

Turkey

Turkey might be the world's most contested country. Its landscape is dotted with battle-grounds, ruined castles and the palaces of great empires. And the country's tumultuous 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 ordinary 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 being pampered at a *hammam* (Turkish bath), or let the waters of the Mediterranean lap at your toes. Adventure lovers can head east, to uncover a wild, exotic Turkey. History and culture buffs will find marvels and mementos from the dawn of civilisation to the decline of the Ottoman empire. *Bon vivants* need look no further than Istanbul, where the shops, bars and restaurants are among the best in the world. Spend a little time in Turkey and you too will understand why some visitors come for a week or two, and end up staying for a lifetime.

FAST FACTS

- **Area** 779,452 sq km
- **Capital** Ankara
- **Currency** Yeni Turkish Lira; US\$1 = TRL1.5 million, €1 = TRL1.9 million
- **Famous for** delight, baths, ruins, resorts, moustaches
- **Official language** Turkish
- **Phrases** *merhaba* (hello), *tamam* (OK), *teşekkürler* (thank you)
- **Population** 72.4 million
- **Telephone codes** country code ☎ 90; Istanbul ☎ 0212 and ☎ 0216; international access code ☎ 00



HIGHLIGHTS

- Uncover **Istanbul** (p815), the glorious one-time Byzantine and Roman capital and one of the world's truly great cities.
- Go **blue cruising** (p836): jump aboard and sail the Med to Olympos, or Marmarýs, or wherever...
- Pit stop at **Selçuk** (p829) in one of the best pensions along the coast, then spend a day at the magnificent roman ruins of Ephesus.
- Sleep in fairy chimneys and explore underground cities at **Cappadocia** (p846), Turkey's number-one natural attraction.
- Give the beaten track a miss and head for adventure in Turkey's exotic east at **Nemrut Dađı** (p850).

ITINERARIES

- **One week** Devote two or three days to magical İstanbul, then head down the Aegean coast, via the Gallipoli battlefields and Troy, to marvel at the ruins of Ephesus. Squeeze in a side trip to Pamukkale too.
- **Two weeks** From Pamukkale head back to the coast and eastward along the Mediterranean to Antalya, making pit stops at lovely Kaş and laid-back Olympos along the way. Return to İstanbul via Cappadocia – it's a little out of the way, but you won't regret making the effort.

CLIMATE & WHEN TO GO

In general, spring (March to May) and autumn (September to November) are the best times of year to visit. The heat and crowds of July and August can be unbearable, especially in İstanbul.

The Aegean and Mediterranean coasts have mild, rainy winters and hot, dry summers. In İstanbul, summer is stinking hot, and winters are chilly with rain and, occasionally, snow. The Anatolian plateau can be boiling hot (although less humid than the coast) in summer and freezing in winter.

Note that most accommodation along the Aegean, Mediterranean and Black Seas, and in some parts of Cappadocia is closed from mid-October until late April.

HISTORY

The sheer weight and depth of history in Turkey is overwhelming – the Anatolian plateau features in various guises in both the *Iliad* and

HOW MUCH?

- **Budget double hotel room** €12-16
- **Two-course meal** €6
- **Loaf of bread** €0.20
- **Double rakı** €3
- **Nargileh (water-pipe)** €4

LONELY PLANET INDEX

- **Litre of petrol** €2
- **Litre of bottled water** €0.50
- **Half-litre of Efes beer** €1.50
- **Souvenir T-shirt** €7
- **Döner kebab** €3

the Bible; it has produced some of the world's longest-lasting empires, been instrumental in maintaining control in much of Europe and the Middle East for centuries, and still holds the most strategic position on two continents. Just look at the ruins that litter the coast to get a glimpse of the country's former glories.

By 7000 BC, a Neolithic city, one of the oldest ever recorded, was established at Çatal Höyük, near Konya. The greatest of the early civilisations of Anatolia (Asian Turkey) was that of the Hittites, a force to be reckoned with from 2000 to 1200 BC, with their capital at Hattuşa, east of Ankara – traces of their existence can still be seen throughout central Turkey.

After the collapse of the Hittite empire, Anatolia splintered into several small states and it wasn't until the Graeco-Roman period that parts of the country were reunited. Later, Christianity spread through Anatolia, carried by the apostle Paul, a native of Tarsus (near Adana).

Byzantine Empire & The Crusades

In AD 330, the Roman emperor Constantine founded a new imperial city at Byzantium (modern İstanbul). Renamed Constantinople, this strategic city became the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire and was the centre of the Byzantine Empire for 1000 years. During the European Dark Ages, the Byzantine Empire kept alive the flame of Western culture, although it was occasionally threatened by the

empires of the East (Persians, Arabs, Turks) and West (the Christian powers of Europe).

The Byzantine Empire's decline came with the arrival of the Seljuk Turks and their defeat of the Byzantine forces in August 1071. Seljuks overran most of Anatolia, and established a provincial capital at Konya, ruling over domains that included today's Turkey, Iran and Iraq.

With significantly reduced territory, the Byzantines endeavoured to protect their capital and reclaim Anatolia, but the Fourth Crusade (1202–04) proved disastrous for them when a combined Venetian and crusader force took and plundered Constantinople. They eventually regained the ravaged city in 1261.

Ottoman Empire

A Mongol invasion of the late 13th century put an end to Seljuk power, but new small Turkish states soon arose in western Anatolia. One, headed by Gazi Osman (1258–1326), grew into the Ottoman Empire, and in 1453 Constantinople finally fell to the Ottoman sultan Mehmet II (the Conqueror), replacing Bursa as the capital of the dynasty.

A century later, under Süleyman the Magnificent, the Ottoman Empire reached the peak of its power, spreading deep into Europe, Asia and North Africa. Ottoman success was based on military expansion. When their march westwards was stalled at Vienna in 1683, the rot set in, and by the 19th century the great European powers had begun to covet the sultan's vast domains.

Nationalist ideas swept through Europe after the French Revolution. In 1829 the Greeks won their independence, followed by the Serbs, the Romanians and the Bulgarians. In the ensuing territorial scrambles, Italy took Tripolitania (now Libya) in North Africa from Turkey, and in 1913 the Ottomans lost both Albania and Macedonia.

Having sided with the Axis powers in 1914, the Turks emerged from WWI stripped of their last non-Turkish provinces: Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia (Iraq) and the Arabian peninsula. Most of Anatolia itself was to be parcelled out to the victorious Europeans, leaving the Turks with virtually nothing.

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk

At this low point, Mustafa Kemal, the father of modern Turkey, took over (around

1920). Atatürk, as he was later called, had made his name by repelling the Anzacs in their heroic but futile attempt to capture the strategic Dardanelles strait at Gallipoli during WWI.

Rallying the remnants of the Turkish army during the Turkish War of Independence that followed WWI, Kemal pushed the last of the weak Ottoman rulers aside and out-manoeuvred the Allied forces. The Turks finally won in 1922 by repelling the invading Greeks at Smyrna (present-day İzmir). In the ensuing population exchange, whole communities were uprooted as Greek-speaking peoples of Anatolia were shipped to Greece, while Muslim residents of Greece were transferred to Turkey. These exchanges brought great disruption and the creation of 'ghost villages' that were vacated but never reoccupied.

After the renegotiation of the WWI treaties, a new Turkish republic, reduced to Anatolia and part of Thrace, was born. Atatürk then embarked on a rapid modernisation programme: establishing a secular democracy, introducing the Latin script and European dress, and adopting equal rights for women (at least in theory). The capital was also moved from İstanbul to Ankara. Such sweeping changes did not come easily, and some of the disputes from that period have never been fully resolved.

Relations with Greece improved in the 1930s (the Greek president even nominated Atatürk for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1934), but soured again after WWII by the conflict over Cyprus, particularly after the Greek-led, anti-Makarios coup and the subsequent Turkish invasion in 1974. (For more information see the Cyprus chapter, p177).

Modern Turkey

After Atatürk's death on 10 November 1938, Turkey experienced three military coups and a lot of political turbulence – no fewer than 60 different governments have held office since independence. During the 1980s and '90s the country was also wracked by the conflict with the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party), led by Abdullah Öcalan, who wanted the creation of a Kurdish state in Turkey's southeastern corner. This conflict led to an estimated 35,000 deaths and huge population shifts inside the country. In 1999 Öcalan was captured and a ceasefire called.



In 2001 the Turkish economy collapsed in spectacular fashion. Over a million people lost their jobs, and the value of the Turkish lira slumped from TRL650,000 for US\$1 to TRL1.6 million.

Current Events

In 2002 the newly formed AKP (Islamic Justice and Development Party), a religious party dominated by one-time Istanbul mayor Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, won an unprecedented victory, becoming the first non-coalition government in 15 years and ousting 90% of the existing members of parliament. Only one other party won any seats at all.

With concerns over Erdoğan's controversial past (he was once jailed for inciting

religious hatred, and was still banned from sitting in parliament at the time his party came to power), many people feared the AKP would bring a rush of hardline Islam to national politics. So far, however, the new regime has proved reassuringly moderate, concentrating on stabilising the economy and strengthening the country's bid to join the EU.

Terrorism and the increasing polarisation of the Eastern and Western worlds have reinforced Turkey's unique position as a United States ally and NATO member, and joining Europe remains a key priority. The death penalty has been abolished to meet European Union criteria (incidentally relieving PKK leader Öcalan), and the Kurdish mi-



nority have been granted greater rights and freedoms. Accession talks began in October 2005, but the ongoing Cyprus issue continues to be a stumbling block. Turkey's refusal to 'abandon' Turkish Cypriots continues to drive a wedge between it and EU member states Greece and Cyprus, whose support it will need if Turkey's bid is to succeed. In addition to this, the negative press received when Turkey's best-known author Orhan Pamuk was tried for 'insulting Turkishness', has put the spotlight on the government's declared commitment to freedom of expression. With accession talks offering no guarantee of acceptance into the EU anyway, it seems that Turkey may remain teetering at the edge of Europe for some time.

PEOPLE

Turkey's population (72.4 million) is predominantly Turks, with a big Kurdish minority (perhaps 14 million) and much smaller groups of Laz, Hemsin, Arabs, Jews, Greeks and Armenians. The Laz and Hemsin people are natives of the northeastern corner of Turkey on the Black Sea coast, while Arab influence is strongest in the Hatay area abutting Syria. Southeastern Turkey is pretty solidly Kurdish, although the problems of the last 20 years have led many to head west in search of a better life.

As a result of Atatürk's reforms, republican Turkey has largely adapted to a modern Westernised lifestyle, at least on the surface. In the big cities and coastal resorts you will not feel

much need to adapt to fit in. In smaller towns and villages, however, you may find people warier and more conservative.

RELIGION

Turkey is 99% Muslim, overwhelmingly of the Sunni variety, with small groups of Shiites and larger groups of Alevis (around 20%), mainly in the east. Most Turks are fairly relaxed about their religion; many women uncover their heads and many men drink alcohol (although almost no one touches pork).

ARTS

As with all else, Atatürk changed Turkey's cultural picture, encouraging painting, sculpture, Western music (he loved opera), dance and drama. Today's arts scene is a vibrant, if at times discordant, mix of the traditional, the innovative and the painfully modern.

The source of most traditional influences is, of course, the Ottoman Empire. Islam discourages images of humans or animals, so the Ottomans produced little sculpture or portraiture. Instead artists concentrated on calligraphy, architecture, tiles, jewellery, carpet-making, textiles and glass-making, with geometric motifs dominating most forms. More obscure arts, such as paper-marbling and Karagöz shadow-puppetry have also been enjoying a resurgence, and are seen as crafts worthy of preservation. Not surprisingly, carpet-weaving continues to be a Turkish passion.

Ottoman court music was mostly religious and can sound pompous and turgid to Western ears. Folk music is livelier, however, and

has since undergone a major revival. Despite the popularity of Western music in cities and tourist areas, Turkish pop still reigns supreme here; artists generally make no effort to break into English-speaking markets, and the national MTV counterpart, Kral TV, only shows Turkish videos. Turkey did, however, host the Eurovision Song Contest in 2004 after winning it for the first time in 2003 with Sertab Erener's song in English, 'Every Way That I Can'. Big names in the music scene to look out for include Sezen Aksu (Queen of pop), Tarkan (King of Pop), Burhan Öçal (one of the country's finest percussionists), and Orient Expressions (Alevi and folk with jazzed-up Turkish melodies).

SPORT

Turks are fanatical lovers of football (soccer), and if you can get to a match involving one of the big İstanbul three – Galatasaray, Fenerbahçe and Beşiktaş – you're guaranteed to have a good time. Try to make sure you're cheering for the right side!

The other main spectator sport here is *yağlı güreş* (oil wrestling), where burly men in leather shorts grease themselves up with olive oil and go at it – be in Edirne (p824) in June for oily action.

ENVIRONMENT

The Dardanelles, the Sea of Marmara and the Bosphorus strait divide Turkey into Asian and European parts, but Eastern Thrace (European Turkey) makes up only 3% of the land area. The remaining 97% is Anatolia, a vast plateau rising eastward towards the Caucasus Mountains.

Turkey's junction between Asia and Europe and its varied geology has made it one of the most biodiverse temperate-zone countries in the world, blessed with an exceptionally rich flora of over 9000 species, a third of them endemic. In addition, some 400 species of bird are found in Turkey, with about 250 of these passing through on migration from Africa to Europe.

In theory, you could see bears, deer, jackals, caracal, wild boars and wolves in Turkey. In practice you're unlikely to see any wild animals at all unless you're trekking. The most noted *cause célèbre* is the loggerhead turtle (*caretta caretta*), whose beach nesting grounds have long been endangered by tourism and development. Various national and

international schemes are underway to protect these areas during the breeding season – look out for signs telling you when to avoid which stretches.

One of the biggest environmental challenges facing Turkey is the threat from maritime traffic along the Bosphorus. Turkey is also one of the world's main builders of dams. Wherever you go you see signs to a new *baraj* (dam) construction, and it doesn't take long to hear about the problems they are causing.

FOOD & DRINK

The infamous *döner kebab* (doner kebab) is the mainstay of the Turkish diet, and you'll find a range of lamb and chicken kebabs in street stalls and *lokantas* (restaurants) almost everywhere. Even the unadventurous should branch out a bit and try the *dürüm kebab*, sliced lamb rolled up in flatbread, or the *İskender kebab*, a bed of bread covered with lamb slices, yoghurt and tomato purée, all drizzled with melted butter. A popular alternative to kebabs is *köfte*, minced meat formed into flattened meatballs.

The cheapest, quickest options in most restaurants and cafeterias are *pide*, a canoe-shaped Turkish pizza topped with cheese and/or meat; *lahmacun*, wafer-thin Arabic-style pizza smeared with tomato sauce and minced lamb; and *gözleme*, thin bread pancakes filled with cheese or meat. *Manti*, the Turkish version of ravioli, is also a good bet.

For vegetarians, a meal of mezes (hors d'oeuvres) can be an excellent way to avoid meat while ensuring a varied diet. Most restaurants will be able to rustle up at least *beyaz peynir* (white sheep's milk cheese), *börek* (flaky pastry stuffed with white cheese and parsley), *kuru fasulye* (beans), *dolma* (stuffed vegetables) and *patlıcan tava* (fried aubergine). *Çorba* (soup) of various shades is also a reliable fixture on most menus, though many are made with meat stock.

It's impossible to go a day in Turkey without being offered *çay* (tea), grown on the eastern Black Sea coast and served in dainty tulip-shaped glasses with copious quantities of sugar. The wholly chemical *elma çay* (apple tea) is a travellers' favourite – but locals wouldn't be seen dead drinking the stuff. Traditional Turkish *kahve* (coffee) is drunk like espresso; order it *sade* (no sugar), *orta* (medium-sweet) or *çok şekerli* (very sweet) and take care not to swig the grains.

In the coastal touristy towns, virtually every restaurant serves alcohol, as do more expensive restaurants in the big cities. In smaller towns, there's usually at least one restaurant where alcohol is served, although in religiously conservative cities such as Konya you may have to hunt hard to find it. Although Turks have a fairly relaxed attitude towards alcohol, public drunkenness is a definite no-no. The Turkish liquor of choice is *raki*, a fiery aniseed drink resembling Greek *ouzo*; it's traditionally cut by half with water and drunk to accompany mezes. Turkish wine, both red and white, is worth the occasional blow out. Efes and Tuborg beers are increasingly popular with locals for good reason.

İSTANBUL

📍 0212 / pop 16 million

On an afternoon stroll through İstanbul you can marvel at the greatest examples of Byzantine art and architecture in the world, submerge yourself in the mystique of the seraglio or lose yourself in the labyrinthine Grand Bazaar. You can join the throng at a *meyhane* (tavern) heaving with raki-fuelled song and dance, dine alongside Prada-clad locals enjoying international fusion cuisine and witness the ablutions of the faithful summoned by the melodious call to prayer.

