İzmir Caddesi; admission €2.75; 🕒 8.30am-5pm Tue-Sun) look out for the sculptures from Pergamum.

In a converted 180-year-old Greek house in the heart of the old town, the tranquil **Odyssey Guesthouse** (☎ 653 9189; www.odysseyguesthouse.com; Abacıhan Sokak 13; dm €5.50, s/d with shared bathroom €8/16.50) has seven rather sparse but clean and atmospheric rooms.

Buses run to İzmir (€4.45, two hours) every 45 minutes and Ayvalık (€3.35, one to 1½ hours) at least every hour.

İZMİR

☎ 0232 / pop 2.5 million

If you've been pottering around smaller Aegean towns like Assos and Bergama, İzmir might come as a shock. Turkey's third-largest city is a vast, cosmopolitan sprawl with an aspiring Riviera feel. Many people choose to skip it, as prices are relatively high, little remains of the historic town and the sheer size of the place can be off-putting.

Those who do stick around could check out the ruins of the extensive 2nd-century AD Roman **agora** (admission €1; 🕒 8am-5pm) on the eastern edge of the chaotic, atmospheric bazaar. It's also worth taking a bus to the hilltop **Kadifekale** fortress to see the view, especially just before sunset.

Information

Yuk@rnet (Kıbrıs Şehitleri Caddesi 68, Alsancak; per hr €0.80)

Tourist Information (☎ 483 5117; Akdeniz Mahallesi 1344, Sokak 2)

Sleeping & Eating

The cheapest places to stay are along Anafartalar Caddesi, between Basmane station and the bazaar area, although standards aren't exactly stellar.

Otel Hikmet (☎ 484 2672; 945 Sokak 26; s/d with shower €11/22, without shower €8/16) Tucked away in cobbled streets in old İzmir near the Agora, this simple, family-run gem is chock-full of character. Though longing for a lick of paint, the rooms are spotless.

For bargain basement meals head down Anafartalar Caddesi towards the bazaar. *The* place to be seen on a summer's evening is the sea-facing Kordon.

Getting There & Around

Many bus companies have ticket offices around Dokuz Eylül Meydanı, near Basmane station. They usually provide a *servis* to the *otogar*, 6.5km from the city centre. Frequent buses serve Selçuk (€4.40, one hour), Çanakkale (€14, six hours) and many other destinations.

The nicest way to get around İzmir is by **ferry** (🕒 7am-11pm). Frequent timetabled services link the piers at Konak, Pasaport and Alsancak. *Jetons* (travel tokens) cost €1.10 each.

SELÇUK

☎ 0232 / pop 25,100

An excellent museum, a fine old basilica and mosque, a stork's nest-studded aqueduct, dozens of pleasant, small *pensions* and the ruins of Ephesus on its doorstep – Selçuk really does seem to have it all. These days the town more or less lives on the proceeds of tourism, albeit of the smaller-scale, independent-traveller kind.

The western side of Atatürk Caddesi, behind the museum, is the quieter part of town and contains some of the best *pensions*; the eastern side holds the *otogar* and plenty of shops and restaurants. The **tourist office** (☎ 892 6945) is opposite the *otogar*.

Sights & Activities

The city of **Ephesus** (admission €5.50; 🕒 8am-5pm Oct-Apr, 8am-7pm May-Sep) first flourished as a centre for worship of the Anatolian goddess later identified with Diana/Artemis, and quickly became an important port, though the harbour has long since silted up. Wandering down the former main street, you'll see the well-preserved (or restored) remains of structures such as the Temple of Hadrian, Marble Way (where the rich folk lived) and the Fountain of Trajan. The real photo opps, though, are the reconstructed façade of the monumental Library of Celsus and the immense Great Theatre, which could hold 24,000 people. An audioguide with brain-adding amounts of information can be hired for €4.45 (€2.25 for students). Ephesus is a 3km, 35-minute walk west of Selçuk. Frequent *dolmuşes* to Pamucak and Kuşadası pass the turn-off (€0.50, five minutes).

In Selçuk, the main attraction is the excellent **Ephesus Museum** (Uğur Mumcu Caddesi; admission €2.50), with its priceless collection of artefacts

from the Roman period. On the hill above Atatürk Caddesi, the **Basilica of St John** (admission €2.75; ☎ 8am-6pm) is said to be built over the apostle's tomb. Between Ephesus and Selçuk, the fabulous ruins of the **Temple of Artemis** (free admission; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm) was once one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

Sleeping & Eating

Competition between Selçuk's many *pensions* is intense, and the standard of service and value offered by these places is higher here than perhaps anywhere.

Hotel Jimmy's Place (☎ 892 1982; www.artemistguesthouse.com; 1016 Sokak 19; r 'deluxe' 1-3 people €39; s €14-19, d €17-25; ☎ ☑ ☒ ☓) The friendly Turkish-Australian couple who run this hotel claim to know 'what travellers want'. They do: there's a pool, a terrific, Turkey-focussed 'Travel Library', a travel agency and a roof terrace with views.

Australia & New Zealand Guesthouse (☎ 892 6050; www.anzguesthouse.com; 1064 Sokak 12; dm €8, d with bath-room €19-22, with shared bathroom €11; ☎ ☑ ☒) This sociable multilevel backpacker favourite has plenty of communal space and good facilities, including movie nights and BBQs.

There's no shortage of cheap restaurants in Selçuk; those at the eastern end of Cengiz Topel Caddesi have neat views of the town's Byzantine aqueduct. **Ejder Restaurant** (☎ 892 3296; Cengiz Topel Caddesi 9/E; köfte €3-4.45; ☎ 8.30am-11pm) is a favourite with locals and travellers alike. **Old House Restaurant & Bar** (Eski Ev; ☎ 892 9357; 1005 Sokak 1/A; mains €2.75-5.55) has tables set in a little courtyard amid grapefruit and pomegranate trees. Try the appetising speciality 'Old House Kebap' (€4.45) served sizzling on a platter.

Getting There & Away

While it's easy enough to get to Selçuk direct from İzmir (€2.10, one hour), coming from the south or east you generally have to change at Aydın, from where buses leave almost hourly to other destinations (such as Bodrum, Marmaris, Fethiye, Denizli, Antalya). **Dolmuşes** (€2.25, one hour) to Aydın leave every 40 minutes from Selçuk. **Dolmuşes** run to Kuşadası every 20 minutes (€1.65, 30 minutes, 18km) and Pamucak (€1.10, 10 minutes, 7km).

KUŞADASI

☎ 0256 / pop 50,000

Kuşadası is an unabashed resort town, with everything that entails, and it is effectively the start of Turkey's coastal package holi-

day strip. Many independent travellers just dash through to catch a boat out to Samos (Greece). If you're up for a big, messy night out, however, you can practically guarantee it on Bar St here.

The 16th-century **castle** on the island in the harbour aside, Kuşadası is short on sights, although it does make a good base for visits to the ancient cities of **Priene**, **Miletus** and **Didyma** to the south. Admission to each site is €1.10.

Most cheap accommodation is near the harbour. **Hotel Liman** (☎ 614 7770; www.limanhotel.com; Kibris Caddesi, Buyral Sokak 4; s €11-17, d €14-25, f €31; ☎ ☑ ☒) is very clean and comfy. **Stella Travellers Inn** (☎ 614 1632; www.stellahostel.com; Bezirgan Sokak 44; dm/s/d €8/22/28; ☎ Apr-Nov; ☑ ☒ ☓) is a big backpackers den with great sea views and unusual extras, like a basketball court.

