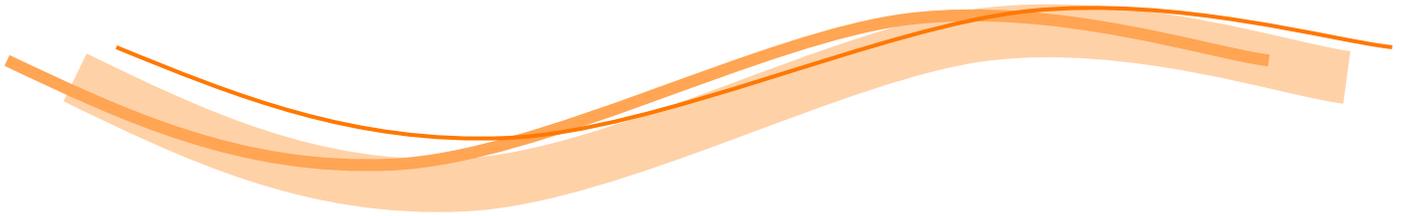




TURKEY





TURKEY

Explore a country that sits astride Asia and Europe, a land of astonishing landscapes, architectural monuments of staggering beauty and a culture that emanates from two continents.

Experience the magnificence of Istanbul's Topkapi Palace and Blue Mosque; see the Fairy Chimneys and Underground City in fabled Cappadocia; wander the ancient streets of Ephesus; marvel at Nature's unique crystal balconies at Pamukkale; and lose yourself in the magic and mystery of this ancient land that has a time honoured tradition of welcoming travellers with warm hospitality.

The European portion of The Republic of Turkey (called Thrace) is separated from the Asian part (called Anatolia) by the waters of the Bosphorus. The country borders on the Black Sea, the Caucasus Mountains and the Mediterranean and enjoys a rich diversity of climate and landscape.

Turkey has a complex and fascinating history - and an astonishing array of ancient ruins. The oldest known human settlement in the world is located in Catalhoyuk, Konya, Turkey, dating back to 6500 BC. And two of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World stood in Turkey - the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus and the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus in Bodrum. Since Turkey has been the capital of civilizations that have reigned the lands of Anatolia for centuries it can pretty much be regarded as an open air museum thanks to its magnificent heritage! Historical and cultural monuments and sites have been built throughout the country since ancient times.

One of the other precious and diverse treasures of Turkey is the Turkish cuisine. There is almost limitless variety offered by a magnificent heritage of flavours which evolved over the centuries. Turkish cuisine is the result of blending the culinary cultures of many communities and civilizations – resulting in thousands of unique delicacies and specialties ranging from meat dishes to cold dishes with olive oil and from sorbets to spices.

Turkey is also the home of dark, flavourful and aromatic Turkish coffee. Coffee means much more than a drink for Turks. It symbolizes hospitality, friendship and refinement and has been an important part of the Turkish social fabric for over five centuries. Turkey gave the world “coffee house culture” and recently UNESCO confirmed it as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. And once you have drained your delicious brew – you can read your future in the coffee grounds left behind!

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Location	The Republic of Turkey straddles two continents, Europe and Asia. The European portion, called Thrace, is separated by the Bosphorus from Anatolia, the Asian part. From there, the country borders on the Black Sea to the Caucasus Mountains, where the border curves back to the Mediterranean.
Geography	The European section of Turkey, East Thrace, forms the borders of Turkey with Greece and Bulgaria. The Asian part of the country, Anatolia, consists of a high central plateau with narrow coastal plains, between the Köroğlu and Pontic mountain ranges to the north and the Taurus Mountains to the south. Eastern Turkey has a more mountainous landscape and is home to the sources of rivers such as the Euphrates, Tigris and Aras, and contains Lake Van and Mount Ararat, Turkey's highest point at 5,165 metres (16,946 ft).
Name	Derived from the Medieval Latin Turchia, i.e. "Land of the Turks"
Population	Approximately 77 million
Language	Turkish is the sole official language throughout Turkey and the Kurdish language by approximately 18% of people. English is widely understood in most of the areas where visitors travel.
Currency	Turkey is excellent value for Canadians right now. The local currency is Turkish Lira which is outside the more expensive Euro zone. One Canadian Dollar currently buys 2.23 Lira (October 2015) so conversion is easy – just half the price and you're close! Bank ATM's are freely available and all major credit cards are accepted in Turkey. Travellers checks are not accepted in payment in the markets
Tipping	Indispensable as a supplement to an already low wage, gratuities are a way of life in Turkey and are often expected for even the most minor service. Try to keep small notes handy and follow these guidelines: Give the porter \$1 per bag; leave at least an additional 10% of the restaurant bill for your waiter; reward your tour guide with \$25 for a job well done; thank the captain of your gulet with about \$30; and give the attendant in the Turkish bath \$5 before the rubdown. Shows of appreciation are also expected from your chambermaid.
Government	Turkey is a democratic, secular, unitary, constitutional republic.
Documentation	For Canadians, a Passport and a Turkish visa, costing \$60 (as at Oct 2015) is required. There is no need to acquire an entry visa prior to departure, because obtaining one on arrival is easy: go to the visa window before clearing customs at the airport. Or you can apply for an e-Visa online before you travel.
Time zone	All of Turkey is in the Eastern European Time (EET), which is Greenwich Mean Time +2. To make it easier: when it is noon in Toronto and Montreal, it is 7pm in Istanbul.
Health	There are no severe health risks in travel to Turkey, nor are vaccinations required. Although water from the tap is chlorinated and

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	<p>generally safe to drink, even the locals drink bottled water. Water in the all inclusive resorts on the coast is safe to drink.</p> <p>Visitors experiencing unexpected illness in Turkey can feel fairly confident in the healthcare they will receive. In general, the quality of care will be better in the major cities such as Istanbul, Ankara, Bodrum, and Izmir than in the heartland.</p> <p>The government websites offer up-to-date health-related travel advice: www.hc-sc.gc.ca/index_e.html</p>
<p>Safety tips</p>	<p>You may be pleasantly surprised to learn that Turkey is a safe country for tourists. Yes, there are occasional thefts...but just display as much caution in Istanbul's covered bazaar as you would at the train station of your nearest Canadian city.</p>
<p>Etiquette for Visiting Mosques</p>	<p>Turkey's beautiful mosques are open to all, Muslim and non-Muslim, Turk and foreigner.</p> <p>The great imperial mosques of Istanbul, Bursa and Edirne are usually open continuously every day for long hours, for free (although donations for mosque upkeep are gratefully accepted). In the most-visited mosques a separate area may be set off by railings for visitors so that distraction of worshippers is minimized. Smaller mosques in other cities may close outside of prayer times. Often a caretaker is on hand (or can be notified) to let you in if the door is locked.</p> <p>Avoid visiting a mosque at prayer-time, that is, at or within a half hour after the ezan (call to prayer) is chanted from the minarets. The times, pegged to sunrise and sunset, change daily as the days grow longer or shorter. Avoid visiting on Friday late morning through early afternoon, which is when the weekly group prayers and sermons take place. In short, if the mosque is busy with worshippers, it's polite to return later to visit.</p> <p>All visitors to mosques—Muslim and non-Muslim—remove their shoes before stepping onto the mosque's carpets. This is a practical, not a religious, requirement: Muslim worshippers kneel and touch their heads to the carpets as they pray, so they'd like to keep the carpets clean. Speak quietly, move slowly, and if you take photos, turn off the flash on your camera. It's most polite to ask permission before taking photos of people.</p> <p>Avoid walking in front of worshippers performing their ritual prayers, as this is considered impolite. Walk around or behind them. (Worshippers who miss the designated prayer time may come to complete their prayers later, and so may be in the mosque when you visit.)</p> <p>When visiting a mosque, wear modest, conservative clothing which exposes a minimum of flesh. No shorts or sleeveless shirts on either men or women. At the most popular mosques in Istanbul (such as the Blue Mosque), attendants may provide robes to wear during your visit if your normal sightseeing clothing is too informal. (There's no charge for</p>

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	<p>use of the robe.) Footwear is not important as you'll be removing it before entering the mosque in any case. Women should wear a dress or blouse and skirt (at least to the knees), preferably with elbow-length or longer sleeves, and a headscarf. A handy garment for women is a light jacket-shirt or jacket with a built-in hood ("hoodie"). Just raise the hood when you enter the mosque, and you don't need a headscarf. Men should wear long trousers and a sleeved shirt.</p>
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CLIMATE	
General climate	The coastal areas of Turkey bordering the Aegean Sea and the Mediterranean Sea have a temperate Mediterranean climate, with hot, dry summers and mild to cool, wet winters.
Today's weather	Sunny and 17C in Istanbul as at 31 st October 2015.
Best time to visit	<p>The best time to go is during the "shoulder season" months of April, May, mid- to late September, and October, when families send their kids back to school, museum sites are less crowded, and the heat is pleasantly balmy. You might even need a sweater for the early morning chill or late-evening breezes, especially in Istanbul and on the steppes. Cappadocia is a great destination for rafting in the spring as well as for the autumn colours, while hiking, biking, and camping around the coastal villages are great spring or fall diversions.</p> <p>Prices peak during high season, which loosely refers to July, August, and the first half of September, when the azure coastlines teem with sun-and-fun seekers. It can get very hot during these months: perfect for a beachside or cruising vacation, but positively steamy under the blazing sun reflected off of the white stone and marble of archaeological sites.</p>

