



Türkiye

A country on two continents, where Istanbul's minarets rise over the Bosphorus and every visitor is offered a glass of tea.

AT A GLANCE

Facts to know

CAPITAL

Ankara

POPULATION

About 86 million (official figure for the end of 2025)

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

Turkish, as set out in the constitution. Kurdish, Arabic and other languages are also spoken

CURRENCY

Turkish lira, divided into 100 kuru

AREA

About 784,000 km², mostly in Asia, with a small part (East Thrace) in Europe

GOVERNMENT

Presidential republic with an elected president and parliament (President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, since 2014)

HIGHEST MOUNTAIN

Mount Ararat (Ar Da), 5,137 m, a dormant volcano in the far east

LONGEST RIVER

The Kızılırmak, about 1,355 km, the longest river entirely inside Türkiye. The Euphrates and Tigris rise in Türkiye but flow on into Syria and Iraq

NEIGHBOURS

Greece and Bulgaria in Europe; Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan (its Nakhchivan exclave), Iran, Iraq and Syria in Asia. Across the sea: the island of Cyprus to the south, many Greek islands just off the Aegean coast, and Ukraine, Russia and Romania across the Black Sea

DRIVES ON THE

Right

CALLING CODE

+90

A 45-minute trip to Türkiye

Everything you need is in this pack. No preparation beyond printing. Adapt the timing to your group.

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| 0 to 5 min | Welcome. Show the map page and find Türkiye together. Ask: who has been there, or knows someone from there? |
| 5 to 15 min | Read the facts at a glance, then three moments from the story: 9500 BC: Göbekli Tepe is built; 1915: The Gallipoli landings; 2023: Earthquakes in the southeast. |
| 15 to 25 min | At the table: talk about Meze and Red lentil soup. Idea: bring a small taste (bread, cheese, fruit, tea) if your kitchen can help. |
| 25 to 30 min | Say it like a local: practise "Merhaba" (Hello), "Günaydın" (Good morning), "yi akamlar" (Good evening). Everyone says them together. |
| 30 to 40 min | Quiz: read the questions aloud, or play the big-screen version at https://worldstroll.com/countries/turkiye/group . No scores needed. |
| 40 to 45 min | Talk about it (questions page), then stamp or sign everyone's passport page. |

You will need

- This printed pack (one per table, or one each)
- Pens for the quiz
- Optional: a world map or globe, a small tasting, music from the country

Türkiye and its cities



- Istanbul (Istanbul Province, on both sides of the Bosphorus): Hagia Sophia and the Blue Mosque, Topkap Palace, The Grand Bazaar, Ferries across the Bosphorus
- Ankara (Ankara Province, central Anatolia): Anıtkabir, Atatürk's mausoleum, The Museum of Anatolian Civilizations, Ankara Castle, The Grand National Assembly
- İzmir (İzmir Province, Aegean coast): The Kordon seafront promenade, The Kemeraltı bazaar, The clock tower on Konak Square, Day trips to Ephesus
- Bursa (Bursa Province, Marmara region): skender kebab, The Green Mosque and Green Tomb, Skiing on Mount Uludağ, The Ottoman village of Cumalıkızık
- Antalya (Antalya Province, Mediterranean coast): The old town of Kaleiçi, Hadrian's Gate, Beaches and resorts, Ancient Aspendos and Perge nearby
- Konya (Konya Province, central Anatolia): The Mevlâna Museum, Whirling dervish ceremonies, Seljuk mosques and schools, Etli ekmek, lamb served on soft flatbread
- Gaziantep (Gaziantep Province, southeastern Türkiye): Pistachio baklava, The Zeugma Mosaic Museum, Kebabs and lahmacun
- Trabzon (Trabzon Province, Black Sea coast): Sumela Monastery in the mountains, Hamsi (Black Sea anchovies), Uzungöl and the mountain plateaus, The Trabzon Hagia Sophia
- Göreme (Nevşehir Province, Cappadocia): Hot-air balloon flights at sunrise, Fairy chimneys and cave hotels, The Göreme Open-Air Museum, Walks through the valleys

- anlurfa (anlurfa Province, southeastern Türkiye): Balklgöl, the pool of sacred fish, Göbekli Tepe nearby, Isot, its dark smoky pepper, The anlurfa Archaeology Museum
- Edirne (Edirne Province, East Thrace (European Türkiye)): The Selimiye Mosque, Kırkpınar oil wrestling every summer
- Selçuk (zmir Province, near the Aegean coast): Ephesus, The Temple of Artemis site, The Basilica of St John, The House of the Virgin Mary