Scratch beneath the surface and you find a city of immense disparity – a sprawling, heaving metropolis battling the fuelling tensions of the ever-widening gulf between haves and have-nots. It's almost a microcosm for the world's challenges: social, religious, environmental and political. These energies and tensions make İstanbul all the more vital, intriguing and beguiling. There simply is no other city like it.

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 Constantinople fell for the first time in 1204, it was ransacked by the loot-hungry Europeans of the misguided Fourth Crusade.

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

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

Equally, though, there's no need to go overboard: obvious non-Muslims wearing headscarves and the like will probably attract just as much curious attention as those without!

İstanbul only regained its former glory after 1453, when it was captured by Mehmet the Conqueror and made 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 retained much of its charm, even during the empire's long decline.

Occupied by Allied forces after WWI, the city came to be thought of as the decadent playpen of the sultans, notorious for its extravagant lifestyle and insidious spy games. As a result, when the Turkish Republic was proclaimed in 1923, Ankara became the new capital, in an attempt to wipe the slate clean. Nevertheless, İstanbul 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 İstanbul from its Asian half. The European side is divided by the Haliç (Golden Horn) estuary into the 'newer' quarter of Beyoğlu in the north and Old İstanbul in the south; the Galata Bridge spans the two.

Sultanahmet, the heart of Old İstanbul, has the bulk of the tourist sights, 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 İstanbul's *otogar* (bus terminal) at Esenler, about 10km west of Old İstanbul.

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 Square, heart of 'modern' İstanbul.

INFORMATION

Bookshops

Homer Kitabevi (Map pp818-19; ☎ 249 5902; Yeni Çarşı Caddesi 28, Galatasaray, Beyoğlu; ☎ 10am-7.30pm Mon-Sat, 12.30pm-7.30pm Sun)

Robinson Crusoe (Map pp818-19; ☎ 293 6968; İstiklal Caddesi 389, Beyoğlu; ☎ 9am-9.30pm Mon-Sat, 10am-9.30pm Sun)

Emergency

Tourist Police (Map p821; ☎ 527 4503; Yerebatan Caddesi 6, Sultanahmet)

Internet Access

There are internet cafés all over İstanbul. You can find wi-fi access at the international terminal at the Atatürk international airport. The following places have ADSL connections and English-speaking staff.

Anatolia Internet Cafe (Map p821; İncili Çavuş Sokak 37/2, Sultanahmet; per hr €2; ☎ 9am-9pm)

Otantik Internet Café (Map p821; Alayköşkü Caddesi 2/B, Sultanahmet; per hr €2; ☎ 9am-midnight)

Sultan Pub (Map p821; Divan Yolu Caddesi 2, Sultanahmet; per hr €3.50; ☎ 9.30am-1am) Has wi-fi access.

Internet Resources

Biletix (www.biletix.com) Entertainment listings.

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

My Merhaba (www.mymerhaba.com) Expat resource gives the low-down on the city.

Medical Services

American Hospital (Amerikan Hastanesi; Map pp818-19; ☎ 311 2000; Güzelbahçe Sokak 20, Nişantaşı)

German Hospital (Alman Hastanesi; Map pp818-19; ☎ 293 2150; Siraselviler Caddesi 119, Taksim)

Money

There are banks, ATMs and exchange offices all over İstanbul.

Post

PTT Sirkeci (Map p821; Büyük Postane Caddesi, Eminönü); Taksim (Map pp818-19; Boğazkesen Caddesi); Sultanahmet (Map p821; booth, Aya Sofya Meydanı)

Telephone

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

Tourist Information

There is a tourist office at Atatürk international airport at the international arrivals.

Tourist office (Map p821; ☎ 511 5888) At Sirkeci train station.

Tourist office (Map p821; ☎ 518 8754; Divan Yolu) Just east of the Sultanahmet train station.

Travel Agencies

Fez Travel (Map p821; ☎ 516 9024; www.feztravel.com; Akbıyık Caddesi 15)

Senkron Travel (Map p821; ☎ 0212-638 8340; www.senkrontours.com; Arasta Caddesi 51, Sultanahmet) Tours €20 to €45.

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

İstanbul is no more nor less safe a city than any large metropolis, but there some dangers worth highlighting. Some İstanbullular drive like rally drivers, and there is no such thing as right of way for pedestrians, despite the little green man. As a pedestrian, give way to cars and trucks in all situations, even if you have to jump out of the way. The other main issue is a scam concerning men, bars and women. What could possibly go wrong you ask? See p851 for the low-down.

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Old İstanbul

This 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** (Hagia Sofia; Map p821; ☎ 522 0989; Aya Sofya Meydanı; admission adult/child €5.50/free; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun) in AD 532, he meant to create the grandest church in the world, and it's certainly hard to miss the result. For 1000 years it was 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 surviving from the Christian period. When the church was captured by the Ottomans and converted into a mosque, the mosaics were actually plastered over, as strict Islam prohibits images of living creatures. They were only revealed in 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 p821; Hippodrome; admission by donation; ☎ closed prayer times). The nickname comes from the luminous blue impression created by the tiled walls and painted dome of the interior. Leave your shoes outside.

Rents from the *arasta* (row of shops) to the east provide support for the Blue Mosque's upkeep, and it's also a great hassle-free spot to shop. Nearby the *arasta* is the entrance to

İSTANBUL IN TWO DAYS

Starting in Sultanahmet, **Topkapı Palace** (below) could easily occupy you for your first day; try and fit in **Aya Sofya** (below) and the **Blue Mosque** (below) as well. In the evening, head to a *hammam* and grab a kebab.

For the second day, spend the morning in the chaos of the **Grand Bazaar** (below), then head over to **Beyoğlu** (p820) for a glimpse of modern İstanbul.

the **Great Palace Mosaic Museum** (Büyük Saray Mozaik Müzesi; Map p821; ☎ 518 1205; Torun Sokak; admission €3; ☎ 9am-4.30pm Tue-Sun, to 6.30pm Jun-Oct), a spectacular stretch of ancient Byzantine pavement featuring hunting scenes.

TOPKAPI SARAYI

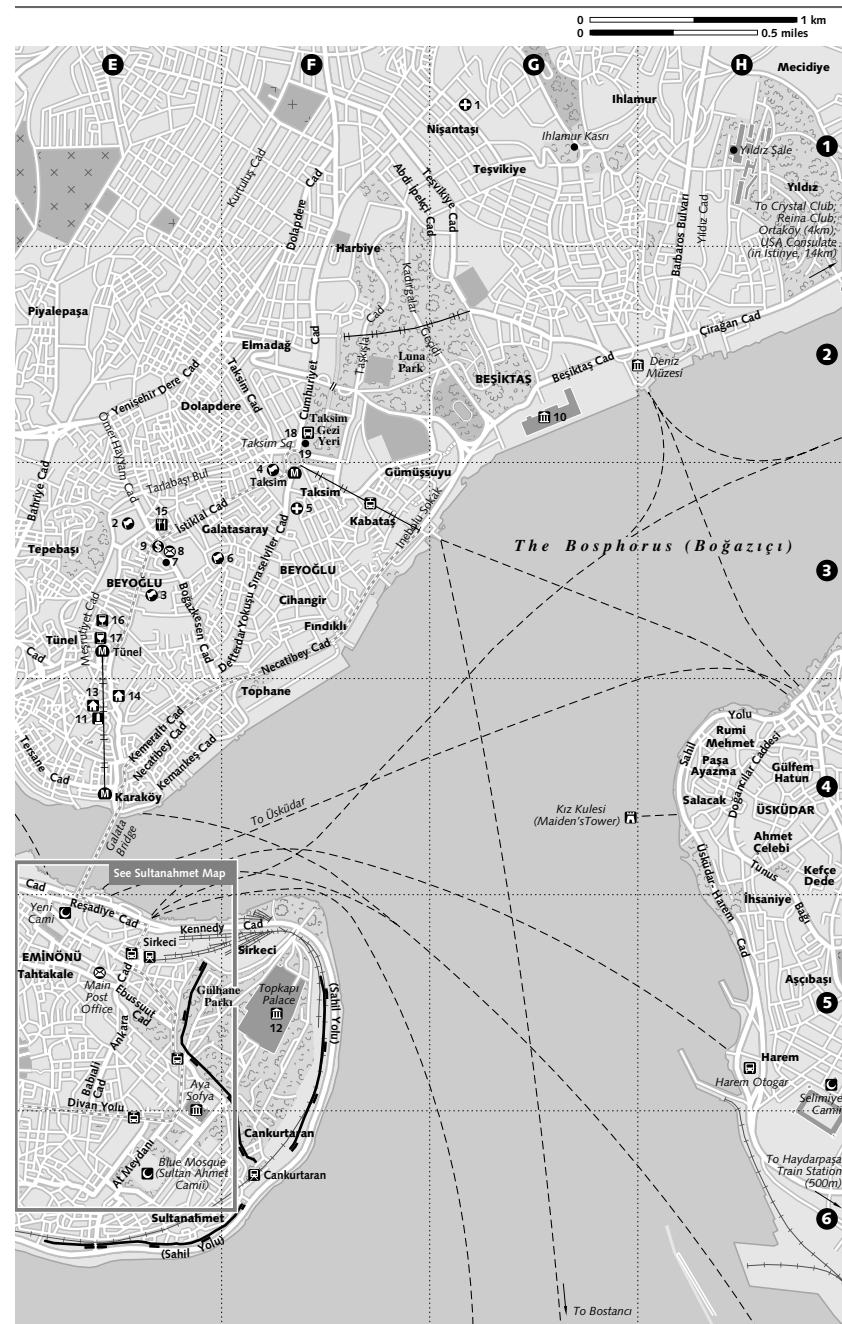
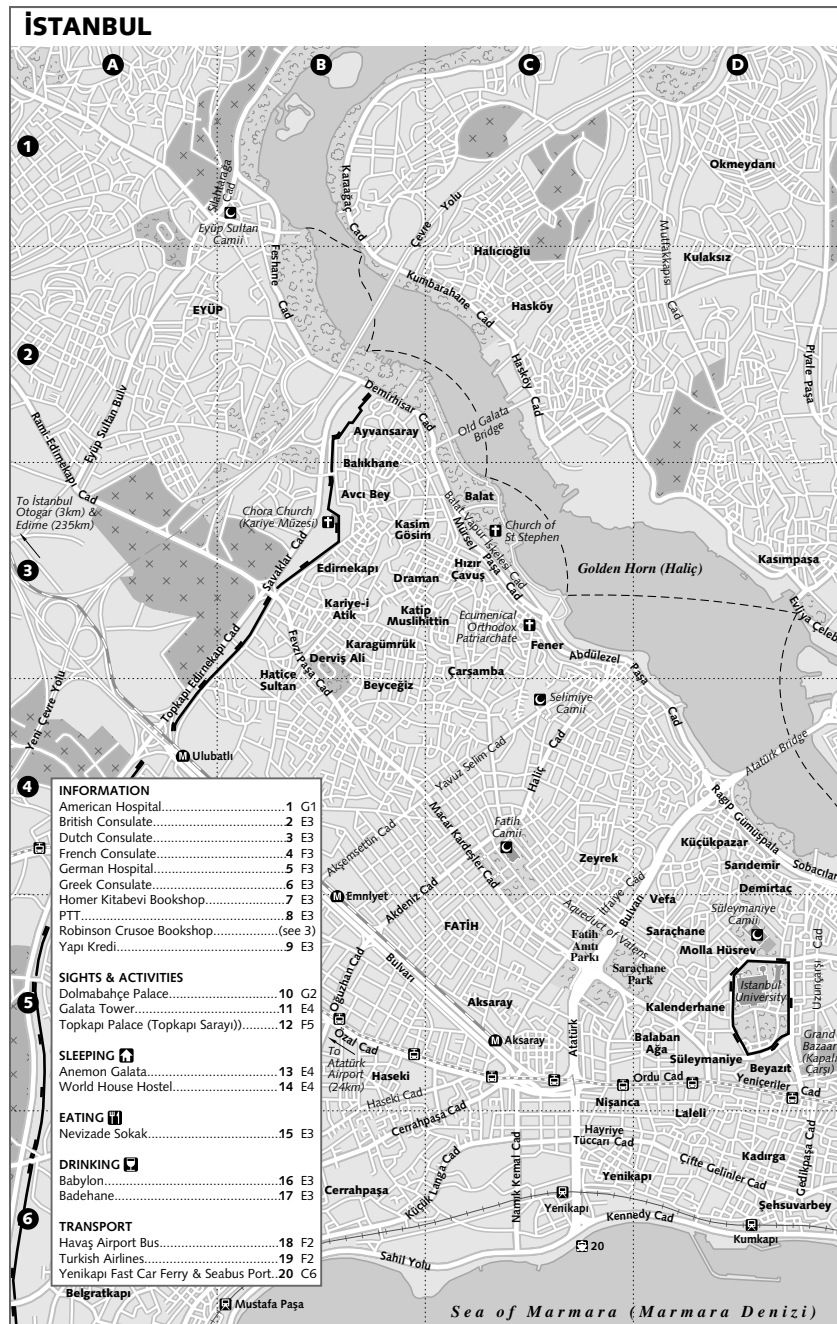
Just northeast of Aya Sofya, the sprawling **Topkapı Sarayı** (Topkapı Palace; Map pp818-19; ☎ 512 0480; Soğukçeşme Sokak; adult/child €5.50/free; ☎ 9am-7pm Wed-Mon, to 5pm winter) was the opulent seat of the sultans from 1462 until they moved to Dolmabahçe Palace in the 19th century. It's not just a single palace but a massive collection of courtyards, houses and libraries, with an intriguing 400-room harem.

In the vast First Court is the **Aya İrini** (Church of Divine Peace), dating from around AD 540. Within the Second Court are exhibits of priceless porcelain, silverware, crystal, weaponry and calligraphy. Right beside the **Kubbealtı** (Imperial Council Chamber) is the entrance to the **harem** (adult/child €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 **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, the main street in Sultanahmet, is the **Grand Bazaar** (Kapalı Çarşı; Map p821; ☎ 8.30am-7pm Mon-Sat), a labyrinthine medieval shopping mall also known as the Covered Market, with 22 entrances and 4500 shops, and 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 p821; ☎ 522 1259; Yerebatan Caddesi 13; admission €5.50; 🕒 9am-6.30pm Apr-Sep, to 5.30pm Oct-Mar), built by Constantine and enlarged by Justinian. This vast, atmospheric cistern was constructed using columns, capitals and plinths from ruined buildings. Don't miss the two columns in the northwestern corner, supported by upside-down Medusa heads, or the column towards the centre featuring a tear-drop design.

İSTANBUL ARCHAEOLOGY MUSEUM

Downhill, west of Topkapı Sarayı is the **Istanbul Archaeology Museum** (Arkeoloji Müzeleri; Map p821; ☎ 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** houses Hittite and other older archaeological finds. Also on the grounds is the graceful **Tiled Pavilion** (Çinili Köşk), one of İstanbul's oldest Ottoman buildings.

HIPPODROME

In front of the Blue Mosque is the **Hippodrome** (Atmeydanı; Map p821), where chariot races and the Byzantine riots took place.

The **Obelisk of Theodosius** is an Egyptian column from the temple of Karnak. It rests on a Byzantine base and has 3500-year-old hieroglyphics. The 10m-high **Obelisk of Constantine Porphyrogenitus** was once covered in bronze, subsequently stolen by the Crusaders. The base rests at the former level of the Hippodrome, several metres below the ground.

Between these two monuments are the remains of a **spiral column** of intertwined snakes, originally erected by the Greeks at Delphi to celebrate their victory over the Persians.

TURKISH & ISLAMIC ARTS MUSEUM

On the western side of the Hippodrome, the **Turkish & Islamic Arts Museum** (Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi; Map p821; ☎ 518 1805; Hippodrome 46, Sultanahmet; admission €3; 🕒 9am-4.30pm Tue-Sun) is housed in the former palace of İbrahim Paşa, grand vizier and brother-in-law of Süleyman the Magnificent. Inside, the most spectacular exhibits are the wonderful floor-to-ceiling

Turkish carpets, but don't miss the fascinating ethnographic collection downstairs either.

Dolmabahçe Palace

Follow Necatibey Caddesi eastwards along the Bosphorus and you'll come to the grandiose **Dolmabahçe Palace** (Map pp818-19; ☎ 236 9000; Dolmabahçe Caddesi, Beşiktaş; 🕒 9am-4pm Tue, Wed & Fri-Sun), right on the waterfront. The palace was built between 1843 and 1856 as home for some of the last Ottoman sultans, but was guaranteed its place in the history books when Atatürk died here on 10 November 1938.

Visitors are taken on hurried guided tours of one or both of the two main buildings: the **Selamlık** (Men's Apartments; admission €8.50) and the **Harem-cariyeler** (Family Apartments; admission €7). Both are stuffed with extravagant furniture and fittings; if you must choose, go for the Harem-cariyeler.

