

# Steph's Quick Budget Fact Sheet

## Turkey - Istanbul

### Quick Facts

- ✓ **Capital:** Ankara
- ✓ **Language:** Turkish
- ✓ **Population:** ± 15,07 mln
- ✓ **Sq km:** ± 5.461
- ✓ **Currency:** Turkish Lira (₺ - TL)
- ✓ **Country code:** +90 (216 Asian side / 212 European side)
- ✓ **Visa:** For many nationalities, [check here!](#)
- ✓ **Emergency phone:** 112 (medical), 110 (fire), 155 (police), 158 (coastguard)
- ✓ **Vaccinations:** Hep-A, Hep-B, Typhoid



### History Recap Over 1 Drink

Byzantine Empire --> Ottoman Empire: 1683: Ottoman advance into Europe halted by Battle of Vienna. 1908: Young Turk Revolution --> constitutional rule (*degenerates into military dictatorship during WWI - Ottoman Empire alliance with Germany / Austria-Hungary*). '18-'22: Partition of defeated Ottoman Empire --> triumph of Turkish National Movement in war of independence against foreign occupation and rule of Sultan. National Movement in war of independence against foreign occupation and rule of Sultan. '23: Turkey Republic, president: Kemal Ataturk. '28: Secular, Islam removed from constitution. '45: Neutral most of WWII - Turkey declares war on Germany/Japan. Joins UN. '50: First free elections: Democratic Party. '52: Joins NATO (*abandoning Ataturk's neutralist policy*). '60: Armed coup. '63: Association agreement EEC. '74: Turkish troops invade Cyprus: US trade embargo (*lifted in '78*). '80: Military coup. Martial law. '84: Kurdish War: Kurdistan Worker's Party launches separatist guerrilla war. '90: Turkey allows US-led coalition against Iraq: air strikes from Turkish bases. '92: 20,000 Turkish troops enter Kurdish safe havens in Iraq in anti-PKK operation. '93: Ciller 1st female prime minister. '95: EU customs union. 2002: Family equality men-women. Death sentence abolished. '03: Istanbul attacks. '11: Syrian refugees. '15: Against Islamic State (*suicide bomb attacks*). '16: Kurdistan Freedom Hawks bomb attacks in Ankara. '16/'17: More Islamic State killing attacks.

### Travel Seasons

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Spring												
Summer												
Autumn												
Winter												
Budget												

Altitude: 40m. Climate: Hot Summer Mediterranean (Csa).

### Bucket List For Free (Highlights)

- ☺ **Mosques / Churches:** [Hagia Sophia / Ayasofia](#) (some parts free), Eyup, [Süleymaniye](#), [Blue Mosque](#) & more!
- ☺ **Sights:** Adalar Islands & Bosphorus (*cross cheaply by public transport*), Eminonu Pier, Grand Bazaar, Walls of Constantinople, Gülhane / Emirgan Park, [Kiz Kulesi](#)...
- ☺ **Neighborhoods:** Ortakoy, Besiktas, Sultanahmet, Bebek, Balat, Eminonu, Beyoglu, Kadikoy, Eyup, Taksim..
- ☺ **Hikes:** Adalar Islands, Belgrad Forest, Camlica Hill...

### Worth The Extra \$€¥ (Highlights)

- 👍 **Sights:** [Topkapi Palace](#), [Dolmabahçe Palace](#), [Beylerbeyi Palace](#), [Galata Tower](#), [Miniaturk](#), Rumeli...
- 👍 **Museums:** [Photography Museum](#), [Istanbul Modern](#), [Turkish & Islamic Art](#), [Kariye](#), [Rahmi M. Koc](#), [Sakip Sabanci](#), [Toy Museum](#), [Ural Ataman](#), [Borusan](#)...
- 👍 **Events / Activities:** Swirling Dervishes, Hammam...  
Check [Tripadvisor](#) for more sights & activities!