A short history of Türkiye

Anatolia is one of the oldest settled lands on earth. Hunter-gatherers raised the stone circles of Göbekli Tepe, and later came the Hittites, Greek cities along the coast, the Persians, Alexander the Great and the Romans. Byzantium became Constantinople, capital of the Eastern Roman Empire for over a thousand years. Turkish peoples arrived from Central Asia in the 11th century, the Ottomans rose from a small state in the northwest to a great empire, and after the First World War the modern republic was founded in 1923. Some chapters of this history, such as the fate of the Armenians in 1915 and the division of Cyprus in 1974, are still seen very differently by different sides.

9500 BC **Göbekli Tepe is built**

From about 9500 BC, people who still lived mainly by hunting and gathering built round enclosures of huge carved T-shaped stone pillars on a hill near today's anlıurfa. They are among the oldest known monumental buildings in the world, thousands of years older than Stonehenge or the pyramids.

1650 BC **Hattusa becomes the Hittite capital**

Around 1650 BC the Hittite king Labarna moved his capital to Hattusa, near today's Boazkale in central Anatolia, and took the name Hattusili. From here the Hittites ruled a great empire. A tablet found at Hattusa records their peace treaty with Ramesses II of Egypt, one of the oldest known peace treaties.

AD 330 **Constantinople becomes the capital**

The Roman emperor Constantine the Great rebuilt the old Greek city of Byzantium, founded about 660 BC, and in 330 made it the new capital of the empire under the name Constantinople. It remained the capital of the Eastern Roman, or Byzantine, Empire for over 1,100 years.

AD 537 **Hagia Sophia is completed**

Emperor Justinian I had the great church of Hagia Sophia rebuilt in only about five years, and it was inaugurated on 27 December 537. Its huge dome made it one of the wonders of its age, and it was the cathedral of Constantinople for over 900 years.

1071

The Battle of Manzikert

On 26 August 1071 the Seljuk Turks under Sultan Alp Arslan defeated the Byzantine army near Malazgirt in eastern Anatolia and captured Emperor Romanos IV. The victory opened Anatolia to Turkish settlement, and the land slowly became Turkish in language and culture.

1299

The Ottoman state is founded

According to tradition, around 1299 Osman I founded a small state in northwestern Anatolia. His descendants, the Ottomans, took Bursa, then Edirne, and built an empire that at its height stretched from Hungary to Arabia and North Africa and lasted until 1922.

1453

The Ottomans take Constantinople

On 29 May 1453, after a siege of 53 days, the 21-year-old Sultan Mehmed II took Constantinople, and the last Byzantine emperor, Constantine XI, died in the fighting. Mehmed, known ever after as 'the Conqueror', made the city his capital and turned Hagia Sophia into a mosque.

1520

Suleiman the Magnificent becomes sultan

Suleiman I ruled from 1520 to 1566, the longest reign of any Ottoman sultan. Called 'the Magnificent' in Europe and Kanuni, 'the Lawgiver', in Turkish, he led armies to Vienna in 1529, and his architect Mimar Sinan built the Süleymaniye Mosque in Istanbul.

1915

The Gallipoli landings

On 25 April 1915, in the First World War, British, French, Australian and New Zealand troops landed on the Gallipoli peninsula to try to open the straits to Istanbul. After about eight months of fighting, with huge losses on both sides, the Allies withdrew in January 1916. A young officer, Mustafa Kemal, made his name here. Australians and New Zealanders remember 25 April as Anzac Day.

1915

The Armenian deportations and massacres

From April 1915, during the First World War, the Ottoman government deported the Armenian population of Anatolia, and between about 600,000 and 1.5 million Armenians died in massacres and death marches. Most historians and many countries call these events the Armenian genocide. The Turkish government rejects that term and describes the deportations as a wartime measure. Armenians remember the victims every year on 24 April.

1923

The Republic of Turkey is proclaimed

After the War of Independence, the Grand National Assembly made Ankara the capital on 13 October 1923 and proclaimed the Republic of Turkey on 29 October 1923. Mustafa Kemal, later given the surname Atatürk, 'father of the Turks', became its first president. 29 October is Republic Day.