Beyoğlu

Beyoğlu is the heart of modern İstanbul and the hotspot for galleries, cafés and boutiques, with hip new restaurants opening almost nightly, and more bars than a bar-hopper could hope to prop up in a lifetime. Beyoğlu is 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 pp818-19) was known as the Grande Rue de Pera in the late 19th century, and now it carries 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.

The **Galata Tower** (Galata Kulesi; Map pp818-19; Galata Meydanı, Karaköy; admission €5.50; 🕒 9am-8pm), originally constructed in 1348, was the highest point in the Genoese fortifications of Galata and has been rebuilt many times. There's also a vertiginous panorama balcony offering spectacular 360-degree views of the city.

The Bosphorus

In summer there's no finer way to soak up the city than a ferry ride up the Bosphorus. 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 Anadolu Kavağı. The return fare is €4. Private ferries will take you as

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

- Aya İrini (Church of Divine Peace)..... 10 D4
- Aya Sofya (Sancta Sophia)..... 11 D5
- Basilica Cistern (Yerebatan Sarnığı)..... 12 C5
- Blue Mosque (Sultan Ahmet Camii)..... 13 C6
- Çemberlitaş Hamamı..... 14 A5
- Grand Bazaar (Kapalı Çarşı)..... 15 A4
- Great Palace Mosaic Museum..... 16 C6
- Hippodrome..... 17 C5
- Istanbul Archaeology Museum..... 18 D3
- Museum of the Ancient Orient..... 19 D3
- Obelisk of Constantine Porphyrogenitus..... 20 B6
- Obelisk of Theodosius..... 21 B6
- Spiral Column..... 22 B6
- Tiled Pavilion (Çinili Köşk)..... 23 D3
- Topkapı Sarayı Gate..... 24 D5
- Turkish & Islamic Arts Museum..... 25 B6

SLEEPING

- Bahaus Hostel..... 26 D6
- Hotel Empress Zoe..... 27 D5
- Mavi Guesthouse..... 28 D5
- Orient International Hostel..... 29 D6
- Side Hotel & Pension..... 30 D6

EATING

- Doy Doy..... 31 B6
- Hamdi Et Lokantası..... 32 A1
- Hatay..... 33 C3
- Spice Bazaar (Misir Çarşısı)..... 34 A2
- Tarihi Sultanahmet Köftçisi Selim Usta..... 35 C5

DRINKING

- Sultan Pub..... 36 C5
- Şah Pub & Bar..... 37 C5

TRANSPORT

- Beyoğlu & Bosphorus Buses..... 38 A1
- Bosphorus State-run Excursion Ferries..... 39 B1
- T4 Bus to Taksim Square..... 40 C5

INFORMATION

- Anatolia Internet Café..... 1 C5
- ATMs..... 2 C5
- Fez Travel..... (see 29)
- Otlantik Internet Café..... 3 C4
- PTT..... 4 B2
- PTT Booth..... 5 C5
- Senkron Travel..... 6 C6
- Tourist Office..... 7 C2
- Tourist Office..... 8 C5
- Tourist Police..... 9 C5

far as Rumeli Hisarı (three hours, about €14), and depart from Eminönü, just east of Galata Bridge (Map p821).

SLEEPING

The most convenient place to stay for sight-seeing is Sultanahmet/Cankurtaran; if you prefer wining, dining and bar-hopping stay in Beyoğlu.

Budget

Mavi Guesthouse (Map p821; ☎ 517 7287; www.mavi.guesthouse.com; Kutlugün 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, kilim-clad lounge. Rooms are basic but clean enough.

Bahaus Hostel (Map p821; ☎ 638 6534; www.travelin.istanbul.com; Bayramfırı 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.

Orient International Hostel (Map p821; ☎ 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 pp818-19; ☎ 293 5520; www.worldhouseistanbul.com; Galipdede Caddesi 117, Galata; dm €10-14, s/d €35/40; 📺) With an unbeatable foothold betwixt the hushed sights of Sultanahmet and the commotion of Beyoğlu, this colourful hostel is the best new kid on the block.

Midrange

Side Hotel & Pension (Map p821; ☎ 517 2282; www.sidehotel.com; Utangaç Sokak 20, Sultanahmet; hotel s/d €45/60, 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.

Hotel Empress Zoe (Map p821; ☎ 518 2504; www.emzoe.com; Adliye Sokak 10, Cankurtaran; s €50-70, d €60-95; 📺) Immaculate and supremely tasteful rooms in adjoining buildings share a gorgeous pebbled garden and a wisteria-bedecked terrace offering terrific views. Book well ahead.

Anemon Galata (Map pp818-19; ☎ 293 2343; www.anemonhotels.com; cnr Galata Meydanı & Büyükhendek Cad-

AUTHOR'S CHOICE

Hamdi Et Lokantası (☎ 528 0390; Kalçın Sokak 17, Eminönü; kebaps €4.50-8) A favourite Istanbul 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). Book ahead and request a spot on the terrace.

desi 11, Galata; s/d €100/120; 📺) In the shadow of the Galata Tower, Anemon Galata is a magnificent historic building converted into a lovely, intimate hotel. Book well ahead.

EATING Restaurants

Options for eating in Sultanahmet are fairly limited; you'll find the best food in town in Beyoğlu. Just saunter along İstiklal Caddesi and take your pick, or head into the back streets at **Nevizade Sokak** (Map pp818-19; ☎ 10am-midnight), crammed with *meyhanes* and locals seeking a rakı-soaked night on the town. Lots of fun.

Tarihi Sultanahmet Köftecisi Selim Usta (Map p821; ☎ 520 0566; Divan Yolu 12; mains €2.5-5) Don't get this place confused with the other *köfte* places along this strip purporting to be the *meşhur* (famous) *köfte* restaurant: No 12 is the real McCoy. Hungry in-the-know locals flock here for a serve of the best *köfte* you'll ever grease your palate with.

Doy-Doy (Fill up! Fill up!; Map p821; ☎ 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.

Hatay (Map p821; ☎ 522 8513; İbni Kemal Caddesi 9-11, Hocaapaşa; mains €5-11) Known for its fresh, quality meze – try the platter (€8.50) to sample a bit of everything – this is one of the few restaurants round here that caters as much for locals as it does for travellers.

Self Catering

The best place to pick up dried fruit, pulses, cheese, fruit and vegetables is from the **Spice**

Bazaar (Map p821; ☎ 8.30am-6.30pm Mon-Sat) and surrounds.

DRINKING

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 live music.

Parts of Beyoğlu can be seedy. Ignore the 'friendly' locals who try to lure you into trouble with promises of free drinks and so on.

Babylon (Map pp818-19; ☎ 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 pp818-19; ☎ 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. Dress down and come ready to enjoy an attitude-free evening.

Sultan Pub (Map p821; ☎ 528 1719; Divan Yolu 2, Sultanahmet; ☎ 9am-midnight) This is a popular pub-restaurant opposite Sultanahmet Meydanı, with a less rowdy atmosphere than some of the backpacker bars.

Another good choice is **Şah Pub & Bar** (Map p821; ☎ 519 5807; İncili Çavaş Sokak 11, Sultanahmet; ☎ 10am-3am).

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

ENTERTAINMENT

Grab a copy of *Time Out Istanbul* (€2.80) for monthly listings on every aspect of the city's cultural scene, and check out **Biletix** (☎ 0216-556 9800; www.biletix.com).

Hammams (Turkish Baths)

İstanbul's most interesting historical *hammams* are pricey and touristy, but are worth visiting nonetheless.

Çemberlitaş Hamamı (Map p821; ☎ 522 7974; Vezir Hanı Caddesi 8, Çemberlitaş; bath & massage €20,

bath only €13.50; ☎ 6am-midnight) The best choice for first-timers, with separate baths for men and women in a building designed by the great Ottoman architect Mimar Sinan. Prices would be outrageous anywhere else in Turkey, but service is experienced and hassle-free.

GETTING THERE & AWAY Air

İstanbul's busiest international airport is the **Atatürk international airport** (IST; www.dhmiata.gov.tr), 23km west of Sultanahmet. There is also an increasingly popular smaller airport, **Sabiha Gökçen international airport** (SAW; www.sgairport.com), some 50km east of Sultanahmet and Taksim, on the Asian side of the city. Most foreign airlines have their offices near Taksim, or north of it, along Cumhuriyet Caddesi.

Turkish Airlines (www.thy.com; ☎ 444 0849) and its rivals cover most domestic destinations with at least one daily flight each.

Boat

Yenikapı (Map pp818-19), south of Aksaray Square, is the dock for *hızlı feribot* (fast car-ferries) across the Sea of Marmara.

Bus

İstanbul's *otogar* is at Esenler, some 10km west of the city centre. It's 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 pp818-19). 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 station for services to Edirne, Greece and Eastern Europe is Sirkeci. The nightly *Dostluk/Filia Express* is an excellent service between Athens/Thessaloniki 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 To/From the Airports

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 – the whole trip takes about 50 minutes. Several shuttle buses also operate, including the Havaş airport bus (Map pp818-19; €5, 35 minutes to one hour, every 30 minutes), which goes to Taksim Sq via Aksaray. Sultanahmet travel agencies and hostels book minibuses in the other direction for around €4 per person. 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 international airport. 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.

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 (Eminönü, Sirkeci and Karaköy) and at Kabataş, just before Dolmabahçe Palace.

Bus

The most useful bus service for travellers is the T4, which runs between Sultanahmet (just behind the tourism office by Sultanahmet Park) 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, İstanbul's ancient funicular system, mounts the hill from Karaköy to Tünel Meydanı and İstiklal Caddesi (€0.50, from 7am to 9pm).

A funicular railway also runs from the Bosphorus shore at Kabataş up the hill to Taksim Sq every three minutes for €0.65.

Light Rail Transit (LRT)

A LRT service connects Aksaray with the airport, stopping at 16 stations including the

otogar along the way. Services depart 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, and we still hear stories of rigged machines). A trip from Sultanahmet to Taksim Sq costs around €5.

Train

To get to Sirkeci station, 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 30 minutes).

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 from Kabataş, via Eminönü and Sultanahmet, to Zeytinburnu (from where you can catch the LRT to Atatürk international airport). Tickets cost €0.65.

AROUND İSTANBUL

Since İstanbul is such a vast city, few places are within easy day-trip reach. However, if you make an early start it's possible to see Edirne in Thrace (Trakya), the only bit of Turkey that is geographically within Europe. The fast ferry link means that you can also just about make Bursa and back in a day, although it's much better to plan an overnight stay.

EDİRNE

☎ 0284 / pop 120,000

Edirne is a surprisingly pleasant, under-visited town with several fine old buildings from its brief time as capital of the Ottoman Empire. If you're passing through, have a look at the **Üçşerefeli Cami**, the **Eski Cami** and especially the **Selimiye Camii**, considered by some as architect Mimar Sinan's finest work. It's worth taking the walk out to visit the impressive **Bayazıt II complex**, on the outskirts of town. The award-winning **Health Museum** (admission €2; ☎ 9am-6pm) inside provides a fascinating glimpse of Ottoman medicine.

Come in late June for the famous **Historic Kırkpınar Oil-Wrestling Festival** (www.kirkpinar.com). At this time you'll need to wrestle yourself to find somewhere to stay, but the **Tuna Hotel** (☎ 214 3340; Maarif Caddesi 17; s/d/tr/q €19.50/28/36/42; ☎), open year-round, is a friendly, neat option.

Frequent buses run to İstanbul (€8, 2½ hours) and Çanakkale (€11, 3½ hours).

BURSA

☎ 0224 / pop 1.2 million

Sprawling at the base of Uludağ, Turkey's biggest winter-sports centre, Bursa was the original centre of the Ottoman Empire. It retains several fine mosques from those days, as well as some popular thermal springs in the suburb of Çekirge.

The city centre is along Atatürk Caddesi, with the Ulu Cami (Grand Mosque) to the west and the main square, Cumhuriyet Alanı (commonly called Heykel), to the east. The *otogar* is 10km north of the centre. Çekirge is about 6km west of Heykel. The **tourist office** (☎ 220 1848; ☎ 8am-noon & 1-5pm Mon-Fri) is beneath Atatürk Caddesi, in the row of shops at the northern entrance to Orhan Gazi Alt Geçidi. For internet access, try **Discover Internet Centre** (Taşkapı Caddesi; per hr €0.70; ☎ 9am-midnight).

Sights & Activities

The largest of Bursa's lovely mosques is the 20-domed **Ulu Cami** (Grand Mosque; Atatürk Caddesi), built in 1399 in the traditional Seljuk style. Northeast of Ulu Cami is the **bedesten** (covered bazaar). The **Koza Han** (Silk Cocoon Market) here is worth wandering through, too.

On the western side of town, Timurtaş Paşa Park holds the **tombs** of Osman Gazi and his son Orhan Gazi, the founders of the Ottoman Empire.

The state-of-the-art **City Museum** (admission €0.85; ☎ 9.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6.30pm Sat & Sun) has some interesting cultural and ethnographical collections, though the lack of English signage can be inconvenient.

East of Heykel, the **Yeşil Cami** (Green Mosque; Emir Sultan Caddesi) is widely considered Bursa's finest building, marking the transition from Seljuk to true Ottoman architecture.

In Bursa, Şinasi Çelikkol has worked hard to keep the tradition of Karagöz puppetry alive and was instrumental in the setting up of the **Karagöz Art House** (Çekirge Caddesi; ☎ 233 8429; admission €5; ☎ shows 11am Wed & Sat, 7.30pm Fri).

Sleeping & Eating

The centre of town has a motley bunch of places to stay. You're better off forking out a bit more and staying in Çekirge, where you'll also get free mineral baths.

Hotel Güneş (☎ 222 1404; otelgunes@yahoo.com; Inebay Caddesi 75; s/d/tr/q with shared bathroom €13/23/25/34) In a restored Ottoman house, the friendly family-run Güneş is Bursa's best budget pension.

Hotel Efehan (☎ 225 2260; www.efehan.com.tr; Gümüşceken Caddesi 34; s/d €31/48) Revelling in a spot of modern style with plenty of marble, the Efehan has all-round appeal and is definitely good value for the central location.

Hotel Gönülferah (☎ 233 9210; www.gonulferahhotel.com; İ. Murat Caddesi 24, Çekirge; s/d €100/150; ☎) This stunner has flat-screen TVs, gorgeous valley views and full spa service. Rates can come down 50% in low season.

Bursa was the birthplace of the delicious *İskender kebab*. For an evening of seafood and drinks, head straight for Sakarya Caddesi, off Altıparmak Caddesi. **Arap Şükrü Yılmaz** (Sakarya Caddesi 4; ☎ 11am-11pm) is reliably popular.

Kebabçı İskender (☎ 221 4615; Ünlü Caddesi 7; mains €4-16.50; ☎ 10am-10pm) This legendary kebab shop dates back to 1867 and its owners claim to be descendants of İskender Usta himself. Prices are a bit steep, but worth it.

Getting There & Around

The fastest way to get to İstanbul is to take a bus to Yalova (€3.50, every 30 minutes), then the **İDO fast ferry** (www.ido.com.tr) to İstanbul's Yenikapı docks. Get a bus that departs Bursa's *otogar* at least 90 minutes before the scheduled boat departure.

There are also regular direct buses to İstanbul (€8.50, 2½ to three hours); those designated *feribot ile* (by ferry) are quicker and much more pleasant than the *karayolu ile* (by road) services.

There are no *servis* (shuttle service to *otogar*) buses between the *otogar* and the centre; take the normal city bus 38 (€0.85, 45 minutes).

THE AEGEAN COAST

Turkey's Aegean coast can convincingly claim more ancient ruins per square kilometre than any other region in the world. Since time immemorial, conquerors, traders and travellers have beaten a path to the mighty monuments,

and few leave disappointed. Here you'll see the famous ruins of Troy, Ephesus and Pergamum (Bergama), and here you can contemplate the devastation of war at the battlefield sites of Gallipoli.

GALLIPLI

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 (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.hasslefree-tour.com; €27) or **Troy-Anzac Tours** (☎ 0286-217 5849; www.troy-anzac.com; €23). If you're less pressed, it's cheaper to take a ferry from Çanakkale to Eceabat and a *dolmuş* (shared taxi) to Kabatepe, 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 €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 is enough to do in the town of Çanakkale itself to keep you busy between tours, although it can get pretty crowded on summer weekends and particularly around Anzac Day. The **tourist office** (☎ 217 1187; ☎ 8am-noon & 1-7pm Mon-Fri) is located by the harbour, and you can access the internet at **Maxi Internet** (Fetvane Sokak 51; per hr €0.55; ☎ 10am-1am).

Sights

Built by Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror in 1452, the **Ottoman castle** at the southern end of the waterfront now houses the **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 (p826). Unfortunately many of the rooms are not much more than cupboards.

Hotel Kervansaray (☎ 217 8192; www.hotelkervansaray.org; Fetvane Sokak 13; s/d/tr €25/45/62; ☎ ☑) Now that it's finally open, Çanakkale's first real boutique hotel is as lovely as you could hope, laying on plenty of Ottoman touches in keeping with the restored pasha's (governor's) house it occupies, even in the TV lounge.

