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Turkish Cultural Orientation

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Chapter 1 Profile

Introduction

The Republic of Turkey emerged from the ruins of the Ottoman Empire in 1923. Although Turkey has had an uneasy historical relationship with the Muslim world, over the course of the 20th century it became an advanced, powerful, secular, and democratic Muslim state. A founding member of NATO, the Turks are now seeking full membership in the European Union (EU). If successful, Turkey will be the first Muslim EU member state.



© John Walker
Morning fog in Istanbul

From a geographical perspective, Turkey is part of Asia, Europe, the Middle East, Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Balkans. Just as Turkey is seeking to play an expanded role between East and West, an elected Islamist government is trying to forge a stable synthesis of traditional and modern values.

Area

Turkey straddles two continents. More than 95% of it falls in Asia and is known as Anatolia or Asia Minor. Thrace, the European part, lies to the west of the Bosphorus Strait. Turkey is surrounded by seas on three sides. Fresh water resources, necessary for human settlement, were established by the movement of tectonic faults upon which Turkey rests. As a result, population density is high in areas prone to earthquakes.¹

Climate

The coastal regions of Turkey have a Mediterranean climate of cool, rainy winters and hot, moderately dry summers. The interior is shielded from mild Mediterranean influences by mountains, which for the most part run parallel to the sea. Interior Turkey experiences a continental climate of cold winters and dry, hot summers. The eastern mountain region has a particularly inhospitable climate; summers are hot and dry while winters are uncomfortably cold, occasionally leaving outlying residents snow-bound. Precipitation varies according to locale. It ranges from an annual average of more than 1,400 mm (55 in) on the eastern Black Sea coast to less than 300 mm (12 in) in the central plateau region.²

¹ BBC News (International Edition). "Why Turkey Suffers Earthquake Misery." 1 May 2003.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2992311.stm>

² Country Studies, Library of Congress. "Turkey: Climate." January 1995.
<http://countrystudies.us/turkey/22.htm>

Rivers

The headwaters of several rivers are found within Turkey. For those rivers flowing into other countries, Turkish allocation and damming policies have been the objects of downriver governmental dispute.³ The Firat (Euphrates) is the longest river at 1,263 km (785 mi). Along with the Dicle (Tigris), it flows through southeastern Turkey and then merges in Iraq before emptying into the Persian Gulf. Since much of its route cuts through remote mountainous terrain, the Dicle has been the last major river system in Turkey to be harnessed for human use.



© Mariurupe / flickr.com
Munsur River (upper Euphrates)

Farmers only use the lower parts to meet their irrigation requirements. The east-flowing Aras River marks Turkey's border with Armenia. In central Turkey, the Kizilirmak traverses a 1,182 km (734 mi) horseshoe-shaped route, making it the longest river to flow wholly within Turkish borders. It empties into the Black Sea just west of Samsun.⁴

Major Cities

Ankara

Ankara developed as a trading center on the East-West caravan routes. Its importance declined by the 19th century, when shipping had replaced land transportation. It regained importance in 1923 when it became the capital of the Republic of Turkey. The city's architecture reflects this heritage. The narrow, winding streets of its Old Quarter are built around the ruins of an ancient citadel. As commerce expanded, the new city grew up around the old. The city's new administrative center was laid out in 1928 by the Republic's early planners, who were aware of the requirements of a capital city. Modern Ankara contains broad boulevards flanked by landscaped government office buildings and museums.⁵

Istanbul

Istanbul, the capital of successive empires that ruled Turkey, remains Turkey's largest city and its commercial and cultural capital. Spanning two continents, the city itself is bisected by a narrow strait, the Bosphorus, which connects the Black Sea to the Sea of Marmara.⁶ The busy waterway is used by tankers moving oil through the strait as well as numerous ferries carrying people from one side to the other.

³ American University, ICE Case Studies. "Tigris-Euphrates River Dispute." November 1997. <http://american.edu/TED/ice/tigris.htm>

⁴ *All About Turkey: Geography, Economy, Politics, Religion, and Culture*. Ergener, Rashid. "Geography [p. 8]." 2002. Boulder: Pilgrim Press.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=bfmU0hyp8mcC&pg=PA8&lpg=PA8&dq=major+rivers+turkey&source=web&ots=DR8n9jStJh&sig=OUzA7l8T5p3F9a5toTMujpb1sGs&hl=en#PPA8,M1>

⁵ Galen R. Frysinger. "Ankara." No date. http://www.galenfrysinger.com/ankara_turkey.htm

⁶ Suite 101. Gerrard, Mike. "Istanbul Odd Facts and Fun Figures." 26 August 2007. http://turkey-travel.suite101.com/article.cfm/istanbul_odd_facts_and_fun_figures

Izmir

Izmir is a large port situated at the head of the Gulf of Izmir, along the deeply indented Aegean Sea coast. Historically known as Smyrna, the city was burned following a skirmish during the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1922. The modern city, built after the Republic of Turkey was founded the following year, features broad boulevards and modern buildings. Izmir is the headquarters for NATO's Land Forces Command in southeastern Europe.⁷



Bursa

Bursa is located 25 km (15.5 mi) from the Sea of Marmara. Nestled amid the northern foothills of the Uludag Mountains, the city is split into three regions by crosscut ravines. The city is known for outstanding examples of early Ottoman architecture. Bursa has road connections to other parts of Turkey, but is not connected to any rail line.