1928

A new Latin alphabet

A law of 1 November 1928 replaced the Arabic script with a new alphabet of 29 Latin letters, including ç, , , ö, and ü, which matches spoken Turkish very closely. Atatürk himself toured the country to teach it, and schools for adults opened everywhere.

1934

Women win the vote

Turkish women could vote in local elections from 1930, and on 5 December 1934 parliament gave them the right to vote and stand in national elections. In the election of February 1935, 17 women became members of parliament. This was ten years before women in France could vote.

1974

Cyprus is divided

In July 1974 a coup in Cyprus, backed by the military government in Athens, aimed at union with Greece. Türkiye then sent troops, and by mid-August they held more than a third of the island. Cyprus has been divided ever since, with a UN buffer zone between the Greek Cypriot south and the Turkish Cypriot north, which only Türkiye recognises as a state. Talks to reunite the island have so far failed.

2022

The UN adopts the name Türkiye

On 1 June 2022 the United Nations received a letter from the Turkish foreign minister asking it to use Türkiye instead of Turkey, and the change took effect at once. Many governments and organisations followed, while 'Turkey' remains the common name in everyday English.

2023

Earthquakes in the southeast

On 6 February 2023 two huge earthquakes, of magnitude 7.8 and about 7.5, struck southeastern Türkiye and northern Syria about nine hours apart. More than 53,000 people died in Türkiye alone, whole neighbourhoods in cities such as Antakya and Kahramanmara collapsed, and rebuilding is still going on.

What people eat in Türkiye

Turkish cooking brings together the grain and dairy of the Central Asian steppe, the olive oil and fish of the Aegean and the Black Sea, the spice and kebabs of the southeast, and the refined dishes of the Ottoman palace kitchens. Breakfast, kahvalt, is a big spread of cheese, olives, tomatoes, cucumbers, eggs, honey, jam and bread, with endless glasses of tea. A dinner often starts with meze, small cold and hot dishes to share, followed by soup, a main dish of meat or vegetables with rice or bulgur, and fruit or a sweet. Bread comes with every meal, and a small cup of Turkish coffee may end it.

Meze (Meze)

All of Türkiye, especially the Aegean coast and Istanbul

A spread of small dishes to share at the start of a meal: white cheese, melon, yoghurt with garlic and cucumber (cack), smoky aubergine purée, stuffed vine leaves, spicy tomato dip, and vegetables cooked in olive oil. In a meyhane, a traditional tavern, meze can last all evening.

Red lentil soup (Mercimek çorbas)

All of Türkiye

A smooth, golden soup of red lentils, onion and carrot, finished with butter and red pepper and served with a wedge of lemon. It is found in almost every Turkish home and in simple restaurants called lokanta, and some people even eat it for breakfast.

Menemen (Menemen)

Named after the town of Menemen near Izmir, now eaten all over Türkiye

Eggs scrambled into a soft mixture of tomatoes, green peppers and olive oil, cooked and served in a small two-handled pan with plenty of bread for dipping. It is a favourite breakfast, and some cooks add sucuk, a spicy sausage, or white cheese.

Simit (Simit)

Istanbul and all of Türkiye

A ring of bread dipped in water and molasses and covered in sesame seeds, then baked until crisp and golden outside and soft inside. Street sellers carry piles of simit on trays on their heads or sell them from trolleys, and many people eat one with tea and white cheese for breakfast.

Pide (Pide)

All of Türkiye, and especially popular on the Black Sea coast

Flatbread baked at a high heat, traditionally in a wood-fired oven, usually long, with the edges folded in around a filling of minced meat, cheese, egg or sucuk sausage. The Black Sea version, Karadeniz pidesi, is famous all over the country. The person who makes it is a pideci.

Lahmacun (Lahmacun)

Southeastern Türkiye, especially Gaziantep and anlurfa; it is also loved in Syria, Lebanon and Armenia, and its roots are in the wider Levant

A very thin round of dough spread with minced meat, onion, tomato, pepper and herbs, baked in a very hot oven for a few minutes. It has no cheese. You squeeze lemon over it, add parsley and onion, roll it up and eat it with your hands.

Adana kebab (Adana kebab)

Adana, in southern Türkiye

Lamb minced by hand with tail fat and red pepper, pressed onto a wide flat iron skewer and grilled over charcoal. It is served with flatbread, grilled tomatoes and peppers, and onions with sumac. Kebabs vary greatly from region to region, and many cities are proud of their own.

skender kebab (skender kebab)

Bursa, in the northwest

Thin slices of meat grilled on a vertical spit, laid over pieces of flatbread, covered with hot tomato sauce and sizzling melted butter, and served with thick yoghurt on the side.