Köy Evi (Yalı Caddesi 13; dishes €0.85-1.70; ☎ 8am-9pm) Proper home-cooking rules in this tiny shop, where you can watch local women in headscarves making *mantı*, *börek* (filled pastry).

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.

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

Excavations illustrate parts of nine successive cities built on this site: Troy I goes right back to the Bronze Age; legendary Troy could be Troy VI or VII; and most of the visible ruins are Roman ones from Troy IX. Unless you're well up on archaeological matters, it's worth taking a guided tour from Çanakkale (around €15) to get the most out of a visit here.

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

BEHRAMKALE & ASSOS

☎ 0286 / pop 600

Behramkale, 19km southwest of Ayvaci, is a beautiful, hilltop village with a rare pre-Ottoman **mosque** (without minaret) and the ruins of a **Temple of Athena** (admission €2.75; ☎ 8am-dusk) looking across the water to Lesvos in Greece. Two kilometres further on, on the other side of the hill, is a small *iskele* (port), packed with waterfront restaurants and several camp sites – this area is known as Assos. Both get overcrowded in summer, especially at weekends, so visit in low season if possible.

Remote, rustic and rather ramshackle, the best asset of 200-year old **Timur Pansiyon**

TOP FIVE R&R SPOTS

- In a treehouse hammock (p838), Olympos
- Steaming in Çemberlitaş Hamamı (p823), İstanbul
- Wetting the toes at Patara beach (p836)
- Doing blissfully nothing on a blue cruise (p836), Fethiye
- Tramping and camping Ihlara Valley (p849), Cappadocia

(☎ /fax 721 7449; timurpansiyon@yahoo.com; s/d €17/33; ☎ Apr-mid-Sep) is its fabulous setting above the village, right beside the temple, with gorgeous sea views out towards Lesvos. **Old Bridge House** (☎ 721 7426; www.assos.de/obh; dm €10, d €50-70, bungalow per person €15, camp site per tent €5; ☎ Mar-Nov, call otherwise; ☎ ☑), at the bottom of the hill, is an old travellers' favourite.

Regular buses run from Çanakkale (€3.50, one to 1½ hours) to Ayvaci, where you can pick up a *dolmuş* (which leaves when it's full) to Behramkale and Assos (€1.50, 20 minutes).

BERGAMA (PERGAMUM)

☎ 0232 / pop 58,500

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, leaving the extensive ruins that have made the site famous. The old centre is now a charming, old-fashioned town, deceptively isolated from the growing urban sprawl around it.

The **tourist office** (☎ 631 2851; İzzet Caddesi 54) is midway between the *otogar* and the market.

Sights

The **Acropolis** (admission €6; ☎ 8.30am-5pm), a wind-swept, hilltop site 6km from the city centre, is the part everyone comes to see, with its commanding location, reconstructed columns and spectacular sloping amphitheatre. You can follow the pretty path marked by dots down through the ruins to get back to town. The **Asclepion** (Temple of Asclepius; admission €6; ☎ 8.30am-5pm), 3.5km from the city centre, is the remains of a famous medical school with a library that rivalled that of Alexandria in Egypt. In

the centre itself, the **Red Basilica** (admission €3; ☎ 8.30am-5pm) is the crumbling remain 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, influenced by the Afrodisiyas school, which was known for its expressive features and lavish detailing.

Taxis charge €9 to the Acropolis, or €25 for a full tour of the sights, including waiting time.

Sleeping & Eating

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

Acropolis Guest House (☎ 631 2621; www.akropolisguesthouse.com; Kayalık Caddesi 5; s/d €20/49, f€44; ☎ ☑) This 150-year old stone house is the closest Bergama gets to boutique accommodation. Eight attractively decorated rooms surround a peaceful pool and garden.

Meydan Restaurant (İstiklal Meydanı; mains €2.50-3) Near the Basilica, Meydan's vine-shaded terrace is an engaging setting for a leisurely meal.

Getting There & Away

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

İZMİR

☎ 0232 / pop 2.5 million

Turkey's third-largest city, İzmir (once Smyrna) carpets the hills around the Bay of İzmir like concrete mould, with buildings as far as you can see in every direction. The city was the birthplace of Homer in about 700 BC and saw the final battle in Turkey's war for independence in 1922. İzmir is now the main transport hub for travel along the Aegean coast, but its sites are relatively minor and few people stick around here unless they have some spare time or crave some riviera sophistication.

Orientation & Information

Central İzmir is a confusing web of plazas, boulevards and side streets; get hold of a map pronto if you want to explore at all.

The key landmark of the inner centre is the Dokuz Eylül Meydanı roundabout, near Basmane train station. Southwest, Anafartalar Caddesi winds through the bazaar to the upscale waterfront at Konak. The Kordon (Atatürk Caddesi) runs northeast along the waterfront past Cumhuriyet Meydanı, the main PTT and plenty of luxury hotels. At the northern end is the Alsancak harbour district.

İzmir's flashy *otogar* is 6.5km northeast of the town centre. Internet access is available at **Yuk@rnet** (Kıbrıs Şehitleri Caddesi 68, Alsancak; per hr €0.80), and other information can be found at the **tourist office** (☎ 483 5117; Akdeniz Mahallesi 1344 Sokak 2).

Sights

Since most of old İzmir was destroyed by earthquakes, there's little to see here. Those who do stick around could check out the ruins of the extensive 2nd-century 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.

İzmir's interesting **Archaeology Museum** and even better **Ethnography Museum** (admission €2.50; ☎ 8am-5pm Tue-Sun) are a short, unsigned walk up the hill from Konak along Anafartalar Caddesi and Millikütüphane Caddesi. The newly opened **Museum of History & Art** (admission €2.75; ☎ 8am-5pm Tue-Sun) is in the Kültür Park.

Sleeping & Eating

Otel Hikmet (☎ 484 2672; 945 Sokak 26; s/d without shower €8/16, s/d with shower €11/22) 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.

Otel Antik Han (☎ 489 2750; www.nisanyan.com.tr; Anafartalar Caddesi 600; r/apt €40/65) One of İzmir's very few historical boutique hotels, it's set around a tranquil courtyard and is a world away from the hustle and bustle of the bazaar outside.

For bargain basement meals head down Anafartalar Caddesi towards the bazaar. The place to be seen on a summer's evening, but also atmospheric, romantic (if you're so inclined) and fun is the sea-facing Kordon. Kıbrısşehitleri Caddesi in trendy Alsancak has dozens of varied eateries as well.

Getting There & Away

AIR

There are regular flights with Turkish Airlines, Onur Air, Atlasjet and Sun Express to Istanbul (from €55, one hour) and other destinations.

BUS

There are plenty of bus companies that have ticket offices around Dokuz Eylül Meydanı or Gaziosmanpaşa Bulvarı. These companies usually provide a *servis* (free minibus) to the *otogar*. From İzmir there are frequent buses to Istanbul (€20, nine hours), Çeşme (€3.50, 1¼ hours), Selçuk (€4.40, one hour), Çanakkale (€14, six hours) and many other destinations.

Getting Around

TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

Frequent Havaş airport buses (€7, 30 minutes) leave from Gaziosmanpaşa Bulvarı, north of the Hilton, and from the airport (where they meet flights).

BOAT

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

ÇEŞME

☎ 0232 / pop 100,000

Popular with French tourists and İzmir families, Çeşme is very much a seasonal tourist town, though it's mainly used as a stopping-off point between Chios (Greece) and Turkey. If you're staying, it has a small **Genoese fortress**, a 16th-century **caravanserai** (now a hotel) and a choice of **boat excursions**. There's a decent beach 6km away at **Ilıca**.

The **tourist office** (☎ 712 6653; İskele Meydanı 6), ferry and bus ticket offices, banks with ATMs, restaurants and hotels are all within two blocks of Cumhuriyet Meydanı, the main square on the waterfront.

The family-run **Barnak Pansiyon** (☎ 712 6670; 3052 Sokak 58; s/d €17/33; ☎) has glorious vistas of the whole bay from the two terraces shared by six of the rooms – make sure you get one.

Ridvan Oteli (☎ 712 6336; ridvanotel@ttnet.net.tr; Cumhuriyet Meydanı 11; s/d €39/56; ☎) has smart rooms with balconies and sea views.

Tourist restaurants cluster around the main square. The Mediterranean-styled **Sahil Restau-**

rant (☎ 712 8294; Cumhuriyet Meydanı 12; mains €10-12), on the waterfront, is known for its fish.

Getting There & Away

Buses run at least every 45 minutes to İzmir, to both the main *otogar* (€4.45, two hours) and the smaller, western Üçkuyular terminal (€4.15, 1¼ hours).

Ferries run between Çeşme and Chios (one way/return €25/40) five days a week in summer, and twice weekly in winter.

SELÇUK

☎ 0232 / pop 25,100

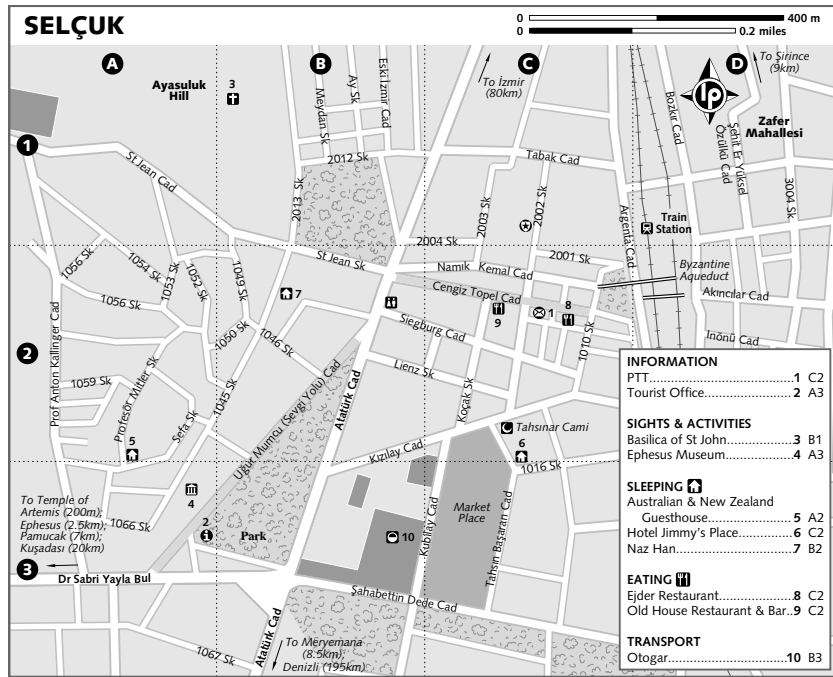
An excellent museum, a fine old basilica and mosque, a stork's nest-studded aqueduct, dozens of pleasant, small pensions and the ruins of Ephesus on its doorstep – Selçuk really does seem to have it all. These days the town more or less lives on the proceeds of tourism, albeit of the smaller-scale, independent-traveller 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 audio guide with brain-addling 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 (Sevgi Yolu) 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 have been built over the apostle's tomb. Between Ephesus and Selçuk, the fabulous ruins of the **Temple of Artemis** (admission free; ☎ 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.artermis.guesthouse.com; 1016 Sokak 19; s €14-19, d €17-25, deluxe 1-3 people €39; ☎ ☎ ☎) The friendly Turkish-Australian couple who run this hotel claim to know 'what travellers want'. They do: there's a pool, a terrific, Turkey-focused '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 shared bathroom €11, with private bathroom €19-22; ☎ ☎ ☎) This sociable multi-level backpacker favourite has plenty of communal space and good facilities, including movie nights and BBQs.

Naz Han (☎ 892.8731; 1044 Sokak 2; nazhanhotel@gmail.com; r €50-67; ☎ ☎) Hidden away behind high walls like a precious jewel, this 100-year old Greek house offers five simple but comfortable rooms around a cosy, enchanting courtyard.

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). **Dolmuş** (€2.25, one hour) to Aydın leave every 40 minutes from Selçuk. **Dolmuş** run to Kuşadası every twenty minutes (€1.65, 30 minutes) and Pamucak (€1.10, 10 minutes, 7km).

KUŞADASI

☎ 0256 / pop 50,000

Kuşadası is an unabashed resort town, with everything that entails, and is effectively the start of Turkey's coastal package-holiday strip – many independent travellers just dash through to catch a boat out to Samos (Greece). If you do decide to hang around, visit the **tourist office** (☎ 614 1103; İskele Meydanı, Liman Caddesi; ☎ 8am-12pm & 1-5pm Mon-Fri) to get you started. If you're up for a big, messy night out, though, you can practically guarantee it on Bar St. Internet is available at the **B@h@ane Internet Café** (Öge Sokak 4/A; per hr €1.40).

Sights & Activities

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; they're open from 8.30am to 6.30pm in the summer months. If you're pushed for time, a tour of the ancient cities from the *otogar* costs around €20.

Sleeping & Eating

Coming from the harbour, walk up Barbaros Hayrettin Caddesi, turn right and take Yıldırım Caddesi or Aslanlar Caddesi to reach most of the pensions and cheap hotels.

Anzax Golden Bed Pension (☎ 614 8708; www.kusadasihotels.com/goldenbed; Uğurlu 1 Çıkmazı 4; dm €8-11, s with shared bathroom €11, s with private bathroom €17-20, d with private bathroom €22-25; ☎ ☎ ☎) Bright, light and spotless, this pension's biggest attraction is its lovely terrace and its friendly owners. Find it off Aslanlar Caddesi.

Villa Konak (☎ 612 2170; www.villakonakhotel.com; Yıldırım Caddesi 55; s/d with half-board €47/62; ☎ ☎ ☎) Hidden away from the hubbub in the old quarter of town is the Villa Konak, a restored 140-year-old stone house. Rooms, simple but attractively done with the odd Orientalist flourish, are arranged around a large and rambling courtyard-garden.

Avlu (☎ 614 7995; Cephane Sokak 15; stews €1.40-1.95; ☎ 8am-midnight) Hidden in the old town amid a maze of streets, this *lokanta* is well worth seek-

ing out. It offers first-class home-cooking in a clean and cheerful environment at unbeatable prices, and with free coffee and tea.

If you don't fancy paying €12 for fish and chips or roast beef and Yorkshires, there are plenty of cheaper Turkish options in the Kaleiçi district, behind the harbour.

Drinking & Entertainment

Bar St (Barlar Sokak) is Kuşadası's tourist-bar strip, crammed with the kind of crass noisy dives you wouldn't be seen dead in back home. Chances are you'll end up in Jimmy's Irish Bar at some point; if you can escape, head for Kaleiçi, where you'll find several charming café-bars and proper Turkish clubs such as **Another Bar** (Tuna Sokak 10).

Getting There & Away

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

At the spa town of Pamukkale, the unique formations of travertine shelves, pools and stalactites, hugging the ridge above town like a white scar, were created by the area's warm mineral water, which cools as it cascades over the cliff edge and deposits its calcium. It's a strange piece of landscape unlike anything else you'll see in Turkey, and now appears on the Unesco World Heritage list. Long before Unesco, the Romans recognised the appeal of the site and built a large spa city, Hierapolis, to take advantage of the water's curative powers.

Sights & Activities

As you climb the hill above Pamukkale village you pay to enter the **travertines** and **Hierapolis** (admission €2.80; ☎ 24hr). The ruins of Hierapolis, including a theatre, a colonnaded street with

public toilet and a vast necropolis, are very spread out; allow at least half a day to 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-12.30 & 1.30-7.15pm), which contains some spectacular sarcophagi and friezes from Hierapolis and the nearby ruins of Afrosodias.

Sleeping & Eating

Over 60 pensions and hotels lurk below the travertines in Pamukkale village. Eating at your accommodation is usually the best idea – most places have poolside terraces.

Kervansaray Pension (☎ 272 2209; kervansaray2@superonline.com.tr; İnönü Caddesi; s/d €10/15; 🍷 🍷 🍷) This popular travellers' hangout has a good reputation for cheerful service and decent rooms.

Venüs Pension (☎ 272 2152; www.venusotel.net; Hasan Tahsin Caddesi; s/d/tr €8.50/17/25; 🍷 🍷 🍷) Our personal favourite right now, this lovely pink house is run by a very friendly young Turkish-Australian couple. Home-cooked food and a nice terrace and lounge add to the appeal.

Koray Otel (☎ 272 2300; www.hotelkoray.com; Fevzi Çakmak Caddesi 27; s/d €23/34; 🍷 🍷) Another traveller-friendly establishment in much the same mould as Venüs. Rooms here are nicer and tour services are available.

Of Pamukkale's restaurants, **Kayaş Wine House** (Atatürk Caddesi 3; mains €3.50-7.50; ☎ from noon) is the best option.

Getting There & Around

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 hardcore resort territory, riddled with (mainly British) tourists every summer. Luckily the town has resisted rampant modernisation and retains charm in the winding streets of its old town and bazaar area; only the pricey restaurants and the per-

sistent bass beats from waterfront clubs belie the illusion of a fishing-village lifestyle.

