PACK LIGHTLY

LAYERS OF EMPIRE, A SLOW COAST

Turkey

Which empire to find where, whether the balloon ride earns its price, and the bus and flight grid that links Istanbul, Cappadocia and the Lycian coast in two weeks.



p. 19 2,500 years in one route, mapped site by site

p. 20 Balloons over Cappadocia: worth it, or skip

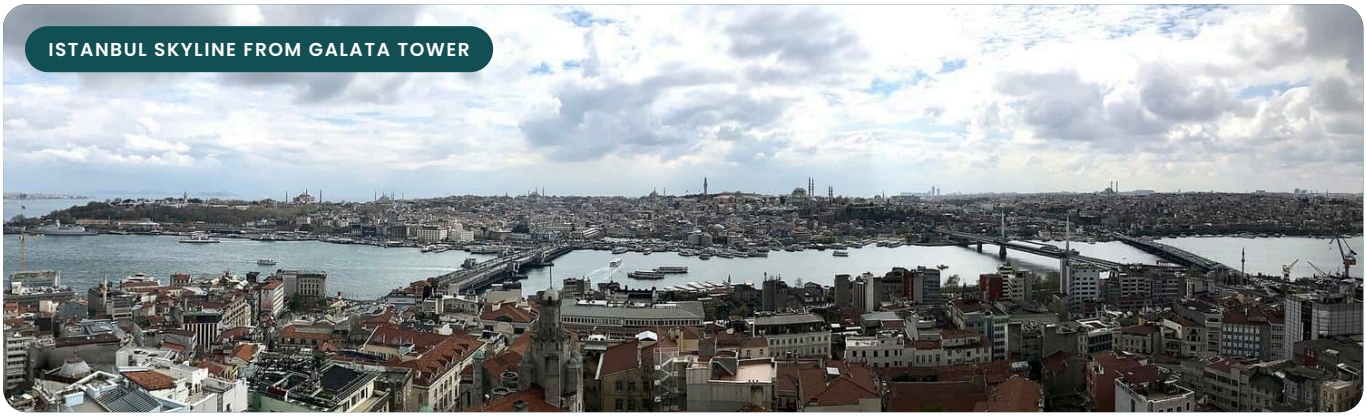
p. 33 The night-bus and flight grid that makes the route work

48 PAGES EUR PRICES VISA RULES VARY BY PASSPORT EDITION 2026.10

photo: Wikimedia Commons

Start here

the shape of a Turkey trip, what it costs, what to sort first


ISTANBUL SKYLINE FROM GALATA TOWER

Turkey moves on coach buses that cross the country overnight and on domestic flights that turn an 11-hour ride into 80 minutes. This guide uses both. Istanbul and Cappadocia anchor the first week, the Aegean ruins and the Lycian coast carry the second, and the grid on page 33 tells you which leg gets the bus and which gets the plane.

The shape of a trip

Two weeks fits six stops: Istanbul, Cappadocia, Pamukkale, Ephesus, Fethiye and Kas. Ten days drops the coast. Three weeks adds Antalya and a few days on the Lycian Way.

What a day costs

About 35 EUR a day on a backpacker budget, 70 mid-range, 150 comfort (2026 prices). The lira moves fast, so this guide prices in EUR and shows TRY only as a guide. Details on page 32.

Sort before you fly

US passports enter visa-free for up to 90 days (checked 2026-09-22). Other passports differ, so run the Visa Checker before booking flights. The booking order is on page 35.


GOREME VALLEY BEFORE SUNRISE


KAS HARBOUR WITH FISHING BOATS

HOW THE LINKS WORK

Booking links in this guide carry a commission at no extra cost to you. Full disclosure is on the last page.

Contents

tap a line to jump straight there

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02 Where to go 08

03 Empires, balloons, the Lycian Way 18

04 Where to stay 22

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06 When to go, what it costs, how to move 31

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QUICK JUMPS

Layers of empire, site by site 19

Balloons: worth it or skip 20

Night bus or flight, leg by leg 34

What a day costs, in EUR 33

Your trip on one page

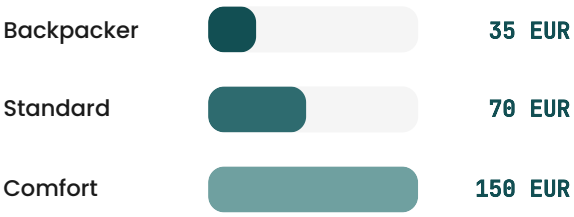
14 days · 35 to 150 EUR/day · best Apr-Jun or Sep-Oct

The two-week loop runs Istanbul, Cappadocia, Pamukkale, Ephesus, Fethiye and Kas, flying in on one end and out of Antalya on the other. One flight, one overnight bus, three daytime buses. Budget from the bars below, and book the Cappadocia flight and the night bus first; both fill before everything else.

THE ROUTE



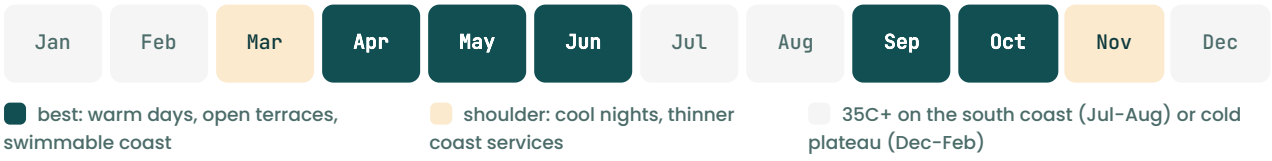
BUDGET PER DAY, EUR



BOOK FIRST

01	International flights, 6 to 8 weeks out	Skyscanner
02	Night bus Cappadocia to Pamukkale, 1 to 2 weeks out	Omio
03	eSIM, install before departure	Saily

BEST MONTHS



best: warm days, open terraces, swimmable coast

shoulder: cool nights, thinner coast services

35C+ on the south coast (Jul-Aug) or cold plateau (Dec-Feb)

Turkey at a glance

scores 0-100 · Turkey vs the Southern Europe average

SCORECARD

	Turkey / Southern Europe
Culture	95 / 91
Food and drinks	90 / 89
Nature	85 / 79
Tourist infrastructure	80 / 84
Budget friendly	75 / 62
Safety	70 / 84

Budget travel	35 EUR/day
Mid-range	70 EUR/day
Comfort	150 EUR/day

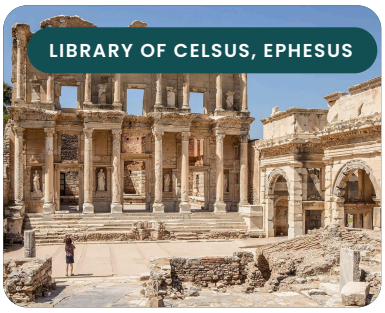
CULTURE · BEACH · ADVENTURE · CITY · WELLNESS

score / Southern Europe average · country-comparison tool, 2026-10

FOUR FRAMES OF THE TRIP


BLUE MOSQUE FROM SULTANAHMET PARK


PAMUKKALE TRAVERTINE POOLS


LIBRARY OF CELSUS, EPHESUS


OLUDENIZ LAGOON FROM ABOVE

BUDGET FRIENDLY
+13
vs the region, the clearest win

CULTURE
95
vs a regional 91

INFRASTRUCTURE
-4
thinner off the main loop

SAFETY
-14
petty scams, traffic, borders

01

What Turkey is

One country on two continents, four regions worth knowing, and why hotels and tours quote in euros while buses charge in lira.

