Lecture by Rick Steves

INTRODUCTION

Turkey At-a-Glance

Population: 73 million
Size: about the same as Texas
Biggest city: Istanbul (13 million people)
Religion: 99% Muslim
National hero: Ataturk, founder of modern Turkish Republic in 1923; died in 1938

Food

Breakfast: bread, olives, sliced tomatoes, cucumbers, cheese, yogurt, tea
Meze: appetizers
Dolma: stuffed vegetables
Eggplant: stuffed, pureed, fixed 1,000 ways

ISTANBUL

Hagia Sophia: Justinian church-mosque-museum; huge unsupported dome, 9th century mosaics
Blue Mosque: classic Ottoman design
Hippodrome: Ancient cistern
Topkapı Palace: residence for sultans for four centuries; incredible gems; harem with tiles and stained glass
Chora Church: 14th century Byzantine mosaics
Galata Bridge (bridges the Golden Horn) and Galata Tower (good views)
Grand Bazaar: maze of 4,000 shops
Spice Market: spices plus tourist trinkets
Taksim and Istikal Street: modern Istanbul with smart shops on pedestrian street with restored turn-of-the-century tram
Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum: former palace housing displays of carpets, calligraphy, ceramics, and other traditional arts

CENTRAL TURKEY

Ankara

Modern Turkey capital
Ataturk’s Mausoleum/museum
Museum of Anatolian Civilizations: located in restored caravansera; exhibits on Hittites and other early civilizations

Cappadocia

Wind, water, sand erosion created unearthly shapes; tufa easily carved into rooms/ dwellings; with arrival of Christianity, churches carved/decorated
Volcanic rock outcrops riddled with tunnels and windows
Open air museums with churches and chapels, rock dwellings in valleys, fairy chimneys

Konya

Conservative and very religious city
Mevlana Museum: Mevlana was one of world’s great mystic philosophers; museum is in former lodge of whirling dervishes; holy place for Turkish Muslims; resting place of Mevlana and others

More Central Turkey

Antalya: gateway to Turkish Riviera
Aphrodisias: home for famous school of sculptors in Roman times; well-preserved stadium for 30,000; theatre; rebuilt temple of Aphrodite
Pamukkale: calcium-laden mineral water; white travertine terraces/pools; thermal pool for swimming among submerged marble columns
Hierapolis: Roman-built spa city; theatre for 12,000 extraordinary cemetery; colonnaded street. Adjacent to Pamukkale.
Kusadasi: cruise port
Ephesus: well-preserved Roman classical city; marble ruins; theatre; library; recently restored slope houses with wonderful mosaics/frescos (Efes in Turkish)

LEARN MORE

Read: Rick Steves Istanbul, Rick Steves Mediterranean Cruise Ports (for Istanbul and Ephesus), Lonely Planet Turkey, Lonely Planet Turkish Phrase Book

Watch: Rick Steves Greece, Turkey & Portugal Blu-ray/DVD

Listen: Travel with Rick Steves radio podcast archives at ricksteves.com

Tour: Best of Turkey in 13 Days, Best of Istanbul in 7 Days

App: Rick Steves’ Audio Europe — Free audio tours and radio features organized in geographic playlists, for iPhone and Android

Surf: ricksteves.com