Mant (Mant)

All of Türkiye, most famously Kayseri in central Anatolia

Tiny dumplings filled with spiced minced meat, boiled and served under garlic yoghurt with melted butter, red pepper flakes and dried mint. The dumplings came west with Turkic peoples along the Silk Road.

Çi köfte (Çi köfte)

Southeastern Türkiye, especially anlurfa

Fine bulgur kneaded for a long time by hand with onion, tomato and pepper paste and isot, the dark smoky pepper of Urfa, until it forms a soft, spicy paste. It is served in lettuce leaves with lemon. Its name means 'raw meatball', because the traditional version was made with raw minced meat. Since 2008 the raw-meat version may not be sold in Türkiye, and what you buy today is made without meat. Safety: never eat a home-made version with raw meat, which can carry parasites and bacteria.

mam bayld (mam bayld)

Ottoman palace and home cooking, now all of Türkiye

Whole aubergines, split and filled with onions, garlic and tomatoes, then cooked slowly in plenty of olive oil. It is served warm or at room temperature, often as part of a meal of vegetable dishes.

Baklava (Baklava)

The Ottoman kitchens of Istanbul; Gaziantep is famous for its pistachio baklava

Many paper-thin layers of pastry brushed with butter, filled with chopped pistachios or walnuts, baked until crisp and soaked in syrup. Where it first came from is disputed, and Greeks, Turks and other peoples of the former Ottoman lands all have their own proud baklava traditions.

Künefe (Künefe)

Hatay (Antakya) and the southeast; similar sweets are made across the Middle East

Fine strands of pastry baked in a small round pan around a layer of soft, stretchy local cheese, soaked in syrup and topped with pistachios. Since 2023 Antakya künefe has had a protected name in the EU. It is served very hot, when the cheese inside is still stretchy.

Turkish delight (Lokum)

Istanbul and all of Türkiye

Soft, chewy cubes of starch and sugar flavoured with rosewater, lemon or mastic, often filled with pistachios or hazelnuts and dusted with icing sugar. It is offered to guests with coffee and on holidays.

Turkish coffee (Türk kahvesi)

Istanbul and all of Türkiye

Very finely ground coffee boiled slowly with cold water, and sugar if wanted, in a small pot called a cezve until it foams. It is poured unfiltered into small cups and served with a glass of water and often a piece of lokum. Let the grounds settle and do not drink the last sip.

Ayran (Ayran)

All of Türkiye, and among Turkic peoples for about a thousand years

A cold, salty drink of yoghurt whisked with water, sometimes frothy on top. It goes with kebabs, lahmacun and pide, and is especially refreshing in summer.

At the table

- If you are invited to a Turkish home, bring a small gift such as flowers or sweets. Avoid wine unless you know your hosts drink, as many Turks do not drink alcohol.
- Tea is offered everywhere: at home, in offices and even while you bargain in the bazaar. It is served in small tulip-shaped glasses, and accepting one is polite.
- People say 'afiyet olsun', may it be good for you, to anyone who is eating, much like 'enjoy your meal'.
- Take off your shoes just outside or inside the door when you enter a Turkish home, unless your hosts tell you to keep them on.
- Blowing your nose or picking your teeth at the table is considered very rude; step away from the table instead.
- Older people are served first and treated with great respect. During Ramadan, families and neighbours break the fast together at sunset with a meal called iftar.

Red lentil soup

A smooth, golden soup of red lentils, onion and carrot, finished with butter and red pepper and served with a wedge of lemon. It is found in almost every Turkish home and in simple restaurants called lokanta, and some people even eat it for breakfast.

Ingredients

- 200 g red lentils, rinsed
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 carrot, chopped
- 1 small potato, peeled and chopped
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste or red pepper paste
- 1.2 litres vegetable or chicken stock
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin, salt and black pepper
- To finish: 30 g butter, 1 teaspoon paprika or pul biber (Turkish chilli flakes), 1 teaspoon dried mint, and lemon wedges

Method

1. Soften the onion and carrot in the olive oil over a medium heat for about 5 minutes. Stir in the tomato paste and cook for 1 minute more.
2. Add the lentils, potato and stock, bring to the boil, then simmer gently for 25 minutes, stirring now and then, until everything is very soft.
3. Blend until smooth, using a stick blender or a food processor, and season with cumin, salt and pepper. Add a little hot water if it is too thick.
4. Melt the butter in a small pan, take it off the heat and stir in the paprika and mint.
5. Serve the soup in bowls with a spoonful of the red butter on top and lemon wedges to squeeze in.