IN THIS CHAPTER

Two continents, four regions, four readers 07

What Turkey is

about 85M people · Europe and Asia · lira country, euro quotes in tourist zones

Istanbul sits on both sides of the Bosphorus: the old city and Galata on the European bank, Kadikoy and Uskudar on the Asian one. Everything east of it, Anatolia, is Asia, and that plateau is where most of the country's 85 million people and nearly all of its distances live. Ankara is the capital, but nearly every trip starts in Istanbul and ends on a coast.

Prices come in two currencies. Restaurants, buses and markets charge in lira. Hotels, tours, balloon flights and airport transfers in tourist zones quote in euros, because the lira loses value fast and operators protect themselves. Pay in lira where you can, and read the currency page before the first ATM.

CAPITAL
Ankara
not on a first-trip route

CURRENCY
TRY
tourist zones quote EUR

TIME ZONE
UTC+3
no daylight saving

BEST MONTHS
Apr-Jun, Sep-Oct
avoid Jul-Aug on the coast

FOUR REGIONS, FOUR CHARACTERS


PUBLIC FERRY ON THE BOSPHORUS

Istanbul and the Marmara

Byzantine and Ottoman capital · the arrival gate

Hagia Sophia, the mosques of Sultanahmet and a ferry network that doubles as the best cheap sightseeing in the country.


FAIRY CHIMNEYS NEAR GOREME

Central Anatolia: Cappadocia

volcanic valleys · cave hotels · cold nights

A high plateau of soft rock carved into churches, homes and underground cities. Two to three nights, with the balloon decision on page 20.


THE MARBLE ROAD AT EPHESUS

The Aegean: ruins and hill villages

Ephesus · Selcuk · Sirince · Pamukkale inland

The densest stretch of Greek and Roman sites in the country, in small towns that make good bases.


KEKOVA COAST FROM A BOAT

The Turquoise Coast: Fethiye to Antalya

Lycian ruins · coves · the Lycian Way

Mountains drop straight into the sea. Slow towns, boat days and walking trails, not a resort strip, between Fethiye and Kas.

WHO THIS GUIDE IS WRITTEN FOR

First-timer, two weeks
The Istanbul to Kas loop, one flight and four buses.

Backpacker on buses
35 EUR a day, night buses instead of beds.

Ruins hunter
Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman sites in order, with the pass maths.

Coast walker
Lycian Way day sections from Fethiye to Kas.

photos: Wikimedia Commons

02

Where to go

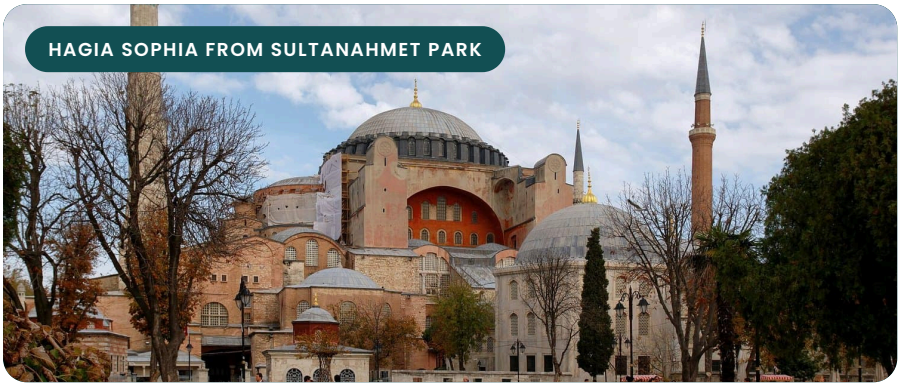
Nine stops, ranked by what they give you per night. Istanbul and Cappadocia are the anchors; the Aegean ruins and the Lycian coast are the payoff.

IN THIS CHAPTER

Istanbul old city	09
Istanbul beyond Sultanahmet	10
Cappadocia	11
Pamukkale and Hierapolis	12
Ephesus, Selcuk, Sirince	13
Fethiye and Oludeniz	14
Kas and Kekova	15
Antalya old town	16
Bodrum and Safranbolu, briefly	17

Istanbul: the old city

Sultanahmet · 3 nights · Byzantine and Ottoman, 200 metres apart



HAGIA SOPHIA FROM SULTANAHMET PARK

Hagia Sophia opened as a church in 537 and the Blue Mosque faces it across a park, finished in the 1610s. Topkapi Palace, the Basilica Cistern and the Grand Bazaar sit within a 15-minute walk. Few cities stack two empires this close, so the old city rewards a slow first day on foot.

Three nights covers the four big sites and a ferry afternoon. Do Hagia Sophia and Topkapi at opening, take the Basilica Cistern at the end of the day when the queue thins, and leave the Grand Bazaar for the last evening when you know what you want to buy.

Mosques are free but close to visitors around the five daily prayers. Friday midday is the longest closure.

Hagia Sophia works as a mosque again and charges foreign visitors an entry fee. Check the current price at the gate.

Hagia Sophia

537 CE dome, Byzantine mosaics upstairs. The first hour after opening is the quiet one.

Blue Mosque

Free entry, covered shoulders and knees, headscarf for women. Shoes off at the door.

Topkapi Palace

Ottoman court from the 15th century. Allow three hours, the Harem is a separate ticket.

Basilica Cistern

A 6th-century underground reservoir. A guided entry with priority access starts around 39 USD (2026 listing).

GO DEEPER

The Istanbul guide and the write-up on Hagia Sophia hold the entry details and opening hours.

Istanbul beyond Sultanahmet

Karakoy · Kadikoy · Bosphorus ferries · the day after the monuments



An Istanbulkart covers ferries, metro, trams and buses. Buy it at a station machine on day one.

Skip the 1-hour tourist cruises sold at the Eminonu pier. The public ferries cover the same view.

The second day belongs on the water. A public ferry from Eminonu or Karakoy to Kadikoy takes about 20 minutes and costs a fraction of a Bosphorus cruise, with the same skyline. Kadikoy on the Asian side is where locals eat: a covered market, fish restaurants and streets of record shops and cafes.

Karakoy and Galata fill the walk back, uphill to the tower and downhill through galleries and coffee roasters. The long public Bosphorus line to Anadolu Kavagi takes roughly 90 minutes each way and works as a half-day trip with a fish lunch at the far end.

Kadikoy market and Moda

Asian-side food street, then a seafront walk to Moda. Best for a long lunch.

Galata Tower and Karakoy

The tower is the dusk viewpoint. The streets below are the better reason to climb.

Public Bosphorus ferry

Eminonu to Anadolu Kavagi, about 90 minutes each way, on a normal transit fare.

Princes' Islands

Car-free islands in the Marmara, about an hour by ferry. A summer half-day.

READ ON See the Bosphorus boat trip page and the Istanbul markets page.

Cappadocia

Goreme base · 3 nights · cold nights, even in spring


ROSE VALLEY NEAR GOREME

Sunrise and sunset are the cheap spectacle: the balloons launch at dawn, and the valleys glow in the last hour of light.

The plateau is high. Pack a fleece for April and October evenings, and expect snow in winter.

Cappadocia is a plateau at about 1,000 metres where volcanic ash eroded into pillars and valleys, then people carved churches, houses and whole underground cities into it. Goreme is the practical base: cave hotels, walking trails from the village edge and tour pickups at the door. Three nights is the floor, and the third is the weather buffer for the balloon.

Two group day tours cover the area. The Red tour with an underground city runs from about 40 USD, the Green tour with a hike in Ihlara Valley from about 74 USD (small-group listings, 2026-10). Walk the valleys for free, and use the tours for the distances.

Goreme Open Air Museum

Rock-cut Byzantine churches with frescoes. Paid entry, go at opening before the coaches.

Rose and Red valleys

Free walking trails from Goreme. Time them for the last hour of daylight.

Derinkuyu underground city

Multi-level shelter dug into soft rock. Narrow, so skip it if tight spaces bother you.