If you don't fancy paying €12 for fish'n'chips, there are plenty of cheaper Turkish options in the Kaleiçi district, behind the harbour. **Avlu** (☎ 614 7995; Cephane Sokak 15; stews €1.40-1.95 with free coffee/tea; ☎ 8am-midnight) is well worth seeking out, offering 1st-class mama-cooked meals.

Kuşadası's *otogar* is at the southern end of Kahramanlar Caddesi on the bypass highway. Out of season you'll probably have to change at İzmir (€6, 1½ hours) or Söke (€1.65, 30 minutes) for most destinations. In summer there are frequent buses to Bodrum (€8, 2½ hours) and Denizli (for Pamukkale; €8, three hours). For Selçuk (€1.65, 25 minutes) and Söke, pick up a minibus on Adnan Menderes Bulvarı.

From 1 April to 31 October boats depart daily to Samos (same day/open return €40/60); there are no services at other times of the year.

PAMUKKALE

☎ 0258 / pop 2500

Renowned for its brilliant white ledges and pools (travertines), the Pamukkale plateau can disappoint as well as delight. In recent years the water supply has dried up, you can no longer swim in most of the pools and rumour has it that some of the famous calcium ridges have been uplifted with whitewash. It's still an impressive site and if you're not convinced, there's the bonus of the extensive Hierapolis ruins.

Climb the hill above Pamukkale village, and pay to enter the **travertines and Hierapolis** (admission €2.80; ☎ 24hr). The Hierapolis ruins,

including a theatre, a colonnaded street (with public toilet) and a vast necropolis, are very spread out; at least half a day will do them justice.

Afterwards swim amid sunken Roman columns at **Antique Pool** (adult/child €10/4) in Hierapolis itself, and visit the excellent **Hierapolis Archaeology Museum** (admission €1.10; ☎ 9am-12.30pm & 1.30-7.15pm).

Over 60 *pensions* and hotels lurk below the travertines in Pamukkale village. **Kervansaray Pension** (☎ 272 2209; kervansaray2@superonline.com.tr; İnönü Caddesi; s/d €10/15; ☎ ☑ ☒ ☓) is a favourite travellers' hangout.

Frequent buses run from local hub Denizli to İzmir (€6, four hours) and Konya (€11, seven hours); a full-day tour will cost around €32 from most Aegean towns. Buses run between Denizli and Pamukkale every half-hour or so (€0.85, 30 minutes).

BODRUM

☎ 0252 / pop 40,000

Once known as Halicarnassus, Bodrum has gone through various incarnations in its long history, but is now hard core resort territory and is crammed with (mainly British) tourists every summer. Fortunately the town has resisted rampant modernisation and retains a charming element in the winding streets of its old town and bazaar area. Only the pricey restaurants and the persistent bass beats from waterfront clubs belie the illusion of a fishing village lifestyle.

The Adliye Camii, a small mosque on the castle promontory, marks the town centre, separating Bodrum's two main bays. The *otogar* is 400m inland, along Cevat Şakir Caddesi.

Information

Cybernet Internet Café (Üçkuyular Caddesi 7; ☎ 24hr; per hr €1.10)

Tourist Office (☎ 316 1091; Kale Meydanı; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, daily in summer)

Sights & Activities

You'll see the **Castle of St Peter** on about every brochure, postcard and flyer in Bodrum, and it's still an essential stop plus a scenic asset. Built in 1402 and rebuilt in 1522 by the Crusaders, the castle has the sensational **Museum of Underwater Archaeology** (admission €5.55; ☎ 9am-noon & 1-7pm Tue-Sun summer, 8am-noon & 1-5pm winter).

With its good visibility, clean water and pleasant temperatures, Bodrum is a good place for **diving** or **snorkelling**. The **Snorkel & Dive Center** (☎ 313 6017; www.snorkeldiveshop.com; Cevat Şakir İş Caddesi 5) is a good starting point. A full day's diving with two dives, boat, all equipment, insurance, hotel transfers and lunch per person costs €45. All-day snorkelling trips cost €17 per person.

Sleeping & Eating

The narrow streets around the harbour have plenty of *pensions*, although few places stay open out of season, and breakfast, air-conditioning and other 'extras' are seldom included in the price. The western bay tends to be quieter.

Sevin Pansiyon (☎ 316 7682; sevinpansiyon@hotmail.com; Türkkuysu Caddesi 5; s winter €8-14, d winter €14-17, s summer €19-22, d summer €25-36; ☎ ☑ ☒) Behind the post office, the Sevin's biggest asset is its central position. It's also a friendly place with good facilities, but rooms vary considerably so check out several.

Bodrum Backpackers (☎ 313 2762; www.bodrumbackpackers.com; Atatürk Caddesi 31B; dm/s/d €8/11/22, mattress & bedding on terrace with/without breakfast €3.35/5.55; ☑ ☒) Clean and well run, with a pleasant and chilled-out roof terrace.

The small streets east of the Adliye Camii harbour have several cheap eateries where you can grab a *döner* (kebab) for less than €3. **Nargileh** (water pipe) fans should try the **Old Café** (Cumhuriyet Caddesi), while no dedicated clubber will want to miss out on the mighty **Halikarnas** (www.halikarnas.com.tr; Cumhuriyet Caddesi; admission Sun-Thu €18, Fri & Sat €20; ☎ 10pm-5am 18 May-31 Oct), with top-quality sound and light equipment (including two Class IV lasers you can see in Greece!), and beer/spirits from €5.55.

Getting There & Away

There are frequent bus services from Bodrum to Antalya (€14, eight hours), Fethiye (€10, six hours), İzmir (€8, four hours), Kuşadası and Selçuk (€7, two hours), and Marmaris (€8, three hours).

In summer daily hydrofoils and boats link Bodrum with Kos (€25 to 30, one hour); in winter services are cut to three times weekly. From June to September boats also run to Rhodes (€50 one way, two hours). Contact the **Bodrum Ferryboat Association** (☎ 316 0882; www.bodrumferryboat.com) for the latest information.

MEDITERRANEAN COAST

With 1200km of coastline stretching between Marmaris and Antakya, Turkey's Mediterranean front is the pride of the tourist industry. The jaw-dropping scenery just begs to be sailed, trekked or explored, and ruins abound to keep the classicists happy. The main centres of activity are Fethiye, at the busy western end, and Antalya, at the start of the less resorty eastern strip.

MARMARIS

☎ 0252 / pop 35,000

A firm favourite with UK and Dutch package companies, Marmaris has suffered from some haphazard town planning and lacks the endearing qualities of Bodrum, despite having a very similar setting. However, if you steer clear of the tackier Brit-swamped parts, you'll find the atmosphere ain't all bad, and it's a good place to board a boat or chug a few beers.

Iskele Meydanı, the main square, is by the ferry pier northeast of the castle; Hacı Mustafa Sokak, known as Bar St for instantly obvious reasons, runs east from here. The *otogar* is 3km north of town.

Information

Internet @fe (Atatürk Caddesi, Huzur 30; ☎ 10am-1am; per hr €2.20)

Tourist office (☎ 412 1035; Iskele Meydanı 2; ☎ 8am-noon & 1-5pm Mon-Fri, daily Jun-mid Sep) Right near the castle.

Sights

The small **castle** (☎ 412 7420; admission €1.10; ☎ 8am-noon & 1-5pm Tue-Sun) has a few unexciting exhibition rooms, but offers fine views of Marmaris.