GETTING AROUND	
Getting There	Turkish Airlines flies direct to Istanbul from Toronto year round. Flight time is around 11.5 hours. http://www.turkishairlines.com/en-ca/
Cities and Regions	<p>Istanbul Istanbul is the largest city in Turkey with 13 million inhabitants. Turkey's main seaport and chief cultural centre, Istanbul occupies an exceptional site astride the Golden Horn, a small inlet on the European side of the Bosphorus, where it enters the Sea of Marmara.</p> <p>Wonderful architecture and ancient monuments provide a feast for the eyes. For example the glorious former basilica consecrated to Holy Wisdom - the Hagia Sophia. The central dome, representing the vault of Heaven, is 31 metres in diameter and hangs 55 metres above the ground. Its entire weight is borne by four immense pillars, leaving a remarkable airiness and lightness in the central space.</p>

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Just a few hundred metres to the west stands one of the most beautiful mosques in the world, the Sultan Ahmed Mosque. Named for the sultan who commanded it in the early 17th century, it symbolises the zenith of the Ottoman Empire. Though smaller than the Hagia Sophia, it is much more elegant, with a spaciousness created by a succession of domes. The porcelain tiles on the walls have given it its most common name: the Blue Mosque.

The other great monument of the old city is Topkapı Palace, the famous seraglio from which the sultans ruled the empire. The palace, a grand complex of courts and buildings, can be visited, as can the numerous museums it houses and a part of the former harem.

The Palace of Dolmabahçe alone is worth leaving the old city for the other side of the Golden Horn. Built on the north shore of the Bosphorus in 1855, it was the home of Sultan Abdülmacid I, who intended it to play a role similar to the court of Versailles. A tour shows a good proportion of the 285 rooms of the palace.

Turkey is home of The Grand Bazaar in Istanbul. It is the oldest and largest shopping mall on the planet, made up of over 3000 shops spread across 61 covered streets, with hidden inns and labyrinth-like laneways. This mystical, magical place has no ordinary shops – discover authentic craft stores, some of them dating back over 500 years. A visit to the Grand Bazaar is a “must see” to breathe in the alluring fragrances, colourful sights, and hypnotizing sounds.

Ankara

The Turkish capital, Ankara, is located in the centre of the country. This proud, bustling city plays its role of national capital to the hilt, with its four million inhabitants and its ceaseless activity.

Ankara’s chief attraction is unquestionably the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations. This magnificent museum retraces the history of the multiple civilizations that have succeeded each other in Anatolia. The site alone is worth the visit, as the museum is housed in a 19th-century bedesten (covered market) and caravanserai.

The citadel at the heart of the old city is surrounded by walls erected by the Byzantines between the 7th and 9th centuries. The broad gates of the fortress now invite the visitor to stroll peacefully through a maze of narrow streets.

In the modern part of the city, the mausoleum of Atatürk, the father of modern Turkey, powerfully evokes the reverence in which the Turks hold this historic figure.

Bursa

South of the Sea of Marmara about 100km from Istanbul, Bursa was the capital of the first Ottomans. To this day it remains a charming city with

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everything the Western imagination expects in a Turkish town: narrow streets, mosques, hammams (the famous Turkish baths), mausoleums, bazaars, and houses in Eastern styles. The city's parks and gardens, combined with its typical green tiles, have earned it the sobriquet of "Green Bursa."

Among the main attractions are the Green Mosque, the citadel hill, the ancient baths of the Çekirge district, and the Ulu Cami or Great Mosque. The Tophane district, in the oldest part of the city, merits a long walking visit to enjoy the traditional wooden architecture of the old Ottoman houses.

Marmaris to Antalya

Southeast of Bodrum, a long peninsula extends into the Mediterranean. On its eastern side, at the end of a sheltered bay, **Marmaris** has grown into the main pleasure harbour of the area. This ancient fishing village, built around a medieval castle, has transformed itself to welcome its numerous guests.

From Marmaris, the peninsula continues southwestward, dividing into two arms. To the west, an enchanting route leads to Datça, then to the ancient city of Knidos (also spelled Cnidus). The other branch, the Bozburun Peninsula, is less well-travelled: the archeological sites there have not yet been properly excavated.

East of Marmaris, another ancient city, Kaunos or **Caunus**, is also worth the visit. Like Ephesus, this Lycian city was once prosperous, but faded away once its port silted up. Among the traces that remain are the characteristic tombs that the Lycians carved directly into the cliffs.

One of the prettiest towns along the coast, **Antalya** is located where the border between Lycia and Pamphylia once ran. It's worth spending at least a few hours strolling in the old town to enjoy its mosques and minarets, its old port, and the fortifications that once protected it.

Antalya also boasts one of the finest archeological museums in the country. Several beaches are nearby.

Troy to Bodrum

The site discovered by Schliemann in 1868 was already inhabited in the third millennium B.C.E., well before the destruction of Troy (c. 1250 B.C.E.). After its fall, the city was held successively by the Persians, the Greeks under Alexander the Great, and the Roman. Today, Troy is a must-see archeological site.

Nearby to the south, the little town of Assos is worth a detour. The old town walls date to Ancient Greek times. There is also a charming little port, and the site is enchanting and surrounded by beaches.

A little farther south and a short distance inland, Bergama, in ancient times Pergamon, has welcomed visitors for 2,000 years. There are

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numerous sites to visit in Pergamon, though most are little more than ruins in various states of preservation. The city's acropolis contains temples to Zeus, Athene, and Dionysus.

İzmir (ancient Smyrna), 100 km south, is Turkey's third largest city. The big-city attitude of the locals sets them apart from the social fabric of the surrounding area. Tradition's hold is not as firm here, especially on the waterfront, lined with cafés, chic restaurants, and boutiques. The trendy bars are mostly concentrated in the Alsancak district.

Inland from İzmir, there seems to be nothing particularly special about the little town of Sart. But once, under the name of Sardis, it was the capital of the famous kingdom of Lydia. Its most famous monarch, Croesus, lived around 500 B.C.E. Colossally wealthy because of the gold in the nearby river Pactolus, he was said to have invented currency.

The main treasures of the Aegean coast, however, are back on the coast, 75 km south of İzmir. Between Selçuk and Efes lie the ruins of the ancient Ionian city of Ephesus. Its storied past included being the site of one of the Seven Wonders of the World, the temple of Artemis. Sadly, little remains.

Ephesus is ringed by several other ancient cities. Three of these, Nyssa, Aphrodisias, and Pamukkale, have the advantage of being slightly inland and therefore off the beaten path. The main attraction at Nyssa is an especially well preserved theatre. As its name indicates, Aphrodisias was above all a sanctuary to Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love. Her temple's columns still stand today. Pamukkale was made famous under the name of Hierapolis by its hot springs, which gave rise to a unique landscape: a sort of staircase of salt, each of whose "steps" is a turquoise pool.

On the coast just south of Ephesus is the seaside resort town of Kusadasi. Each year its hotels welcome tens of thousands of tourists. The Aegean coast concludes with the lovely seaside town of Bodrum. Once known as Halicarnassus, it was the site of the Mausoleum, another one of the Seven Wonders of the World. The city of Bodrum is surrounded with beaches and inlets, ideal for swimming, diving, and boat excursions.

Cappadocia

One of Turkey's most beautiful regions, Cappadocia seduces visitors with its majestic landscapes carved by an exceptionally complex geological history. Over time, erosion has sculpted a sumptuous array of canyons, hoodoos, and lush valleys. The region is still home to an impressive number of rock-hewn churches, many decorated with beautiful murals.

