
TURKEY

FLAG



FACTS AND STATISTICS

Location: southeastern Europe and southwestern Asia (that portion of Turkey west of the Bosphorus is geographically part of Europe), bordering the Black Sea, between Bulgaria and Georgia, and bordering the Aegean Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, between Greece and Syria

Capital: Ankara

Climate: temperate; hot, dry summers with mild, wet winters; harsher in interior

Population: 82+ million (2019 est.)

Ethnic Make-up: Turkish 80%, Kurdish 20% (estimated)

Religions: Muslim 99.8% (mostly Sunni), other 0.2% (mostly Christians and Jews)

Government: republican parliamentary democracy

Business culture: Ranked 25th by the Business Culture Complexity Index™



LANGUAGE IN TURKEY

The official language, Turkish, is the first language spoken by 90% of the 63m population.

- Minority languages include Kurdish, spoken by 6% of the population.
- Arabic is spoken by 1.2% of the Turkish population; most of those speakers are bilingual Arabic and Turkish speakers.
- Other minority languages include Circassian, spoken by more than 0.09% throughout the country, Greek, Armenian and Judezmo, a Romance language spoken by Jews.

TURKISH SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Islam

Islam is the religion of the majority of Turks although the state is fiercely secular. Islam emanated from what is today Saudi Arabia. The Prophet Muhammad is seen as the last of God's emissaries (following in the footsteps of Jesus, Moses, Abraham, etc) to bring revelation to mankind. He was distinguished with bringing a message for the whole of mankind, rather than just to a certain people. As Moses brought the Torah and Jesus the Bible, Muhammad brought the last book, the Quran. The Quran and the actions of the Prophet (the Sunnah) are used as the basis for all guidance in the religion.

- Among certain obligations for Muslims are to pray five times a day - at dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset, and evening.
- The exact time is listed in the local newspaper each day.
- Friday is the Muslim holy day although this is not practiced in Turkey.
- However, most males will attend the congregational afternoon prayer.
- During the holy month of Ramazan, all Muslims must fast from dawn to dusk.
- Fasting includes no eating, drinking, cigarette smoking, or gum chewing.

ETIQUETTE & MANNERS IN TURKEY

Meeting and Greeting

- When meeting shake hands firmly. When departing it is not always customary to shake hands although it is practiced occasionally.
- Friends and relations would greet each other with either one or two kisses on the cheek.
- Elders are always respected by kissing their right hand then placing the forehead onto the hand.
- When entering a room, if you are not automatically met by someone greet the most elderly or most senior first.

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- At social occasions greet the person closest to you then work your way around the room or table anti-clockwise.
 - Greet people with either the Islamic greeting of 'Asalamu alaykum' (peace be upon you) or 'Nasilsiniz' (How are you? pronounced na-sul-su-nuz).
 - Other useful phrases are 'Gunaydin' (Good Morning, pronounced goon-ay-dun), 'iyi gunler' (Good Day, pronounced ee-yee gun-ler) or 'Memnun Oldum' (pleased to meet you).

Gift Giving Etiquette

- Gift giving has no real place in business relationships or etiquette.
- Relationship building and the like will usually take the form of dining or sight seeing trips rather than lavish gifts.
- However, if a gift is given it will be accepted well. It is always a good idea to bring gifts from your own country such as food stuffs or craft items.
- Be aware that Turkey is a Muslim country. Before giving alcohol to anyone be 100% sure that they drink.
- The only time you would need to give any great thought to gifts would be if you were invited to a Turk's home for dinner.
- The most usual gifts to take are pastries, (especially 'baklava') and decorative items for the home such as ornaments or vases.
- Flowers are not usually taken to a host but can be if felt appropriate.
- It is best to ask a florist for advice on what is best to take.
- If the host has children take some expensive sweets or candy.

Dining Etiquette

- Most business entertaining will take place in restaurants.
- Turks enjoy food and the meal is a time for relaxing and engaging in some good conversation.
- The protocol of Turkish hospitality dictates that the host always pays for the meal.
- The concept of sharing a bill is completely alien. You may try and offer to pay, which may be seen as polite, but you would never be allowed to do so.
- The best policy is to graciously thank the host then a few days later invite them to do dinner at a restaurant of your choice.
- It may be a good idea to inform the restaurant manager that under no circumstances are they to accept payment from your guests.
- Evening meals may be accompanied by some alcohol, usually the local tippie called Raki (pronounced rak-uh).

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- It will comprise of a few courses with the main course always meat or fish based, accompanied by bread and a salad.
 - Turks smoke during meals and will often take breaks between courses to have a cigarette and a few drinks before moving onto the next.
 - Tea or Turkish coffee is served at the end of a meal sometimes with pastries.
 - Turkish coffee is a national drink and should at least be sampled. It comes either without sugar, a little sugar or sweet.
 - Turkish coffee is sipped and allowed to melt into the taste buds so do not gulp it down as you would instant coffee.
 - Never drink to the bottom of the cup as it will be full of ground coffee and taste awful.