## Budget Bites

- ⌘ **Big supermarkets:** Migros, Carrefour, Discount.
- ⌘ **Markets:** Grand Bazaar, Arasta Bazaar, Kadikoy Carsisi, Besiktas Saturday Market, Malatiya Market, Tarlabasi, Resat Balik & more. Cheapest outlet village: Viaport Tuzla (close to Sabiha Gokcen Airport).
- ⌘ **Local food:** Sis Kebab (meat skewer), Iskender Kebab (kebab with rice / tomato sauce), Durum (wrap), Çig Köfte (spicy sticky bulgur), Köfte (meat), Sarma / Dolma (rice in wine leaves), Kebab (meat in wrap), Baklava (sweet pastries), Muhammara (pepper-and-walnut-dip), Gozleme (salty pancakes), Pilav (rice), Kumpir (stuffed potato), Simit (sesame bagel), Islak Burgers (wet hamburgers), Pide (Turkish pizza), Mezze (fingerfood), Mercimek Corbasi (lentil soup), Borek (stuffed crispy bread), Su Boregi (borek-lasagne-crossover), Menemen (scrambled egg), Manti (kind-of-ravioli), Lahmacun (crispy bread topped with meat/salad), Balik Ekmek (fish sandwich), Lokum (Turkish Delight).
- ⌘ **Go vegan:** Being vegan is pretty easy in this part of the world. Many local dishes are vegan on their own, such as: Çig Köfte, Sarma / Dolma, Potato or Spinach Gozleme, Simit, Kumpir (without meat and mayonnaise), Kisir, Bakla (bean appetizer), Ispanak Kavurma (roasted spinach), Patlican Ezmesi (eggplant puree), Acile Ezme and Fava (bean puree). Besides Çig Köfte food take-outs, there are many vegan/vegetarian restaurants: check them on [Happy Cow - Istanbul](#).

## Mama Said

- ☠ Turkey is pretty safe, and assaults are uncommon. But like everywhere, use common sense, pickpocketing happens in busy areas and on public transport. I didn't feel super safe in Belgrad Forest.
- ☠ Drugs are illegal, and sentences are high.
- ☠ Even though Turkey is Islamic, Istanbul is very modern and all types of dress are common. Females traveling solo are as safe as anywhere in a big city, just avoid walking alone at night or in very remote areas.
- ☠ Tap water is not drinkable, use filtered water.
- ☠ Hagglng is common and expected.
- ☠ The 'okay'-sign means 'homosexual'. Just sayin'.

## Sleep Cheap

- ❖ Hostels and alternative accommodation are relatively cheap in Turkey, but not so much in high season (*summer*). Wild camping is legal and even [encouraged](#).
- ❖ The cheapest and most interesting way to go: [Couchsurfing](#) or [house-sitting](#)! Also check [WorkAway](#).

## Festivals

- ☼ Istanbul Tulip Festival: Apr.
  - ☼ Istanbul Coffee Festival: Sept.
  - ☼ Istanbul Theatre Festival: Nov.
- More festivals [here](#).

## Nights Best Spent

- ◆ **Nightlife areas:** Taksim/Istiklal, Beyoglu, Ortakoy, Besiktas Pier, Amalimescit, Cezayir St., Karakoy, Kadikoy (Iskele St.), Kumkapi.
- ◆ **Theatre:** Sürreya Opera House, Etrugrul Theatre, Moda Stage, Kadiköy Haldun Taner Stage, Grand Pera, Sehir Tiyatrolari, Hodjapasha Cultural Center & [more](#).

## Free-Riding?

- Istanbul is very big. The separate areas are walkable, but to get around from area to area alternative transport is necessary.
- Cycling is possible, but rather uncommon. Traffic doesn't pay much attention to cyclists and roads aren't great for bicycles.
- The main bus terminals (*Otogar*) are Ayüp (*Nişanca / Bahariye Cd*) and Essenler (*Altintepsi Mh.*), but there are several (*verify before departure*). The main train station is called Marmaray Sikeri (*Fatih area*). One can travel [from Bulgaria](#) by bus or night train. Within the city center there are bus-, metro-, tram- and funicular-lines. The cheapest option is buying the rechargeable [Istanbul Card](#) from the yellow machine in any metro station, which you swipe upon entry. Use the Moovit app for routes. Minibuses serve outer neighborhoods such as Tuzla, here you pay cash (*verify rate with locals*).
- Airport: Istanbul Airport (IST); Sabiha Gokcen (SAW)
- Hitch-hiking is not too common nor safe in Turkey (*speaking from experience*). It's better to use apps like [Blablacar](#) to get a cheap(er) ride.

The Earth Becomes My Throne