Tours

Wooden boats along the waterfront offer tours of outlying beaches and islands. Check carefully exactly what you pay and what you'll get before agreeing to anything. A day's outing usually costs €24 to €28 per person.

The most popular excursions are to **Dalyan** and **Kaunos** or to the bays around Marmaris, but you can also take longer, more serious trips to **Datça** and the ruins at **Knidos**. It's also

worth asking about boats heading for **Cleopatra's Island**, which offers silky-soft sand and water as warm as a Jacuzzi.

Sleeping & Eating

Dominated by package hotels, Marmaris has few central cheap options, and those that do survive can be noisy and uninspiring.

Interyouth Hostel (☎ 412 3687; interyouth@turk.net; 42 Sokak 45; dm & s with shared bathroom €7, with ISIC card €5.55, d with shared bathroom €14; ☑) Located inside the covered bazaar (signposted up the stairs), this hostel is efficiently run. Rooms, though smallish and rather spartan, are spotless and well maintained.

Ayge Otel (☎ 412 3136; 64 Sokak 11; s €17-20, d €22-28; ☑) Central, friendly, family-run and with good facilities, this is a two- or three-star hotel at one-star prices.

For the cheapest food, head through the bazaar; the whole waterfront heaves with pricier but more varied restaurants.

Bars currently 'in' include the ever popular **Back Street** (☎ 412 4048; 39 Sokak 93) and a close second, **Areena** (☎ 412 2906; 39 Sokak 54; beer €4.45), with its large dance floor, bar elevated above the dance floor and high-quality lasers.

Getting There & Away

Frequent buses and minibuses serve Fethiye (€5.50, three hours, hourly), Bodrum (€7, three hours) and Dalyan (via Ortaca; €4, 1½ hours), plus several daily services to Antalya (€15, six hours).

Boats run to Rhodes daily in summer, less frequently in winter (same day/open return €57/75). Tickets can be bought from any travel agency, including **Yeşil Marmaris Travel & Yachting** (☎ 412 2290; www.yesilmarmaris.com).

DALYAN

☎ 0252 / pop 5000

Independent travellers might have trouble knowing what to make of Dalyan. In summer the crowds, facilities and coloured lights virtually scream 'tourist trap'. However, the setting, right on the Dalyan River and overlooked by Lycian rock tombs, is hard to write off completely.

In any case, the main activity here is boating out of town, with a range of excursions on offer. The most popular jaunt takes you to **Iztuzu beach**, a short paddle away. It's a gorgeous place to sun yourself, as well as being one of the few remaining nesting grounds of

the endangered loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*). The same trips (€11) usually take in a visit to the ruined city of **Kaunos** (admission €2.50; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm) and the **Sultaniye hot springs** (admission €1.95) on the shores of Köyceğiz Lake, possibly with a mud bath thrown in.

Dalyan Camping (☎ /fax 284 4157; Maraş Caddesi 144; camp sites per tent/caravan €8/14, bungalows for up to 2/3/4 people €14/20/28; ☎ Apr-Oct) has a nice location by the river opposite the tombs. The eight pine-made bungalows are simple and clean. **Cınar Sahil Pension** (☎ 284 2402; www.cınarsahilpansiyon.com; Yalı Sokak 14; s/d €17/28) is worth considering for its central location and great views.

To get anywhere from Dalyan you have to take a minibus to Ortaca (€0.85, 30 minutes) and change. Ortaca to Fethiye costs €3 (one hour).

FETHIYE

☎ 0252 / pop 51,000

Thanks to the popular 'blue cruises' that leave from here, Fethiye has a vibe that is much more backpacker than resort town, such as Marmaris, although it still becomes very hot and crowded in summer. The picture-perfect harbour and mountain backdrop are irresistible at any time, and the town also makes a good base for visiting the beautiful **Saklıkent Gorge** and the ruins at **Tlos** and **Pınara**.

Fethiye's busy *otogar* is 2.5km east of the town centre, with a separate station for minibuses 1km east of the centre. *Dolmuş* ply up and down the main street, Atatürk Caddesi, taking you past the government buildings, the PTT and several banks. The **tourist office** (☎ 614 1527; Iskele Meydanı; ☎ 8.30am-noon & 1-5.30pm daily May-Sep, Mon-Fri Oct-Apr) is next to the marina, just past the Roman theatre.

Sights & Activities

In Fethiye itself, little remains of the original town of Telmessos: just the ruins of a Roman **theatre** and several Lycian sarcophagi dating from about 400 BC. The cliff backdrops hold several picturesque Lycian tombs, including the **Tomb of Amyntas** (admission €2.50; ☎ 8am-7pm). **Fethiye Museum** (505 Sokak; admission €2.75; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Tue-Sun) is worth visiting if you have a spare couple of hours.

Most people enjoy the well-promoted **12 Island boat tours** (€15 per person), the tours to **Butterfly Valley** (€11) via Ölüdeniz, the **Saklıkent Gorge Tour** (€22) and the **Dalyan Tour** (€22).

Fethiye is also the starting (or finishing) point for the 500km **Lycian Way** (see Activities, p1171), a superb scenic walking trail along the coast.

Dolmuş run to the nearby evocative Ottoman Greek 'ghost town' of **Kayaköy** (admission €1.75), abandoned after the population exchange of 1923. A little further over the mountains is **Ölüdeniz** (Dead Sea), with a tranquil **lagoon**, but an unfortunate packed belt of hotels behind the **beach**. Popular activities are paragliding and parasailing. You may prefer to shoot straight through and catch a boat to the beautiful **Butterfly Valley** (€5.50 return), with a handful of laid-back accommodation options. Frequent *dolmuş* to Ölüdeniz (€1.65, 25 minutes) run from behind Fethiye's minibus garage.

Sleeping & Eating

Most of the nicer *pensions* are uphill from the marina, off Fevzi Çakmak Caddesi.

Ferah Pension (☎ 614 2816; www.ferahpension.com; 2 Ordu Caddesi 21; dm/s/d €5.50/14/20; ☑) Spick and span, 'Monica's Place' is well-known locally and consistently popular with backpackers. The 'dormitory' (a glass-enclosed roof terrace) has beautiful views.

V-Go's Hotel & Guesthouse (☎ 614 5904; www.boatcruiseturkey.com; Ordu Caddesi 66; dm/s/d €8/11/22; ☑) The new kid on the block and worth checking out.

One way to taste Fethiye's fabulous fish without losing too many Turkish lira is to bring your own! Buy your fish from the market, take it to one of the restaurants surrounding the market and ask them to cook it. A nominal charge of €2.75 will procure you a green salad, bread with garlic butter, a sauce to accompany the fish, and fruit and coffee; it's a bargain fit for a king. Try **Hilmi et Balk Restaurant** (☎ 612 6242; Hal ve Pazar Yeri 53), a firm favourite locally.

Getting There & Away

Heading for Antalya, the *yalı* (inland) bus route (€9, four hours) is shorter and cheaper, though less scenic, than the *sahil* (coastal) route (€10, 7½ hours), which also serves Patara (€2, 1½ hours) and Kaş (€3, 2½ hours). For intermediate destinations, go to the minibus garage off Atatürk Caddesi 1km east of the town centre.

The 'blue cruise' has become a travellers' institution, and is still the nicest way to get

between Fethiye and Olympos or Marmaris – you travel on a *gület* (wooden yacht), calling in at bays along the way for swimming, sunbathing and variable amounts of boozing. Depending on the season the price for a three-night cruise per person is usually €84 to €150 for Fethiye and €150 for Marmaris.