Menemen

Eggs scrambled into a soft mixture of tomatoes, green peppers and olive oil, cooked and served in a small two-handled pan with plenty of bread for dipping. It is a favourite breakfast, and some cooks add sucuk, a spicy sausage, or white cheese.

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons olive oil or butter
- 2 long green peppers (or 1 green bell pepper), thinly sliced
- 1 small onion, chopped (optional)
- 3 ripe tomatoes, peeled and chopped, or 1 tin (400 g) chopped tomatoes
- 4 eggs
- Salt, black pepper and a pinch of chilli flakes
- Crusty bread to serve

Method

1. Heat the oil in a frying pan and cook the peppers, and the onion if you like it, for about 5 minutes until soft.
2. Add the tomatoes with a little salt and simmer for 5 to 8 minutes, until most of the juice has cooked away.
3. Crack in the eggs and stir gently so they mix into the tomatoes in soft streaks.
4. Cook, stirring now and then, until the eggs are set to your liking. Turks often like them soft, but pregnant women, young children, older people and anyone with a weak immune system should cook them until firm, or use pasteurised eggs.
5. Season with pepper and chilli flakes and bring the pan to the table with bread.

Çi köfte

Fine bulgur kneaded for a long time by hand with onion, tomato and pepper paste and isot, the dark smoky pepper of Urfa, until it forms a soft, spicy paste. It is served in lettuce leaves with lemon. Its name means 'raw meatball', because the traditional version was made with raw minced meat. Since 2008 the raw-meat version may not be sold in Türkiye, and what you buy today is made without meat. Safety: never eat a home-made version with raw meat, which can carry parasites and bacteria.

Ingredients

- 200 g extra fine bulgur (köftelik bulgur)
- 150 ml hot water
- 2 tablespoons hot or mild red pepper paste (biber salças)
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1 small onion, grated
- 2 tablespoons isot or other chilli flakes, to taste
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin, 1 teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons pomegranate molasses
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 spring onions and a bunch of parsley, finely chopped
- To serve: lettuce leaves and lemon wedges

Method

1. Put the bulgur in a large bowl, pour over the hot water, cover and leave for 10 minutes. No meat is used in this version.
2. Add the pepper paste, tomato paste, grated onion, isot, cumin and salt. Wearing kitchen gloves, knead the mixture firmly for 15 to 20 minutes, until the bulgur is soft and it all sticks together like dough.
3. Knead in the pomegranate molasses and olive oil, then the spring onions and parsley. Taste and add more salt or pepper.
4. Take a walnut-sized piece and squeeze it in your fist to make the traditional finger-marked shape. Repeat with the rest.
5. Serve wrapped in lettuce leaves with a squeeze of lemon.

mam bayld

Whole aubergines, split and filled with onions, garlic and tomatoes, then cooked slowly in plenty of olive oil. It is served warm or at room temperature, often as part of a meal of vegetable dishes.

Ingredients

- 4 medium aubergines
- 150 ml olive oil, divided
- 3 onions, thinly sliced
- 4 cloves garlic, sliced
- 4 ripe tomatoes, chopped (keep a few slices for the top)
- 1 green pepper, sliced
- A small bunch of parsley, chopped
- 1 teaspoon sugar and salt to taste
- 150 ml hot water

Method

1. Peel the aubergines in stripes, leaving bands of skin, and soak them in salted water for 20 minutes. Dry them well.
2. Fry the whole aubergines in about 4 tablespoons of the oil, turning them, until soft and lightly browned. Lay them in a baking dish.
3. In the same pan, cook the onions slowly in 4 more tablespoons of oil for about 15 minutes until soft and sweet. Add the garlic, pepper and chopped tomatoes and cook for 5 minutes, then stir in the parsley, sugar and salt.
4. Heat the oven to 180°C (160°C fan). Slit each aubergine lengthways, open it like a boat and fill it with the onion mixture. Top with tomato slices.
5. Pour the rest of the oil and the hot water around the aubergines, cover with foil and bake for 40 minutes. Let them cool a little and serve warm or at room temperature.

