

FAQ – TURKEY

Visas:

Most nationalities require tourist visas for Turkey. Europeans, Americans, Canadians and Australians can purchase these on arrival at the airport; other nationalities should check with their local Embassies for latest regulations as some nationalities may require consular visas. Arriving passengers may obtain a 90-day multiple entry visa at international airports. Reconfirm travel document requirements with carrier before departure. Currently visas for US Citizens are USD\$20 per person.

Language:

The national language in Turkey is Turkish. However, tourists will rarely find a problem communicating as English is widely spoken in hotels, tourist areas and shops.

Currency:

As of 1 January 2009 the local currency is officially called Turkish Lira, or 'TL', on this date new smaller bank notes were introduced. Turkish Lira is divided into 100 kurus. As of 1 April 2009, USD\$1.00 is worth around 1.6 TL.

**Prior to 1 Jan 2009 the local currency was called New Turkish Lira or 'YTL', these larger bank notes will still remain in circulation through 2009, they will be withdrawn on 31 Dec 09.*

In Turkey banks are open from Monday to Friday; working hours being 0900 to 1700, though banks at the airports are open 24 hours daily. ATMs are widely accessible; it's perfectly possible to get around Turkey with nothing else but a credit or debit card. *U.S. Dollars are widely accepted in Turkey, and there are many opportunities for exchanging currencies in exchange offices, and many post offices (PTTs), shops and hotels alongside the banks.

Tipping:

It's customary to tip in Turkey and you may want to think about carrying small bills in your pocket for this purpose. Visitors would normally consider tipping their Tour Guide and Driver. Tips for hotel staff, waiters in restaurants and all portorage in airports and hotels is always covered by Sea Song Tours.

It is common to leave small tips for restaurant staff. Use the 10% rule for bills up to USD\$200; for bills that are more than USD\$200, it's acceptable to leave a smaller percentage.

******The recommended guideline for tipping your Tour Guide at the end of your journey is USD \$10 per person per day. The recommended guideline for tipping your Driver at the end of your journey is USD \$3 per person per day

Taxes:

Hotels, restaurants, bars and cafes sometimes add 10-15% service charge to the bill. At most shops, the sticker price includes Value Added Tax (VAT) of 18%.

Telephone Codes:

Country code is 90; Area codes are:

Istanbul	212	Kusadasi	256
Cappadocia	384	Bodrum	252
Antalya & Kas	242	Izmir	232

Customs:

The majority of Turkish citizens are Muslim, but there are also Christian and Jewish communities mainly in the cities of Istanbul and Izmir. The Turkish Republic was founded in 1923 on strong secular principles and for this reason Turkey has a modern and cosmopolitan feel.

Apart from government offices and banks, most businesses and shops are open seven days of the week from 10am until 8/10pm

Photography:

If you are taking photographs of local people, always ask their permission beforehand. Your guide can assist you in this. Do not take photographs of military installations or airports. In most museums there are restrictions on the use of flash photography and the use of tripods – please ask your guide if you are unsure.

Electricity:

Turkey's electrical current is 220-240V and sockets take the standard continental European dual round-pronged plug.

Health:

No vaccinations are currently needed for visitors to Turkey. During your stay, it is preferable to drink only bottled water, in hotels it is safe to brush your teeth with tap water. Take care from the sun, which can often feel cooler than it really is due to the cool coastal breezes and lack of humidity. Drink plenty of water during the day.

Recommended Attire:

Please bring comfortable walking shoes, a sunhat and cotton clothing. It is always a good idea to pack a lightweight jacket or sweater as it can get cool in the evenings. In Istanbul and the western region of Turkey appropriate daytime clothing is: long shorts, knee-length skirts, cotton trousers, T-shirts and polo's, short sleeved blouses and sundresses. For evening meals; jacket and tie is not required, open collared shirts (short or long sleeved) with trousers is suitable attire for men.

Around the pool at your hotel, low necklines, sleeveless shirts, or shorts can be comfortably worn; and at the beach resorts feel free to dress as you would at home.

When visiting mosques you will need to have your shoulders and knees covered.