Since time immemorial, Avanos has been home to potters who collect

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	<p>the red silt from the river to make their earthenware. Ürgüp, centrally located and convenient as a base, is home to a cave city. Nearby Uçhisar is well worth a stop. Its isolated peak, strategically valuable and easy to defend, was once held by the Hittites. Over time, the mountain was carved into a Swiss cheese of cave dwellings. The sight is unbelievable.</p> <p>The region teems with architecturally remarkable churches and monasteries, each more beautifully decorated with paintings and mosaics than the last.</p> <p>Among the many worthy attractions, Göreme stands out both for its charm and its religious art; the open-air museum beside the town houses remarkably well-preserved murals. Zelve, a village whose inhabitants had to be relocated due to the risk of landslides, is now an ideal spot for explorers.</p>
<p>Distances</p>	<p>Turkey is a large country (34th largest in the world) and so the distances between cities can be significant. However, most of the places you are likely to visit are in the western half of the country, so this helps cut down the travel times. It is also possible to fly between cities in Turkey, with several low cost airlines.</p> <p>Istanbul to Ankara is 450km Ankara to Cappadocia is 320kms Cappadocia to Pamukkale is 620kms</p>
<p>Ferries</p>	<p>Istanbul City Ferry Lines, Sehir Hatlari Vapurlari runs commuter ferry service between Europe and Asia, and to the nearby Princes' Islands. A one-way fare to points within Greater Istanbul (not including the Princes' Islands, which is nominally higher) costs just over a Dollar.</p> <p>The faster seabuses are run by the Istanbul Deniz Otobüsleri www.ido.com.tr and provide convenient service to the Asian side plus the Marmara Islands, Bursa, and Yalova. A one-way fare, for example, from Kabatas to Bostanci is \$4.</p> <p>The ferry that takes the time-honored cruise up the Bosphorus leaves from Eminönü, making stops at Besiktas (near Dolmabahçe Palace and the Çiragan Palace) on its crisscross pattern up the channel and costs \$10 round-trip, which makes this one of the great travel bargains of the world to my mind! The ferry departs daily at 10:35am and 1:35pm from mid-April through November or December.</p> <p>Long-distance ferries or the faster seabuses provide transportation to the Princes' Islands (from Eminönü and Kabatas) and to points along the southern coast of the Marmara Sea. If you're interested in traveling by car to cities along the Marmara region (for example, Bursa, Çanakkale, Izmir, and points south), the easiest and quickest way is to take a car ferry or seabus from Yenikapi to Güzelyali or Mudanya (for Bursa) or Bandirma (for Çanakkale and the Northern Aegean). The trip takes 75 minutes and 1 hour, 45 minutes respectively.</p>

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<p>Trains</p>	<p>On July 25, 2014, the Istanbul (Pendik)-Ankara high-speed line made its first ceremonial run. It was opened for regular service on July 26, 2014. Trains make the journey on the 533-km Istanbul-Ankara route in about 3.5 hours, challenging the current monopoly held by airlines on such rapid transport between Turkey's two largest cities. Fares are about TL70 one-way/single for adults, half price for children from 1 to 12 years of age, free for infants.</p> <p>In Istanbul, high-speed trains to Eskişehir and Ankara currently originate not at historic Haydarpaşa Gar, but at Pendik, a station about 35 km east of Haydarpaşa near Sabiha Gökçen Airport.</p>
<p>Car Rental</p>	<p>Driving through Turkey is a great way to travel independently with the utmost of freedom. This is even more the case now that the road conditions have improved dramatically in recent years. Turkey has been pouring investment into road infrastructure, including the establishment of the multilane toll roads around Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir and the widening of major provincial thoroughfares. In fact, except for the road signs (which on the toll collection booths are now also in English), you'll almost think you were driving in Europe. All major international car rental companies are available in Turkey.</p>
<p>Buses</p>	<p>In big cities like Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, and Antalya, municipal buses provide a cheap way to get around, if you can actually figure out how. Destinations are posted on the windshield, but it's always a good idea to ask the driver if he's going your way before getting on. Getting on in the middle of a bus route can be confusing, but there's always the ubiquitous good Samaritan there to steer you in the right direction. In Istanbul the modern green buses are for commuters with debit tokens only, while the old orange buses are for everybody else; tickets can be purchased from the cashier onboard.</p> <p>Long-distance buses are an integral part of the Turkish culture, probably because there are often few alternatives for inter-city travel other than renting a car. The major bus companies in Turkey are Ulusoy www.ulusoy.com.tr/eng , Varan www.varanturizm.com , Kamil Koç www.kamilkoc.com.tr , Uludag, Metro, and Pamukkale www.pamukkaleturizm.com.tr</p>
<p>Dolmus</p>	<p>Another popular and economic way of getting around is the dolmus, essentially a minivan with passenger seats. The best description of these little group taxis is in the translation: dolmus in English means "stuffed."</p> <p>The dolmus follows a set route, stopping and starting to pick up passengers until no one else will fit in it. The main stops are posted on the windshield and you pay according to the distance that you go, usually under 75¢. This system works well in and around small towns; drivers will politely honk as they drive to see if you want to get on, and</p>

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	<p>routes are direct to the places you want to go. In major metropolitan areas such as Istanbul, the process is a bit more complicated, even for the locals. The best way to avoid an inner-city trip to nowhere is to board at one of the dolmus stands marked by a blue "D" and take it to the final destination (preferably the same destination as yours). Fares are usually posted and rarely exceed \$3 per ride. It's also acceptable to pay the driver before you get off, so you can enjoy a bit of spontaneity as well. Dolmuses stop running in the early evening, so in the outlying areas, make sure you've got a way back to the hotel.</p>
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ACCOMMODATION TYPES	<p>Thanks to the recent explosion in popularity of tourism to Turkey, there are now choices of accommodation in all categories, from the most simple guest houses to the grandest five star hotels.</p>
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LIFESTYLES	
Kids	<p>Turks love kids, making travel with one a delight for all involved. And kids seem to love scrambling around ancient ruins, exploring underground cisterns (especially the ones with water in them!); kids even get carried away in the Grand Bazaar. Almost all tourist services (hotels, ferryboats) offer some kind of discount for children, usually 50% of the full price for children 6 to 12, while kids under 6 generally get loads of freebies.</p>
Teens	<p>What self-respecting Teen wouldn't have an amazing time exploring Turkey? Istanbul has the exotic markets, underground cisterns of past empires, ferries up the Bosphorus and bridges spanning two continents. Elsewhere, there are many opportunities for soft adventure, from balloon rides over Ankara to white water rafting in Cappadocia and every kind of watersport on the Aegean and Mediterranean coasts. But the most unique adventure that I remember from my teen years in Turkey was exploring the remarkable Underground City of Kaymakli – multiple levels and labyrinthine passageways deep underground where once 20,000 people lived.</p>
Romance and Honeymoons	<p>My tip for the most romantic experience in Turkey? A cruise along the southern coast on an old wooden Gulet boat – see "The Blue Voyage" below.</p>
Zoomers	<p>The extra time that many Zoomers have available is a blessing in a country that has so much to offer visitors. This is a place to take your time and let the history and culture of the centuries seep into your blood. The people are very friendly and often have a good command of English, so communication is possible too.</p>

UNIQUES	
Surprising	<p>Istanbul is the only city in the world located on two continents, Europe and Asia.</p>

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	<p>The oldest known human settlement in the world is located in Catalhoyuk, Konya, Turkey, dating back to 6500 BC.</p> <p>Two of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World stood in Turkey. The Temple of Artemis in Ephesus and the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus in Bodrum.</p> <p>Turkey introduced coffee to Europe.</p> <p>The first coins were minted in Sardis, the capital of the Ancient Kingdom of Lydia, at the end of seventh century BC.</p>
History	<p>Turks began migrating into the area now called Turkey in the 11th century. The process was greatly accelerated by the Seljuk victory over the Byzantine Empire at the Battle of Manzikert. Several small beyliks and the Seljuk Sultanate of Rûm ruled Anatolia until the Mongol Empire's invasion. Starting from the 13th century, the Ottoman beylik united Anatolia and created an empire encompassing much of Southeastern Europe, Western Asia and North Africa.</p> <p>After the Ottoman Empire collapsed following its defeat in World War I, parts of it were occupied by the victorious Allies. A cadre of young military officers, led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, organized a successful resistance to the Allies; in 1923, they established the modern Republic of Turkey with Atatürk as its first president.</p>
Books	<p>Frommer's Turkey, is an invaluable guide to the best of Turkey. It focuses on the area and sights that you are most likely to visit and provides excellent background information for your trip as well as up to date planning information on hotels and restaurants. They also have a separate guide just for Istanbul.</p> <p>If you are a history buff, I highly recommend John Julius Norwich's epic and magisterial coverage of the Byzantine Empire from its birth to its fall in the fifteenth century: Byzantium. Give yourself plenty of time to read the three volumes – you will not be disappointed! And look at for the lovely edition from the Folio Society: http://www.foliosociety.com/book/BYZ/byzantium</p>
1000 Places to See Before You Die	<p>Lots to choose from in this destination:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Roman ruins of Ephesus The Covered Bazaar, Istanbul Hagia Sophia, Istanbul Kariye Museum, Istanbul Mosque of Suleiman the Magnificent The Pera Palace Hotel, Istanbul Topkapi Palace, Istanbul