Turkish coffee

Very finely ground coffee boiled slowly with cold water, and sugar if wanted, in a small pot called a cezve until it foams. It is poured unfiltered into small cups and served with a glass of water and often a piece of lokum. Let the grounds settle and do not drink the last sip.

Ingredients

- 2 heaped teaspoons Turkish coffee (very finely ground)
- 2 small coffee cups of cold water (about 140 ml)
- Sugar to taste: none (sade), a little (orta) or sweet (ekerli)

Method

1. Put the cold water, coffee and sugar into a cezve or the smallest pan you have, and stir well once. Do not stir again after this.
2. Heat very slowly over a low heat. After 3 to 4 minutes a dark foam will rise.
3. Just before it boils, spoon some foam into each cup, then return the pot to the heat for a few seconds until it rises again.
4. Pour the coffee slowly into the cups so the foam stays on top. Serve with a glass of water and wait a minute for the grounds to settle before drinking.

Ayran

A cold, salty drink of yoghurt whisked with water, sometimes frothy on top. It goes with kebabs, lahmacun and pide, and is especially refreshing in summer.

Ingredients

- 250 g plain whole-milk yoghurt
- 250 ml cold water
- ½ teaspoon salt
- Ice cubes and a few mint leaves (optional)

Method

1. Put the yoghurt, water and salt in a jug.
2. Whisk hard, or blend for 30 seconds, until smooth and frothy on top.
3. Taste and add a little more water if you like it thinner.
4. Pour into glasses over ice and serve with mint, if you like, alongside grilled meat or pastries.

Useful phrases

Merhaba

MER-ha-ba · Hello

Günaydn

gun-eye-DUHN · Good morning

yi akamlar

ee-YEE ak-sham-LAR · Good evening

Naslsnz?

NA-suhl-suh-nuhz · How are you? (polite)

yyim, teekkürler

ee-YEE-yim, te-shek-kur-LER · I'm fine, thanks

Benim adm ...

be-NIM a-DUHM · My name is ...

Teekkür ederim

te-shek-KUR e-de-RIM · Thank you

Affedersiniz

af-fe-DER-si-niz · Excuse me

Kaç para?

KACH pa-ra · How much is it?

Çok pahal

CHOK pa-ha-LUH · That's very expensive

Hesap, lütfen

he-SAP, LUT-fen · The bill, please

Tuvalet nerede?

tu-va-LET NE-re-de · Where is the toilet?

ngilizce biliyor musunuz?

in-gi-LIZ-je bi-li-YOR mu-su-nuz · Do you speak English?

Anlamyorum

an-LA-muh-yo-rum · I don't understand

Afiyet olsun

a-fee-YET ol-SUN · Enjoy your meal (literally 'may it be good for you')

erefe!

she-re-FE · Cheers! (literally 'to honour')

Kolay gelsin

ko-LAI gel-SIN · May it come easy

Güle güle

gu-LE gu-LE · Goodbye (literally 'smiling, smiling')

Things you might not know

1. Istanbul is built on two continents. Roughly two thirds of its people live on the European side of the Bosphorus and one third on the Asian side, and many cross by ferry every day.
2. Göbekli Tepe, near anlıurfa, was built from about 9500 BC, more than 6,000 years before Stonehenge. Its builders were mainly hunter-gatherers, living at the very dawn of farming.
3. Two of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World stood in what is now Türkiye: the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus and the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, today's Bodrum.
4. Saint Nicholas, whose legend of secret gift-giving grew into Santa Claus, was born in Patara and was bishop of Myra, today the town of Demre on Türkiye's Mediterranean coast.
5. Tulips were loved and bred in the Ottoman Empire long before they reached the Netherlands in the late 1500s. The English word 'tulip' is thought to come from the Turkish word for the cloth of a turban.
6. Turks drink more tea per person than any other nation, over 3 kg of tea a year each in widely quoted figures, or almost four glasses a day. Most of it is grown on the rainy Black Sea coast around Rize.
7. In 1963 a man renovating his house in Derinkuyu, Cappadocia, broke through a wall and found an underground city about 85 m deep, where up to 20,000 people with their animals could shelter.
8. Turkish women won the right to vote in national elections in 1934, ten years before women in France (1944) and eleven years before women in Italy (1945).
9. Mount Ararat, at 5,137 m the highest mountain in Türkiye, has been linked since the Middle Ages with the story of Noah's Ark. It is also a national symbol of Armenia, which it overlooks across the border.
10. Every 10 November at 9:05 in the morning, the moment Atatürk died in 1938, sirens sound and people across Türkiye stop and stand in silence for a minute. Even traffic halts.
11. Turkish coffee was added to UNESCO's list of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity in 2013. The grounds left in the cup are sometimes

used to tell fortunes.