PATARA

☎ 0242
Patara's main claim to fame is its superb 20km-long beach, one of Turkey's best. It's also a turtle breeding ground. A secondary attraction are the extensive but overgrown **ruins** (admission €8), which are good for a scramble.

Near Patara are two Unesco World Heritage sites: the **Letoön** (admission €1.75), which has excellent mosaics and a sacred pool; and impressive **Xanthos** (admission €1.75), which boasts a Roman theatre and Lycian pillar tombs.

All Patara's amenities are in Gelemiş village, 1.5km inland from the beach. **Zeybek 2 Pension** (☎ 843 5141; zeybekpension2@hotmail.com; s/d €11/17; ☺) is a homey, welcoming option.

Midibuses plying the Fethiye–Antalya main road will drop you at Gelemiş, 4km from the beach.

KAŞ

☎ 0242 / pop 8000

Of all Turkey's popular coastal towns, Kaş perhaps the most convincing small-town feel to it, with some wonderful winding streets in its old quarter and a waterfront area that retains enough character to be charming even at the height of the tourist season. And the drive here is a treat, strewn with mountain views all the way from Fethiye.

Apart from enjoying the town's ambience and few small pebble beaches, you can also walk west a couple of hundred metres to the well-preserved Roman **theatre**. Lycian **sarcophagi** are dotted about the streets, and the **tombs** cut into the cliffs above the town are beautifully lit at night.

The most popular boat trips head round **Kekova island** and out to beautiful **Kaleköy** (Simena), passing over Lycian ruins beneath the sea. You'll pay around €13 per person in a glass-bottomed boat.

Information

Net-C@fé (İbrahim Serin Caddesi 16/B; ☎ 9am-1am per hr €0.80)

Tourist office (☎ 836 1238; ☎ 8am-noon & 1-7pm May-Oct, 8am-noon & 1-5pm Nov-Apr) On the main square.

Sleeping & Eating

Kaş' quietest places to stay are all on the western side of town and rise in price (and quality) the closer they are to the sea. There are lots of small *pensions* south of the *otogar*.

Kaş Camping (☎ 836 1050; Yaşar Yazici Caddesi; 2-person camp sites €11) A popular and pleasant camping ground in an olive grove west of town.

Anı Motel (☎ 836 1791; www.motelani.com; Süleyman Çaruş Caddesi; dm/s/d €5.50/8/14; ☺ ☑) Some effort has actually been put into the décor at this backpacker haunt, which boasts spotless rooms and a large roof terrace.

Kaş has a thriving restaurant scene. **Natur-el** (☎ 836 2834; Gürsöy Sokak 6; meals €7-10) is one of the best, offering dishes cooked to old Ottoman recipes.

Kaş has plenty of low-key, fun drinking holes. Try **Hi-Jazz Bar** (☎ 836 1165; Zümrüt Sokak 3) and the newly opened **Meis Bar** (Liman Sokak 20).

Getting There & Away

Midibuses depart from Kaş' convenient central *otogar* for all local destinations. Regular services include Fethiye (€4, 2½ hours), Kale (€1.25, one hour), Olympos (€5, 2½ hours) and Antalya (€5.50, four hours).

OLYMPPOS

☎ 0242

Long beloved of hippies and New Age types, **ancient Olympos** (admission per day €1.10) was once a major port city; now it's a fantastically wild, abandoned place where ruins peek out from forest copses, rock outcrops and riverbanks. You also have to pay the admission fee to reach the extensive **beach**.

According to legend, the nearby **Chimaera** (Yanartaş), a natural eternal flame, was the hot breath of a subterranean monster. Easily sighted by ancient mariners, it is now a mere glimmer of its former fiery self, but no less exotic. To find the Chimaera, follow the signs 3km east down a neighbouring valley. A half-hour climb leads to the flames.

Sleeping & Eating

Most visitors come here to stay in the treehouse camps, a backpacker-friendly assortment of wooden huts, restaurants and bars lining the 3.5km road from the beach to Olympos village.

All prices here are half-board – as meals are provided, few people choose to eat elsewhere.

Kadir's Yörük Top Treehouse (☎ 892 1250; www.kadirstreehouses.com; dm/treehouse €8/11, bungalow with bathroom €17; ☺ ☑) The original treehouse camp that began it all, it just gets ever-larger, ever-quirkier and ever more fun, with a capacity for 300.

Şaban (☎ 892 1265; www.sabanpansion.com; dm/treehouse €8/11, bungalow with bathroom €14-17; ☺ ☑) Şaban is not a party place, but sells itself on tranquillity, space, a family-feel and great home cooking.

Getting There & Away

Buses plying the main road between Antalya and Fethiye will drop you off at the roadside restaurant about 1km from the turn-off to Olympos. Minibuses leave for Çıralı (€1.25) and Olympos (€1.25) from this restaurant from roughly 8am to 6pm on the hour.

ANTALYA

☎ 0242 / pop 603,000

Situated on the Gulf of Antalya (Antalya Körfezi), this quickly growing epicentre of both ancient history and thoroughly modern Turkish culture has become known since the 1960s as a gateway city for the country's so-called 'Turkish Riviera'. It isn't difficult to discern why: the gorgeous Roman-Ottoman quarter of **Kaleiçi** commands a heart-stopping view of the Bey Mountains (Beydağları), as well as the Roman harbour at Kaleiçi's base and the refreshingly clean body of water in between.

The *otogar* is 4km north of the city centre; a minibus into the city costs €0.55. Antalya's central landmark and symbol is the Yivli Minare, near the main square, Kale Kapısı (Fortress Gate). To get into Kaleiçi, head south down the hill.

Information

Natural Internet Cafe (☎ 8am-11pm)

Owl Bookshop (Barbaros Mahallesi, Akarçeşme Sokak 21; ☎ 10am-1pm & 3-7pm Mon-Sat)

Tourist office (☎ 241 1747; Yavuz Özcan Parkı; ☎ 8am-7pm)

Sights & Activities

About 2km west of the city centre, **Antalya Müzesi** (Cumhuriyet Caddesi; admission €6; ☎ 9am-7.30pm Tue-Sun) houses spectacular finds from nearby Perge, Aspendos and Side – it's one of Tur-

key's best museums. The *tramvay* (€0.50) takes you to the Müze stop.

Heading down from the clock tower you'll pass the elegant **Yivli Minare** (Grooved Minaret), which rises above an old mosque. Further into Kaleiçi, the **Kesik Minare** (Truncated Minaret) is built on the site of a ruined Roman temple.

Just off Atatürk Caddesi, the monumental **Hadrian's Gate** (Hadriyanüs Kapısı) was built for the Roman emperor's visit in AD 130 and is still an impressive sight today.

The **Suna & İnan Kıraç Kaleiçi Museum** (☎ 243 4274; Kocatepe Sokak 25; admission €0.85; ☎ 9am-noon & 1-6pm Thu-Tue) is a lovingly restored Ottoman building displaying rituals and milestones in typical Ottoman lives.

Park life is a key feature of the Antalyan daily grind, and you'd have to be in a real rush not to make time for a relaxed tea, coffee or *nargileh* at the viewpoint cafés in **Tophane** or **Karaaliöglü Parkı**.

Sleeping & Eating

Kaleiçi is primarily a *pension* district, and it provides an ever-changing selection of accommodation.