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	<p>The Whirling Dervishes of Konya The Blue Voyage, Bodrum and Marmaris Pamukkale Cappadocia</p>
UNESCO World Heritage Sites	<p>Turkey has 15 UNESCO World Heritage sites from the well-known (Istanbul and Troy) to the undiscovered (Hattusha and Safranbolu):</p> <p>Great Mosque and Hospital of Divriği (1985), Göreme National Park and the Rock Sites of Cappadocia (1985), Historic Areas of Istanbul (1985), Hattusha, the Hittite Capital (1986), Nemrut Mountain (1987), Hierapolis-Pamukkale (1988), Xanthos-Letoon (1988), City of Safranbolu (1994), Archaeological Site of Troy (1998), Selimiye Mosque and its Social Complex (2011), Neolithic Site of Çatalhöyük (2012), Pergamon and its Multi-Layered Cultural Landscape (2014), Bursa and Cumalıkızık: the Birth of the Ottoman Empire (2014), Diyarbakır Fortress and Hevsel Gardens Cultural Landscape (2015) Ephesus (2015).</p>
Must Sees	<p>The Blue Voyage Sailing along the Turkish Mediterranean coastline is one of the highlights of any trip to Turkey, and in some cases, the only way to visit the small fishing villages and islands of the southwestern coast (see above as one of the 1000 Places to Se Before You Die). The traditional Turkish sea excursion is either by the traditional wooden broad-beamed gulet, or sleek yacht cruiser. Hiring a private yacht (or bareboat charter) is a popular choice for those with sailing proficiency and a taste for independence and adventure. Captained yachts are also available as an option. But so are captained and crewed gulets, which typically accommodate 8 to 12 people (or more) and come equipped with many modern conveniences. The most popular gulet cruises depart from Marmaris and ply the waters to Fethiye and back, stopping at (conditions permitting) Cleopatra's Baths, Dalyan, Kaunos, Istuzu Beach, and Ölüdeniz. See if you can get your agent to book you an excursion out of Marmaris in the opposite direction (to Datça) or start in Finike and loiter around Kekova Bay. Weeklong gulet cruises commonly depart on Sunday mornings (boarding Sat nights) and last 1 week, although it's also possible to arrange mini-cruises departing from anywhere your heart desires. A typical weeklong Blue Voyage will run you anywhere from \$500 and up per person. Meals are usually included, but all drinks are extra. Boats</p>

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	<p>may come equipped with air-conditioning, but even on a private and comparatively luxurious boat, the generator, and thus the A/C, gets shut down at night.</p> <p>This is simply a magical way to spend a week in Turkey!</p>
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<p>SPORTS ACTIVITIES</p>	<p>The most popular sport in Turkey is football. Turkey's top teams include Galatasaray, Fenerbahçe and Beşiktaş. In 2000, Galatasaray cemented its role as a major European club by winning the UEFA Cup and UEFA Super Cup. Two years later the Turkish national team finished third in the 2002 World Cup Finals in Japan and South Korea, while in 2008 the national team reached the semi-finals of the UEFA Euro 2008 competition. The Atatürk Olympic Stadium in Istanbul hosted the 2005 UEFA Champions League Final, while the Şükrü Saracoğlu Stadium in Istanbul hosted the 2009 UEFA Cup Final.</p>
<p>Golf</p>	<p>A relatively new phenomenon in Turkey, the game of golf is now catching like wildfire. There are now over 20 courses in the country with some around Istanbul, but the majority on the southern coast in the Antalya area.</p> <p>Several clubs have created their very own sweet spot along the shores east of Antalya, in the secluded hills of Belek. You can book in advance by contacting the golf clubs individually.</p> <p>The most popular of the Antalya courses is the PGA Sultan Course at the Antalya Golf Club, in Belek www.antalyagolfclub.com.tr , a par-71, 450 yd "challenge" designed by European Golf Design and David Jones. Greens fees range from \$60 to \$80, depending on the season. Golfers under 16 play for 50% off.</p> <p>The Gloria Golf Club was the first and only resort to have its very own golf course. Michel Gayon is responsible for the design of two 18-hole championship courses; there's also a 3-hole practice course for beginners. Greens fees start at \$60.</p> <p>The 27-hole Nick Faldo Course at Cornelia Golf Club www.corneliagolfresort.com opened in 2006. It's got a dune ridge running through the course, and there are three different 18-hole combinations. Greens fees range from \$90 to \$150, depending on the season.</p> <p>The golf-obsessed may also want to check into the Kempinski Hotel The Dome www.kempinski-antalya.com , sister property to the esteemed Çiragan Palace in Istanbul. It's a palatial retreat with two PGA-endorsed courses, and plenty of luxurious tidbits (including a decadent spa, beach, and kids' club) for non-golfing companions.</p>

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<p>Fishing</p>	<p>Fishing can be done without a license in most areas as long as you're an amateur. Latest details concerning fishing zones, the minimum sizes of fish that can be caught, and the numbers of fish that can be caught per person, can be obtained from the Department of Fisheries at the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs. Especially Aegean and Mediterranean seas are rich fishing areas.</p> <p>Enjoy a relaxing fishing holiday in the exquisite Turkish countryside. Fish from the shore of a gorgeous lake, or take a boat and experience fishing at its best. You may even catch a monster catfish, or a bream or any one of the numerous varieties that live in the lake here at their location in Koycegiz. Everything is here for you, from taxis to tackle through to food and floats. http://www.fishinginturkey.co.uk</p>
<p>Kayaking and Rafting</p>	<p>The mountainous geography and numerous rivers in the Antalya region create exhilarating white-water rafting appropriate to all levels. The Manavgat River flows through a series of lengthy gorges, but the grades 4 and 5 rapids are accessible to experienced paddlers only. The Köprü River, located halfway between Antalya and Side with Grade 1 and Grade 3 rapids, is no less breathtaking but a bit more suitable to beginners. This is an ideal family day out, even if you have no experience whatsoever. Medraft Turizm, in Antalya www.medraft.com , organizes day trips for all levels, with top professional and experienced guides, from \$50 per person per day, including transfer, a full day on the water, and lunch.</p>
<p>Hiking</p>	<p>Kate Clow, a British woman based in Antalya, turned a labour of love into a hiker's dream. She's mapped and marked a comprehensive network of ancient dirt roads and blissfully solitary footpaths. The first long-distance trail, called the Lykia Yolu (Lycian Way), connects Antalya and Fethiye; Kate has created a companion guide to go along with it. The second network of trails begins along the coast around Antalya and heads over the Toros Mountains into the Lakeland around Egirdir and on up to Antioch in Pisidia, in some cases trodding the ancient Roman roads used by St. Paul on his missionary journeys through Asia Minor. For more on the trails or for information on trekking trips, log on to www.lycianway.com or www.stpaultrail.com .</p> <p>If you want to rough it just a little less, Medraft Turizm in Antalya www.medraft.com , runs 3-day jeep "safaris" up into the Toros Mountains above Antalya, with overnights in their own mountain lodge.</p>
<p>Ballooning</p>	<p>Hot Air Balloon rides can be taken daily over Cappadocia. Each flight is a fantastic experience as you float intimately amongst the fairy chimneys and soar over the magnificent Cappadocian landscape. They usually carry between 6 and 20 passengers and depart very early in the morning to catch the sunrise and gentle winds, lasting for about 1-1.5 hours.</p>

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<p>Diving</p>	<p>In addition to a wide variety of colorful plant and sea life, the Gulf of Antalya is also a graveyard for several unlucky World War II fighter planes and at least one groundbreaking shipwreck. Maybe the Meltem, the winds that blow in from the Caucasus or the rocky coastline have something to do with it, but the results are some of the most fascinating dive sites along the coast. Dive concessions are on-site at all the major hotels and resorts all up and down the region's coastline. You don't have to be a guest to sign up but a day's notice is generally necessary. Yunus Diving, located within the Beach Park on Konyaalti Beach, offers a 2-hour discovery dive, 2-hour licensed dives, and wreck dives starting from around \$35; not including equipment rental but including the oxygen tank.</p>
<p>CULTURE</p>	<p>Turkish culture developed by absorbing the artistic traditions of conquered lands, so more than any one defining style, the Turkish arts are characterized by layers and layers of complexity. From the time the Turkish tribes spread through Anatolia in the 11th century until the end of the Ottoman Empire, the Turks had incorporated decorative and architectural styles from the Sassanids (a pre-Islamic Persian dynasty), the Romans, the early Christians, the Byzantines, and Renaissance-era Europeans.</p>
<p>Arts</p>	<p>Built originally as an opera house, Atatürk Cultural Centre (AKM) in Taksim Square houses the Istanbul State Opera and Ballet, the Symphony Orchestra, and the State Theatre Company. Tickets are absurdly low at \$6 to \$15 and are usually available for purchase in the month of, as well as the day of, the performance. During the summer months, AKM hosts the Istanbul Arts Festival, but because of high demand, tickets may be hard to come by. For a schedule of performances log onto www.mymerhaba.com for upcoming events.</p> <p>A new classical venue for the Istanbul State Opera and Ballet is the restored Süreyya Pasa building in Kadıköy, designed by Süreyya Ilmen between 1924 and 1927 as an opera house. The restoration took 2 years and was completed in 2007, and now the Kadıköy Municipality Süreyya Opera House will host three performances a week of the Istanbul State Opera and Ballet. There is a box-office on-site, but tickets can also be purchased at the Atatürk Cultural Center. The season schedule features some of opera's best-loved works, plus a number of new Turkish ones. For more information, log onto www.idobale.com.</p>
<p>Music</p>	<p>Much like the art, architecture, and even food of Turkey, Turkish music blends a wide range of styles and cultures, from Anatolian troubadours on horseback to the commercially successful tunes of arabesque at the top of the charts. Different combinations of styles and genres have given rise to countless new sounds that despite being modern still</p>