Ihlara Valley

A river canyon with rock churches along a flat walk. The Green tour's best stop.

MORE ON THE SITE The Cappadocia write-up covers 17 things to do, and the Goreme page covers the village itself.

Pamukkale and Hierapolis

travertine terraces · 1 night · shoes off on the terraces



WHITE TRAVERTINE TERRACES AT PAMUKKALE

Pamukkale is a white hillside of mineral terraces with a Roman spa city on top. The terraces are the photo, Hierapolis is the substance: a theatre, a vast necropolis and a thermal pool set among fallen columns. Walk the terraces barefoot, because shoes are not allowed on the white stone.

One night is the right dose. The Antalya day trip packs about 16 hours of coach into a single visit (listing from 19.84 USD, 2026-10), so sleep in the village, walk the terraces in the evening light and hit Hierapolis at opening. Tour coaches thin out after midday and again after 5pm.

Pamukkale is the cheaper balloon market. A sunrise flight with transfer lists from about 69 USD (2026-10).

The Antique Pool inside Hierapolis charges its own fee. Bring swimwear only if you plan to pay it.

The travertine terraces

Walk up barefoot from the south gate at the end of the day, after the day-trip coaches have left.

Hierapolis theatre

A well-preserved Roman theatre above the town. A clear view over the valley.

Necropolis

One of the largest ancient cemeteries in the region. Quiet, shaded in parts, and mostly empty.

Antique Pool

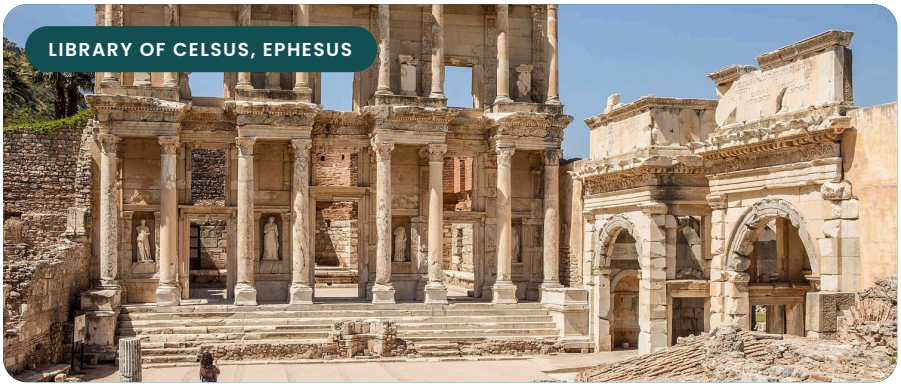
Swim among fallen columns. Pay extra, and expect crowds mid-day.

KEEP READING

The Pamukkale breakdown lists 14 things to do around the terraces.

Ephesus, Selcuk and Sirince

Roman city · market-town base · 2 nights


LIBRARY OF CELSUS, EPHESUS

The Temple of Artemis is a single reassembled column in a field. Take 15 minutes, not an afternoon.

Midday in July is brutal on the exposed marble. If you visit in summer, go at opening.

Ephesus is the best-preserved large Roman city on this route, anchored by the facade of the Library of Celsus from the 2nd century CE and a Great Theatre cut into the hillside. Stay in Selcuk, a small market town about 3 km away, and reach the site by minibus or taxi. It is cheaper and quieter than the resort towns on the coast.

Cruise passengers from Kusadasi arrive mid-morning and leave mid-afternoon. Be at the gate at opening or come in the late afternoon. Small-group Ephesus tours from the Kusadasi port list from about 22 USD (2026-10), a fair price if you want a guide and a ride. Spend the evening in Sirince, a hillside village known for its fruit wines.

Library of Celsus

The two-storey facade at the end of the marble road. Best light is late afternoon.

Great Theatre

A hillside Roman theatre built for thousands. Climb to the top row for the view down the road.

Selcuk

A small market town with a Saturday market and a basilica on the hill. The cheapest base nearby.

Sirince

Hillside village of stone houses and fruit wines. A good evening, not a full day.

THE LONG VERSION

See the Ephesus rundown, plus the pages on Selcuk and Sirince.

Fethiye and Oludeniz

3 nights · lagoon, paragliding, rock tombs · start of the Lycian Way



BLUE LAGOON AT OLUDENIZ FROM THE HILL

Fethiye is a working harbour town with Lycian rock tombs cut into the cliff above it, and Oludeniz, about 15 km south, holds the lagoon on every postcard. Base in Fethiye for restaurants and bus connections, and go to Oludeniz for a day. The coast here is where the Lycian Way begins, so the hills above the lagoon are the first walking.

Paragliding off Babadag is the headline activity: a tandem flight lists from about 125 USD (2026-10), which makes it the one splurge on the coast that tends to match the sales pitch. A hamam session in Fethiye lists from about 54 USD, a fair rest day after the walking.

Paragliding is weather-dependent. Book the early days of your Fethiye stay so a cancelled morning can move later.

The Oludeniz beachfront is the busiest and priciest strip on the coast in July and August.

Oludeniz Blue Lagoon

A sheltered turquoise lagoon. Go early or late, avoid the midday beach crowd.

Babadag paragliding

Tandem flights from the mountain down to the lagoon, from about 125 USD.

Fethiye rock tombs

Lycian tombs carved into the cliff above the old town. A 30-minute climb.

Saklikent Gorge

A deep canyon with a cold stream walk. A half-day trip from Fethiye.

ON THE WEBSITE See the Fethiye guide, Oludeniz page and Saklikent Gorge.

Kas and Kekova

2 nights · harbour town · diving and a sunken city


KAS OLD TOWN AND HARBOUR

Kas has no train and no airport. Plan the last leg to Antalya (about 3 hours by bus) with your flight time in mind.

Swimming is possible from April to October, with the warmest water in September.

Kas is a small harbour town with whitewashed houses, bougainvillea on the lanes and a diving scene that works as a reason to come. It has none of the resort sprawl of the east coast. Kekova, an hour or so offshore by boat, holds a Lycian city that sank in an earthquake, its walls and stairs visible through clear water.

Take a boat or a sea-kayak day to Kekova rather than a bus tour: kayaks drift over the ruins at water level. Patara beach, one of the longest in the country, sits about 45 minutes west by dolmus, and Kalkan, a steep whitewashed town between the two, makes a good lunch stop on the way.

Kas harbour

Sunset drinks on the quay, and the departure point for boat and dive trips.

Kekova sunken city

Ruins under clear water. A kayak or a small boat puts you closer than a tour bus.

Patara beach

Long open sand backed by dunes and Roman ruins. Go by dolmus, not a tour.

Kalkan

A steep whitewashed town between Patara and Kas. Stop for lunch, not a night.

MORE DETAIL

See the Kas page, Kekova, Patara and the diving in Turkey page.

Antalya old town

Kaleici · 1 night · the exit airport, and Roman day trips


KALEICI OLD HARBOUR, ANTALYA

Antalya is the logistics city of the south coast: the airport that ends the 14-day loop and the base for Roman sites inland. The old quarter, Kaleici, is a maze of Ottoman houses around a small harbour, entered through Hadrian's Gate from the 2nd century. One evening is enough, and the rest of the city is concrete.

The better use of a spare day is a Roman site outside town. Perge and Aspendos, with its theatre from the 2nd century, sit about an hour away. Termessos, a mountain city, runs as a guided hike that lists from about 71 USD (2026-10), and is the best of the three for quiet.

Antalya airport is the exit for the whole west coast. Fly in or out of Antalya, not both.

The resort belt east of the city (Lara, Side, Alanya) is a different trip. This guide does not route through it.

Kaleici old town

Ottoman houses, a small harbour and Hadrian's Gate. Best at dusk.

Aspendos theatre

One of the best-preserved Roman theatres anywhere. An easy half day.