Orientation & Information

The Adliye Camii, a small mosque on the castle promontory, marks the centre, separating the town's two main bays. The *otogar* is 400m inland, along Cevat Şakir Caddesi. Check out the **tourist office** (☎ 316 1091; Kale Meydanı; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, daily summer), or for internet access head to the **Cybernet Internet Café** (Üçkuyular Caddesi 7).

Sights & Activities

You'll see the **Castle of St Peter** on just about every brochure, postcard and flyer in Bodrum, and it's still an essential stop as well as a scenic asset. Built in 1402 and rebuilt in 1522 by the Crusaders, the castle houses the superb **Museum of Underwater Archaeology** (admission €5.55; ☎ 9am-noon & 1-7pm Tue-Sun summer, 8am-noon & 1-5pm winter), containing finds from the 14th-century *BC Uluburun*, the oldest excavated shipwreck in the world, and a model of a Carian princess's **tomb** (admission €2.75; ☎ 10am-noon & 2-4pm Tue-Fri).

Westward past the marina and over the hill, **Gümbet** has a nicer beach than Bodrum but is full of package-holiday visitors. You'll probably prefer the less-developed **Ortakent**. To the west of the Bodrum peninsula, **Gümüşlük** is the least spoilt of the many smaller villages nearby. Half-hourly *dolmuşes* run there (€1.40, 30 to 40 minutes).

Although there's little left of the **Mausoleum** (Turgutreis Caddesi; admission €2.75; ☎ 8am-5pm Tue-Sun), it's still worth visiting. This was the monumental tomb of King Mausolus, which made the city famous and was once among the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

With its good visibility (up to 20m or 25m on a good day), 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 for information.

Sleeping

The narrow streets around the harbour have plenty of pensions, though few places stay open out of season, and breakfast, air con and other 'extras' are seldom included in the price. The western bay tends to be quieter as it's further from the main bars and clubs.

Bodrum Backpackers (☎ 313 2762; Atatürk Caddesi 31B; www.bodrumbackpackers.com; dm/s/d €8/11/22, mattress & bedding on terrace with/without breakfast €3.35/5.55; 🍷) Founded by a former backpacker, this clean and well-run place now caters to them. With a pleasant and chilled-out roof terrace, it can also organise boat trips, airport pick-up and car hire.

Sevin Pansiyon (☎ 316 7682; sevinpansiyon@hotmail.com; Türküyusu Caddesi 5; s €19-22, d €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. It stays open in winter, when prices decrease by almost half.

Baç Pansiyon (☎ 316 2497; bacpansiyon@turk.net; Cumhuriyet Caddesi 14; s €28-33, d €44-50, per person extra €10) Small but stylish and all in marble, wood and wrought-iron, this centrally-situated hotel also boasts about the best hotel views in Bodrum.

Su Otel (☎ 316 6906; www.suhotel.net; Turgutreis Caddesi, 1201 Sokak; s/d €45/72; 🍷 🍷) Decked out in bright primary colours, this is a friendly, comfy home away from home, with two holiday cottages (from €105 for up to three people) sleeping up to eight people. Book in advance.

Eating & Drinking

The small streets east of the Adliye Camii harbour have several cheap eateries where you can grab a *döner* for less than €3. Otherwise, continue east to Kilise Meydanı, a plaza filled with open-air restaurants. More substantial soirées can be had at lively Meyhaneler Sokak (Taverna St), off İskele Caddesi, or among the many fish restaurants lining the eastern bay. Check all fish prices before ordering.

Nazik Ana (☎ 313 1891; Eski Hükümet Sokak 7; veg/meat mains €1.40/2.25; ☎ 9am-10pm, closed Sun winter) Housed in an attractive 100-year-old stone house, this simple but atmospheric place is a huge hit with locals.

Berk Balık Restaurant (☎ 313 6878; Cumhuriyet Caddesi 167; meze €2.25, all fish per kg €20; ☎ noon-1am) Run by a group of friends, this restaurant specialises in fish and seafood, served on a terrific upstairs terrace that buzzes like a village taverna.

Nargileh (water pipe) fans should try the **Old Café** (Cumhuriyet Caddesi) for a post-prandial puff, while no dedicated clubber should miss out on the mighty **Halikarnas** (www.halikarnas

.com.tr; Cumhuriyet Caddesi; admission weekday/weekend €17/20; ☎ 10pm-5am 18 May-31 Oct). With top-quality sound-and-light equipment (including two Class IV lasers you can see in Greece), it's an extraordinary experience particularly when at capacity (5000 people).

Getting There & Away

Bodrum airport is actually nearer to Milas; Havaş buses run there and back according to departure times (€7.25, 45 minutes). The taxi fare is around €40.

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

THE MEDITERRANEAN COAST

Turkey's Mediterranean coastline winds eastward for more than 1200km from Marmaris to Antakya on the Syrian border. From Marmaris to Fethiye the stunning 'Turquoise Coast' is perfect for boat excursions and dotted with secluded coves for swimming. The rugged peninsula between Fethiye and Antalya, and the Taurus Mountains east of Antalya, are wild and beautiful.

Further east, after Alanya, holiday traffic starts to thin out, and by the time you reach the Syrian border there's barely a resort in sight. If you want to get the best of the summer Med without the crowds, this is a great stretch of coast to trawl along, with some of Turkey's lesser-known sights (particularly castles) and cities providing pit stops along the way.

Best of all is the region's seamless mix of history and holiday. A stroll at midnight along a beach in Olympos or Patara will suddenly send you back thousands of years as you pass a Lycian tomb or a tremendous Corinthian temple.

MARMARIS

☎ 0252 / pop 35,000

The once-sleepy fishing village of Marmaris sits on the marvellous natural harbour. The setting may still be glorious but the picturesque old part of town is now all but lost in concrete sprawl. But, to its credit, the town council has woken up and the harbourside promenade now boasts some handsome, albeit modern, stone buildings. If it's a last night out, a boat cruise or a ferry to Greece you're after, this is the place. Also, the rugged coastline around Marmaris is an undiscovered gem. When you need to escape, hire a car or motorcycle and cruise around the rugged Reşadiye and Hisarönü Peninsulas.

Orientation & Information

İskele 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 **tourist office** (☎ 412 1035; İskele Meydanı 2; ☎ 8am-noon & 1-5pm Mon-Fri, daily Jun-mid-Sep) is right near the castle. **Internet C@fe** (Atatürk Caddesi, Huzur Apt 30; per hr €2.20) provides internet access. The *otogar* is 3km north of town.

Sights & Activities

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

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

Sleeping

Unlike Kuşadası and Bodrum, Marmaris lacks a network of small, welcoming pensions. Indeed, almost all the budget places have been squeezed out by the package-holiday market, and the survivors are often noisy and uninspiring. For the cheapest accommodation stroll along the waterfront and turn inland just past Abdi İpekçi Park.

Interyouth Hostel (☎ 412 3687; interyouth@turk.net; 42 Sokak 45; dm & s with shared bathroom €7, 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.

Ayçe 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 a one-star price.

Hotel Begonya (☎ 412 4095; 39 Sokak 101; d €34; 🚻) If it wasn't right on Bar St this walled pension would be a perfect rustic retreat. As it is, you'll need the earplugs on offer to sleep, but the plant-crammed courtyard is perfect for al-fresco lazing during the day.

Royal Maris Otel (☎ 412 8383; www.royalmarisotel.com; Atatürk Caddesi 34; s €22-50, d €39-83; 🚻 🚿) Comfortable and stylish, this great-value hotel offers two pools, a private beach, a *hammam* and a fitness centre. The views from some rooms and from the roof terrace are stunning.

Eating & Drinking

If you're planning a feast of fish, be sure to ask about prices before ordering, particularly on the waterfront. For something cheap and cheerful, try the bazaar area between the post office and the mosque, the old town area around the castle where there's a host of small, Turkish restaurants, and along 39 Sokak (Bar St), where stalls cater to the ravenous late-night revellers.

Meryem Ana (☎ 412 7855; 35 Sokak 62; mains €2-6) A firm family affair, look out for the mother and aunt hard at work in the kitchen stuffing vine leaves. It has an excellent reputation locally and is a good choice for veggies too (a large mixed plate of many dishes costs €5).

Bars currently 'in' include the ever popular **Back Street** (☎ 412 4048; 39 Sokak 93) and a close second is **Areana** (☎ 412 2906; 39 Sokak 54; beer €4.45), with its large dance floor, elevated bar and high-quality lasers. The **Panorama Bar** (☎ 413 4835; Hacı İmam Sokağı 40; beer €2.75) is more of a permanent fixture and less of a club. It's off 30 Sokak.

Getting There & Away

The nearest airports are Bodrum (see p833) and Dalaman, 120km east of Marmaris. The Havaş shuttle to Dalaman costs €3.

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

DALYAN

☎ 0252 / pop 5000

Independent travellers may have trouble knowing what to make of Dalyan – in summer the crowds, facilities and coloured lights (even on the mosque) virtually scream 'tourist trap'. However, the setting, right on the Dalyan River and overlooked by Lycian rock tombs, is so perfect it's hard to write it 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 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.

Sleeping & Eating

Çınar Sahil Pension (☎ 284 2402; www.cinarsahilpansiyon.com; Yalı Sokak 14; s/d €17/28) Rooms are simple and spotless, but the big boon here is the central location and the roof terrace with possibly the best views in Dalyan.

Sultan Palas Hotel (☎ 284 2103; www.sultanpalasdalyan.co.uk; Horozlar Mevkii; s/d €44/73) With rooms set in a luscious garden full of fruit trees and a gorgeous pool, Sultan Palas is truly a heavenly haven. To get here, catch one of the five daily boat shuttles from town or call the hotel.

Metin Pide & Pizza (☎ 284 2877; Sulunger Sokak 3/B; ☎ 8.30am-9.30pm winter, 8.30am-midnight summer) Hugely popular for its delicious *pide* (€1.40 to €2.20) and pizza (€2.75 to €5), this is a family affair with all members helping out.

Riverside Restaurant (☎ 284 3166; Sağlık Sokak 7; meze €3-8, 450g fish €9-11; ☎ 8.30am-midnight) Dalyan's best fish restaurant.

Several readers have complained of overcharging in Dalyan's restaurants. Be sure to

check prices before ordering (particularly fish), as well as your bill afterwards. For a drink, head for the point on Maraş Caddesi where it widens slightly. Bars are cheek-by-jowl; choose the most popular one that evening.

Getting There & Away

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 is much more geared towards independent travellers than the wholesale resort towns such as Marmaris, although it still gets very hot and crowded in summer. The picture-perfect harbour and mountain backdrop are pretty irresistible at any time, and the town also makes a good base for visiting the beautiful **Saklık Gorge** and the ruins at **Tlos** and **Pınara**.

Orientation & Information

Fethiye's busy *otogar* is 2.5km east of the town centre, with a separate station for minibuses 1km east of the centre. *Dolmuşes* 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; İskele 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**: 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 Saklık Gorge Tour (€22), and the Dalyan Tour (€22).

Fethiye is also the starting (or finishing) point for the 500km **Lycian Way** (see p840), a superb, scenic walking trail along the coast.

BLUE CRUISE

Fethiye is the hub of Turkey's cruising scene, dispatching dozens of yachts on a daily basis in summer. The most popular voyage is the 'Blue Cruise' to Kale (near Olympos), a four-day, three-night route that attracts more than its share of young party animals. You can also continue as far as Antalya, or head in the opposite direction towards Marmaris – many people argue this is actually a finer stretch of coast.

For more ambitious trips you can charter the whole boat yourself, with or without crew, and set off wherever the fancy takes you. Fethiye, Kaş and Marmaris are all good starting points.

Make sure you shop around for a service that suits – there are many shoddy operators working the waters and your wallet. Recommended operators include **Almila Boat Cruise** (☎ 0535-636 0076; www.beforelunch.com), **Big Backpackers** (☎ 0252-614 9312; www.bluecruiseftethiye.com) and **Olympos Yachting** (☎ 0242 892 1145; www.olymposyachting.com).

Dolmuşes 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 *dolmuşes* 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 €5.50, s/d €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; ☺ ☑) This is the new kid on the block and worth checking out.

Villa Daffodil (☎ 614 9595; www.villadaffodil.com; Fevzi Çakmak Caddesi 115; s/d €25/42; ☺ ☑) This large, Ottoman-designed guesthouse boasts a decent-sized pool, a lovely dining terrace with gorgeous views, and comfortable and homely rooms (all with balcony; eight with direct sea views).

Meğri Lokantasi (☎ 614 4047; Çarşı Caddesi 26; mains €5.55-14) Packed with locals who spill onto the streets, the Meğri does excellent and hearty home-style cooking at very palatable prices.

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 with locals.

Fethiye's bars and nightclubs are mostly clustered on one little street, Hamam Sokak, just off İskele Meydanı. Ottoman Dancing Bar is a longtime favourite.

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 centre.

The 'blue cruise' (see boxed text, p836) 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 is usually €84 to €150 for Fethiye and €150 for Marmaris per person.

PATARA

☎ 0242

Patara's main claim to fame is its simply splendid 20km-long beach, one of Turkey's best – it's also a turtle breeding ground, so

most of the sandy expanse is out of bounds between 8pm and 8am in summer. Just as enticing is the extensive overgrown **ruined city** (admission €8) close by.

Patara is also a good base for visiting two of Turkey's superb Unesco-listed World Heritage sites. The **Letoön** (admission €1.75), off the Fethiye–Antalya highway near Kumluova, boasts excellent mosaics, a good amphitheatre and a sacred pool used in the worship of the goddess Leto. A few kilometres southeast, **Xanthos** (admission €1.75), with its Roman theatre and Lycian pillar tombs, is among the most impressive sites along this part of the coast, even though many of its best sculptures are now in the British Museum in London.

Sleeping & Eating

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; ☺) Rooms here are clean, homely and hung with traditional rugs, plus they have lovely views from their balconies.

Patara View Point Hotel (☎ 843 5184; www.pataraviewpoint.com; s/d €20/33; ☺ Apr–Oct; ☺ ☑ ☑) Off the main road so more tranquil than most, the Patara boasts an Ottoman-style cushioned terrace and rooms with lovely views over the valley.

Bread & Water (☎ 843 5080; mains €7-9) Styled like a wood cabin with a pretty terrace, the restaurant dishes up delicious 'Turkish fare with a modern European twist'.

Getting There & Away

Buses on the Fethiye–Kaş route drop you on the highway 4km from the village. From here *dolmuşes* run to the village every 45 minutes.

Three to four minibuses run to Fethiye (€3.35), Kalkan (€2.75, 20 minutes) and Kaş (€4.15, 45 minutes).

KAŞ

☎ 0242 / pop 8000

Of all Turkey's popular coastal towns, Kaş has 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. The drive here is a treat, strewn with mountain views all the way from Fethiye. The **tourist office** (☎ 836 1238; ☺ 8am–noon & 1-7pm May–Oct, 8am–noon & 1-5pm

Nov–Apr) is on the main square, and internet access is available at **Net-Café** (Ibrahim Serin Caddesi 16/B; per hr €0.80).

Sights & Activities

Apart from enjoying the town's ambience, and the small pebble beaches, you can also walk west a few 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.

There are dozens of travel and tour outfits in Kaş just waiting to whisk you off diving, trekking, sailing and so on. Boat trips are the most popular excursions here: common routes 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.

Land-based day trips may take in Patara, Xanthos or the wonderful 18km-long **Saklıkent Gorge**, where you can eat trout on platforms over an icy-cold river.

Sleeping & Eating

Kaş's quietest places to stay are all found on the western side of town, rising in quality the nearer you get to the sea. Yenicami Caddesi, just south of the *otogar*, has lots of small, family-run pensions.

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

Otel Sardunya (☎ 836 3080; www.sardunyaotel.com; Necip Bey Caddesi 56; s/d €22/30.50; ☺) Set in a modern building, rooms are reasonably spacious, but the real boon is the verdant seashell-clad restaurant across the road and the sunbathing terrace with a swimming platform just below.

Kale Otel & Pension (☎ 836 4074; hotelkale@hotmail.com; Yeni Cami Caddesi 8; info@guletturkey.com; pension s/d €39/56, hotel s/d €56/77; ☺) Close to the theatre, this well-run hotel offers simple but pleasantly furnished rooms with balconies, many with gorgeous views over the water.

Kaş has a thriving restaurant scene. **Natural** (☎ 836 2834; Gürsöy Sokak 6; meals €7-10) provides a chance to sample Turkish cuisine at its brilliant best, with dishes cooked to old Ottoman recipes passed down from generation to generation. Also worth seeking out is **Hideaway**

Café & Bar (☎ 836 3369; Cumhuriyet Caddesi 16/A; meals around €6-11), an enchanting café-garden offering fresh fare made with the highest-quality local ingredients.

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

Getting There & Away

Midibuses (medium-sized buses) depart from Kaş's 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).

