

Turkey

By Tom Kirvan

Long known as the “crossroads of civilization,” Turkey for centuries has been the bridge between Europe and Asia, a country where East meets West in a kaleidoscope of cultures.

Located partly in Asia and partly in Europe, Turkey is bounded on the north by the Black Sea, on the northeast by Georgia and Armenia, on the east by Azerbaijan and Iran, on the southeast by Iraq and Syria, on the southwest and west by the Mediterranean Sea and Aegean Sea, and on the northwest by Greece and Bulgaria.

With a population of more than 86 million, Turkey is a mostly mountainous country with its highest peak, Mount Ararat (16,854 feet), a dormant volcano which is described in the Bible as the resting place of Noah’s Ark. Istanbul is the country’s most populous city with 15.4 million inhabitants and serves as its economic and financial center. Its strategic geographic location helps link Europe with Iran, the Arabian Peninsula, Africa, Russia, and the Mediterranean Basin.

Steeped in history, Turkey is home to countless sights of the Byzantine and Ottoman eras, including Ephesus, a city of colossal monuments and marble-columned roads that once was one of the most important cities in the ancient Mediterranean world. The ancient city of Troy, the legendary setting for Homer’s epic poems the “Iliad” and the “Odyssey,” also is a popular archaeological site in the northwest section of the country, drawing tens of thousands of visitors each year.

Straddling two continents, Istanbul is the fifth largest city in the world by population and is famous for the magnificence of the Hagia Sophia Mosque, the Topkapi Palace Museum, and the Blue Mosque, a structure that dates to the early 1600s and is renowned for its religious significance and architectural beauty. It also is the site of the Grand Bazaar, one of the world’s largest covered markets that houses 4,000 shops and attracts millions of visitors every year. The Grand Bazaar was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1985, formally recognizing its cultural and historical significance.

The swooping rock valleys of Cappadocia, located in the heartland of the country, are an immensely popular tourist destination with their array of unique geological, historical, cultural, and religious features. The area’s incredible rock formations are best seen by hot-air balloon, where the lunar-like landscape and broad panoramas can be fully appreciated.

The country also is the birthplace of the famous Turkish baths, otherwise known as hammams, generally located in beautiful buildings with marble interiors and domed ceilings. For those who prefer a more natural setting, Turkey features some of the region’s most beautiful beaches, where mountains intersect with the sea in spectacular fashion.



Fast Facts

Language: Turkish

Religion: Muslim

Capital: Ankara

Population: 86.1 million

Must-see Attraction: Cappadocia rock formations

Primerus Member: Kavasoğlu Law Firm

Based in Istanbul, the Kavasoğlu Law Firm was founded in 1987, and provides legal services in transaction-based projects and dispute resolution.