12. As of 2026, Türkiye has 22 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, from Hattusa and Troy to Göbekli Tepe, Cappadocia and Pamukkale. The newest is Sardis, the capital of ancient Lydia, added in 2025.
13. In 2005 Türkiye removed six zeros from its currency: one new lira was worth 1,000,000 old lira. The symbol followed in 2012.

TALK ABOUT IT

Questions for the group

- Have you ever been to Türkiye, or has someone in your family? What do you remember?
- Have you ever tasted Meze or Red lentil soup? What is a dish you remember from a trip?
- Cyprus is divided (1974). Do you remember hearing about it? Where were you then?
- Have you seen Hagia Sophia, in person or in pictures? Which famous place would you most like to see?
- If you could spend one day in any city of Türkiye, which would it be and why?
- Which fact surprised you the most today?

QUIZ

How well do you know Türkiye?

Circle the right answer. The answers are on the last page.

1. The name of the aubergine dish imam bayld means what?

- A) The imam fainted
- B) The imam's favourite
- C) The imam's garden
- D) The imam laughed

2. skender kebab, sliced meat on bread with tomato sauce, butter and yoghurt, comes from which city?

- A) Trabzon
- B) Edirne
- C) Adana
- D) Bursa

3. Which city, close to the borders with Greece and Bulgaria, was the Ottoman capital before Constantinople?

- A) Konya
- B) Edirne
- C) Antalya
- D) Trabzon

4. Women in Turkey won the right to vote in national elections before women in France.

- A) True
- B) False

5. Visitors should take off their shoes before entering a mosque in Türkiye.

- A) True
- B) False

6. Until 1928 Turkish was usually written in the Arabic script.

- A) True

B) False

7. Saint Nicholas, whose legend grew into Santa Claus, was bishop of which city in today's Türkiye?

- A) Troy
- B) Myra
- C) Hattusa
- D) Ephesus

8. What is Türkiye's single official emergency number for police, ambulance and fire?

- A) 110
- B) 112
- C) 155
- D) 177

9. Which city in central Anatolia is most famous for its tiny mant dumplings?

- A) Trabzon
- B) Kayseri
- C) zmir
- D) Antalya

10. Tulips were grown in the Netherlands long before they became popular in the Ottoman Empire.

- A) True
- B) False

11. Istanbul lies partly in Europe and partly in Asia.

- A) True
- B) False

12. UK government travel advice tells visitors to Türkiye to carry photo ID, such as a passport.

- A) True
- B) False

Quiz answers

1. A) The imam fainted

It means 'the imam fainted'. Stories say he fainted with pleasure at the taste, or at the cost of all the olive oil.

2. D) Bursa

Bursa: it is named after skender Efendi, who served it there in the late 19th century. Adana gave its name to a different kebab, of minced meat on a wide skewer.

3. B) Edirne

Edirne, then called Adrianople, was the Ottoman capital from the 1360s until 1453. Konya had been the capital of the earlier Seljuk Sultanate of Rum.

4. True

True. Turkish women won the vote in national elections in December 1934; in France this came in 1944.

5. True

True. Leave your shoes at the entrance or carry them in a bag, cover shoulders and knees, and women should also cover their hair.

6. True

True. A law of 1 November 1928 replaced the Arabic script with a new alphabet of 29 Latin letters, which Atatürk himself helped to teach.

7. B) Myra

Myra, today the town of Demre on the Mediterranean coast. Nicholas was born in nearby Patara.

8. B) 112

112 brings together police, ambulance, fire and other services in one number. The older numbers 155 (police), 110 (fire) and 177 (forest fires) each cover only one service. They still work, but calls now go through the 112 system.

9. B) Kayseri

Kayseri mant are tiny dumplings served with garlic yoghurt, melted butter and red pepper. Antalya, Trabzon and zmir are on the coast.

10. False

False. Tulips were loved and bred in the Ottoman Empire first, and they first flowered in the Netherlands in the 1590s.

11. True

True. The Bosphorus divides the city: about two thirds of its people live on the European side and one third on the Asian side.

12. True

True. UK travel advice says it is illegal not to carry photo ID in Türkiye, so always carry your passport.

Türkiye visa page

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