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	<p>sound unfamiliar to a Western ear untrained in Eastern modes. An irregular meter called aksak, typical to Turkish folk music that originated on the Asian steppes, may sound strange to ears trained on the regular cadences of double, triple, and 4/4 time.</p> <p>Folk music endures in the rural villages of Turkey and is a regular feature at wedding celebrations, circumcision ceremonies, and as part of a bar or cafe's lineup of canli muzik (live music).</p> <p>Classical Turkish music began as the music of the Ottoman court, and in an empire composed of a patchwork of cultures, the top composers were Greeks, Armenians, and Jews. Turkish classical music has its origins in the Persian and Arabic traditions, and eventually, the music of the Mevlevi became a major source as well.</p> <p>Military music had an important role in the successes of the Ottoman Empire, with its thunderous use of percussion aimed at demoralizing an enemy before battle. The Janissary band influenced 18th- and 19th-century European music, in alla turca movements written by Mozart and Beethoven, and operas written by Lully and Handel.</p> <p>Pop music took hold of Turkey in the 1950s and 1960s, much as it swept the Western world. But pop in Turkey took on a different form, first with the popularity of the tango in the 1950s, and then with the re-recording of Western favorites using Turkish lyrics. It wasn't long before Turkish musicians began composing their own forms of pop. In the 1970s, as the rural population began to migrate to the cities in search of their fortunes, a widely disparaged form of music called arabesque swept the nation off its feet, with the sounds of unrequited love, sentimentality, and even fatalism. Arabesque was a fusion of the new pop, folk, and traditional music that developed into a new and highly commercial style; today, these both exotic and catchy phrases blare from every taxicab, long-distance bus, and discothèque.</p>
<p>Films</p>	<p>A number of well known films have used Turkey as their setting, including:</p> <p>Troy Critics say a buff-Brad-Pitt makes this 2004 film epic what it is. It has put Troy on the tourist map the way Gallipoli did for Gallipoli.</p> <p>Gallipoli Based on Alan Moorhead's book of the same name, this Australian movie (1981) changed Turkey's Gallipoli battlefields from a sleepy backwater into a major tourist destination.</p> <p>Topkapi A motley group of clever but bumbling thieves (Melina Mercouri, Peter Ustinoff, Maximilian Schell, Robert Morley) steal the emerald dagger</p>

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	<p>from the treasury of Topkapi Palace (1961). Great scenes of Istanbul in the late 1950s, a very different city from today.</p> <p>From Russia With Love Classic James Bond flick (1963) has some good scenes of Istanbul, particularly the famous one in Yerebatan Sarayi (Sunken Palace Cistern) before it was restored.</p>
<p>Museums</p>	<p>The Istanbul Archaeology Museum is housed in three buildings just inside the first court of Topkapi Palace and includes the Museum of the Ancient Orient (first building on your left) and the Çinili Köşk (opposite the entrance to the main building).</p> <p>The museum houses over one million objects, the most extraordinary of which are the sarcophagi that date back as far as the 4th century B.C. The museum excels, however, in its rich chronological collection of locally found artifacts that shed light on the origins and history of the city. Near the entrance is a statue of a lion from the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus. In the halls to the left is a collection of sarcophagi found at Sidon (ancient Syria), representing various architectural styles influenced by outside cultures including Egypt, Phoenicia, and Lycia. The most famous is the Alexander Sarcophagus, covered with astonishingly advanced carvings of battles and the life of Alexander the Great, discovered in 1887. Found in the same necropolis at Sidon is the stunningly preserved Sarcophagus of the Crying Women, with 18 intricately carved panels showing figures of women in extreme states of mourning. Don't miss the monumental Lycian tomb, carved in a style befitting a great king and just as impressive in this exhibit as on the hills of Lycia. Farther on is the recently inaugurated Northern Wing, which rescues from storage a stunning collection of monumental sarcophagi and partially reconstructed temple freizes.</p> <p>The newly renovated and reopened Museum of the Ancient Orient is an exceptionally rich collection of artifacts from the earliest civilizations of Anatolia, Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Arab continent. The tour begins with pre-Islamic divinities and idols taken from the courtyard of the Al-Ula temple, along with artifacts showing ancient Aramaic inscriptions and a small collection of Egyptian antiquities. Although the individual exhibits are modest in size, the recent upgrade rivals Ankara's archaeological museum for organization and presentation.</p> <p>With nothing dating more recent than the 1st century A.D., it's a real challenge to find something in this museum that is not of enormous significance. But two of the highlights are easily the fragments of the 13th-century-B.C. sphinx from the Yarkapi Gate at Hattusas and one of the three known tablets of the Treaty of Kadesh, the oldest recorded peace treaty signed between Ramses II and the Hittites in the 13th century B.C., inscribed in Akkadian, the international language of the</p>

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	<p>era.</p> <p>Across from the Archaeology Museum is the Çinili Kösk, a wonderful pavilion of turquoise ceramic tiles whose facade displays eye-catching blue and white calligraphy. The mansion was originally built by Mehmet the Conqueror as a hunting pavilion, and now more appropriately houses the Museum of Turkish Ceramics. The museum, which is closed more often than not, contains a modest collection of Anatolian and Selçukian tiles, not the least of which is the 14th-century mihrab from the Ibrahim Bey mosque in Karaman in central Anatolia. Other highlights include some fine samples from Iznik and Kütahya, the two most important production centers for pottery, porcelain, and ceramics during the Ottoman period.</p> <p>Military Museum, Istanbul: Feared, respected, and loathed for 500 years, the Ottoman warrior was the brick on which the Ottoman dynasty was built. Indeed, it was the rising influence of industry and economics over combat and conquest that contributed to the ultimate downfall of the empire. Since war plays a pivotal role in the history and culture of Turkey, no visit to Turkey would be complete without a stopover at the Military Museum. The Mehter Concert is a startlingly powerful musical performance re-creates the traditional military band of the Janissaries, the elite Ottoman corps abolished when their power became too great. The musical arrangement is an unexpectedly organized cacophony of sounds that, preceding the approaching army, also served to instill terror in the opposing army.</p> <p>The exhibit, housed in the former military academy where Atatürk received his education, contains a chronological and functional assemblage of artifacts of warfare from the Ottoman era through World War II. The exhibit is anything but dull, showcasing chain mail and bronze armor for both cavalry and horses, leather and metalwork costumes, hand-sewn leather and arrow bags, swords engraved with fruit and flower motifs or Islamic inscriptions, and even a petroleum-driven rifle. Not to be missed is the hall of tents, an unanticipated display of in situ elaborately embroidered and silk encampment tents used on war expeditions.</p>
<p>Festivals</p>	<p>Turkey is full of festivals throughout the year – here are some suggestions for the summer months from our friends at Frommer's:</p> <p>June</p> <p>Antalya Sand Sculpture Exhibition. Several dozen sand-sculpture artists convene from more than 14 countries to create temporary fantasies of oriental lore in sand. The exhibition takes place at a beach to be determined annually. For information, log on to www.prosandart.com .</p>

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Mid-June through September.

Aspendos Opera and Ballet Festival. Live performances in the spectacular (now open-air) Theatre of Aspendos, the best-preserved theater of antiquity. June through July.

International Istanbul Music Festival. This world-class festival features big names in classical, opera, and ballet. Past artists have included La Scala Philharmonic, the Royal Coconcertgebouw Orchestra, the Tokyo String Quartet, Itzhak Perlman, Idil Biret, and Burhan Öçal. For schedules and tickets, contact the Istanbul Foundation for Culture & the Arts (www.istfest.org). Mid-June to mid-July.

International Izmir Festival. Not to be outdone by either Istanbul's numerous international festivals or the popular draw of Antalya's Aspendos Theatre venue, Izmir has proudly sponsored its own artistic extravaganza for more than 20 years. A sampling of past feature productions include Sophocles's Electra, performed at the Celsus Library at Ephesus; the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra performance at Ephesus's Great Theatre; and the Izmir State Classical Turkish Music Chorus singing at the Alaçati open-air theatre in Çesme. Tickets can be purchased at a number of box offices in Izmir, Bodrum, and Çesme; for information go to www.iksev.org. Mid-June to mid-July.

Kirkpinar Oil Wrestling Tournaments, Edirne (Sarayıçi) and in villages around the country. This revered national sport involves the fittest of Turkish youth and astonishing amounts of olive oil to prevent the opponent from getting a good grip. The event is usually accompanied by a colorful market and fair. Late June/early July.

July

Cabotage Day. This maritime festival commemorates the establishment of Turkey's sea borders. Major ports with marinas usually celebrate with yacht races and swimming competitions. For more information, contact the Tourist Information Office of the town you will be visiting. July 1.