Sabah Pansiyon (☎ 247 5345; www.sabahpansiyon.8m.com; Hesaççı Sokak 60/A; dm/s/d without shower €11/14/19, s/d with shower €14/22; ☺ ☑) Antalya's most popular backpacker haven offers tours, car hire and decent evening meals, with plenty of lounging space to boot.

Mavi & Ani Pansiyon (☎ 247 0056; www.maviani.com; Tabakhane Sokak 26; s/d €19/28) An odd cross between a restored Ottoman house and Japanese *ryokan* (traditional inn), some rooms sport a mattress laid directly atop raised wooden floors, and the common areas are decorated in Anatolian style.

For a cheap feed head inland to the packed restaurants close to the junction of Cumhuriyet and Atatürk Caddesi, Eski Sebzeciler İç Sokak. Here you'll find a *tandır kebab* (mutton cooked in earthenware), salad and drink can cost as little as €4. The bazaar's also a good starting point, but avoid the rip-off kebab shops without marked prices around the clock tower.

Getting There & Away

From the *otogar*, regular buses head for Olympos (€3, 1½ hours), Konya (€7, six hours), Göreme (€17, 10 hours) and most major destinations.

CENTRAL ANATOLIA

Away from the resorts and the tourist-saturated coast, the Anatolian plateau is Turkey's true heartland. It's halfway between the European sophistication of Istanbul and the quasi-Arabic flavour of the remote east.

ANKARA

☎ 0312 / pop 4.3 million

Ankara has never enjoyed a great reputation either as a tourist hotspot or as a dynamic capital, but it's a much more manageable size than Istanbul and no less cosmopolitan in its outlook. With its key position at the heart of the country, transport links here are unbeat-

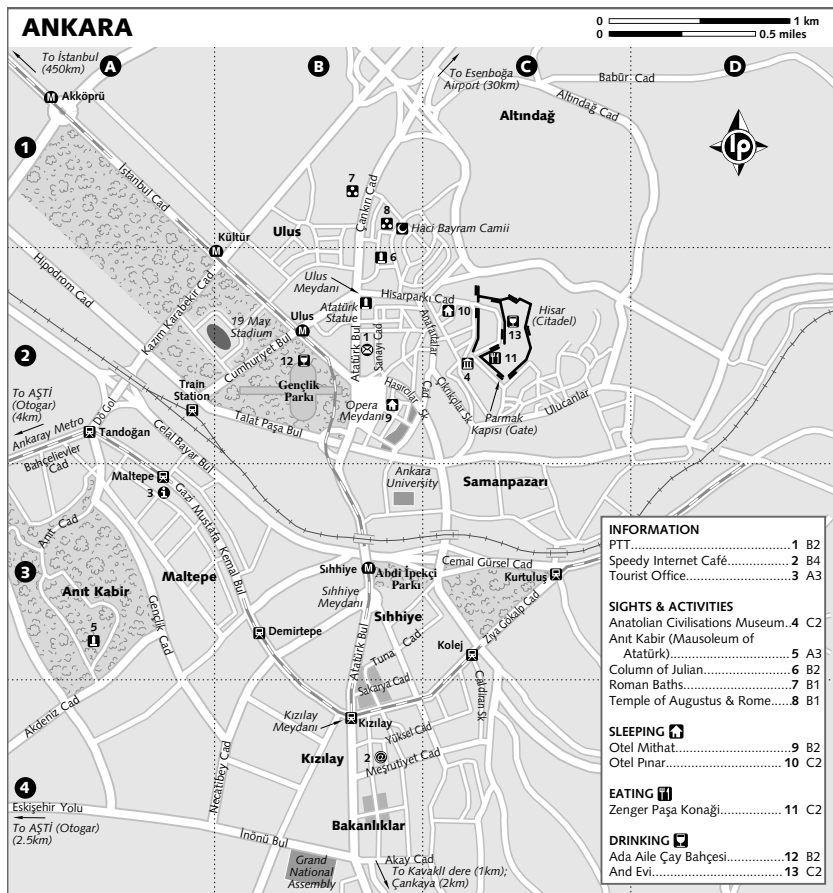
able, and it's worth checking out the citadel area and the city's excellent museum before you hop aboard a bus.

Ankara's *hisar* (citadel) crowns a hill 1km east of Ulus Meydanı (Ulus Sq), the heart of Old Ankara. Modern Ankara lies further south, around Kızılay Meydanı (Kızılay Sq), Kavaklıdere and Çankaya, the well-heeled residential neighbourhood that hosts many embassies

Atatürk Bulvarı is the city's main north-south axis, running right through town. Ankara's mammoth *otogar* is 5.5km southwest of Ulus Meydanı.

Information

Speedy Internet Café (Konur Sokak, Kızılay; ☎ 9am-1am; per hr €1)



PTT (Atatürk Bulvarı)

Tourist office (☎ 231 5572; Gazi Mustafa Kemal Bulvarı 121, Maltepe; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat)

Sights & Activities

Next to the citadel, the **Anatolian Civilisations Museum** (☎ 324 3160; admission €5.60; ☎ 8.30am-5.15pm) is the perfect introduction to the complex weave of Turkey's chequered ancient past, housing artefacts cherry-picked from just about every significant archaeological site in Anatolia. However museum-fatigued you're feeling, this place is a must, and provides a perfect excuse to wander around the living streets of the citadel itself.

The **Anıt Kabir** (Mausoleum of Atatürk; admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm Apr-Sep, 9am-4pm Oct-Mar), 2km west of Kızılay Meydanı, is the monumental tomb of modern Turkey's founder and a place of pilgrimage for many Turks. It's well worth visiting.

Various Roman ruins are scattered around the town, including the **Column of Julian**, erected in AD 363, and the **Temple of Augustus & Rome**. Near the temple are remains of the **Roman Baths** (admission €1.10; ☎ 8.30am-12.30pm & 1.30-5.30pm Tue-Sun).

After all this antiquity, take a break and see the lighter side of Ankara life by eating, drinking or swanning around the boating lake in **Gençlik Parkı**.

Sleeping

Despite its general seediness, Ulus is undoubtedly handy if you want to visit the Anatolian Civilisations Museum and then move speedily on again.

Otel Mithat (☎ 311 5410; www.otelmithat.com.tr; Tavus Sokak 2; s/d €13/18) Minimalist décor in Turkey? The comfortably beige rooms here are proof it can work, making a nice change from drab prints and faux-Ottoman overkill.

Otel Pinar (☎ 311 8951; Hisarparkı Caddesi 14; s/d €15/20) Up towards the citadel, this is the best corner of Ulus for lone or female travellers, and the Pinar supplies just the right kind of simple budget accommodation you need for a short stay.

Eating & Drinking

You'll have no problems eating out in Ulus, although most restaurants stick to the basic Turkish kebab'n'salad formula. For more choice, head to the pedestrian zone north of Ziya Gökalp Caddesi in Kızılay.

Zenger Paşa Konağı (☎ 311 7070; www.zengerpasa.com; Doğan Sokak 13; mains €1.75-6; ☎) One of several atmospheric (if slightly touristy) restaurants up in the citadel, wonderful ethnographic displays liven up this restored old house.

The best place for a tea is **Ada Aile Çay Bahçesi** (Gençlik Parkı), across the road from Opera Meydanı. For a drink, delightful **And Evi** (☎ 312 7978; İçkale Kapısı), right on top of the walls inside the citadel, offers a panoramic terrace or a sumptuous indoor lounge.

