

The People

Recent estimates (1990) indicate that Turkey has reached a population of 55 to 60 million. With this population and a high birth rate (annual population growth rate is about 2.7 per cent), Turkey will soon be the most populous nation in Europe, outside the U.S.S.R. Moslems make up 98 per cent of the population, with Christian (Greek Orthodox, Armenian, and Roman Catholic) and Jewish minorities in Istanbul and Izmir. About 37 per cent of the Turkish population is engaged in agriculture. Average population density is 68 persons per km² (based upon 1983 survey); however, the western part of Anatolia is the most densely populated.

Language

Apart from Turkish, English is used extensively, particularly in the business community. German has now become the second most important foreign language, while French is used occasionally in the business communities of Istanbul and Izmir.

Local Customs

Most business entertaining is done in restaurants and clubs.

Climate

Turkey's climate varies according to the terrain. Winter can be severe on the Central Anatolian plateau, especially in the eastern part, as well as in the Black Sea and Marmara coastal districts and, to a lesser extent, on the Aegean seaboard. Summer months are usually hot. The southern coastal districts, sheltered by the Taurus Mountains, enjoy a milder winter but are correspondingly hotter and more humid during the summer. The Central Anatolian plateau enjoys warm days and cool nights, with very little rainfall during its long summer. April, May, June and the period from the end of September to the beginning of December are the best times to visit Turkey; late autumn and early spring are recommended for the southern coastal districts.