Termessos

Ruins on a mountainside. Hike it with water and shoes with grip.

Koprulu Canyon

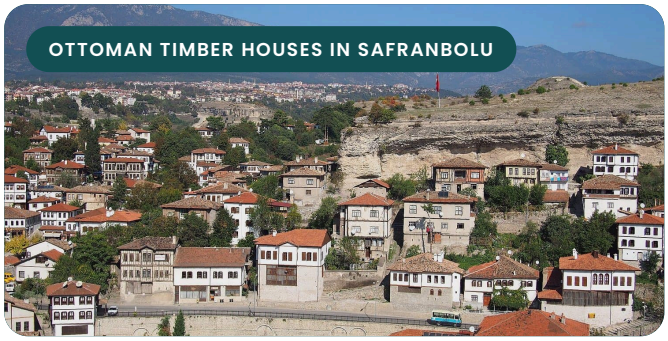
River rafting and canyon walks, from about 46 USD for a half-day trip.

WORTH A READ See the Antalya write-up and the Aspendos page.

Bodrum and Safranbolu, briefly

two alternatives to the main loop · swap in, do not add on





Bodrum

A resort town on a peninsula, built around a crusader castle and a marina. It is the right swap if you want beach time and nightlife more than Lycian ruins. Hotels list from about 41 USD to 368 USD a night (2026-10), a wider spread than any other stop here. Gumusluk, a quiet fishing village on the peninsula, is the calmer base.

Safranbolu

A UNESCO-listed Ottoman town of timber houses in the hills of the north. It fits an Istanbul to Black Sea route, not the Aegean loop, and works as a one-night detour on the way to Amasra on the coast. Spring and autumn are the right months, because the summer heat is lower here than on the south coast.

Swap Bodrum in for Fethiye and Kas if the coast is your whole trip. Keep the Lycian Way for a second visit.

Neither place fits inside the 14-day loop. Add them only on a third week.

SEE ALSO See the Bodrum breakdown, Safranbolu and Amasra, plus the longer best places list.

03

Empires, balloons, the Lycian Way

Three decisions that shape a Turkey trip more than any single city: which empire to chase, whether to pay for a balloon, and how much of a long trail to walk.

IN THIS CHAPTER

Layers of empire, site by site 19

Balloons: worth it or skip 20

The Lycian Way in segments 21

Layers of empire, site by site

four layers mapped to the 14-day loop · the pass maths at the bottom

Turkey stacks its history in layers, and the 14-day loop meets three of them in order: Byzantine and Ottoman in Istanbul, Roman along the Aegean and Lycian coast. The Seljuk layer lives on the Anatolian plateau and barely touches this route. The table sorts every major site by empire and day.

LAYER	SITES ON THIS ROUTE	DAYS	VERDICT
Greek and Roman to the 4th c. CE	Ephesus (Library of Celsus, Great Theatre), Hierapolis, Xanthos and Letoon, Aspendos near Antalya	7-9, 10-14	The strongest layer here. Five sites, almost all outdoors.
Byzantine 4th to 15th c.	Hagia Sophia (537), Basilica Cistern, rock-cut churches at Goreme, Derinkuyu underground city	1-3, 4-6	Two Istanbul landmarks plus Cappadocia's frescoed caves.
Seljuk 11th to 13th c.	Konya and the caravanserais of the plateau, off the loop	none	Skip it unless you add a night in Konya. It is the thinnest layer on this route.
Ottoman 14th to early 20th c.	Topkapi Palace, Suleymaniye (1550s), Blue Mosque (1610s), Grand Bazaar	1-3	All four sit in Istanbul. Suleymaniye is the quiet one.

route logic: 14-day loop on page 29 · dates rounded

THE MUSEUM PASS MATHS

Count the paid state sites in your plan. The 14-day loop has six: Topkapi, Hagia Sophia, the Basilica Cistern, Ephesus, Hierapolis and the Goreme Open Air Museum. Mosques that are open to worship, such as the Blue Mosque and Suleymaniye, are free and sit outside the sums. Add the posted price at each ticket desk, compare the total with the Museum Pass price on the day, and check that every site is on the pass's own list before you buy. If the pass wins by more than a few euros, buy it at the first site.

Older than all of it: Gobekli Tepe near Sanliurfa, a stone sanctuary roughly 11,500 years old. It sits far east of this loop and needs its own flight.

Do not buy a pass for a trip with fewer than four paid sites. The pass pays off through volume, not through convenience.

DIG IN

The 20 religious landmarks of Turkey trace the faith layers, and Gobekli Tepe has its own page.

Balloons: worth it or skip

one flight, three nights, one clear rule

Verdict: worth it once, if Cappadocia is on the route and you can stay three nights. Skip it with one night in town, a fear of heights or a tight budget, because the same sunrise is free from a hotel terrace. The flight is the single most expensive hour of the trip, and the main risk is not the ride but a cancelled morning.

OPTION	COST (2026 LISTINGS)	WHAT YOU GET	VERDICT
Cappadocia flight	Premium market, get three written quotes	Sunrise launch over the valleys, about an hour in the air	Worth it once, on night 1 of 3.
Pamukkale flight	From about 69 USD with transfer	Sunrise over the terraces, a cheaper market	Fine if Cappadocia is off your route.
Guided balloon viewing	From about 46 USD	A viewing tour of the launch, feet on the ground	Good for anyone who fears heights.
Hotel terrace or rim viewpoint	Free	The same balloons from below, at the same hour	Do this on night 2 whatever you decide.

prices: operator listings via Viator, captured 2026-10-03

CANCELLATION AND SAFETY, AS FACTS

The operator, working to the civil aviation rules, decides on the morning whether wind and visibility allow a launch. Cancellations cluster in winter and in windy spells, so a three-night stay gives you two retry mornings. Ask each operator for the rebook-or-refund terms in writing before paying. Accidents are rare but have happened, so pick an operator by licensed pilots, basket size and insurance rather than by price alone. Baskets range from small groups to 20 or more passengers, and a smaller basket costs more.

Book night 1 of your stay, not the last. A cancelled flight then has two more mornings to land on.

Walk-up offers in town at much lower prices usually mean a crowded basket or a gap in the paperwork. Ask to see the licence.

THE FULL PICTURE

The Cappadocia balloon page covers launch sites and operators in more depth.

The Lycian Way in segments

about 540 km in total · day sections, not a thru-hike · spring and autumn



THE LYCIAN WAY ABOVE THE COAST NEAR KAS

The Lycian Way runs about 540 km along the coast from Oludeniz towards Antalya, marked with red and white paint. You do not need all of it. The Fethiye to Kas stretch is the most scenic and the best served by villages, and it breaks into day walks you can start and end by dolmus, with a bed and a shower every night.

Walk it in April, May, September or October. July and August push the south coast past 35C, which turns a coastal climb into a heat risk. Carry water for every section, since springs are unreliable in late summer.

Start each day section before 9am. The cliffs have little shade, and the afternoon wind can turn.

Download an offline trail map before you start. Signal drops in the valleys.

Oludeniz to Faralya

The classic opener: a climb above the lagoon to a cliff village over Butterfly Valley.

Faralya to Kabak

Forest paths down to Kabak, a remote cove with a small pension scene.

Patara to Kalkan

Dunes, ruins and a coastal path to a steep whitewashed town. An easier day.

Kalkan to Kas

Rocky headlands with sea views, ending at a harbour with a cold beer.

GO DEEPER The Lycian Way page lists seven things to do along the trail, and Kabak has its own entry.

04

Where to stay

Which neighbourhood in each stop, what the listings start at, and where the booking window matters.