Getting There & Around

Ankara's huge *otogar* (AŞTI) dispatches passengers across the country all day and night. For Istanbul (€14, six hours) buses depart at least every 15 minutes. Other useful services include those to Bursa (€11.50, six hours), Antalya (€14, eight hours), İzmir (€8.50, nine hours) and Göreme (€9, five hours), all departing at least hourly.

KONYA

☎ 0332 / pop 762,000

Turkey's equivalent of the 'Bible Belt', conservative Konya treads a delicate path between its historical significance as the home town of the whirling dervish orders and a bastion of Seljuk culture on the one hand, and its modern importance as an economic boom town on the other.

Many travellers don't even consider stopping in Konya, but if you are passing through this region, say from the coast to Cappadocia, bear in mind that the wonderful shrine of the Mevlâna here is one of Turkey's finest and most characteristic sights.

The city centre stretches from Alaaddin Tepesi (Aladdin's Hill) along Alaettin Caddesi and Mevlâna Caddesi to the Mevlâna Museum. The *otogar* is 14km due north of the city centre; minibuses run you into the city, or you can catch the tram as far as Alaaddin Tepesi (€0.40, 30 minutes).

Information

Tourist office (☎ 351 1074; Mevlâna Caddesi 21; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Sat)

Truva Internet (Adliye Bulvarı; per hr €0.55; ☎ 9am-midnight)

Sights & Activities

For Muslims and non-Muslims alike, the main reason to come to Konya is to visit the **Mevlâna Museum** (Mevlâna Müzesi; ☎ 351 1215;

admission €2.80; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Sun, 10am-6pm Mon), the former lodge of the whirling dervishes. In Celaleddin Rumi, the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum produced one of the world's great mystic philosophers. His poetry and religious writings, mostly in Persian, the literary language of the day, are among the most beloved and respected in the Islamic world. Rumi later became known as Mevlâna (Our Guide) to his followers.

The city's collection of imposing Seljuk buildings are also well worth visiting. Look out for the **Alaaddin Camii** and the **Sahib-i Ata Külliyesi**.

Sleeping & Eating

Hotel Ulsan (☎ 351 5004; ulsanhotel@my.net.com; Çarşı PTT Arkası; s/d €11/17; 📺) Tucked away behind the PTT, this impeccably renovated gem is as good as many twice the price, with that all-important dash of character (teddy bears!).

Hotel Gümüş ahin (☎ 352 0422; www.gumussahin.com; Mevlâna Caddesi 39; s/d/tr €25/47/67; 📺) A stylised ceramic hallway provides a dramatic entrance to this decent central choice.

Köşk Konya Mutfađı (☎ 352 8547; Mengüç Caddesi 66; mains €2.80-4.50; ☎ 11am-10pm) Run by the well-known food writer Nevin Halıcı, this excellent traditional restaurant puts her personal twist on classics like kebaps and *ayran* (a salty, watery yogurt drink). In summer headscarved women prepare your food in a hut on the lawn.

Getting There & Away

There are frequent buses from Konya to Cappadocia, via Nevşehir (€9, three hours), Ankara (€6, three hours) and Pamukkale (€11, seven hours).

CAPPADOCIA

Those troglodytes sure knew what they were doing when they decided to lay down their hats and call Cappadocia home. Deep in the heart of the country, they settled within the lunar-like landscape and burrowed their houses into stone cliffs and their cities underground. Today the cave dwellers are predominantly tourists staying in cave hotels who have been drawn to this part of Turkey by its surreal scenery, wealth of ancient churches and unparalleled opportunities for adventure activities.

GÖREME

☎ 0384 / pop 2100

The Göreme landscape is one of Turkey's most amazing sights. Over the centuries a thick layer of volcanic tufa has been eroded into fantastic, eerie shapes, dubbed 'fairy chimneys' by the locals. Into the chimneys early Christians carved chambers and vaults for use as churches, stables and homes.

Information

Nese Internet Café (Turgut Ozal Meydanı 2; per hr €1.50; ☎ 8.30am-10pm)

Sights & Activities

Ditch your bags on arrival and leg it straight to the **Göreme Open-Air Museum** (admission €5.50; ☎ 8.30am-7pm Apr-Oct, 8am-5pm Nov-Mar), Cappadocia's finest collection of rock-hewn cave churches and one of Turkey's World Heritage sites. The churches are tiny, so try and get in between the many bus tours – you can have your photo taken on a camel while you wait. Don't miss the **Tokalı Church**, one of the largest here, or the **Dark Church** (Karanlık Kilise; admission €3), which has some of the most colourful frescoes.

Tours

Göreme is the main base for tours of Cappadocia's most popular sites (one-day trips from €30). Stops usually include nearby Pigeon Valley, Ihlara Gorge, Ürgüp or Avanos, a convenient caravanserai, the **rock citadel** (admission €1.50; ☎ 8.30am-7pm) at Uçhisar, and one of the fascinating underground cities at **Kaymaklı** or **Derinkuyu** (admission €6; ☎ 8am-5pm Nov-Apr, 8.30am-6.30pm May-Oct), south of Nevşehir. Many companies also offer trips further afield, around central Anatolia and into eastern Turkey. We recommend the following:

Kapadokya Balloons (☎ 271 2442; www.kapadokya.balloons.com; Adnan Menderes Caddesi) The most respected hot-air balloon company in the region.

Middle Earth Travel (☎ 271 2528; www.middleearthtravel.com; Gaferli Mahallesi Cevizler Sokak 20) Brands itself as an 'adventure travel specialist' and offers activities such as abseiling at Ortahisar (€40).

Neşe Tour (☎ 271 2525; www.nesetour.com; Avanos Yolu 54) All the usual tours, plus two-night, three-day trips to Mt Nemrut (€159) leaving on Monday and Thursday.

Sleeping

Clustered on the hilly southern side of town are dozens of charismatic *pensions*, many offering rooms carved out of the natural rock

itself. A small information office in the *otogar* displays details of most options.

Kaya Camping Caravaning (☎ 343 3983; kayacamping@www.com; camp sites per person/tent/campervan €4.50/1.75/4.50; 📺) This impressive camping ground is 2.5km from central Göreme, uphill from the Göreme Open-Air Museum.

Traveller's Cave Pansiyon (☎ 271 2707; www.travellerscave.com; Aydıncı Mevki 28; dm €3.50, s/d with shared bathroom & breakfast €8.50/12.50, s/d with bathroom & breakfast €13.50/16.50; 📺) One of the best budget choices in town, the Traveller's Cave offers small but serviceable cave rooms that are blessedly free of the musty aroma that afflicts similar rooms in other establishments.

Köse Pension (☎ 271 2294; www.kosepension.com; dm/hut per person €5/7, s with shared bathroom €6, d with bathroom €12.50; 📺) Staying in a modern building instead of a cave may seem dull, but you'll really appreciate the difference in winter. In summer the lovely pool and home-cooked food make Köse Pension a popular choice.

Kelebek Hotel & Cave Pension (☎ 271 2531; www.kelebekhotel.com; standard s/d €25/30 incl breakfast, deluxe s/d €35/40 incl breakfast; 📺) Kelebek is the most successful hotel/*pension* in Cappadocia for good reasons: the owner's local knowledge and professionalism, the variety of room types and the best roof terrace in the village.

Eating

Most of Göreme's *pensions* provide good, cheap meals and serve wine and beer; you'll often eat as well in them as in the restaurants around town.

Fırn Express (☎ 271 2745; Eski Belediye Yani Sokak; pide €2-3, claypot dishes €3-3.50, pizza €4-5.50) Set a bit back from the main strip, this simple place makes the most of its large wood-fired oven.