International Jazz Festival, Istanbul. Performances are held at various locations around the city. For schedules, dates, and tickets, contact the Istanbul Foundation for Culture & the Arts (www.istfest.org).

Folklore and Music Festival, Bursa. One of Turkey's best folk-dancing events of the year, this festival features dance groups from around the country, lasts 1 week, and includes concerts and crafts displays. Last 2 weeks in June through first week in July.

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August

Assumption of the Virgin Mary, Ephesus. A special Mass conducted by the archbishop of Izmir celebrates the Assumption at the house of Mary. August 15.

Zafer Bayrami (Victory Day). This national holiday commemorates the decisive victory over the invading Greek armies during the War of Independence in 1922. Parades run through the main streets, and if you go soon, you may still brush elbows with some surviving vets. August 30.

International Ballet Festival, Bodrum. "Easy on the eyes" is an understatement when referring to the open-air dance performances staged under the warm glow of the night-lit castle of St. Peter. The annual festival hosts troupes from around the globe. Ticket sellers are ubiquitous on concert days; for advance information contact the Bodrum tourist office (www.devoperable.gov.tr/bodrum.html). Last 2 weeks in August.

International Mountain Biking Festival, Cappadocia. The Delta Bike Club celebrates the marriage of bicycles and monastic pathways with their annual mountain festival. The setting offers unbeatable peaks and valleys formed of ancient volcanic tufa, and various levels of difficulty (www.deltabisiklet.com). End of August.

September

Seker Bayrami (or Ramadan Barami) is a 3-day celebration punctuating the end of Ramadan. The evening revelry reaches its peak during the last 3 evenings. Presents and sweets are given to the children (seker means sugar in Turkish), and the Turkish Delight industry makes a killing.

October

Akbank Jazz Festival. This 2-week-long festival brings the blues simultaneously to Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir. Now in its 17th season, the festival hosts world-renowned performers in the cities' most atmospheric venues (www.akbanksanat.com). Last 2 weeks in October.

Golden Orange Film Festival. For 44 years, Antalya has been the host of the Altin Portakal (Golden Orange) Film Festivali, Turkey's version of the Oscars. But with the 2005 inauguration of the Eurasia Film Festival, the combined event has made international waves and attracted the

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	<p>likes of Francis Ford Coppola, Sophie Marceau, and Miranda Richardson (www.altinportakal.org.tr). Mid-October to mid-November.</p> <p>Cumhuriyet Bayrami (Republic Day). This event celebrates the proclamation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923. Parades, public speeches, and firework displays are just a few of the organized events, but the Turks do their own celebrating as well. October 29.</p>
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ATTRACTIONS	
<p>Beaches</p>	<p>Here are the top 10 beaches Turkey has to offer to make the perfect summer memory:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bodrum/ Ortakent: On the southwest tip of the Aegean coast is Bodrum, known as the St. Tropez of Turkey for its seaside resorts and inexhaustible nightlife. Lying mid-way along the Bodrum peninsula, Ortakent Yahsı is the place for a relaxed family holiday with plenty of dining, entertainment and watersports from wake-boarding to kayaking and sailing. The crystal-clear waters quietly lapping onto the region's countless bays, coves and beaches like the town beach at the base of St. Peter's Castle belie the region's history as the land of Herodotus, of the Knights Templar, and of the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. 2. Cesme Alaçati: Near the tip of the Çesme Peninsula, Cesme Alaçati is one of Turkey's up-and-coming vacation havens. Visitors come for the charming old stone houses on narrow streets lined with sidewalk cafes, restaurants and boutiques. The small beach at Alaçati opens to a wind-swept bay ideal for windsurfers. Nearby on the Çesme Peninsula is Ilica, where thermal spring waters bubble up under the sand, allowing visitors to steep in hot springs while immersed in the sea. 3. Ölüdeniz: Considered one of the top five beaches in the world, Ölüdeniz is cocooned by a steep ridge of mountains where paragliders leap from the peaks down into Kelebek Vadisi (Butterfly Valley), known for its annual hatching of the rare tiger butterfly. 4. Marmaris: One of Turkey's most popular summer destinations, Marmaris' towering mountains frame beautiful bays and offshore islands. The jewel in the Marmaris' coastal crown is Akyaka beach, which sits at the head of the bay of Gokova and is backed by pine-clad hills and eucalyptus groves. 5. Patara Beach: The longest beach in the Mediterranean with a sandy shoreline extending more than 18 kms with mountains at each

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end and sand dunes along its length. Patara is one of the principal cities of Lycia, whose visitors included Apollo, Alexander, Vespasian, Hadrian, St. Paul and St. Nicholas, better known as Santa Claus.

6. **Olympos Beach:** Famed for its tree house accommodations, Olympos Beach has been on the backpacker trail for years and is fast attracting more visitors to the 5 kms sweep of beach lined by fir trees and surrounded by an amphitheatre of mountains, including the 8,000-foot peak of Mt. Olympos.

7. **Kaputas:** On the road between Kalkan and Kas, the beach at Kaputas spreads out at the base of a gorge where fresh water mixes with the turquoise sea at a place that can only be accessed by descending 200 steps down the cliff face. From there, beachgoers can swim to the sea caves of Güvercin Mağarası and Mavi Mağara, and waterside rocks that act as natural diving boards into the tranquil sea.

8. **Hisaronu Bay:** On a forested hillside along a turquoise coast, Hisaronu Bay has two small beaches that look out towards the Datca Peninsula. With a permanent breeze along the coast, the beaches are popular for water sports by day and restaurants, bars and shops by night.

9. **Iztuzu Beach:** Millennia of sand deposited at the mouth of the Dalyan River has formed the sandbar of Iztuzu Beach. Accessible only by a fleet of pontoon taxis plying the reed-lined river from the village center to the delta, the beach forms a natural barrier between the fresh water delta of the Dalyan River and the Mediterranean Sea – where thermal springs and mud baths are said to heal diseases and beautify the skin.

10. **Kilyos:** Offering respite from the crowds of Istanbul, the sandy stretch at Kilyos on the Black Sea is best-known for its beautiful beaches and coves, modern hotels and restaurants as well as summer entertainment and water sports such as beach concerts, kite surfing, and windsurfing.

Antalya on the south coast is perhaps the most popular area, so here are some recommendations for this beautiful destination...

A favorite beach destination for residents of Antalya is **Konyaalti**, a long stretch of pristine pebble beach backed by a meandering promenade chock-full of activities, including playgrounds and Aqualand, Antalya's largest water park. Kids will particularly enjoy Dolphinland, where you

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	<p>can smile in wonder along with your little ones, and for an extra \$65 you can swim with the dolphins. The whole complex has been dubbed Antalya Beach Park; it features 10 beach "clubs", swaths of waterfront brightly equipped with lounges and umbrellas, and serviced by cafes, restaurants, changing cabins, and showers. Beach admission fees vary from about \$4 to \$8 per day and include use of the facilities. Most of the beach establishments have a water sports centre, with jet skis for rent by the quarter-hour, parasailing, ringo rides, water-skiing, kayaks, sea bikes, and windsurfing, to name a few. As the sun sets, beach clubs morph into stylish outdoor nightclubs, providing cushions and lounges for lots of posing and draping, and an atmosphere of high style and frivolity.</p> <p>The sandy Lara Beach stretches along the coast in the opposite direction, a little over 11km east of downtown. Minibuses (nos. 18, 30, or 77) pass along the beachfront after about a half-hour or 45-minute ride and it's a lovely long stretch of sand that extend the length of Lara.</p> <p>Freshwater springs gushing off the mountains have found several awe-inspiring outlets in and around Antalya - a great place for a bracing, high-pressure shower. Located below Mermerli Park at the eastern end of Kaleiçi is Memerli Plaj (entrance through the Memerli Restaurant), a miniature beach backed by the ancient sea walls. An icy spring shoots out of the rock at the end of the beach. With a little more time, head over to the Lower Düden Waterfalls, on the road to Lara Beach, where the waters plunge straight into the sea. Alternately, go an additional 13km to the Upper Düden Waterfalls, unique because you can walk behind the cascade.</p> <p>Farther west is the ancient port city of Phaselis nestled amid the pine trees on the edge of three pristine and scenic bays. Plan to spend the day to wade in the waters and wander through the main streets, agoras, baths, and temples of this enchanting ancient city.</p>
<p>Wildlife</p>	<p>The country is filled with fauna similar to that of the Balkans: bears, lynxes, wild boar, deer, chamois, otters, foxes, camels, buffaloes and a handful of increasingly rare leopards. You will more likely come across horses, goats and sheep watched by a very powerful shepherd dog, the kangal. This breed is strictly controlled and its exportation licenced. This is equally the case with the famous Van cat, a cat with white fur and heterochromic eyes (one green and the other blue). Different species of snakes, lizards and salamanders also thrive here.</p> <p>The birdlife is of an astounding diversity, with a multitude of raptors, including the majestic eagles and vultures. Migratory species fly over Anatolia twice a year: cranes, storks, countless raptors (black kite,</p>