Ferries sail daily throughout the year for the Greek island of Meis (Kastellorizo) for €35 per person return (30 minutes).

OLYMPUS & CHIMAERA

☎ 0242
After climbing into the mountains, the switch-back coastal road reaches a turn-off marked for Olympos. From here it's just over 8km down a winding unpaved road to the village and a further 3.5km along an ever-worsening road to **ancient Olympos** (admission per day €1.10). Once a major port city, now it's a fantastically wild, abandoned place beloved of hippies and New Age types, with ruins peeking out from copses, outcrops and riverbanks. You also have to pay the admission fee to reach the extensive **beach**, although your ticket should be valid for at least two days.

Also known as Yanartaş or Burning Rock, the **Chimaera** is a cluster of flames that blaze spontaneously from crevices on the rocky slopes of Mt Olympos. This site is the stuff of legend and it's not difficult to see why ancient peoples attributed these extraordinary flames to the breath of a monster – part lion, part goat and part dragon. It's about a 7km walk from Olympos. From Çıralı, follow the road along the hillside marked for the Chimaera until you reach a valley and walk up to a car park. From there it's another 20- to 30-minute climb up a dirt track through the forest (bring a torch) to the site.

Sleeping & Eating

Most visitors come here to stay in the tree-house 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 €17; 🏠 🚰) The original treehouse camp that began it all, Kadir's just gets ever-larger, ever-quirkier and ever more fun, with a capacity now for 300.

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

If those don't sound like your thing, there are normal pensions and hotels at neighbouring Çıralı. **Myland Nature** (☎ 825 7044; www.mylandnature.com; s/d/tr €42/55/50/72; 🏠 🚰), run by a photographer, is an arty, laid-back place offering spotless bungalows set around a pretty garden. Across the road is **Arcadia Hotel** (☎ 825 7340; www.arcadiaholiday.com; d with half-board €99; 🏠 🚰), a step up with only four luxury bungalows.

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.

The nicest way to get from Olympos to Fethiye is on a cruise (see p836).

ANTALYA

☎ 0242 / pop 603,000
Situating directly on the Gulf of Antalya (Antalya Körfezi), this quickly growing epicentre of both ancient history and thoroughly modern Turkish culture has become known 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.

Orientation

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

Pebbly **Konyaaltı beach** spreads out to the west of town; sandy **Lara beach** to the east. Both are solidly back-dropped with package-holiday hotels.

Information

Merkez PTT (Kenan Evren Bulvarı) Postal services.

Natural Internet Café (☎ 8am-11pm)

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

Tourist office (☎ 241 1747; Yavuz Özcan Parkı)

Sights & Activities

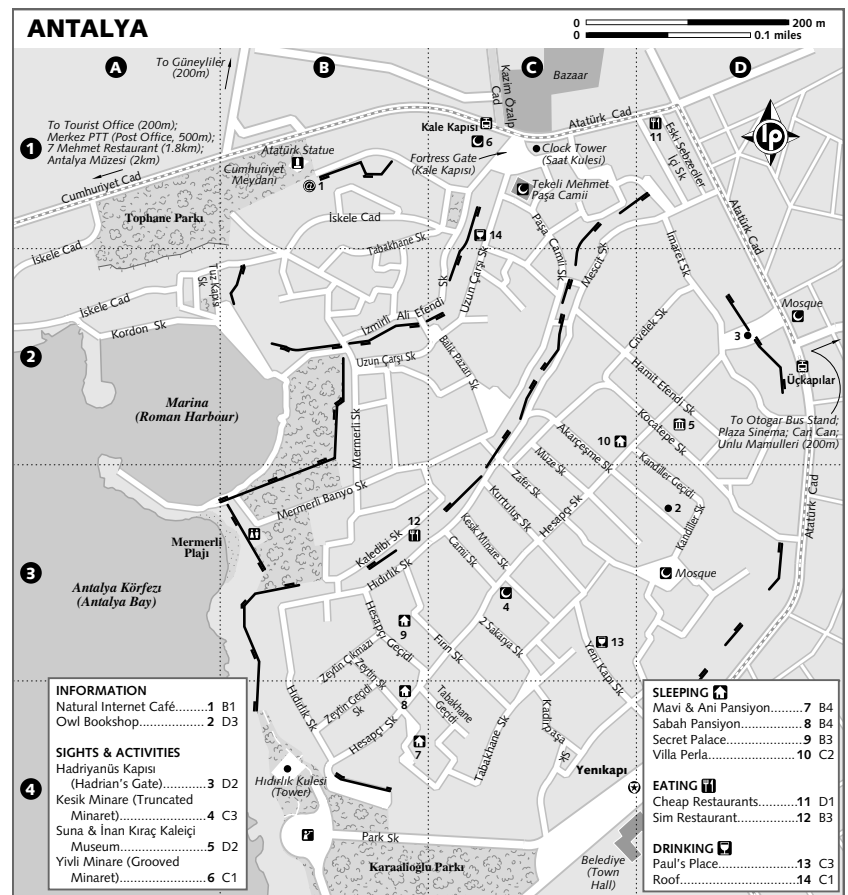
Antalya Müzesi (Cumhuriyet Caddesi; admission €6; ☎ 9am-7.30pm Tue-Sun) is about 2km west of the centre but houses spectacular finds from nearby Perge, Aspendos and Side – it's one of

Turkey's best museums. The *tramvay* (tram; €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. More impressive



are the Turkish ceramics next door in the former Greek Orthodox church of Aya Yorgo (St George).

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 cafés in **Tophane** or **Karaalioglu Park**.

Getting out of town, Antalya is a convenient base for both Turkey's national hiking routes, the **Lycian Way** and **St Paul's Trail** (see p850).

Sleeping

Although sleeping options are scattered throughout the city, the most welcoming pensions and small hotels are found in the old town of Kaleiçi, an almost vehicle-free district that is also the perfect base from which to explore Antalya's restaurants, nightlife and sights.

Sabah Pansiyon (☎ 247 5345; www.sabahpansiyon.8m.com; Hesapçı Sokak 60/A; dm €11, s/d with shared bathroom €14/19, s/d with private bathroom €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.mavian.com; Tabakhane Sokak 26; s/d €19/28) Something of an odd cross between a restored Ottoman house and Japanese *ryokan*, this pension has some rooms that sport a mattress laid directly atop raised wooden floors, and the common areas are decorated in Anatolian style.

Secret Palace (☎ 244 1060; Fırn Sokak 10A; s/d €33/44; 🚻 🚺) This lovely option offers an outdoor garden with orange and tangerine trees, and a restored, traditional Turkish house. The delightfully decorated 'oriental corner' is ideal for Turkish-tea sipping.

Villa Perla (☎ 248 9793; www.villaperla.com; Hesapçı Sokak 26; s/d €45/60; 🚻 🚺) Even the luxury Alp Paşa Hotel down the road might have trouble competing with Villa Perla's lovely courtyard, shaded by orange trees. The interior makes equally good use of quirky Ottoman artefacts.

Eating & Drinking

Many eating and drinking options are tucked in and around the harbour area; those perched over the bay command the highest prices. For a cheaper feed head inland to the packed restaurants along Eski Sebzeciler İçi Sokak, close to the junction of Cumhuriyet and Atatürk

Caddesi. 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.

Güneyliler (☎ 241 1117; Elmali Mahallesi 4 No 12; meals €5) This *very* reasonably priced, locally popular joint isn't much to look at, but the wood-fired *lahmacun* (Turkish-style pizza) and expertly grilled kebabs are so good, you'll likely find yourself returning again and again.

Sim Restaurant (☎ 248 0107; Kaledibi Sokak 7; mains €1.75-6) This is a touristy restaurant, but the out-of-the-way location makes for a much more 'authentic' experience. The outdoor seating puts you in the middle of the street life.

7 Mehmet Restaurant (☎ 238 5200; www.7mehmet.com; Atatürk Kültür Parkı 333; meals €11) One of Antalya's most highly regarded eateries, 7 Mehmet's spacious indoor and outdoor dining areas sit on the hillside overlooking Konyaaltı Plajı, the city and the bay.

Paul's Place (☎ 244 6894; www.stpaulcc-turkey.com; Yenikapı Sokak 24; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri) Right inside the St Paul Cultural Centre, this is an absolute god-send for the homesick: espresso drinks, real filter coffee and home-baked pastries are on offer.

Roof (Uzun Çarşı Sokak 36; admission €3) The strobe lights inside this cramped, 2nd-floor dance club are (frankly) nausea-inducing, but the music (banging techno and jungle) more than makes up for it.

Getting There & Away

Turkish Airlines, Atlasjet and Onur Air offer frequent flights to İstanbul from €55. The airport is 10km east of the city centre, the Havaş bus costs €5 (30 minutes), or a taxi costs about €10.

From the *otogar*, regular buses go to Olympos (€3, 1½ hours), Alanya (€5, 2½ hours), Konya (€7, six hours), Göreme (€17, 10 hours) and most of the other major destinations.

AROUND ANTALYA

Between Antalya and Alanya there are several spectacular Graeco-Roman ruins. **Pergé** (admission €6; ☎ 9am-7:30pm), east of Antalya near Aksu, boasts a 12,000-seat stadium and a 15,000-seat theatre. **Aspendos** (Belkis; admission €6, parking €2; ☎ 8am-7pm), 47km east of Antalya, has Turkey's best-preserved ancient theatre,

dating from the 2nd century AD and still used for performances during the Aspendos Festival every June/July. **Termessos** (admission €5; ☎ 8am-5:30pm), high in the mountains off the Korkuteli road to the west of Antalya, has a spectacular setting but demands some vigorous walking and climbing.

The **Köprülü Kanyon**, 96km northeast of Antalya, is a deservedly popular spot for white-water rafting. Numerous agencies in Antalya offer rafting trips for about €20 to €25 per person for a four- to five-hour raft, plus time for swimming.

ALANYA

☎ 0242 / pop 110,100

In 1427 Alanya was sold, in its entirety, for 5000 gold coins. The amount of development since then should have added at least a few doubloons to its value – with hundreds of tourist hotels and restaurants, the package-holiday industry practically owns the city, and independent travellers are a rarity. The main reason to stop by is to take in the ruins of the magnificent Seljuk castle.

Orientation & Information

The long-distance *otogar* is 3km west of the centre; to get into town take a bus (€0.20). Alanya's centre, such as it is, lies inland (north) from the promontory on which the castle walls sit. For information head to the **tourist office** (☎ 513 1240; Kalearkası Caddesi; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm), or **Café Pruva Internet** (☎ 519 2306; ☎ 8am-midnight) off Müftüler Caddesi, just south of Atatürk Caddesi.

Sights & Activities

Perched high above the frolicking sun-seekers, Alanya's **Seljuk castle** (admission €3; ☎ 9am-7:15pm) was built in 1226 under the reign of Alaeddin Keykubad I and still has some functioning buildings inside the massive walls. Take a bus or taxi up and then stroll back down to take advantage of the views. Several natural **caves** in the hill below can also be visited; the humidity is reputedly good for asthma sufferers.

The octagonal **Kızıl Kule** (Red Tower; admission €1; ☎ 9am-7:30pm Tue-Sun), down by the harbour, was also built in the year 1226. Alanya's small **museum** (☎ 513 1228; Bebek Sokak; admission €1; ☎ 9am-noon & 1:30-7:30pm) is worth a visit too.

There are good **beaches** to the east and west, but they're solidly backed with high-rise hotels.

Sleeping & Eating

Sadly, most of Alanya's cheap pensions have given way to package resorts, and only a couple of places linger on in noise-ridden İskele Caddesi, above the harbour. On the plus side, in the tourist hotels you might pay as little as half the advertised prices out of season.

Otel Temiz (☎ 513 1016; İskele Caddesi 12; s/d €28/44; 🚻 🚺) This viable budget-ish option has rooms with TVs, minibars, balconies and perfectly clean bathrooms.

Club Hotel Bedesten (☎ 512 1234; bedestenhotel@hotmail.com; s/d €36/61; 🚻 🚺) High above the city in the old Turkish village of Ehmedek, and just down the road from Seljuk castle, this creatively designed hotel was built right on the site of an old Ottoman covered market.

For a cheap bite you'll have to head inland, towards the bazaar. Otherwise, the densely packed waterfront restaurants have the best range of evening meals. If you feel like a special meal take your tastebuds to the old-fashioned **Ottoman House Restaurant** (☎ 511 1421; Damlatas Caddesi 31; €15-20), one of Turkey's finest eateries.

There's no shortage of bars and clubs amid the seafood restaurants. Try **Robin Hood** (☎ 535 7923; Rıhtım Caddesi 24; ☎ 9pm-3am), supposedly the biggest club in Alanya, with (you guessed it) a Sherwood Forest theme.

Getting There & Away

There are frequent buses west via Antalya (€5, two hours) and east to Adana (€12, 10 hours) and Antakya (€17, 1½ hours).

There are services to Girne (Kyrenia) in Northern Cyprus from Alanya harbour, operated by **Ferğün Denizcilik** (☎ 511 5565, 511 5358; www.fergun.net; İskele Caddesi 84).

ANAMUR

☎ 0324 / pop 50,000

There's nothing special about the service town of Anamur, but it's well worth making a stop here on your way through for the ruined Byzantine city of **Anemurium** (admission €1; ☎ 8am-8pm), 8.5km west of the town. A number of buildings are still identifiable and the occasional fragmented mosaic pokes through the topsoil. About 7km on the other side of town is the biggest and best-preserved castle on both the eastern and western Mediterranean coasts, the **Mamure Castle** (Mamure Kalesi; admission €1.50; ☎ 8am-6pm). It still retains all its original 36 towers.

If you get stuck overnight, good options are the **Eser Pansiyon** (☎ 814 2322; www.eserpansiyon.com; İnönü Caddesi 6; s/d/tr €14/22/28; 🚽 📺), and **Hotel Bella** (☎ 816 4751; bilgi@eserpansiyon.com; Kursat Caddesi 5; s/d/tr €17/28/36; 🚽), operated by the same owner.

A bus from Alanya will cost you €8 (three hours).

SILIFKE

☎ 0324 / pop 85,100

Larger than Anamur but just as unassuming, Silifke is in the throes of some extensive development. Stop over here to visit the medieval **fortress** (admission free), with its gateless walls and ancient rock-carved cistern, and the ruined Roman **temple of Jupiter** (admission free). The stone **bridge** over the Göksu River holds an interesting place in local folklore, worth investigating for fans of the bizarre.

Buses depart for Adana along the highway east from Silifke (€7, two hours) about every hour throughout the morning and afternoon and will stop to pick up those who've been visiting the archaeological sites east of town.

From **Taşucu**, 11km southwest, boats and hydrofoils depart for Girne (Kyrenia) in Northern Cyprus (see p854).

KIZKALESİ

☎ 0324

'Maiden's Castle' is a growing holiday resort named for the astounding **Byzantine castle** offshore, which looks from a distance as if it's suspended on top of the water. Unless you're up to swimming 200m, you'll need to take a boat (€3) to get out and see it. The ruins of a **Korykos Castle** (admission €1) are on the shore itself; the two were once linked by a causeway, a very unusual defensive play.

Yaka Hotel (☎ 523 2444; yakahotel@yakahotel.com; s/d €17/28; 🚽) is an excellent choice if you are staying. There are frequent buses to Silifke (€1, 30 minutes).

TARSUS

☎ 0324 / pop 216,000

The birthplace of St Paul doesn't offer much for budding pilgrims, though everything from churches to bars is named after him. You may find other features nearby more interesting: the stretch of Roman road in the **Old City**, the medieval **Eski Cami** (Old Mosque), and the lovely **waterfall** on the Cydnus River (accessible by *dolmuş* from the Eski Cami).

ADANA

☎ 0322 / pop 1,132,000

Turkey's fourth-largest city is not the kind of place you visit for fun. Lacking the mystique of Istanbul and the sophistication of İzmir, it's only use is as a transport hub. If you end up with some time to kill, it's worth having a look at the extravagant **Sabancı Merkez Cami**, built by legendary tycoon Sakip Sabancı, and the two city **museums**.

If you get stuck overnight, the budget options are fairly sleazy. Your best bet is **Akdeniz Oteli** (☎ 363 1510; İnönü Caddesi 14/1; s/d €35/61; 🚽) or the more up-market **Hotel Princess Maya** (☎ 459 0966; Turhan Cemal Beriker Bulvarı; s/d €58/75; 🚽 📺).

Şakirpaşa airport is just 4km from the centre; a taxi will cost €5. Adana's **otogar**, 2km beyond the airport, serves destinations throughout Turkey, including Antakya (€7, 3½ hours), Konya (€12.50, six hours), Ankara (€11.50, 10 hours) and İstanbul (€19, 15 hours).

ANTAKYA (HATAY)

☎ 0326 / pop 141,000

Part of Syria until 1939, you might recognise Antakya from its biblical name, Antioch – the city was vilified as the Roman Empire's most deprived outpost, a claim that the local tourist board keeps strangely quiet about. Sadly, present-day Antakya isn't nearly that exciting, though it's a thoroughly amenable modern town with distinct Arabic influences, and worth a wander even if you're not heading for the border.