Weather – Average Temperatures (In Fahrenheit)

	<i>Istanbul</i>	<i>Cappadocia</i>	<i>Aegean</i>	<i>Mediterranean</i>
<i>Dec – Feb</i>	43	34	50	52
<i>Mar - May</i>	56	50	61	61
<i>June - Aug</i>	72	68	79	81
<i>Sep - Nov</i>	61	54	59	68

Dining:

For almost five centuries, the people under Ottoman rule contributed to the sophisticated cuisine that was created in the kitchens of Topkapi Palace. The territories ranged from the Balkans to North Africa, many of today's staple dishes originated in Central Asia and were introduced by the Turkish tribes migrating to the west.

Lamb and eggplant are two very dominant ingredients of Turkish cuisine. It is worth enquiring about vegetable dishes, as most will have meat as an ingredient or at least as a seasoning.

Turkey's national drink is Raki, a clear anise-flavored spirit that turns cloudy when water is added and is drunk with meze and fish. Turkey also has a thriving wine industry, don't miss trying the local grape varieties of narinca, bogazkere and okuzgozu. The best vineyards in Turkey are Doluca and Kavaklıdere. Local beers have also improved in both quality and variety in recent years, Efes is the brand to look for.

Recommended Restaurants:

HAMDI RESTAURANT Located in Eminonu (0212) 528 03 90

Specializing in Turkish cuisine from Southeast Anatolia, Hamdi is a 20 year old restaurant with wonderful views of Halic Bay and the Galata Bridge. Hamdi is famous for mouth-watering kebabs. Open daily from 11:00 am to midnight. All major credit cards are accepted.

ZEYREKHANE Located in Fatih (0212) 532 27 78/ 635 04 06

Both a restaurant and a café located in a former Byzantine Monastery, and part of a UNESCO Heritage site. Daily menu includes appetizers, salads, sandwiches, delicious meals and desserts. Open Tuesday to Sunday from 9:00 am to midnight. Credit cards accepted.

KORFEZ RESTAURANT Located in Kanlica (0212) 413 43 14

A chic seafood restaurant with a romantic seaside setting, a private boat travels across the Bosphorus from Rumeli Fortress by appointment. Open Tuesday to Sunday from noon to 3:00pm for lunch and from 7:00pm to midnight for dinner. All major credit cards are accepted.

DOGA BALIK Located in Cihangir (0212) 293 91 44

Is considered one of the better seafood restaurants in the city and has a steady local clientele from the surrounding bohemian neighborhoods of Cihangir and Cukurcuma. Ordering is fun as there is no menu, fresh fish is bought daily and homemade meze are on display for you to choose. All major credit cards are accepted.

TUGRA RESTAURANT Ciragan Palace Kempinski Hotel (0212) 326 46 46.

Located in the breathtaking Ciragan Palace with a spectacular view of the Bosphorus. The Tugra Restaurant serves Ottoman cuisine in an elegant atmosphere. Open daily from 7:00pm to 11:00pm. All major credit cards are accepted.

MIKLA Located in Tepebasi (0212) 293 56 56

Located on the top two floors of the Marmara Pera Hotel, one of Istanbul's most exclusive dining experiences. On the menu is a mix of Turkish and Nordic cuisine. The owner, Mehmet Gurs, is Turkey's most famous chef. The bar at Mikla is the perfect spot for cocktails with great views over the city. Open Mon to Sat from 7:00pm to 2:00am for dinner. MasterCard and Visa are accepted.

CARNE Located in Harbiye (0212) 241 8585

Carne is a 'kosher' restaurant with sophisticated décor and an emphasis on Mediterranean cuisine along with such specialties as falafel and traditional Jewish kofte. Reservations are advised. Credit cards accepted. Closed all day on Friday and for lunch on Saturday.

ORIENT CAFÉ Located in Nurosmaniye (0212) 512 3075

Located on Nurosmaniye in the heart of the old city. It is a perfect lunch spot situated outside the Grand Bazaar. Orient serves breakfast, salads, sandwiches, light meals, desserts and variety of coffee beverages. You can also enjoy a glass of wine or beer. The café's décor is in modern Italian design and is warm and comfortable. Open everyday. All major credit cards are accepted.

BRASSERIE NISANTASI Located in Nisantasi (0212) 343 0443

This café, bar and restaurant includes selections from French cuisine with a 'tea-time' menu and wonderful beautiful breakfast offerings. It's quite popular and always very crowded and trendy. Open everyday. All major credit cards are accepted.