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	<p>vultures, hawks and eagles). The south-east of Anatolia (Birecik, Sanli Urfa) is the only region in the world where you will find the last few ibises (Kelaynak) thriving in the vestiges of Ancient Egypt.</p> <p>Some species of the marine fauna, such as the Mediterranean seal and the Caretta turtle, have sought refuge in the crystalline waters of the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas. Surrounded by four seas (the Black, Marmara, Aegean and Mediterranean Seas), Turkey is home to an impressive range of fish. Several species of bream, sea wolf (lüfer), red mullet, and other Mediterranean species thrive in its waters, in addition to the hamsi (a type of anchovy) found in the Black Sea, which is one of the most prized dishes of the Turkish people.</p>
<p>Parks</p>	<p>In terms of scenic beauty rich in flora and fauna, or areas of great historical importance, Turkey's 33 official national parks are of great interest to visitors. In addition there are 16 areas which have been recognised as natural parks or nature reserves, which are valued for their aesthetic, botanical and scientific value and their cultural and natural qualities preserved. These natural areas can provide a welcome break from the busy atmosphere of Turkey's cities and resorts.</p> <p>http://www.goturkey.com/en/pages/read/naturalparks</p> <p>The Olympos - Bey Mountains National Park in the province of Antalya in the Mediterranean region, for example, contains a wealth of flora and fauna, which are either endemic or relic distributions, in addition to important archaeological ruins.</p> <p>The Köprülü Canyon National Park in the same province is the home of Cupressus sempervirens forests. Natural forests of this tree no longer occur elsewhere in the world. In addition to its archaeological and geological treasures, this park also contains a large number of endemic plants and rare animal species.</p> <p>Although the majority of the national parks are found in forest lands, there are also a number which are established in areas where steppe-type vegetation predominates. Examples are Munzur Valley (eastern Anatolia), Baskomutan, Göreme, Bogazköy - Alacahöyük (all in Central Anatolia), and Nemrut Mountain (Eastern Anatolia - Adiyaman). Among the national parks, perhaps the best known is Kuscenneti National Park, one of the many prime quality wetlands in Turkey and located in the southern zone of the Marmara area.</p>
<p>Gardens</p>	<p>Istanbul has many gardens offering a degree of tranquility in the busy city:</p> <p>Gulhane Park: This lovely park is nestled right beneath Topkapi Palace, outside the palace walls. The tree-lined walking paths are stately and wide, and the flower beds and blooming shrubbery are</p>

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	<p>lovely. It's a long park, with walls running the length and large ancient gates on either end.</p> <p>Emirgan Park is a lovely place to spend some time in greenery away from the city. It overlooks the Bosphorus in the suburb of Emirgan. The park, one of the largest in Istanbul, has lovely gardens, a grotto, fountains, quiet picnic areas, and three restaurants housed in former Ottoman Palaces. One, open only during the summer, is a branch of a well-regarded restaurant in the central city. The park includes playgrounds and a checker/chess area for children where pint-sized seating and chess boards surround a super-sized, walk-on board with giant chess pieces. The Sakip Sabanci Museum is located just outside the park In the spring the park hosts a tulip festival.</p>
<p>Historical Sites</p>	<p>Yerebatan Cistern (Yerebatan Sarnici), Istanbul One of my favourite sights in Istanbul... Classical music echoing off the still water and the seductive lighting make your descent into the "Sunken Palace" seem like a scene out of Phantom of the Opera. The only thing missing is a rowboat, which was an actual means of transportation before the boardwalk was installed in what is now essentially a great underground fishpond and stunning historical artifact. The cistern was first constructed by Constantine and enlarged to its present form by Justinian after the Nika Revolt using 336 marble columns recycled from the Hellenistic ruins in and around the Bosphorus. The water supply, routed from reservoirs around the Black Sea and transported via the Aqueduct of Valens, served as a backup for periods of drought or siege. It was left largely untouched by the Ottomans, who preferred running, not stagnant, water, and eventually used the source to water the Topkapi Gardens. The water is clean and aerated thanks to a supply of overgrown goldfish that are replaced every 4 years or so.</p> <p>Follow the wooden catwalk and notice the "column of tears," a pillar etched with symbols resembling tears. At the far end of the walkway are two Medusa heads, one inverted and the other on its side; according to mythology, placing her this way caused her to turn herself into stone. Another superstition is that turning her upside down neutralizes her powers. Possibly, the stones were just the right size as pedestals.</p>

<p>OTHER ACTIVITIES</p>	
<p>Shopping</p>	<p>Two new shopping malls have opened their doors in Istanbul. The shops at Istinye recreate an upscale village atmosphere above the Bosphorus. And down in Nisantasi, the new indoor City Mall aims to target Istanbul's version of those who shop on Madison Avenue or in Knightsbridge.</p>
<p>Markets</p>	<p>The Grand or Covered Bazaar is the centre of a commercial area in Istanbul within and around the covered section of the market that</p>

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	<p>spreads all the way down the hill to Eminönü. The name "Grand Bazaar" refers to a vast collection of over 4,000 shops, 24 hans (privately owned inns or marketplaces), 65 streets, 22 gates, 2 bedestens (covered markets), restaurants, mosques, fountains, and teahouses within an area of 31 hectares. Kapali Çarsi refers specifically to the indoor and covered portion.</p> <p>At the heart and soul of the bazaar are two bedestens (merchant centres), ordered built by Mehmet the Conqueror for the purpose of gaining revenue for the Ayasofya. These were the İç, or Inner Bedesten (more commonly known as the Old Bedesten), and the Sandal Bedesten. These two rectangular structures are typical bedestens, meaning that they are solid, significant, and capped by rows of vaults and domes covering a perimeter of cells surrounding an inner courtyard. Ottoman merchants gravitated to this centre of commerce; it is estimated that by the end of Mehmet II's rule, the bazaar had already grown to a third of its current size. Artisans tended to congregate in one area, a legacy handed down through names of streets such as Fez Makers Street (Fesçiler Sok.), Street of the Washcloth Makers (Aynacilar Sok.), and Street of Fur Makers (Kürkçüler Sok.).</p> <p>A number of characteristic hans that at one time (and now nominally) operated around a particular craft or trade are situated in and around the covered portion (or Kapali Çarsi) of the Grand Bazaar. Of particular note inside the Kapali Çarsi is the Safran Han (stuffing/sewing pillows and mattresses). Beyond the covered portion are the 17th-century Valde Han (weaving on looms), the Çuhacılar Hani (antique silver and jewelry), and the 15th-century Kürkçüler Han, the oldest one still in use (yarns and knitting supplies; the furs are upstairs).</p> <p>Today, the main drag running from the Nuruosmaniye Gate to the Beyazit Gate is Kalpakçılar Caddesi, the glittering main thoroughfare lined on either side with shops of silver and gold, with anything and everything of your heart's desire elsewhere in the market. Have fun!</p>
<p>Nightlife</p>	<p>Depending on your nightlife style, there is a certain rhythm to the way things roll out after dark in Istanbul. The choices run the gamut to bars, restaurants, live music venues, dance clubs, tea gardens, water pipe cafes (serving a menu of fragrant tobacco for use in a nargile or hookah pipe), and a variety of pub-like locales. More often than not, there is significant overlap. For example, the popular Bosphorus nightclub, Reina, has three restaurants and a number of bars on several open-air levels. At the traditional Türkü Evi, live Turkish folk music can more often than not be appreciated while dining on mezes, grills, and sautés. Meanwhile, no denizen of the night will be able to look him/herself in the mirror without having stood at the velvet ropes of one of Istanbul's mega-clubs on the Bosphorus. While different years find these multiplexes with ever-evolving names, the themes and even the</p>

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	locations, stay the same and invariably involve multiple candlelit restaurants, numerous bars, a dance floor, strobe lights, and fresh breezes off the Bosphorus, only inches away.
Casinos	There are currently no casinos in Turkey.
Turkish Baths	<p>The number of hamams, or Turkish Baths, in Istanbul mushroomed in the 18th century when the realization hit that they were big business. Mahmut I had the Cagaloglu Hamami built to finance the construction of his library near the Ayasofya, but only about 20 hamams have survived.</p> <p>The most visited hamams today are the palatial Çemberlitas Hamami, Vezirhan Cad. 8 (off Divanyolu at the Column of Constantine, \$35 for the traditional bath, massage, and kese, a scrubbing using an abrasive mitt; \$24 bath only; daily 6am-midnight with separate sections, which was based on a design by Sinan, and the 18th-century Cagaloglu Hamami, Yerebatan Cad. at Ankara Cad. \$31 bath and kese, which allegedly saw the bare bottoms of Franz Liszt, Edward VIII, Kaiser Wilhelm, and Florence Nightingale, and even had a part as an extra in Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom.</p> <p>The recently restored Süleymaniye Hamami, part of the Süleymaniye mosque complex, is another architectural and social welfare wonder of Sinan and Süleyman the Magnificent. Pickup and drop-off from hotel is included in the price of admission, which includes the massage and kese (\$42-\$49 depending on the pickup location).</p> <p>If you're looking for luxury and personal attention, more in the lines of a modern day spa treatment, you'll want to visit a hamam at a hotel instead, such as Les Ottomans, Sumahan, the Ritz-Carlton, and the Çiragan Palace.</p>