Ferah Kırtasiye ve Kitabevi (Hürriyet Caddesi 17/D) has books, newspapers and magazines. Modanet Internet C@fé is upstairs in an arcade off Hürriyet Caddesi, between the Saray Hotel and the Ferah Kırtasiye ve Kitabevi. The **tourist office** (☎ 216 0610; ☎ 8am-noon & 1-5pm) is adept at changing homes. It was last located on a roundabout on Atatürk Caddesi, a good 10-minute walk from town.

Sights

The magnificent Roman and Byzantine mosaics in the **Archaeology Museum** (Gündüz Caddesi; admission €3; ☎ 8.30-noon & 1.30-5pm Tue-Sun) more than justify a trip here, with some extraordinary examples from nearby Daphne (Harbiye) and Tarsus. You can also visit the ancient **Cave-Church of St Peter** (St Pierre Kilisesi; admission €3; ☎ 8.30am-noon & 1.30-4.30pm Tue-Sun), 3km east of the centre, where St Peter dropped by to do his bit in the war on debauchery.

Sleeping & Eating

You'll find just about everything you need on the main street, İstiklal Caddesi, though it's more fun to wander off into the extensive bazaar area.

Divan Oteli (☎ 215 1518; İstiklal Caddesi 62; s/d €11/16.50; 🚽) Certainly the best of Antakya's budget options, some rooms here have balconies and small desks.

Grand Kavak Otel (☎ 214 3530; www.kavakotel.com; İstiklal Caddesi 16; s/d €20/31; 🚽 📺) A fantastic choice with plain but very comfortable, clean rooms with satellite TV and wi-fi.

Syrian influences permeate Antakya's cuisine. Handfuls of mint and wedges of lemon accompany many kebabs. For dessert, try the local speciality, *künefe*, a cake of fine shredded wheat laid over a dollop of fresh, mild cheese, on a layer of sugar syrup, topped with chopped walnuts and baked. Try and get it hot, straight from the oven. Shops at the northern end of Hürriyet Caddesi sell it. Kral Künefe near the Ulu Cami is the most popular of these, and has seating upstairs and outside.

Getting There & Away

Regular buses heading west into Turkey go via Adana (€6, 3½ hours). The Jet bus company at the airport has direct buses to Aleppo (€3, four hours) at 9am and noon daily, and to Damascus (€5.50, eight hours) at noon daily.

CENTRAL ANATOLIA

Central Anatolia is the heartland of Turkey, both geographically and culturally. Tribes, races and empires have been fighting over these dusty steppes and hills for centuries, dragging cities from obscurity to prominence, or from prosperity to destruction, sometimes spending decades battling over the same patch of ground. Civilisations were made or broken in the crucible of the Anatolian summer, leaving tantalising glimpses of themselves behind.

Ultimately, though, the result of this constant fuss and flux is the characteristic Turkish culture we see today, exemplified above all in the modern cities of Ankara and Konya, which embrace their past but move beyond it, fixing their sights firmly on a prosperous tomorrow. Trends may be set in İstanbul, but it's here that they become fashion, and without its heartland Turkey could never follow its one true beat.

ANKARA

☎ 0312 / pop 4.3 million

In the 80-odd years since independence this once-anonymous provincial capital has really grown into its role as an international city, aiming for modern prestige and sophistication where İstanbul rests on its copious historical laurels. As the city expands, everything that's new and now tends to pop up at random points across the lattice of suburbs, making it tricky for short-term visitors to track down the latest hotspots. If you really want to keep up with the thriving city scene, get used to asking locals for tips and taking taxis to find them.

Orientation

Ankara's *hisar* (citadel) crowns a hill 1km east of Ulus Meydanı (Ulus Square), 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 the way through town. Ankara's mammoth *otogar* is 5.5km southwest of Ulus Meydanı.

Information

PTT (Atatürk Bulvarı) Postal services.

Second Hand Bookstores (cnr Atatürk Bulvarı & Olgunlar Sokak, Kızılay)

Speedy Internet Cafe (Konur Sokak, Kızılay; per hr €1)

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

Sights & Activities

Right next to the citadel, the **Anatolian Civilisations Museum** (☎ 324 3160; admission €5.60; ☎ 8.30am-5.15pm) provides 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 may be feeling, this museum is a must-see, and provides you with the perfect excuse to wander around the living streets of the citadel itself.

The **Anıt Kabir** (Mausoleum of Atatürk; admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm Apr-Sep, to 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 town, including the **Column of Julian**, erected in AD 363, and the **Temple of Augustus & Rome**. Nearby 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, the area around Ulus Meydanı 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 Tur-

key? The comfortably beige rooms here are proof it can work, making a nice change from drab prints and faux-Ottoman overkill.

Otel Pınar (☎ 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 Pınar supplies just the right kind of simple budget accommodation you need for a short stay.

Hotel Spor (☎ 324 2165; www.hotelspor.com; Rüzgarlı Plevne Sokak 6; s/d €31/39/50; ♿) Despite the rowdy betting shop two doors down, the Spor bills itself as a family hotel, and sure enough the slightly ageing wood mellows the compact rooms.

Angora House Hotel (☎ 309 8380; Kalekapısı Sokak 16; s/d €36/56) Another good excuse to clamber up

the hill to the citadel – Ankara's only boutique option rewards the effort with its friendly service and antique fittings.

Eating & Drinking

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

Bosna İşkembe Lokanta ve Kebap Salonu (☎ 310 8701; Çankırı Caddesi 11; mains €2-3.70; ☎ 24hr) This all-hours place is scarily popular and, thankfully, not as grim as some of its rivals.

Urfalı Hacı Mehmet (☎ 311 2636; Kızılbey Sokak 3/A; mains €0.60-3.50) The next generation of family-grill restaurants and so shiny it's practically space age. The special Urfa kebabs (€5.75 to €22.50) will feed up to eight!

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 Gençlik Parkı, across the road from Opera Meydanı. Head straight for the Ada Aile Çay Bahçesi, which juts out into the lake, to watch the world go by over a samovar of tea (€1.10). For a spot of alcohol, delightful **And Evi** (☎ 312 7978; İskele Kapısı, Ulus), right on top of the walls inside the castle, offers a panoramic terrace or a sumptuous indoor lounge.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Turkish Airlines offer daily nonstop flights to most domestic cities. International routes usually require a connection in İstanbul.

BUS

Ankara's huge *otogar* (AŞTİ) dispatches passengers across the country all day and night. For İstanbul (€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 at least hourly.

TRAIN

Train services between İstanbul and Ankara are the best in the country. There are up to 10 departures daily from €7.

Getting Around

TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

Ankara's Esenboğa airport is 33km north of the city centre. Havaş buses (€5.30, 40 minutes) depart from the Havaş Terminal every half-hour between 3.30am and 9.30pm daily. A taxi costs about €21.

LOCAL TRANSPORT

Buses marked 'Ulus' and 'Çankaya' run the length of Atatürk Bulvarı. Those marked 'Gar' go to the train station; those marked 'AŞTİ' go to the *otogar*. You can buy tickets (€0.70) from kiosks near the stops.

Ankara's underground-train network currently has two lines: the Ankaray line running between AŞTİ *otogar* in the west through Kızılay to Dikimevi in the east; and the Metro line running from Kızılay northwest via Sıhhiye and Ulus to Batıkent. The two lines interconnect at Kızılay.

From the AŞTİ *otogar* to Ulus, cross the main road in front of the *otogar* and catch an 'Ulus-Balgat' or 'Gölbaşı-Opera Meydanı' *dolmuş* (€0.85). A taxi between the *otogar* and Ulus costs around €5.

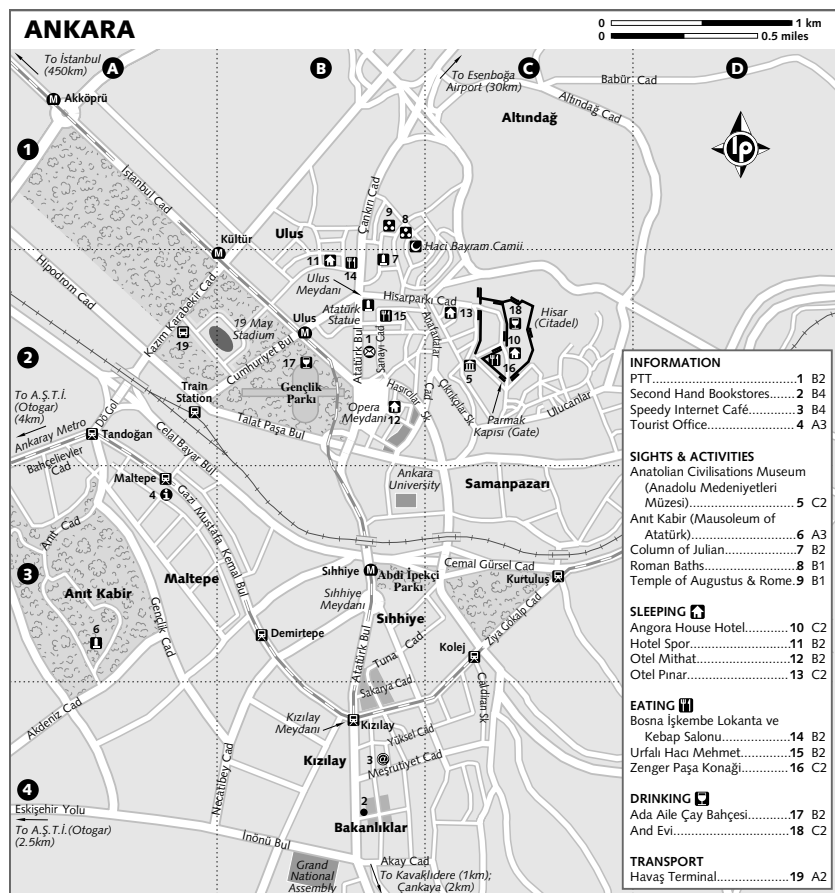
SAFRANBOLU

☎ 0370 / pop 32,200

A real treat for architecture fans, Safranbolu's beautifully preserved old Ottoman quarter, **Çarşı**, is full of half-timbered houses, earning it a place on the Unesco World Heritage list. The antique atmosphere and sprawling bazaar lend themselves perfectly to a day or two of relaxed pottering, particularly if you've come for a break from the disparate pleasures of the coast. The **tourist office** (☎ 712 3863; www.safiranbolu.gov.tr; ☎ 9am-12.30pm, 1.30-6pm) is on the main square.

The best way to appreciate Safranbolu is to stay in one of the many restored Ottoman houses, all furnished in keeping with their colourful heritage. **Selvilik Köşk** (☎ 712 8646; www.hotelselvilikosk.com; Mescit Sokak 23; s/d/tr €20/39/56) is among the best, with some great communal areas, while **Havuzlu Asmazlar Konağı** (☎ 725 2883; www.turing.org.tr; Çelik Gülersoy Caddesi 18; s/d/ste €42/56/67; ☎ Apr-Oct), off the main road just outside Çarşı, has lots of space and a beautiful, traditional pool room (not for swimming).

There are a few direct buses to Safranbolu, although you will usually be dropped at nearby Karabük, from where minibuses



(€0.40) run the last 8km to Kiranköy. Bus services to Ankara cost €6.70 (four hours); to İstanbul €11 (6½ hours).

KONYA

☎ 0332 / pop 762,000

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, perhaps 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.

Orientation & Information

The centre of town stretches from Alaaddin Tepesi (Aladdin's Hill) along Alaettin Caddesi and Mevlana Caddesi to the Mevlana Museum. The *otogar* is 14km due north of the centre; minibuses run you into town, or you can catch the tram as far as Alaaddin Tepesi (€0.40, 30 minutes). The **tourist office** (☎ 351 1074; Mevlâna Caddesi 21; ☹ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Sat) is centrally located, and internet can be found at **Truva Internet** (Adliye Bulvarı; per hr €0.55; ☹ 9am-midnight).

Sights

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 is also well worth visiting. Look out for the **Alaaddin Camii** and the **Sahib-i Ata Külliyesi**.

Sleeping & Eating

Hotel Ulusan (☎ 351 5004; ulusanhotel@myynet.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 Şahin (☎ 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 Mutfağı (☎ 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 kebabs and *ayran* (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. These days the cave dwellers are predominantly tourists who have been drawn to this part of Turkey by its surreal scenery, wealth of ancient churches and unparalleled opportunities for adventure activities.

Let's be clear, though. The true joy of Cappadocia doesn't come courtesy of its wealth of boutique hotels, its spectacular sunsets, its world-class hiking or its warm and welcoming locals. Instead, it stems from the fact that life still follows a village pace here, far removed from the wannabe jet-set lifestyle of the Mediterranean tourist resorts or the marvellous mayhem of İstanbul. This is a place where you can truly relax.

Getting There & Away

Two airports service central Cappadocia: Kayseri and Nevşehir airports. Turkish Airlines and Onur Air operate transfer buses (tickets €7 to €8.50 per person) for passengers leaving or arriving at Kayseri airport. There is no shuttle for Sun Express or Pegasus passengers. The buses pick up from and drop off to hotels and pensions throughout Cappadocia. You *must* prebook these shuttles through **Argus Tours** (☎ 384-341 4688; www.argus.com.tr) if you fly Turkish Airlines; or through **Peerless Travel**

Services (☎ 384-341 6970; www.peerlessexcursions.com) if you fly Onur Air.

It's very easy to get to Cappadocia by bus from elsewhere in Turkey. Most long-haul buses will bring you to Nevşehir. When you purchase your bus ticket, make sure it clearly states that it is for Göreme (or Ürgüp or wherever) as many readers have complained that although they purchased tickets to Göreme, they found themselves deposited at Nevşehir *otogar* or even on the highway outside Avanos! Good bus companies (including Göreme, Metro, Nevşehir, Öncü or Kapadokya) always transfer their passengers from Nevşehir to the surrounding villages on free *servis* buses.

From Cappadocia towns to Ankara costs €9 (4½ hours), Konya €9 (three hours), İstanbul €18 (11 hours) and Antalya €17 (10 hours).

Getting Around

The most convenient bases for exploring central Cappadocia are Göreme and Ürgüp. Bus and minibuses services are frequent in high summer, but much less so in winter. Belediye Bus Corp minibuses (€0.80 to €1.10 depending on where you get on and off) travel between Ürgüp and Avanos via Ortahisar, the Göreme Open-Air Museum, Göreme village and Çavuşin every two hours, starting in Ürgüp at 8am and operating until 6pm. The bus will also stop in Zelve on request. You can hop on and off anywhere around the loop. Note that Sunday services are less frequent. There's also an hourly *belediye* bus running from Avanos to Nevşehir via Çavuşin (10 minutes), Göreme (15 minutes) and Uçhisar (30 minutes). It operates from 7.10am to 6pm and costs between €0.40 and €1.10 depending on where you get on and off.

NEVŞEHİR

☎ 0384 / pop 77,100

Nevşehir, the provincial capital, is an ugly modern town that offers travellers little incentive to linger. Basically, it's useful as a transport hub but not for much else. The main *otogar* is 1.5km north of Atatürk Bulvarı, the town's main road.

Pegasus Airlines (www.pegasusairlines.com) flies between İstanbul and Nevşehir five times per week (€42 to €53 one way). There are regular services to surrounding towns and villages from the *otogar* and from the *dolmuş* stop close to the centre, a short walk north of the Alibey Cami on Lale Sokak. Make sure

you read the opposite page for tips to ensure you receive a free service bus from Nevşehir to your final destination.

GÖREME

☎ 0384 / pop 2100

Some places are magical – and Göreme is one of them. Just 12km east of Nevşehir, this small village is set amid towering fairy chimneys and majestic honeycomb cliffs, with the stunning backdrops of the Rose, Honey and Pigeon Valleys surrounding it. Though some jaded travellers whinge that 'it isn't what it used to be', we think they're full of tuff: Göreme is one of Turkey's unspoiled treasures, where traditional village life manages to happily co-exist with a thriving, modern tourism industry and where visitors are – and always have been – made welcome by a local community as friendly as it is close-knit.

Information

Kapadokya Balloons (☎ 0384-271 2442; www.kapadokyaballoons.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).

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

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.

Sights

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 **Tokali Church**, one of the largest here, or the **Dark Church** (Karanlık Kilise; admission €3), which has some of the most colourful frescoes.

Organised Tours

Göreme is the main base for tours of Cappadocia's most popular sites (one-day trips from €30), though every travel agent within 200km runs similar excursions. 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), excavated over years to provide shelter for the indigent population during Hittite invasions. Many companies also offer trips further afield, around central Anatolia and into eastern Turkey.

Unless you're really pressed for time, avoid taking a tour here from İstanbul, as the overnight journey won't do much for your appreciation of the sights next morning.

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*, in the centre of town, displays details of most options.

