Turkey

3000 miles of coastline along the Black Sea, the Aegean, and the Mediterranean, as well as the narrows that link the Black and Aegean seas.

One of the world's earliest permanently settled regions (9500-8000 BCE), subsequently conquered and ruled by seven major empires. This has left it with an incredibly broad and rich cultural and archaeological heritage.

Became a Republic on 29 October 1923. With the reforms initiated by the country's first president, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Turkey became a secular and parliamentary republic.

Turkey is an ethnically diverse country, a result of its location and the legacy of the multi-ethnic and multi-religious Ottoman Empire.

Istanbul

Istanbul is the largest city in [Turkey](https://www.thoughtco.com/geography-4133035) and is among the 15 [largest urban areas](https://www.thoughtco.com/the-largest-cities-in-the-world-4163437) in the world. The city is the world’s only metropolis to be on more than one [continent](https://www.thoughtco.com/six-or-seven-continents-on-earth-1435100).

The city of Istanbul (previously called Byzantium and Constantinople) has a long history spanning the world's most famous empires. The city was the capital of the entire Roman Empire starting in 330 AD, the capital of the [Byzantine Empire](https://www.thoughtco.com/medieval-and-renaissance-history-4133289) in the 400s, and after being conquered by the Ottomans in 1453, was declared to be the capital of the [Ottoman Empire](https://www.thoughtco.com/the-ottoman-empire-1435003) and its name was changed to Istanbul.

Between 400 and 600 AD the city was the center for the Greek Orthodox church. Some of the most magnificent Christian buildings like the Hagia Sofia were built during this time.

The Ottoman Sultans rejuvenated Istanbul after taking it over, building the Grand Bazaar (one of the largest covered marketplaces in the world) as well as monuments, schools, hospitals, public baths and several grand imperial mosques. Sultan Mehmet also encouraged fleeing Catholic and Greek Orthodox residents to come back, as well as Muslim, Christian, and Jewish families to establish a mixed populace (which only began to reverse in the 1940s).

Ephesus

The glorious city of Ephesus is a wonderfully preserved classical city and one of the most important and famous Greco-Roman sites of the eastern Mediterranean. Ephesus was founded in the 10th century BC by Greek colonists after the sacking of Troy, fell under the control of Croesus and, later, the Persians, was visited by Alexander the Great and re-established itself as the Roman capital of Asia Minor beginning around 27BC. It became a major center of commerce with a population pushing an incredible 250,000 and it remained the most important city of the Byzantine empire after Constantinople through the 5th and 6th centuries AD. The remains at Ephesus are extensive and fabulously well preserved.

Selcuk,

the original site of the city of Ephesus, the Apostle John, who reportedly visited Ephesus twice. His first visit (AD 37–48) was with the Virgin Mary; the second (AD 95) was when he is thought to have written his gospel on this very hill. These legends, and the existence of a 4th-century tomb supposedly containing the saint's relics, inspired Justinian to build a great basilica here and it drew thousands of pilgrims until the late Byzantine period.

Afrodisias

Located 160kms east of Ephesus, one of the country’s finest classical remains and a complex that rivals many of the Aegean’s better known sites. Beautifully preserved, Afrodisias saw prehistoric settlement and further occupation through to the Bronze Age. Around the 8th century BC, the famous Temple of Aphrodite was built and the city thrived through the Hellenistic and Roman periods because of nearby quarries of unique high quality Carian marble the city developed as a centre of marble sculpture.

Lake Bafa

earlier times the **Vafi Sea**  The lake used to be a gulf of the [Aegean Sea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aegean_Sea) until the [Classical period](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classical_antiquity), when the sea passage was gradually closed by the alluvial mass brought by the Meander River. The gulf, and later the lake, was named [Latmus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latmus" \o "Latmus) in antiquity.

Amos

Amos was a Carian city established by early Greek mariners in around the 4th century BC. in the 5th century incorporated in the [Delian league](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delian_league) together with the other Rhodian areas. The city wall is made of coursed polygonal masonry dated to the [Hellenistic period](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hellenistic_period), and is fairly well preserved on the north slope where walls and towers still stand 3–4 metres high. There is one gate in the northern wall, which is probably the main city gate. On the basis of the type of masonry used, the construction of the original wall has been dated to the 4th century B.C.E.