IN THIS CHAPTER

Istanbul and Goreme 23

Selcuk and Pamukkale 24

Fethiye, Kas and Antalya 25

Where to stay: Istanbul and Goreme

listing "from" prices per night, 2026 · the two stops with the widest spread

Istanbul and Goreme price in euros and swing the most between a basic room and a good one, so pick the neighbourhood first. Both fill up in April, May, September and October. Book the first Istanbul nights and the Goreme cave room four to six weeks out.

Istanbul

hotels from 79 USD top scores 9.7

Sultanahmet puts Hagia Sophia and Topkapi on foot, and it is the right base for three nights. Karakoy and Galata suit a second stay if restaurants matter more than monuments. Skip hotels near the new airport, which sits far from everything. Browse the Stay22 hotel map and zoom to Sultanahmet.

Goreme, Cappadocia

cave hotels from 90 USD

A cave room with a terrace is part of the trip, and the terrace is where you watch the balloons for free. Goreme itself has the most restaurants and tour pickups. Check that the terrace faces the launch valleys and that the room has heating in spring and autumn. Compare rooms on the Stay22 map near Goreme.

Rooms and apartments across the country, filtered to what is bookable on your dates.

Find Stays on Stay22

BEFORE YOU BOOK

- [ ] Istanbul: choose a hotel with a lift or ground-floor room, because many old-town buildings are steep and narrow
- [ ] Goreme: confirm the shuttle or walking distance to the bus station, since the night bus leaves from the otogar
- [ ] Ask for a quiet room in Sultanahmet, since the call to prayer starts before dawn
- [ ] Breakfast is usually included and worth having, a good Turkish spread saves a meal

READ ON

See the Istanbul hotels and Cappadocia cave hotels lists for ratings and prices.

Where to stay: Selcuk and Pamukkale

listing "from" prices per night, 2026 · small-town bases, short stays

Both stops are small, so the choice is simple. Sleep in Selcuk for Ephesus and in Pamukkale village at the foot of the terraces. Neither needs more than a few days of notice outside peak months, and both are cheaper than the coast.

Selcuk, for Ephesus

hotels from 57 USD

Selcuk is a small market town about 3 km from the ruins, with family pensions near the station and the basilica. It is the cheapest and calmest base in the region. For one night in Sirince, book a hillside house, since the village is a short drive away. Check rooms on the Stay22 map near Selcuk.

Pamukkale village

pensions and small hotels, no single listing price

Stay in Pamukkale village, not in the city of Denizli, so that you can walk to the terraces for the evening light. The pools at many pensions double as a rest after the night bus. Compare options on the Stay22 map near Pamukkale.

HOW THE TWO STOPS FIT TOGETHER

NIGHT BUS ARRIVAL	PAMUKKALE TO SELCUK	SELCUK TO EPHESUS
early	3h	3 km
ask for early check-in or bag drop	by bus, rounded	minibus or taxi

Arriving off the night bus at 6am? Ask your pension in writing whether you can leave bags and use a shower.

Small pensions often prefer cash, or add a card fee. Ask when you book.

MORE ON THE SITE See the Ephesus hotels list for prices near the ruins.

Where to stay: Fethiye, Kas and Antalya

listing "from" prices per night, 2026 · the coast prices up fastest in summer

The coast is the stretch where booking early matters most, because small harbour hotels sell out first in May, June and September. Pick the harbour over the beachfront strip in each town. Antalya is the exception: one night, near the old harbour, is all it needs.

Fethiye

hotels from 68 USD

Stay by the harbour for restaurants and the bus station, and day-trip to Oludeniz. Avoid the party strip of Hisaronu if you want sleep. Compare rooms on the Stay22 map in Fethiye.

Kas

hotels from 62 USD

Old-town pensions and small hotels near the harbour put diving and Kekova boats at your door. Book a room with a sea view only if you will use the terrace. Open the Stay22 map and zoom to Kas.

Antalya, one night

hotels from 52 USD

Kaleici old town for the evening walk, or a hotel on the airport side if you fly out at dawn. Check rooms on the Stay22 map near Antalya.

Many small coast pensions close from November to March. If you travel in winter, confirm they are open before you book.

If you walk the Lycian Way, book only the first and last nights. Pensions in the villages in between take walk-ins in the shoulder months.

KEEP READING See the Fethiye, Kas and Antalya hotel lists.

05

Routes and itineraries

Six trips by length and budget, a map of the two-week loop, and the 14-day plan day by day.

IN THIS CHAPTER

Pick your trip 27

The two-week loop, as a map 28

The 14-day route, day by day 29

Pick your trip

10 days, 2 weeks or 3 weeks · totals per person, without international flights

Length decides the route before taste does. Totals multiply the tool's daily average (35, 70 and 150 EUR) by the number of days, so treat them as a floor for planning, not a quote. Find your row, then jump to the matching itinerary.

10 DAYS · BACKPACKER

Istanbul, Cappadocia, Aegean

EUR 350 · 35 a day

- Istanbul 4, Goreme 3, Pamukkale 1
- Selcuk 2, fly out of Izmir

10 DAYS · STANDARD

The coast and its ruins

EUR 700 · 70 a day

- Antalya 2, Kas 3, Fethiye 3
- Pamukkale 2: ruins on the way out

2 WEEKS · STANDARD

The Istanbul to Kas loop

EUR 980 · 70 a day

- Istanbul 3, Goreme 3, Pamukkale 1
- Selcuk 2, Fethiye 3, Kas 2

2 WEEKS · COMFORT

The same loop, flying more

EUR 2,100 · 150 a day

- Cave hotel, balloon flight, private transfers
- Fly where the coach exceeds 8 hours

3 WEEKS · BACKPACKER

The loop plus the Lycian Way

EUR 735 · 35 a day

- Istanbul 4, Goreme 4, Pamukkale 1, Selcuk 3
- Fethiye 3, Kas 3, Antalya 3: trail days

3 WEEKS · STANDARD

The loop, slowed down

EUR 1,470 · 70 a day

- Add Kekova, Patara and a Termessos hike
- Two nights in each coast town

THE LONG VERSION

Full day-by-day versions online: the 7-day, 14-day, 21-day and 28-day routes.

The two-week loop, as a map

Istanbul south-east to Cappadocia, west to the Aegean, then along the coast to Antalya

One flight and four buses carry the loop. Istanbul to Cappadocia is the only leg worth a plane. The overnight coach from Cappadocia to Pamukkale replaces a night in a bed and lands in time for the evening terraces. After that, every leg is a daytime ride of 3 to 5 hours.



The 14-day route, day by day

Istanbul to Kas, out of Antalya · the fullest first-timer loop

1-3	Istanbul	Hagia Sophia and Topkapi at opening, a ferry to Kadikoy on day 2, Suleymaniye and the Grand Bazaar on day 3.
4-6	Goreme	Fly in on day 4, balloon or terrace sunrise on day 5, Ihlara or Red tour on day 6. Night bus out after dinner.
7	Pamukkale	Arrive off the night bus, sleep, Hierapolis in the afternoon, terraces at sunset.
8-9	Selcuk	3h bus. Ephesus at opening on day 8, Sirince for dinner. A slow second day or Priene and Miletus.
10-12	Fethiye	5h bus. Oludeniz lagoon, a paragliding morning, a first Lycian Way section on day 12.
13-14	Kas	3h bus. Kekova by kayak on day 13, Patara or a dive on day 14, then the bus to Antalya for your flight.

Day 14 flights out of Antalya should leave after 3pm. The bus from Kas takes about 3 hours and does not forgive a late start.

This loop has no slack. A cancelled balloon on day 5 is the one place a day can be borrowed from the Istanbul block.

ON THE WEBSITE The online 14-day route adds Antalya detail, and the 21-day route stretches the coast.