Traveller's Cave Pansiyon (☎ 271 2707; www.travellerscave.com; Aydıncırağı Mevkii 28; dm €3.50, s/d with shared bathroom & breakfast €8.50/12.50, s/d with private 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.kospension.com; dm/hut per person €5/7, s with shared bathroom €6, d with private 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 this a popular choice.

Kelebek Hotel & Cave Pension (☎ 271 2531; www.kelebekhotel.com; s/d standard incl breakfast €25/30, deluxe €35/40; ☎ ☒) 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.

Göreme House (☎ 271 2060; www.goremehouse.com; Eselli Mahallesi Sokak 47; s/d standard €50/60, deluxe €62/72, ste incl breakfast €95; ☎ ☒) This recently opened option is perfect for lovers of boutique comfort, with blissfully comfortable rooms, great beds, satellite TVs and even a pillow menu!

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.

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

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

A'aturca (☎ 271 2882; Müze Caddesi; mains €5-10) Style meets substance at this elegant eatery. The menu here has been thoughtfully and creatively designed and the food is exceptionally well prepared and tasty to boot.

ÜRGÜP

☎ 0384 / pop 17,100

If you have a soft spot for luxurious hotels and fine dining, you need look no further – Ürgüp is your type of place. The boutique hotels occupying honey-coloured stone buildings, and the spectacular natural setting at the heart of central Cappadocia make Ürgüp one of the most seductive holiday spots in Turkey.

The helpful **tourist office** (☎ 213 4260; Kayseri Caddesi 37; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri Oct-Apr, 8am-5.30pm May-Sep) is right by the fairly uninspiring **museum** (admission €1.10; ☎ 8.30am-noon & 1-5pm Tue-Sun).

Sleeping & Eating

Hotel Elvan (☎ 341 4191; hotelelvan@superonline.com; İstiklal Caddesi, Barbaros Hayrettin Sokak 11; s/d incl breakfast €17/28; ☎ ☒) Vaulted stone rooms, big beds and small bathrooms all contribute to the charm of this family-run pension/hotel. The roof terrace is a particular bonus.

Razziya Evi (☎ 341 5089; www.razziyaevi.com; Cingilli Sokak 24; s €27, d €38-43 incl breakfast) This lovingly restored *evi* (house) has seven cheerful rooms (some in slightly musty caves), a *hammam* (€5 per person), a pretty courtyard and a kitchen that guests can use.

Esbelli Evi Pansiyon (☎ 341 3395; www.esbelli.com; Esbelli Mahallesi Sokak 8; s/d/ste incl breakfast €80/90/200; ☎ ☒ ☒) It's not often that we give hotels a ten out of ten score, but that's what the Esbelli Evi deserves. The first of Cappadocia's boutique hotels, it has been copied by competitors but none are able to fully emulate its unforgettable mix of comfort, style and ambience.

Sömine Restaurant (salads €2-5, mains €4-7) With most of Ürgüp's eateries set around the main square, Sömine goes one better and occupies the square itself. The speciality is *kiremit* (meat dish baked on a tile in a traditional oven), with freshly baked *lavash* (crisp) bread.

WORTH A TRIP

Once called Peristrema, 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 allows 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 exploring Kayseri's 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 **Veziirhani**, once a caravanserai. The beautifully decorated **Güpgüpoğlu Konağı**, 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/ste €28/48/67; ☎ ☒).

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

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.

Although PKK activity in southeastern Turkey has markedly slowed in the last few years, the region remains a political hotbed. You should check with your embassy for the latest information on the area before you head out.

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 town. 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 its own *hammam* and restaurant, is the most popular place to stay for 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).

MT NEMRUT NATIONAL PARK

Two thousand 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. **Nemrut Dağı** (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) from 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; fax 725 5548; Mustafa Kemal Caddesi; s/d with shared bathroom €6/9, s/d with private bathroom €12/17; ☑).

Because of the transport difficulties, many people prefer to take tours from Göreme in Cappadocia (p847).

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 easy-going 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 snowcapped mountains.

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

There are several *dolmuş* a day to Doğubayazıt (€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 as and 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.

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 hostels with dorms (from €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 bathrooms 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/Aспенodos to Lake Egirdir), both around 500km long. **Middle Earth Travel** (www.middleearthtravel.com) has full information.

Water sports from diving to kayaking are available in all the Aegean and Mediterranean resorts, with more 'extreme' pursuits like paragliding gaining popularity. Those of a lazier (or drunker) disposition can take an extended boat trip along the coast (see p836), stopping off to swim in bays along the way.

Skiing is another growth sport; keen powder monkeys can find the best facilities at Uludağ, near Bursa, and Mt Erciyes, near Kayseri.

For an essential taste of Turkey visit a *hammam*, where you can get yourself scrubbed and massaged without lifting a finger. In traditional baths the sexes are always segregated, but in tourist areas mixed bathing has become the norm, along with inflated prices.

BUSINESS HOURS

Opening hours in Turkey are never set in stone, however most banks, businesses and offices are open from 8.30am to noon and from 1pm to 5pm Monday to Friday. Shops are open from 9am to 7pm Monday to Saturday, but in tourist areas food and souvenir shops are often open virtually around the clock. Many museums close on Mondays.

As a rule, restaurants are open roughly 9am or 10am to 10pm or 11pm, depending on size and clientele. Bars usually start serving between 5pm and 8pm, though in tourist areas they might be open all day as well.

Internet cafés usually open from around 9am until late at night, or until the last customer has left.

COURSES

The best courses to learn Turkish are the following.

Taksim Dilmer (☎ 0212-292 9696; www.dilmer.com) Only in İstanbul.

Tömer (☎ 0212-230 7083; www.tomer.com.tr) Affiliated with Ankara University and has many branches throughout the country.

CUSTOMS

Duty-free items can be bought both on arrival and departure from Turkey's international airports.

It's strictly illegal to buy, sell or export antiques – anything over 200 years old falls into this category. Customs officers spot-check luggage and will want proof that you have permission before letting you leave with an antique carpet.

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. Give way to cars and trucks in all situa-

tions. Things are changing slowly, but parents of young children in particular will need to be on their guard at all times.

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 whom you befriend, especially when you're new to the country.

At the time of writing travelling in the southeast is safe. However, the Kurdish issue is far from resolved, so be sure to check the situation before setting out.

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

Turkish Embassies & Consulates

Turkey has embassy representation in the following countries.

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.tcarbsk.com; 184, Blvd Malesherbes 75017 Paris)

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

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

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

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

Switzerland (☎ 31 359 7070; www.tr-botschaft.ch; Lombachweg 33, 3006 Bern)

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 20008)

Consulates in Turkey

Most embassies are in Ankara. Countries with consulates in İstanbul (code ☎ 0212) include the following.

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

France (☎ 334 8730; İstiklal Caddesi 8, Taksim)

Germany (☎ 334 6100; İnönü Caddesi 16, Taksim)

Netherlands (☎ 393 2121; İstiklal Caddesi 393, Beyoğlu)

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

UK (☎ 334 6400; Meşrutiyet Caddesi 34, Tepebaşı, Beyoğlu)

USA (☎ 335 9000; Kaplıcalar Mevkii 2, İstinye)

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Camel Wrestling Last Sunday in January; held in Selçuk.

Anzac Day Held at Gallipoli on April 25.

Oil-wrestling Festival Held in June at Kirkpınar, near Edirne.

International İstanbul Music Festival In June or July.

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

Mevlana Festival Held in Konya in December.

GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

Homosexuality is legal in Turkey and attitudes are changing thanks to the hard work of groups like **Kaos GL** (www.kaosgl.com), but prejudice remains strong and there are sporadic reports of violence towards gays – the message is discretion. İstanbul has a flourishing gay scene, as does Ankara.

For more information, contact Turkey's gay and lesbian support group, **LAMBDA İstanbul** (www.lambdaistanbul.org). Gay-friendly travel agents include **Sunset Gay & Lesbian Travel** (www.turkey-gay-travel.com) and **Absolute Sultans** (www.absolutesultans.com).

HOLIDAYS

Public holidays in Turkey include the following.

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 (September/October) and, about two months later, Kurban Bayramı. Due to the fact that these holidays are celebrated according to the Muslim lunar calendar, the exact dates change from year to year.

INTERNET ACCESS

Turks took to the internet like ducks to water. Wherever you go you'll be two steps from an internet café, and most have ADSL connections. You'll also find wi-fi in many airports, cafés and top-end hotels throughout the country. See www.winet.turktelekom.com.tr for hot spots.

INTERNET RESOURCES

My Merhaba (www.mymerhaba.com) Information site aimed at expats.

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

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

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

MONEY

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

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 except at banks and offices in major cities.

Credit Cards

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'.

Travellers Cheques

Our advice: don't bring them! Banks, shops and hotels usually see it as a burden to change them and will either try to get you to go elsewhere or charge you a premium.

POST

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

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, which can be bought from telephone centres, shops and street vendors. 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. Telephone numbers that start with ☎ 444 are national, so they don't require an area code.

Mobile Phones

The Turks just love mobile (*cep*) phones. Numbers begin with the ☎ 05 prefix; note that calling a mobile costs roughly three times more than calling a land line.

Most mobiles can be connected with **Turkey's Turkcell** (www.turkcell.com.tr), **Telsim** (www.telsim.com.tr) or **Avea** (www.avea.com.tr) networks, though some US-, Canada-, and Scandinavian-bought mobiles phones are not compatible.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Local tourist offices can rarely do more than hand out glossy brochures and sketch maps. That said, some staff have a genuine interest in their region and may make a real effort to help you with any specific queries.

TOURS

Most independent travellers find tours around Turkey expensive, especially since many bundle you into carpet shops and other high-commission outlets. In general, it's faster and cheaper to make your own travel arrangements. Be particularly careful if booking a tour out of İstanbul, as many are ludicrously expensive compared with doing it yourself.

Areas where an organised tour makes sense, particularly on limited time, include Troy and the Gallipoli battlefields (p826), and Cappadocia (p846).

Another useful service is the **Fez Bus** (www.fezbus.com) run by Fez Travel, a sociable 'hop-on, hop-off' bus service linking the main resorts of the Aegean and Mediterranean with İstanbul, Cappadocia and Mt Nemrut. **Intrepid Travel** (www.intrepidtravel.com.au), an Australian-based company, also runs a variety of small-group, good-value tours.

TRAVELLERS WITH DISABILITIES

Turkey is a real nightmare for physically disabled travellers, not just because of a lack of facilities. Obstacles lurk everywhere, properly equipped toilets are almost unheard of, and crossing the road is tough even for the fully mobile. Plan your trip very carefully

and budget to patronise mostly luxury hotels, restaurants and transport.

Utilising the Jolette system, **Mephisto Voyage** (www.mephistovoyage.com) offers special tours in Cappadocia for mobility-impaired people.

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 website of the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs** (www.mfa.gov.tr) for the latest information.

WOMEN TRAVELLERS

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 boxed text, p814) will also reduce unwanted attention.

WORK

One of the most lucrative nonspecialist jobs available to foreigners (from €550 to €850 per week) involves nannying for the wealthy city elite, work mainly restricted to English-speaking women who must be prepared for long hours and demanding employers.

Otherwise there is some work available for qualified teachers of English (whose employers should be able to arrange a work permit).

Most travellers who want to work end up grafting illegally for subsistence wages in pensions, bars and carpet shops, leaving the country every three months to renew their visas.

TRANSPORT IN TURKEY

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air

The cheapest fares are usually to İstanbul's **Atatürk international airport** (IST; ☎ 0212-465 3000; www.dhmiata.gov.tr) and **Sabiha Gökçen international airport** (☎ 0216-585 5000; www.sgairport.com). Throughout the year, but especially during summer, you can catch international flights to/from Antalya, Bodrum, Dalaman and the rapidly expanding İzmir airports. From Turkey's other airports, including Ankara, you usually have to transit through İstanbul.

Turkish Airlines and European carriers fly to İstanbul from all the European capitals. It's also worth inquiring about charter flights.

Airlines flying to and from Turkey include the following.

Air France (code AF; www.airfrance.com;

☎ 0212-310 1919)

British Airways (code BA; www.britishairways.com;

☎ 0212-317 6600)

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

☎ 0216-658 7250)

Cyprus Turkish Airlines (code YK; www.kthy.net;

☎ 0212-274 6932)

EasyJet (code U2; www.easyjet.com; no phone contacts in Turkey)

German Wings (code 4U; www.w25.german

wings.com; ☎ 0212-354 6666)

Lufthansa (code LH; www.lufthansa.com;

☎ 0212-315 3434)

Onur Air (code OH; www.onurair.com.tr;

☎ 0212-233 3800)

Turkish Airlines (code THY; www.thy.com;

☎ 444 0849)

Land

Bus services to Turkey 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 İstanbul: Frankfurt (€130, 45 hours), Munich (€110, 42 hours), Vienna (€105, 36 hours) and Athens (€68, 20 hours).

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

Sea

Marmara Lines (www.marmaralines.com) ferries connect Brindisi and Ancona in Italy with Çeşme. **Turkish Maritime Lines** (www.tdi.com.tr, in Turkish) also operates twice-weekly ferries between Brindisi and Çeşme.

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

The main crossing point between northern Cyprus and Turkey is between Taşucu (near Silifke) and Girne. You can also travel between Alanya and Girne, and Mersin and Gazimağusa (Famagusta) on the east coast of Northern Cyprus.

GETTING AROUND

Air

Turkish Airlines (www.thy.com) links all the country's major cities, with increasing competition from cheaper rivals **Onur Air** (www.onurair.com.tr), **Pegasus Airlines** (www.pegasusairlines.com), **Fly Air** (www.flyair.com.tr), **Atlasjet** (www.atlastjet.com) and **Sun Express Airlines** (www.sunexpress.com.tr). Domestic flights can fill up rapidly so try to book in advance.

One-way tickets from İstanbul to other Turkish cities start at €38.

Bicycle

Riding a bike can be a good way of exploring, especially in backpacker areas, where many pensions lend them out for free. Road surfaces

are acceptable, if a bit rough, though many Turkish drivers regard cyclists as a curiosity and/or a nuisance.

Bus

The Turkish bus network is a very pleasant surprise: coaches go just about everywhere, they're cheap and comfortable, smoking isn't permitted, drinks and snacks are often provided, regular toilet stops are built into longer routes, and drivers even use the breaks to wash down their vehicles!

The premium companies have nationwide networks offering greater speed and comfort for slightly higher fares. They also have the best safety records. Departures on popular routes can be as frequent as every 15 minutes, with hourly services the norm from major cities. Costs vary according to distance and popularity of the route; short trips with local companies can start from as little as €3, going up to €30 for a luxury long-haul service.

A town's *otogar* is often on the outskirts, but most bus companies will have free *servis* minibuses to ferry you into the centre and back again.

The best companies, with extensive route networks, include the following.

Boss Turizm (☎ 444 0880; www.bossturizm.com, in Turkish) Specialises in super-deluxe İstanbul–Ankara services.

Kamil Koç (☎ 444 0562; www.kamilkoc.com.tr, in Turkish)

Ulusoy (☎ 444 1888; www.ulusoy.com.tr)

Varan (☎ 444 8999, 0212-551 5000; www.varan.com.tr)

Car & Motorcycle

The **Türkiye Turing ve Otomobil Kurumu** (Turkish Touring & Automobile Association; ☎ 0212-282 8140; www.turing.org.tr) can help with questions and problems.

Carnets (permits to import cars) are not required for stays of less than six months, but details of your car are stamped in your passport to ensure it leaves the country with you. An International Driving Permit is handy if your licence is from a country likely to seem obscure to a Turkish police officer.

Car mechanical services are easy to find, reasonably competent and cheap. The most

common and so most easily serviced models are Fiat, Renault, Mercedes, Volkswagen and Toyota.

All the main car-rental companies are represented in İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir and other tourist area; Avis in particular has an extensive national network. The cost of a standard rental vehicle for a week with unlimited kilometres (including tax and insurance) ranges from €400 to €500. Daily rentals are from €40 to €70. Turkey has a very high motor-vehicle-accident rate, so always drive defensively and avoid driving at night. In the major cities, park your car and use public transport – traffic is terrible!

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 often expect payment. Women should never hitchhike alone.

Local Transport

Short-distance and local routes are usually served by medium-sized 'midibuses' or smaller *dolmuşes* (minibuses), run by private operators. Most towns have an internal bus network funded by the council; this may be supplemented by underground, tram, train and even ferry services in the largest cities.

Train

Turkish State Railways (☎ 0216-337 8724; www.tdd.gov.tr) runs services throughout the country. Although most people still opt to travel by bus, as train-journey times are notoriously long, the system is being overhauled and several fast lines, such as that running between İstanbul and 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 between İzmir and Selçuk. If you wanted to travel the Aegean and Mediterranean coast you could travel by train to either İzmir or Konya, and take the bus from here. The sleeper trains linking İstanbul, İzmir and Ankara are well worth considering.

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