Knidos

Knidos was a Hellenistic city founded in 6th or 7th century BC – part of a federation of the now Greek and Turkish islands. Favorable location for commerce and Knidians were apparently gained considerable wealth

Allied with the Romans when they conquered the area from Greek king Antiochus, and as reward they were given considerable autonomy. The city flourished through the Byzantine era, and Christian buildings are found throughout the ruins

Kayakoy

In 1923 the Greek city of **Livissi** was abandoned as the population was expeditiously forced to move to Greece during the population exchange between Greece and Turkey leaving behind a fascinating picture of what life was like here 100 years ago. Today what stands is the shell of the city with it’s rock churches, shops, school, & hundreds of homes.

Pinara

Pinara was one of the three major cities in the Xanthos valley and one of the six principal cities of Lycia.  Settlement at Pinara existed as early as the 5th century BC.

The city sits perched high on a mountain reached by a twisting road and gives one an unparalleled eastern view far across the Xanthos valley.  It is towered over by a more than 450 metre high flat-topped mountain cone honeycombed with hundreds of rectangular burial tombs on its vertical east face, typical of the Lycians back to earliest recorded history.

The Lycian League

The Lycian League is the first known democratic union in history.  It is believed that this political alliance of member cities was formed in about 205 BC, under a ruling Assembly with representation from each city according to its population. 23 member cities elected one, two, or three representatives to the Assembly (Synedrion), depending on the size of the city.  Smaller towns combined to send one representative.  Taxes and other public financial burdens were allocated in these proportions to the various cities as well.  Each year when the Assemby convened it elected the Lyciarch and other federal officers.  A League court and judges settled disputes between cities and minor magistrates and jurors in the federal courts were elected from each city proportional to its voting power. Strabo tells us that the political stability of Lycia's strong union of cities was the main reason the cities were able to survive under various occupations,

The League held extensive rights over the cities of Lycia and controlled communal land, trade rights and the rights of citizens to marry.  Free male Lycian citizens who were city residents or landowners outside of the cities were allowed to vote for their representatives in the Assembly and had other various privileges. During the Patara bouleuterion's (assembly hall’s) excavation, voting pieces made of fired clay were discovered.  The number of holes piercing them indicated "yes", "no" and "abstain" .

Aqueduct of Patara

The important port city of Patara in Lycia had few sources of fresh water. Early aqueducts in Hellenistic times were simple channels built from local hills – but the most fruitful sources were several hills (and valleys) away. To bring this water to the growing city, The aqueduct of Patara was built which transported water from sources near the village of Islamlar at 680 m a.s.l. over a distance of 22,5 km to Patara at 50 m a.s.l. The aqueduct comprises five bridges as well as a stretch of pressurized conduit, an inverted siphon locally known as Delikkemer.

Patara City

Patara was an ancient and flourishing maritime and commercial city, already present in 1300BC when it was mentioned in Hittite Texts. The city was built on an estuary of inland from a large natural harbor.

It was one of the leading cities of the [Lycian League](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lycian_League) after the league was formally established in 176 BC, having 3 votes, the maximum.

Patara is mentioned in the [New Testament](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Testament) as the place where [Paul of Tarsus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_of_Tarsus) and [Luke](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luke_the_Evangelist) changed ships. The city was [Christianized](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianized) early, and several early bishops are known. St Nicholas was born here in 270 AD.

The Bouleuterion or [prytaneion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prytaneion) is well-preserved and has been further restored. It was the capital's assembly hall of the Lycian League and overlooked the theatre as well as the Agora. It was constructed in the early 1st century BC and held about 1400 people. In the centre of the [cavea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cavea) is a [tribunalia](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Tribunalia&action=edit&redlink=1), seats reserved for governors. The theatre was rebuilt under [Antoninus Pius](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antoninus_Pius) in 147 AD after an earthquake; its diameter is 265 feet, and held about 6000 spectators.

The city remained of some importance during the [Byzantine Empire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byzantine_Empire) as a way-point for trade and pilgrims. After the Seljuk [Sultanate of Rum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sultanate_of_Rum) acquisition in 1211 the city declined and appears to have been deserted by 1340

Kekova Sunken City

Dolichiste, now called Kekova Adası is an ancient Lycian city, partially submerged on the shores of Kekova Island in southern Anatolia, Turkey.

The city was a trading hub on an ancient Mediterranean trade route between Andriake (the port of Myra), Simena, Teimioussa, and Aperlae, where a maritime culture developed thanks to the sheltered and protected waterway between Kekova Island and the mainland.

Architectural remains and various shipwrecks have been dated from the Archaic to the Byzantine period, suggesting that Dolichiste was occupied for several centuries until it was partially submerged due to two large earthquakes and rising sea levels during the late Holocene.

