

Turkey at a glance



A physical bridge in the heartland of Eurasia, lying on the crossroads between the “Lands of the Old World”, Asia, Europe and Africa.

Spanning over an area of 814,578 square kilometres, Turkey is surrounded by three seas (Mediterranean, Aegean, Black Sea) and 12 neighbouring states.

The country's landscape is divided into seven regions, each with a different climate that gives the chance of enjoying the four seasons simultaneously. The Aegean region is best known for its ancient sites including the two of the seven wonders of the ancient world and with its turquoise sea making the enviable “blue cruise” route an unforgettable experience. With Istanbul, Turkey's largest city and the historic capital of the Ottoman Empire, and with the beautiful Straits of Istanbul and Çanakkale, Marmara region uniquely straddles Europe and Asia. Stretching from the South, Turkey's Mediterranean coast is awash with sandy beaches, secluded coves. With high mountain ranges, plunging valleys, expansive plains and vast lakes, East and South East Turkey are the regions of contrast and colours, adorned with unique architectural samples of Turkish culture.

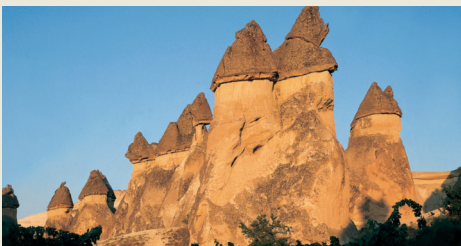
Hagia Sophia



Leanders Tower



Cappadocia



Trojan



Celcus Library



Among the most fertile regions of the country, the Black Sea area is famed for traditional villages. Home to Ankara, Turkey's capital and political centre, Central Anatolia also boasts the expansive natural wonder that is the region of Cappadocia.

A treasure house of history, a cradle of civilizations and a bridge for dialogue between cultures.

The history of Turkey tells of a 10,000 year-old civilization. It is world's one of the oldest regions that is continually inhabited. The first settlements in Çatalhöyük go back to 10,000 BC and the site is often cited as the earliest known sizeable human habitation. The result is a unique Anatolian civilization which has long inspired the thoughts and legends of West.

As civilizations succeeded each other over thousands of years, they lived their religious legacy as well. The three monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam co-exist in harmony in Anatolia. Any visitor to Turkey will be struck by the plethora and variety of religious buildings and ancient shrines. Being cognizant of the responsibility as the heritor of this vast religious cultural background, Turkey has pioneered the dialogue between the representatives of the three monotheistic faiths, the first meeting of which took place in year 2005, in the historic city of Antakya (Antiocheia). Turkey also co-sponsors the global initiative of the Alliance of Civilizations, aimed at preventing cultural polarization and intolerance, an initiative that is candidate to be the peace project of the 21st century.

An 85 year-old modern Republic whose mottoes have been democracy, secularism, sovereignty and the rule of law.

Turks' habitation in Anatolia goes back to the 12th century and several Turkish states dominated the lands of today's Turkey, who succeeded the Ottoman Empire. After a war of independence following the First World War, modern Turkey was established in 1920 and the Republic was declared on 29 October 1923.

The Turkish Republic is based on the principle of separation of powers. Legislative power is vested in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, the executive power and duties are carried out by the President and the Council of Ministers and the judiciary power is exercised by independent courts.

Equality before the law, sanctity of fundamental rights and freedoms, and, the sovereignty vested unconditionally in the nation illustrated within the concept of civic nationalism together with the secular character of the state are the basic tenets of the Turkish Republic enshrined in its Constitution.

A dynamic nation of 70 million people and an emerging economic power with the world's 17th largest economy.

Turkey's biggest asset is its young and educated human resource. The 0-14 age group comprises the 28.08% of the overall population and the 15-6 age group comprises the 65.96%.

Thanks to its young and dynamic population, today Turkey is the 17th largest economy in the world with a GNP of about USD 660 billion. Turkey has recorded sustainable growth during the past 6 years. The growth rate has been % 6.7 in average throughout the last 7 years.

Being a member of the OECD, Turkey also became a founding member of the WTO in 1995 and established a Customs Union with the EU in

1996. Turkey is the only country to have entered into a Customs Union with the EU prior to accession. Turkey's vision for the 21st century is to achieve integration with Europe and become an economic power in its region.

Poised to become an important global energy hub and corridor.

Turkey forms a natural energy bridge between the source-rich countries of the Caspian basin, Middle East and the world markets. Therefore, Turkey is the key country in the East-West energy corridor projects that aim at transporting the Caucasian and Central Asian energy resources to western markets through safe and alternative routes. Taking into account the capacities of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline (1 million barrel per day), the Iraqi-Turkish Oil Pipeline and Samsun-Ceyhan by-pass pipeline which is under development, as well as the oil transported through the Turkish Straits, it is expected that % 6 to 7 of global oil supply will transit Turkey in the years to come. Moreover, with a possible construction of an oil refinery and an LNG terminal, Ceyhan will become the “energy hub” of the region.

A promoter of regional stability and a net contributor to international peace and security.

Guided by the enduring legacy of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Turkey has been pursuing a policy of “Peace at Home and Peace Abroad” since the establishment of the Republic in 1923. Turkey pursues this objective by following a principled and proactive foreign policy that employs a broad spectrum of peaceful means. These entail, inter alia, membership in the NATO Alliance and full integration with the European Union, taking the lead in regional cooperation processes, promoting good neighborly relations and economic cooperation, extending humanitarian aid and assistance to the less fortunate, participating in peace-keeping operations, and contributing to the resolution of disputes as well as post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction efforts. Turkey is the founding member of the United Nations and is represented on the United Nations Security Council for the term 2009-2010.

Did you know that?

- Istanbul is the only city in the world located on two continents, Europe and Asia.
- The oldest known human settlement in the world is located in Catalhoyuk, Konya, Turkey, dating back to 6500 BC.
- 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.
- Turkey introduced coffee to Europe.
- The first coins were minted in Sardis, the capital of the Ancient Kingdom of Lydia, at the end of seventh century BC.
- Saint John, Paul, and Peter all lived and preached in Turkey.
- The most valuable silk carpet in the world is in the Mevlana Museum in Konya, Turkey.
- Legend has it that St. John brought Virgin Mary to Ephesus after the Crucifixion, where she spent her last days in a small stone house on Mount Koressos (Bulbul Dagi) near Ephesus Turkey.
- A cave known today as the Grotto of St. Peter or Church of St. Peter is believed to be where the apostle Peter preached when he visited Antioch (Antakya).