Dibek (☎ 271 2209; Hakkı Paşa Meydanı 1; mains €5-8) This restaurant in a lovingly restored village house is the only place in Göreme where travellers can sample true home-style village cooking.

Getting There & Away

As well as regular services to Ankara (€10, five hours) and Konya (€10, 3½ hours), overnight buses run to İstanbul (€18, 11 hours) and Antalya (€12, 10 hours). Half-hourly *dolmuşes* connect Göreme with Nevşehir (€0.65, 30 minutes), a bigger transport hub.

IHLARA VALLEY

☎ 0382

The **Ihlara Valley** (admission €3; ☎ 8am-7pm Apr-Oct, 8.30am-5pm Nov-Mar) was a favourite retreat of Byzantine monks. Dozens of painted churches carved from the rock have survived, and hikers can follow the course of the stream (Melendiz Suyu) as it flows for 16km from the wide, shallow valley at Selime to a narrow gorge at Ihlara village. It's an unforgettable experience, thanks to the sea of greenery – alive with birds – hugging the banks of the stream at the base of this beautiful canyon. Many people visit on day tours from Göreme, which allow only a few hours to walk the central part of the gorge, but to walk the whole way is likely to be a highlight of your trip to Turkey.

There are modest *pensions* handily placed at both ends (Ihlara village and Selime). You can also break your journey into two parts, with an overnight stay in Belisırma's camping grounds or lone *pension*. Note that all accommodation is closed out of season (December to March).

Four daily minibuses connect Ihlara village with Aksaray (€1.50), where you can pick up buses to the rest of the region.

KAYSERİ

☎ 0352 / pop 604,000

Despite its rapid modernisation, the former capital of Cappadocia still boasts many ancient buildings. Most people fly into Kayseri and are transferred by shuttle bus to central Cappadocia, but there's a lot to be said for spending a day here exploring its sights and meeting its people.

The beautiful **Hunat Hatun** mosque, tomb and seminary is Kayseri's centrepiece. Opposite, behind the massive 6th-century city walls, are the **Ulu Cami** (Great Mosque) and the venerable **Vezirhani**, once a caravanserai. The beautifully decorated **Güğüpüođlu Konađı**, an 18th-century mansion, now houses the city's interesting **Ethnographic Museum** (admission €1.10; ☎ 8am-5pm Tue-Sun).

Hotel Çamlıca (☎ 231 4344; Bankalar Caddesi, Gürcü Sokak 14; s/d €14/25) is grubby and depressing, but it's the only half-decent budget option in the city. Much better is old-fashioned **Hotel Çaparı** (☎ 222 5278; Gevher Nesibe Mahallesi Donanma Caddesi 12; s/d €28/48; 📺).

Turkish Airlines and Onur Air fly from Kayseri to İstanbul (from €55, 70 minutes). Buses serve all destinations, including Ürgüp (€3.50, 1¼ hours) and Göreme (€4.50, 1½ hours).

EASTERN TURKEY

Like a challenge? Eastern Turkey – vast, remote and culturally very Middle Eastern – is the toughest part of Turkey to travel in but definitely the most exotic, and certainly the part that feels least affected by mass tourism. Winter here can be bitterly cold and snowy.

PKK activity in southeastern Turkey has largely faded out, making the area much safer to travel, but it's always a good idea to check with your embassy for the latest before going.

MT NEMRUT NATIONAL PARK

Two thousand-odd years ago, an obscure Commagene king chose to erect his own **memorial sanctuary** on top of a mountain. Today the highlight of the Mt Nemrut National Park is this sanctuary, an artificial summit crammed with the heads of gigantic statues of gods and kings. Mt Nemrut is the star attraction of eastern Turkey and rightly so. The stunning scenery, historical sights, and the undeniable sense of mystique and folly that emanate from the site make a visit here essential.

There are several possible bases for visiting Mt Nemrut. To the north is fast-modernising Malatya, where the **tourist office** (☎ 0422-323 2942) organises daily minibus tours (€30, minimum three people, May to October). The tours take in a sunset visit to the heads, a night at a hotel near the summit and a second visit at dawn. Alternatively you can visit the mountain from the south via the oil-prospecting town of Kahta, which is a better option as you can tour all the sights on the southern side. Most travellers stay at **Pension Kommagene** (☎ 0416-725 9726; Mustafa Kemal Caddesi; s/d €12/17, s/d with shared bathroom €6/9; 🍴).

Because of the transport difficulties, many people prefer to take tours from Göreme in Cappadocia (p1168).

In high summer the nicest places to stay, especially with your own transport, are on the slopes of the mountain near Kahta in the village guesthouses. The pretty village of Karadut, 3km up the mountain from the turn-off to Nemrut, has a few small eateries.

VAN

☎ 0432 / pop 391,000

On the southeastern shore of vast Lake Van, the easygoing city of Van boasts the 3000-year-old **Rock of Van citadel** (admission €1.25, ☎ 9am-dusk) and a fabulous **museum** (admission

€1.25; ☎ 8am-noon & 1-5pm Tue-Sun), but the 10th-century Armenian church on **Akdamar Island** is undoubtedly the star attraction. Its biblical reliefs are simply jaw-dropping, not to mention its location on Lake Van, a vast expanse of water ringed by beautiful snowcapped mountains.

Otel Aslan (☎ 216 2469; Özel İdare İş Merkezi Karşısı; s €6-9, d €9-12) is a hotel-cum-hostel with shoebox-sized, colourful rooms. Better yet is **Büyük Asur Oteli** (☎ 216 8792; fax 216 9461; Cumhuriyet Caddesi, Turizm Sokak; s/d €20/34; 🍴), comfy, friendly and well set up for the needs of travellers.

There are several *dolmuşes* a day to Dodubayazıt (€6, 2½ hours) and buses to Diyarbakır (€13, seven hours), from where you can continue on to Kahta (from Mt Nemrut National Park) and Kars (€17, six hours).

Minibuses run the 44km from near Beş Yol in Van to Akdamar harbour for €1 during the high season. At other times there's an hourly minibus to Gevaş (€1). Boats to the island run when traffic warrants it (minimum 10 people). Provided others are there to share the cost, a return ticket for the 20-minute voyage and admission to the island costs €3.

KARS

☎ 0474 / pop 76,000

The massive fortress and fine old Russian houses are well worth a look, but most people come to Kars to visit the dramatic ruins of **Ani** (admission €3; ☎ 8.30am-5pm), 45km east of the city. Formerly the capital of the Armenian kingdom, Ani was completely deserted in 1239 after a Mongol invasion. The ghost city, fronted by a hefty wall, now lies in fields overlooking the Arpaçay River, which forms the border with Armenia. The site exudes an eerie ambience that is simply unforgettable.

Güngören Hotel (☎ 212 5630; fax 223 4821; Millet Sokak; s/d €15/24; 🍴), with a *hammam* and restaurant, is the most popular with travellers.

There are regular buses to Ankara (€22, 18 hours), Kayseri (€19, 16 hours), Malatya (€15, 14 hours) and Van (€17, six hours). Transport to Ani has always been a problem, so most people opt for the taxi minibuses (€39 per bus load) to the site organised by Kars' **tourist office** (☎ 212 6817; Lise Caddesi; ☎ 8am-noon & 1-5pm Mon-Fri).

TURKEY DIRECTORY

ACCOMMODATION

Camping grounds are dotted around Turkey, though not as frequently as you might hope. Some hotels and *pensions* will also let you camp on their grounds for a small fee (€3 to €6).