Tours worth booking

top-rated local operators, filtered to group trips, sorted toward backpacker prices

These are live, top-rated tours across the main bases, filtered to independent group trips and sorted toward the cheaper end. Match them to the route on the previous pages, and book the few that need a boat, a guide, or a permit ahead of time.

Photoshoot tour with Local Photographer

from 57 USD
5.0 (127 reviews)
2 hours
Istanbul

Green Tour with hike in İhlara Valley

from 74 USD
5.0 (68 reviews)
9.5 hours
Cappadocia

Ritual Hamam Experience

from 54 USD
5.0 (38 reviews)
40 min
Fethiye

Small Group Ephesus &House of Virgin Mary Tour

from 22 USD
5.0 (53 reviews)
6 hours
Kusadasi

from 36 USD
5.0 (70 reviews)
2 hours
Antalya

Antalya / Belek

from 20 USD
4.7 (44 reviews)
16 hours
Pamukkale

Live Viator tours, prices captured October 2026, ratings from verified bookings. Tap a card to book. Some links earn Pack Lightly a commission at no extra cost.

06

When to go, what it costs, how to move

Weather and crowds by month, a day's spending in EUR with the lira as a guide, and the night-bus and flight grid for every leg.

IN THIS CHAPTER

Weather, crowds, price 32

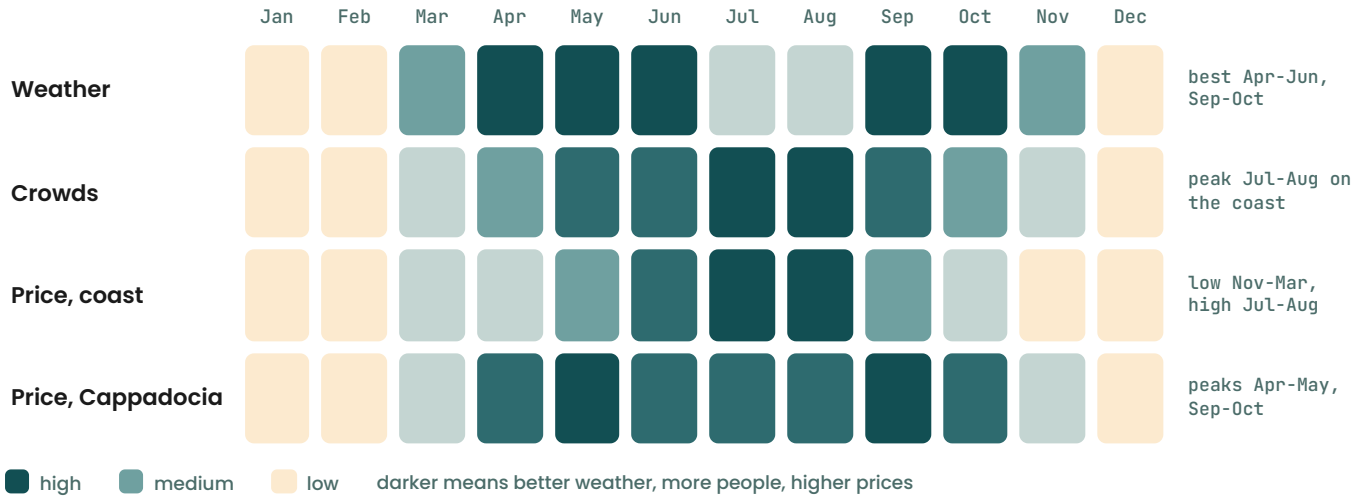
What a day costs 33

Night bus or flight, leg by leg 34

Weather, crowds, price

12-month calendar · coast and Anatolia read differently

Spring and early autumn are the sweet spot: warm days, open terraces and a coast you can still swim from. Istanbul and the Aegean and Mediterranean coasts roast through July and August, when the south coast pushes past 35C and resorts fill with European holidaymakers. Cappadocia and the central plateau sit high and cold in winter, so winter prices there are low for a reason.



weather: best-travel-time dataset, 2026-10 · crowd and price rows: seasonal estimates

BEST MONTHS BY REGION

REGION	BEST	AVOID	WHY
Istanbul	Apr-May, Sep-Oct	Jul-Aug, Dec-Feb	Summer heat and crowds, winter grey and wet
Cappadocia	Apr-Jun, Sep-Oct	Dec-Feb	High plateau, cold nights, snow in winter
Aegean and Lycian coast	May-Jun, Sep-Oct	Jul-Aug	35C+ in the south, resorts at capacity
Far east	late spring to early autumn	winter	Mountain snow closes passes

MORE DETAIL Eid and Ramadan shift bus fares and hotel prices, so check the 2027 holidays page and the month-by-month weather rundown.

What a day costs

EUR first, lira as a guide · 2026 prices, budget-calculator data

Budget in euros, not lira. The lira has lost value quickly, so a lira price printed here would age within months, while tourist-zone operators quote hotels, tours and transfers in EUR anyway. The lira column below uses the calculator's rate from June 2026 and is a guide only.

BACKPACKER	STANDARD	COMFORT	RATE USED
35 EUR	**70 EUR**	**150 EUR**	**34.5**
about 1,200 TRY · 40 USD	about 2,400 TRY · 80 USD	about 5,200 TRY · 170 USD	TRY per EUR, tool rate 2026-06

THE FOOD LADDER, USD PER DISH

DISH	LOW	HIGH	WHERE THE RANGE COMES FROM
Lahmacun	1 USD	3 USD	Counter bakery vs a sit-down restaurant
Doner kebap	2 USD	4 USD	Street counter vs a tourist street
Kunefe	3 USD	6 USD	A dessert shop vs a terrace in Sultanahmet
Manti	4 USD	8 USD	Lokanta lunch vs a harbour restaurant
Adana kebabi	5 USD	11 USD	Local kebab house vs a hotel restaurant
Iskender kebap	6 USD	12 USD	Specialist vs a mixed-menu restaurant

dish ranges: local-food-drinks dataset, 2026-10 · USD as stored in the tool

WHERE THE MONEY GOES

The bed is the biggest line on every budget, so a night bus that replaces one is the largest single saving in the country. Street and lokanta food keeps the daily food bill low even on the comfort tier. The lumpy items are the ones that bend the average: a balloon flight, a paragliding morning, a domestic flight. Count those separately rather than inside the daily number.

Run the same numbers for your own dates, group size and currency in the free budget calculator.

Open the Budget Calculator

Night bus or flight, leg by leg

Metro Turizm and Kamil Koc on the road · Pegasus and AJet in the air

Turkey's coach network is the backbone, and its domestic flights are cheap enough to compete on the longest legs. The rule: fly when the coach exceeds about 8 hours and the fare is close to a hotel night, take the night coach when it replaces a bed and lands before check-in. Times below are rounded, door to door excluded.

LEG	COACH	FLIGHT	TAKE
Istanbul to Cappadocia	10-11h	about 1h20, to Nevsehir or Kayseri	Flight
Cappadocia to Pamukkale	9-10h, overnight	none direct, via Istanbul	Night coach
Pamukkale to Selcuk	about 3h	none	Coach
Selcuk to Fethiye	about 5h	none worth taking	Coach
Fethiye to Kas	about 3h	none	Coach
Kas to Antalya	about 3h	none	Coach
Istanbul to Antalya	11-12h	about 1h25	Flight
Istanbul to Izmir	8-9h	about 1h	Flight

typical journey times, rounded · confirm on the day with the operator

WHAT THE NIGHT COACH IS LIKE

Long-distance coaches run reclining 2+1 seats, a host serves tea and a snack, and the driver stops about every 2 to 3 hours at a service area. Air conditioning runs cold, so keep a layer in your daypack and not in the hold. Tickets are sold at the otogar (the bus terminal), on the operator's website and on Omio. Compare flight totals including baggage on Skyscanner, because the cheapest fare often carries only hand luggage.