Simena

The ancient city of Simena was once of two parts - Kekova island and a coastal part of the mainland.  On the mainland the charming fishing village of Kaleköy ("castle village") stands today, its buildings mingling with ancient and medieval structures.  The top of the village is dominated by a well-preserved castle built by the Knights of Rhodes partially upon ancient Lycian foundations. Inside the castle is the smallest amphitheatre of Lycia. At the eastern end of the village is a Lycian necropolis with a cluster of some very nice sarcophagi overlooking the sea and surrounded by ancient olive trees.

Myra and St Nicholas church

Myra was a Lycian, then ancient Greek, then Greco-Roman, then Byzantine Greek, then Ottoman town in Lycia, which finally was renamed Demre in 2005. It is known for its Lycian rock-cut tombs, theatre, and stunning carvings.

The St Nicholas church (with its tomb of the saint) is thought to have been constructed in the 6th century AD, and repaired by Emperor Constantine IX in 1042 AD. The church became an important pilgrimage site for Christians on their way to Jerusalem.

Gelidonia

Cape Gelidonia and the islands south of it have a very important place in Lycian maritime history being the most dangerous place in the Gulf of Antalya due to its reverse currents, which have dragged countless ships into the rocks since ancient times. To make the cape safer, a lighthouse was built by the French in and put into operation in 1936.

Beş Adalar or Five Islands off Cape Gelidonia, which are ideal for diving and sea sports, and are the scene of a shipwreck that occurred around 1200 B.C.

Olympos

Olympos was a Lycian city which dated back to the 5th century BC, and one of the six largest cities in the Lycian League. It was taken over by pirates from Cilicia for 200 years, only regained by the young Julius Caesar in 78BC. The city was described by Cicero as a ‘rich and highly decorated port city’. It later became a Christian bishopric in 300 AD

The Chimaera

the Chimaera, or Yanartaş, is the site of dozens of small fires that burn constantly from vents in the rocks. It’s suggested that the fires were the inspiration for the fire-breathing Chimaera in Homer’s Iliad. Several Greek legends have arisen around the fires.

Termessos

The first historical mention of Termessos dates back to 334 BCE, when Alexander the Great arrived to the area with a plan to capture Termessos. However, his attempts failed, and Termessos became one of only two cities of Asia Minor that the Macedonian army was not able to conquer. in the period of early Christianity Termessos was the seat of a bishop.

The end to the prosperity and existence of Termessos came with an earthquake that destroyed the aqueduct supplying drinking water to the city. The exact year of this event has not been determined, but by the 5th century AD the city was already completely deserted.

**Karain Cave** (is a [Paleolithic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paleolithic) archaeological site.  A fragment of a [Neanderthal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neanderthal) cranium discovered and dated confirms human habitation since the early [Paleolithic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paleolithic) age between 150,000 and 200,000 years ago. Researchers documented the continuity of human presence in the cave for a period of more than 25,000 years, from the [Mesolithic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mesolithic), to the [Bronze Age](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bronze_Age). It is assumed that during the time of [Greek colonization of Asia Minor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ionia) ([Iron Age](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iron_Age)), the cave had a religious function, as Greek inscriptions and decorations suggest, that are carved into the rock in front of the entrance. Paleolithic and Neolithic flint blades, scrapers and arrowheads were discovered, and in subsequent layers, lithic figurines and bone sculptures have been found as well as the carving of a human face, stylistically similar to the products of the [Natufian culture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natufian_culture) (10th century BC) which flourished in southern Asia Minor and Palestine.

Antalya

 the [fifth-most populous city](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_largest_cities_and_towns_in_Turkey) in [Turkey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkey) with over one million people in its metropolitan area. The city was first settled around 200 BC by the [Attalid dynasty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attalid_dynasty) of Pergamon, which was soon subdued by the Romans. Roman rule saw Antalya thrive, including the construction of several new monuments, such as [Hadrian's Gate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadrian%27s_Gate), and the proliferation of neighboring cities. The city has changed hands several times, including to the [Seljuk Sultanate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seljuk_Sultanate) in 1207 and an expanding [Ottoman Empire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ottoman_Empire) in 1391.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antalya) Ottoman rule brought relative peace and stability for the next five hundred years. The city was [occupied by Italy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_occupation_of_Adalia) for three years in the aftermath of [World War I](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_I), but was recaptured by a newly independent Turkey in the [War of Independence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkish_War_of_Independence).