CUISINE	
Food	<p>A typical Turkish meal begins with a selection of cold then hot mezes, or appetizers. These often become a meal in themselves, accompanied by an ample serving of raki, that when taken together, form a recipe for friendship, laughter, and song. The menu of mezes often includes several types of eggplant, called patlican; ezme, a fiery hot salad of red peppers; sigara böregi, fried cheese "cigars"; and dolmalar, anything from peppers to vine leaves stuffed with rice, pine nuts, cumin, and fresh mint.</p> <p>The dilemma is whether or not to fill up on these delectables or save room for the kebaps, a national dish whose stature rivals that of pasta in Italy. While izgara means "grilled," the catchall word kebab, simply put, means "roasted," and denotes an entire class of meats cooked using various methods. Typical kebaps include lamb "shish"; spicy Adana</p>

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	<p>kebab, a spicy narrow sausage made of ground lamb; döner kebab, slices of lamb cooked on a vertical revolving spit; patlican kebab, slices of eggplant and lamb grilled on a skewer; and the artery-clogging Iskender kebab, layers of pide, tomatoes, yogurt, and thinly sliced lamb drenched in melted butter. To confuse things a bit, stews can also be called kebaps.</p> <p>Köfte are Turkey's answer to the hamburger: flat or round little meatballs served with slices of tomato and whole green chili peppers. But even though signs for kebab houses may mar the view, Turkish citizens are anything but carnivores, preferring instead to fill up on grains and vegetables. Saç kavurma represents a class of casseroles sautéed or roasted in an earthenware dish that, with the help of an ample amount of velvety Turkish olive oil, brings to life the flavors of ingredients like potatoes, zucchini, tomatoes, eggplant, and beef chunks. No self-respecting gourmand should leave Turkey without having had a plate of manti, a meat-filled ravioli, dumpling, or kreplach, adapted to the local palate by adding a garlic-and-yogurt sauce. Pide is yet another interpretation of pizza made up of fluffy oven-baked bread topped with a variety of ingredients and sliced in strips. Lahmacun is another version of the pizza, only this time the bread is as thin as a crepe and lightly covered with chopped onions, lamb, and tomatoes. Picking up some "street food" can be a great diversion, especially in the shelter of some roadside shack where the corn and gözleme - a freshly made cheese or potato (or whatever) crepe that is the providence of expert rolling pin-wielding village matrons - are hot off the grill. Desserts fall into two categories: baklava and milk-based. Baklava, a type of dessert made of thin layers of pastry dough soaked in syrup, is a sugary sweet bomb best enjoyed around teatime with ice cream, although several varieties are made so light and fluffy that you'll be tempted to top off dinner with a sampling. The milk-based desserts have no eggs or butter and are a guilt-free pick-me-up in the late-afternoon hours, although there's no bad time to treat yourself to some creamy sütlaç (rice pudding). The sprinkling of pistachio bits is a liberal addition to these and many a Turkish dessert, while comfort food includes the irmik helva, a delicious yet simple family tradition of modestly sweet semolina, pine nuts, milk, and butter. Turkish delight, otherwise known as lokum, is a sweet candy made of cornstarch, nuts, syrup, and an endless variety of flavorings to form a skwooshy tidbit whose appeal seems to be more in the gift-giving than on its own merit.</p>
<p>Drinks</p>	<p>Rather than the question, "Would you like something to drink?" Turkish hospitality leaps immediately to the "What?"</p> <p>Tea, called çay (chai) in Turkish, is not so much a national drink as it is a ritual. Boil the water incorrectly and you're in for trouble. Let the tea</p>

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	<p>steep without prior rinsing and you've committed an unforgivable transgression. Tea is served extremely hot and strong in tiny tulip-shaped glasses, accompanied by exactly two sugar cubes. The size of the glass ensures that the tea gets consumed while hot, and before you slurp your final sip, a new glass will arrive. If you find the tea a bit strong, especially on an empty stomach, request that it be "açık," or "opened," so that the ratio of water to steeped tea is increased.</p> <p>The coffee culture is a little less prevalent but no less steeped in tradition. Indeed, it was the Turks that introduced coffee drinking into Europe 500 years ago. Early clerics believed it to be an intoxicant and consequently had it banned. But the kahvehane (coffeehouse) refused to go away, and now the sharing of a cup of Turkish coffee is an excuse to prolong a discussion, plan, negotiate, or just plain relax. Turkish coffee is ground to a fine dust, boiled directly in the correct quantity of water, and served as is. Whether you wait for the grinds to settle or down the cup in one shot is entirely an individual choice, although if you leave the muddy residue at the bottom of the cup, you may be able to coax somebody to read your fortune.</p> <p>There are two national drinks: raki and ayran.</p> <p>Raki is an alcoholic drink distilled from raisins and then redistilled with aniseed. Even when diluted with water, this "lion's milk" still packs a punch, so drink carefully. Raki is enjoyed everywhere, but is particularly complementary to a meal of mezes.</p> <p>Ayran is a refreshing beverage made by diluting yogurt with water. Westerners more accustomed to a sweet-tasting yogurt drink may at first be put off by the saltiness of ayran, but when mentally prepared, it's impossible to dismiss the advantages and pure enjoyment of this concoction.</p>
<p>Restaurants</p>	<p>Restaurants are everywhere, and although the name restoran was a European import used for the best establishments, nowadays practically every type of place goes by that name. Cheap, simple, home-style meals can be had at a family-run place called a lokanta, where the food is often prepared in advance (hazir yemek) and presented in a steam table. The dining room is generally bare. A meyhane is a tavern these have become extremely popular places for a fun and sophisticated night out. Decor in the meyhane is usually as stark as in the lokanta, but not necessarily. A birahane is basically a potentially unruly beer hall.</p> <p>Now that you've picked the place, it's time to sit down and read the menu – but not all restaurants automatically provide menus, instead offering whatever's seasonal or the specialty of the house. If you'd feel more comfortable with a menu, don't be shy about asking, and politely say, "Menüyü var mi?" Mezes (appetizers) are often brought over on a platter, and the protocol is to simply point at the ones you want. Don't feel pressured into accepting every plate the waiter offers (none of it is</p>

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	free) or into ordering a main dish; Turks often make a meal out of an array of mezes, accompanied by raki. When ordering fish, it's advisable to have your selection weighed for cost; if the price is higher than you planned to pay, either choose a less expensive fish or ask the waiter if it's possible to buy only half.
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PERSONAL EXPERIENCES	<p>I have been fortunate enough to travel extensively in Turkey over the years. Here are some of the places I have visited:</p> <p>Istanbul Izmir Kusadasi Bodrum Antalya, Alanya, Anamur Konya, Silifke, Silesian Gates Cappadocia and the underground city of Kaymakli Urgup, Goreme Ephesus, Termessos, Aspendos Pamukkale Kayseri, Erzincan, Erzurum, Dogubayazit and Mount Ararat Eastern Anatolia Marmaris Caunus</p> <p>Here are a couple of my Travel Show "Magic Moments" from past trips to Turkey...</p> <p><i>"One of my most memorable travel experiences of many in Turkey was one night on the steppes of Eastern Anatolia near the border with Iran. I was camping in the middle of nowhere with friends when Kurdish nomads appeared from the darkness and invited me to their camp. Their kindness and hospitality washed away any qualms I may have had and I passed the entire night in their gracious company before they guided me back to our camp in dawn's early light..."</i></p> <p><i>"I have had a mesmerizing time in Istanbul, Turkey's largest city with 13 million people. It is a heady mix of civilizations and empires that assaults the senses...in a good way. At times it is almost overpowering,</i></p>
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so today I am taking a ferry up the Bosphorus...one of the most famous waterways of the world. As the old ferry pulls away, the frenetic noise of the city fades and the cooling breeze tempers the summer heat. The ferry's passengers make for wonderful people watching as the locals make their way from one neighbourhood to another. But I am entranced by the slow passage of history on either side of this waterway that has been the focus of so many invaders and emperors. Castles, palaces and evocative wooden mansions punctuate the cityscape as we zigzag from one side of the Bosphorus to the other, alternating between Europe and Asia. I am following in the wake of Jason and the Argonauts, of the great Emperor Constantine and so many others... Eventually the boat arrives at Anadolu Kavagi near the entrance to the Black Sea and I disembark to enjoy a local lunch at one of the many fish restaurants built out onto the waters of the Bosphorus. It's the perfect place to reflect on the magic of this truly amazing destination..."

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