Both Cappadocia airports sit outside Goreme. Budget 40 to 75 minutes of transfer on top of the flight.

Istanbul has two airports on opposite sides of the Bosphorus. Check which one your flight uses before booking the transfer.

WORTH A READ

See the domestic flights page and the Istanbul to Cappadocia options.

07

Practical

Entry rules, money, the bag, the signal and the health basics. Sort these once, and the trip runs itself.

IN THIS CHAPTER

Book in this order 36

Money and getting around 37

Bed, bag, signal 38

Health basics 39

Book in this order

five things before you fly · everything else on the ground

Start with the visa question, because the answer decides whether anything else is worth booking. US passports enter visa-free for up to 90 days in any 180 (checked 2026-09-22), but other nationalities differ. After that, the order follows what sells out first: the Cappadocia flight, then the night coach.

10 wk before

Visa check

Run the Visa Checker for your passport. If an e-visa applies, apply on the official e-Visa portal only, not on a lookalike site.

Open the Visa Checker

8 wk before

International flights

Fly into Istanbul and out of Antalya on one open-jaw ticket. Book 6 to 8 weeks ahead for April-June and September-October.

Compare fares on Skyscanner

4-6 wk before

Istanbul to Cappadocia flight

The one leg where the plane beats the coach by 9 hours. Book it before the Goreme cave room, because both fill in spring.

Check the flight on Skyscanner

1-2 wk before

Night coach, Cappadocia to Pamukkale

Book a window seat ahead in peak months. The rest of the coaches can be bought a day before.

Check coaches on Omio

1 wk before

eSIM

Install before departure and activate on landing, so the airport transfer and the first map work from minute one.

Set up a Saily eSIM

The Visa Checker lists 6 months of passport validity. Check yours before you pay for anything.

Buy insurance that covers ballooning, paragliding and diving if you plan any. Many basic policies exclude them.

SEE ALSO The Turkey entry page, the flight tips and the travel insurance comparison cover each step in more depth.

Money and getting around

lira in your pocket · cards in towns · Istanbulkart for the city

Cards work in cities, hotels and most restaurants, and cash still wins in small places: shared minibuses, village shops, tea gardens and some family pensions. Carry a modest amount of lira for those, and pay by card everywhere else. When a card terminal offers to charge in euros or dollars, choose lira, because the terminal's own rate costs more.

WHERE	CARD?	NOTE
Istanbul and Antalya restaurants	Yes	Choose lira on the terminal
Hotels and cave hotels	Yes	Often quoted in EUR, ask which currency is charged
Dolmus (shared minibus)	No	Cash, small notes
Small pensions, village shops	Sometimes	Ask first, some add a card fee
Bazaars	Mixed	Cash gives you a bargaining edge

acceptance patterns: general practice, 2026 · rates and fees: see the currency page

GETTING AROUND: WHAT BEATS WHAT

Between towns, coaches are the default and the grid on page 33 picks the exceptions. Inside Istanbul, the Istanbulkart works on the metro, trams, buses and the public ferries, and the ferries are the best value in the city. In smaller towns, dolmus minibuses run on fixed routes and fill before they leave. Use licensed taxis with a running meter, and be wary of renting a car for this route: it adds no speed on the loop, and parking in the old towns is hard.

Use ATMs attached to a bank branch, in daylight. Withdraw larger amounts less often to cut flat fees.

Do not exchange money in the street or at a stranger's invitation. Rates are worse than an ATM and the risk of fakes is real.

07

DIG IN See the money and currency guide, the 2026 budget page and the driving page.

Bed, bag, signal

rooms and pensions · packing for mosques, cobbles and cold nights · eSIM

BED

For rooms, apartments and cave hotels, the Stay22 hotel map shows inventory and prices side by side across the country. Family pensions in Selcuk, Pamukkale and the Lycian villages often beat hotel rates for the same location, and many include breakfast. Hostels cluster in Istanbul, Goreme and Selcuk for budget travellers.

BAG: THE TWO-WEEK LOOP LIST

- [ ] A light scarf or shawl, for women's hair in mosques and for anyone in sun
- [ ] Long trousers or a long skirt, and a shirt that covers the shoulders, for mosques
- [ ] A fleece for Cappadocia evenings, since the plateau is cold even in spring
- [ ] Shoes with grip, because the marble at Ephesus and the cobbles of Istanbul are slick when wet
- [ ] Sun hat, SPF 50 and sunglasses for the exposed ruins and coast
- [ ] A reusable bottle, because bottled water is the norm and refills cut plastic
- [ ] Type C/F plug adapter (Turkey runs 230V on the two-pin European socket)
- [ ] A power bank and a small padlock for the night coach
- [ ] Trail shoes and a 2-litre water carry if you plan Lycian Way sections
- [ ] Slip-on sandals for removing shoes at mosques and for the hamam

Signal. Buy the eSIM the week before and activate it on landing. A 5 GB plan covers about a week of maps, messages and ride-hailing, and 10 GB covers two weeks. Coach Wi-Fi is unreliable, so do not plan around it. Airalo offers a Turkey-specific plan as an alternative.

Set up a Saily eSIM

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THE FULL PICTURE

See the 21-day packing list, the dress code page and the SIM and eSIM write-up.

Health basics

no required vaccines for most travellers · heat, stomachs and stray dogs are the real risks

Turkey requires no mandatory vaccines for most arrivals. Routine vaccines (MMR, tetanus) are the usual travel-clinic advice. The everyday risks are heat on the exposed ruins and coast, an upset stomach in the first days, and contact with stray dogs and cats, which are common in every town. Pharmacies (eczane, marked with a red E sign) are plentiful and well stocked.

PRACTICAL BASICS

- [ ] Drink bottled or filtered water. Tap water is treated, but visitors and most locals use bottled
- [ ] Heat: from June to September, walk ruins before 10am and carry a litre of water per person
- [ ] Stomach: eat where the queue is, and take oral rehydration salts in your first-aid kit
- [ ] Stray animals: do not feed or touch them. After any bite or scratch, seek medical care the same day, because rabies treatment must start early
- [ ] Earthquakes: Turkey sits on active faults. Learn your hotel's exits and follow local alerts
- [ ] European health cards do not cover you here. Buy travel insurance, including cover for any adventure activity

IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG

Dial 112 for an ambulance. Private hospitals in Istanbul, Antalya and the main coast towns take insurance and treat foreigners quickly, so keep your policy number and the insurer's emergency line in your phone before you travel.

07

GO DEEPER See the Turkey travel insurance page for risks and cover levels.

08

Safe and smart

The scams that still work in Istanbul and on the coast, the etiquette that matters in mosques and during Ramadan, and the numbers and phrases to save now.

IN THIS CHAPTER

The scams that still work 41

Etiquette: do and do not 42

Emergency numbers and eight phrases 43

The scams that still work

concentrated in Istanbul's tourist core and at transport hubs

Turkey scores 70 on safety, against 84 for its region. The gap is mostly petty crime and scams aimed at visitors in Istanbul, plus advisories for provinces near the Syrian and Iraqi borders, which no stop in this guide touches. Violent crime against tourists is uncommon. Six patterns cost visitors the most.

STREETS AND BAZAARS

The shoe-shine brush drop

A man walks past and drops his brush. You pick it up, he thanks you with a free shine, then asks for a high fee. Walk on without picking it up.

The friendly bar invitation

A stranger strikes up a chat and suggests a bar nearby. The bill arrives at many times the menu price. Decline invitations, and pick the bar yourself.

The carpet "cousin"

Someone claims a relative has a shop and walks you there. Prices carry the commission. Enter shops on your own terms and never buy under pressure.

TRANSPORT AND MONEY

Taxi without a meter

Some drivers say the meter is broken or quote a flat fare. Insist on the meter, or take the public airport bus or metro instead.