HI-type hostels are a rarity in Turkey, although İstanbul and other tourist areas have many backpacker-oriented hostelries with dorms (€3.50 to €11) and extensive services. Otherwise, small family-run *pensions* and hotels take in most of the traveller traffic and generally offer excellent value for money. Singles and doubles with shared bathroom start at €8 and €12, respectively; with en suite bathroom from €13 and €16, respectively.

Note that virtually nowhere in Turkey is far from a mosque – light sleepers might want to bring earplugs for the early morning call to prayer.

ACTIVITIES

Hiking and trekking, particularly in national parks, are a great way to get to grips with the country. So far Turkey has two waymarked national routes: the Lycian Way (Fethiye to Antalya) and St Paul's Trail (Perge/Aspendos to Lake Eğirdir), both around 500km long.

Water sports from diving to kayaking are available in the Aegean and Mediterranean resorts. Skiing is becoming more popular, and the best facilities are at Uludağ, near Bursa, and Mt Erciyes, near Kayseri. Those of a lazier (or drunker) disposition can take an extended boat trip along the coast.

BUSINESS HOURS

Usual business hours in Turkey:

Banks ☎ 8.30am-noon & 1-5pm Mon-Fri

Bars ☎ from 5-8pm until 1am to 3am; in tourist areas they might be open all day

Internet cafés ☎ 9am-late

Museums ☎ 9am-4.30pm Nov-Mar, 8.30am-6pm Apr-Oct; most museums close Mon

Restaurants ☎ 9am or 10am-10pm or 11pm

Post offices ☎ 8.30am-noon & 1-5pm Mon-Fri

Shops ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Sat; in tourist areas food and souvenir shops are often open virtually around the clock.

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Although Turkey is in no way a dangerous country to visit, it's always wise to be a little cautious, especially if you're travelling alone.

Be wary of pickpockets in buses, markets and other crowded places. Keep an eye out for anyone lurking near ATMs.

As a pedestrian note that there is no such thing as right of way, despite the little green man.

In İstanbul single men are sometimes lured to bars by new Turkish 'friends', then made to pay an outrageous bill. Drugging is also a serious risk. Be a tad wary who you befriend, especially when you're new to the country.

At the time of writing travelling in the southeast is safe, but you should check the latest situation before setting out. Visitors should also note that sporadic bombings targeting tourism are becoming a fact of life in Turkey. Again, check advisories for the latest.

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

For entry requirements, see Visas (p1172).

Consulates in Turkey

Most embassies are in Ankara. The following countries have consulates in İstanbul (code ☎ 0212):

Australia (☎ 243 1333; 2nd fl, Suzer Plaza, Asker Ocağı Caddesi 15, Elmadağ, Şişli)

France (Map pp1150-1; ☎ 334 8730; İstiklal Caddesi 8, Taksim)

Germany (Map pp1150-1; ☎ 334 6100; İnönü Caddesi 16, Taksim)

Netherlands (Map pp1150-1; ☎ 393 2121; İstiklal Caddesi 393, Beyoğlu)

New Zealand (☎ 251 3895; İnönü Caddesi 92/3, Gümüştüğü)

UK (Map pp1150-1; ☎ 334 6400; Mesrutiyet Caddesi 34, Tepebaşı, Beyoğlu)

USA (Map pp1150-1; ☎ 335 9000; Kaplıcalar Mevkii 2, İstinye)

Turkish Embassies & Consulates Abroad

Australia (☎ 02-6295 0227; www.turkishembassy.org.au; 60 Mugga Way, Red Hill, ACT 2603)

Canada (☎ 613-789 4044; www.turkishembassy.com; 197 Wurtemberg St, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 8L9)

France (☎ 01 56 33 33 33; www.tcaprbsk.com; 184, Blvd Malesherbes, 75017 Paris)

Germany (☎ 49-228 34 40 93; www.tcberlinbe.de; Runge Str 9, 10179 Berlin)

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

Italy (☎ 39-06 445941; www.ambasciataditurchia.it; Via Palestro 28, 00185 Rome)

Spain (☎ 34-91 319 8064; www.tcmadridbe.org; Calle de Rafael Calvo 18 2A-B, Madrid)

UK (☎ 020-7591 6900; www.turkishconsulate.org.uk; Rutland Lodge, Rutland Gardens, Knightsbridge, London SW7 1BW)

USA (☎ 202-612 6700; www.turkishembassy.org; 2525 Massachusetts Ave, NW Washington, DC 2008)

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Camel Wrestling Be in Selçuk on the last Sunday in January.

Anzac Day Held at Gallipoli on 25 April.

Oil-Wrestling Championships Held at Kirkpınar, late June (see www.kirkpinar.com).

International Istanbul Music Festival Every June, Istanbul hosts world-class classical concerts.

Aspendos Festival Concerts in Side and Aspendos from mid-June to early July.

Mevlana Festival Held in Konya during December.

HOLIDAYS

New Year's Day 1 January

Children's Day 23 April

Youth & Sports Day 19 May

Victory Day 30 August

Republic Day 29 October

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

INTERNET RESOURCES

Mymerhaba (www.mymerhaba.com) Information site aimed at expats.

Turkey Travel Planner (www.turkeytravelplanner.com) Regularly updated travel information.

Turkey Welcomes You (www.tourismturkey.org) Government website with grab-bag of stuff.

Turkish Daily News (www.turkishdailynews.com) Newspaper home page.

MONEY

Turkey's currency is the Yeni Türk Lirası (YTL). Lira comes in coins of 1, 5, 10, 25 and 50 *kuruş*, and a 1 lira coin, and notes of 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100 lira. Prices in this chapter are quoted in more stable euros.

Cash & Credit Cards

US dollars and euros are the easiest currencies to change, although many banks and exchange offices will change other major currencies, such as UK pounds and Japanese yen.

You may find it difficult to exchange Australian or Canadian currency anywhere except at banks and offices in major cities.

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

Tippling & Bargaining

Waiters and bath attendants expect around 10% of the bill. You can also round up taxi fares if you wish. Hotel, food and transport prices may or may not be negotiable, but you should always bargain for souvenirs, even if prices are 'fixed'.

POST

The Turkish postal service is known as the PTT. Turkish *postanes* (post offices) are indicated by black-on-yellow 'PTT' signs.

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

Respecting Muslim sensibilities should be a point of principle, even when you're surrounded by half-naked sunseekers. Women should keep their legs, upper arms and neckline covered, except on the beach. When entering a mosque, women should cover their heads and shoulders, and everyone should cover their legs and remove their shoes.

TELEPHONE

Türk Telekom (www.telekom.gov.tr) has a monopoly on phone services, and service is efficient if costly. Almost all public telephones require Türk Telekom phonecards. If you're only going to make one call, it's easier to look for signs saying *köntörlü telefon*, where the cost of your call will be metered. The cheapest option for international calls is with phone cards, such as IPC and Bigalo.

To call the international operator in Turkey, dial ☎ 115.

VISAS

Nationals of the following countries (among others) don't need a visa to visit Turkey for up to three months: Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. Nationals of Australia, Austria, Canada, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, the UK and USA do need a visa, but this is

just a sticker bought on arrival at the airport or border post rather than at an embassy in advance (make sure to join the queue to buy your visa before the queue for immigration). How much you pay for your visa (essentially a tourist tax) varies; at the time of writing British, Australians and Americans paid €15,

Canadians €45, Spanish, Italians and Irish €10. No photos are required.

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

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