"Closed today" at the monument

A helpful stranger says Hagia Sophia or the Grand Bazaar is closed and steers you to another shop or tour. Check the gate yourself.

Currency conversion at the terminal

A card machine offers to charge in euros or dollars at a poor rate. Always choose lira, and keep the receipt.

08

READ ON See the Turkey safety breakdown and the travel safety map for current advisories.

Etiquette: do and do not

mosques, tea, bargaining and Ramadan

Turkey is relaxed in the tourist zones and more traditional in smaller towns and the east. A few rules cover most situations. Ramadan 2027 runs roughly from early February to early March. Tourist areas stay open, but in conservative towns avoid eating, drinking or smoking on the street in daylight.

Do

- Cover shoulders and knees in mosques, bring a scarf, and take your shoes off at the door
- Accept a glass of tea in a shop or pension. A polite decline with a hand on the heart is fine too
- Bargain in bazaars with a smile, and not in shops with price tags
- Round up in restaurants, and tip about 10 percent where service was good
- Ask before photographing people, especially women and children

Do not

- Insult Ataturk, the flag or the Turkish state. It is a criminal offence, not just rude
- Walk into a mosque during prayer, or take flash photos of worshippers
- Photograph military installations or police checkpoints
- Drink heavily or behave loudly in conservative towns, especially during Ramadan
- Count on the same dress rules everywhere. Swimwear belongs on the beach and not in the town

08

MORE ON THE SITE

The culture and etiquette rundown explains the traditions behind these rules, and the holiday dates page lists Eid.

Emergency numbers and eight phrases

save the numbers now · a few words change how people answer

GENERAL EMERGENCY
112
ambulance, nationwide

POLICE
155
cities and towns

JANDARMA
156
rural areas and trails

COAST GUARD
158
boat and sea emergencies

FIRE
110
nationwide

COUNTRY CODE
+90
for calls from abroad

EIGHT PHRASES THAT CHANGE HOW PEOPLE RESPOND

ENGLISH	TURKISH (PHONETIC)	NOTES
Hello	merhaba (mehr-hah-bah)	works any time of day
Thank you	tesekkurler (teh-shek-kewr-lehr)	the one word to learn first
Please	lutfen (lewt-fehn)	also used when handing something over
Yes / No	evet / hayir (eh-vet / hah-yuhr)	basic essentials
How much?	ne kadar? (neh kah-dahr)	markets, taxis, shops
Where is the toilet?	tuvalet nerede? (too-ah-leht neh-reh-deh)	practical basics
The bill, please	hesap lutfen (heh-sahp lewt-fehn)	waiters will not bring it unprompted
Help!	yardim edin! (yahr-duhm eh-deen)	emergencies only

Save your accommodation's name and address in Turkish in your phone. Taxi drivers and coach staff read it in one glance.

English is common in tourist zones and thinner in villages and on coaches. The phrases above are a courtesy and a backup.

08

KEEP READING See the Turkish for travellers page for a longer phrase list.

09

Tools and reference

The live tools behind this guide, two wallet cards for the trip, and the sources for every number.

IN THIS CHAPTER

Take the live tools with you 45

Print cards: cut, fold, take 46

Sources and methodology 48

Take the live tools with you

scan to open · data updates after this PDF was printed

This guide is a snapshot, and the tools behind it keep updating. Scan a code or type the short URL. Each one covers Turkey with the same data this guide was built from.

Trip Budget Calculator

Turkey: 35 EUR/day backpacker, 150 EUR/day comfort.

pack-lightly.com/
tool/budget-calculator/

Country Map

Every stop in this guide mapped, from Istanbul to Kas.

pack-lightly.com/
tool/country-map/

Best Time to Travel

Best: Apr-Jun, Sep-Oct. Month-by-month weather for 140+ countries.

pack-lightly.com/
tool/best-travel-time-worldmap/

Visa Checker

Turkey: visa-free 90 days for US passports. Other passports vary.

pack-lightly.com/
tool/visa-checker/

Print cards: cut, fold, take

print at 100% scale · credit-card size, 85 x 54 mm

Print this page on A4 or US Letter at 100 percent (no fit-to-page), cut along the dashed lines, and the two cards live in your wallet for the trip. The form fields work in Acrobat and iOS Preview if you would rather type than write.

TURKISH · ESSENTIALS

Hello	merhaba
Thank you	tesekkurler
Please	lutfen
Yes / No	evet / hayir
How much?	ne kadar?
Toilet?	tuvalet nerede?
The bill	hesap lutfen
Help!	yardim edin!

pack-lightly.com

EMERGENCY · TURKEY

General emergency	112
Police	155
Jandarma (rural)	156
Coast Guard	158

My accommodation: _____

Address: _____

Insurance #: _____

Left card front, right card back: print double-sided on the short edge and they fold into one.

Lost the guide, kept the card? The QR opens the live Turkey hub with every page this guide links to, plus updates published after this edition went to print.

pack-lightly.com/turkey/

Photograph both cards before you cut. A phone copy of the emergency card still works when the wallet is back at your hotel.

Ask your host to write the hotel's name and address in Turkish on the back. Taxi drivers and coach staff read it in a second.

Image credits

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13. **library of celsus ephesus**. Herbert Weber, CC BY-SA 4.0.
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16. **ottoman timber houses in safranbolu**. rheins, CC BY 3.0.
17. **pamukkale travertine pools**. Pvasiliadis, CC BY-SA 3.0.
18. **public ferry**. Moonik, CC BY-SA 3.0.
19. **rose valley at sunset near goreme**. Zeynel Cebeci, CC BY-SA 4.0.
20. **the marble road**. Dennis G. Jarvis, CC BY-SA 2.0.
21. **turkey cover**. MusikAnimal, CC BY-SA 4.0.
22. **white travertine terraces**. A.Savin, FAL.

Tour data and prices: Viator Partner API, captured July 2026. Author portrait and brand marks: Pack Lightly.

Sources and methodology

every number traces to a dated source



WRITTEN BY

Wouter van Kemenade

Founder of Pack Lightly. Performance-marketing background, data-led travel writing. Each figure carries a source and a capture date, and the next edition flags any price that moved more than 15 percent.

SOURCES USED IN THIS EDITION

1. Daily budgets: budget-calculator dataset, EUR per day, last updated 2026-06-11. Lira rate from the same tool, June 2026.
2. Entry rules: visa-checker dataset, US perspective, researched 2026-09-22, citing the US State Department country page and the Turkish e-Visa portal.
3. Climate and best months: best-travel-time dataset, captured 2026-10.
4. Scores: country-comparison tool, Turkey against the Southern Europe average (Spain, Italy, Portugal, Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, Malta), 2026-10.
5. Dish prices: local-food-drinks dataset, USD ranges as stored in the tool, 2026-10.
6. Hotel "from" prices: Pack Lightly hotel pages built on Stay22 listings, 2026-10.
7. Tour and activity prices: Viator Partner API, captured 2026-10-03.
8. Journey times: rounded typical operator timetables for coaches and domestic flights. Not a live feed, so confirm on the day.
9. Pack Lightly Turkey cluster pages, retrieved 2026-10: hub · best places · 14-day route · islands · national parks

Methodology. Country scores aggregate eleven dimensions into the 0-100 scorecard on page 5. Budgets come from the live budget-calculator dataset, climate verdicts from the best-travel-time dataset, both stamped with a capture date where they appear. Crowd and price rows on the weather page are seasonal estimates and are labelled as such.

What changed in edition 2026.10: first release on the v2 design standard, released 2026-10-03. Next planned update: April 2027. Not covered here: eastern and south-eastern Turkey beyond the loop, cruise stopovers, all-inclusive resort packages.

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