Adana

Adana is located on the plain of Cilicia and the Seyhan Rivers, 30 km (18.6 mi) from the northeastern corner of the Mediterranean Sea. Well connected by road and rail with other parts of Turkey, it is a trading center for agricultural produce in this lowland area.

History

The Seljuks

While a number of empires controlled Anatolia, the first ethnic Turks started to settle there during the Great Seljuk Empire in the early 11th century. Following their 1071 C.E. victory over the Byzantine army, they proceeded to conquer territory to the east. Over the next few centuries, the Turks subdued most of Anatolia and established the Anatolian Seljuk State as a part of the Great Seljuk Empire (1075–1318). This was the first Turkish empire in Anatolia.⁸ Prior to the formation of the Seljuk Empire, ethnic Turks were nomadic groups lacking any larger group identity.

The Seljuks bequeathed a rich architectural legacy in the form of mosques, *madrassas* (schools), hospitals, fortresses, and tombs, often decorated with ornate carvings and fine tiles. Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi, the mystic poet philosopher and founder of the Whirling Dervish order, was a resident of Konya during the 13th century when it was the capital of the Anatolian Seljuk Empire.⁹

⁷ NATO, Regional Headquarters Allied Forces Southeast Europe. "Joint Command Southeast." 12 August 2004. <http://www.afsouth.nato.int/factsheets/JCSE.htm>

⁸ University of Calgary, Applied History Group. "The Islamic World to 1600: Central Asia." 1998. http://www.ucalgary.ca/applied_history/tutor/islam/fractured/centralAsia.html

⁹ Micro Arch. "History of Turkey." No date. <http://www.microarch.org/micro35/Turkey/DATA/HISTORY.HTM>

The Ottoman Empire

The origins of the Ottoman Empire lie in the obscure reaches of western Anatolia, an inhospitable land settled by the Oghuz Turks. The Turks had created a farming community within the existing Seljuk kingdom. From this humble beginning, the Ottoman Turks established a small military state by 1300. This occurred at the same time the Seljuk state was in decline, weakened by repeated attacks by Mongolian forces in the east. By 1400, the Ottomans had managed to extend their influence over much of Anatolia and even into Byzantine territory in European Macedonia and Bulgaria. In 1402, the Ottomans relocated their capital to Edirne on the European side, as they set their sights on the crown jewel of the Byzantine Empire, its capital, Constantinople.



The city represented an impediment to the further westward spread of Islam. No matter how much territory fell to the Muslims, Constantinople repelled every advance. Seizure of Constantinople by the Ottomans would convey Islamic ascendance and it would give the Ottomans control over East-West trade.¹⁰ Finally, in 1453, Constantinople succumbed to Ottoman control and was renamed Istanbul. At its height in the mid 16th century, the Ottoman Empire encompassed southeast Europe (including the Balkan region as well as Hungary), North Africa (as far west as Morocco), the Crimea and Georgia, the Levant, Syria, Iraq, and much of the Arabian Peninsula.¹¹

By the 19th century, Christian subjects of the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire had developed ties with their European counterparts. These ties imparted an independent identity that threatened to destabilize the empire from within as European powers and Russia threatened it militarily from without. A reform movement coalesced around a group known as the Young Ottomans. They were inspired by republican (anti-monarchist) ideals and viewed common language and culture as the basis of political identity. The Young Ottomans maneuvered to introduce constitutionalism in the 1880s. They were succeeded by a similar group with overlapping membership, known as “the Young Turks,” who, under the leadership of Enver Pasha, launched an unsuccessful military coup in 1908 in the name of Turkish nationalism.

When World War I broke out in 1914, the Ottoman leadership, hoping to regain territories lost in the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913, sided with Germany and Austro-Hungary. A military college graduate, Mustafa Kemal, who admired the Young Turks, distinguished himself with a victory over the Allies at Gallipoli in 1915. In the process, he won the confidence and admiration of many in the Ottoman armed forces. For Turkey, the war came to an end with the signing of the Armistice of Mudros (30 October 1918). Once the war was lost and Ottoman authority crumbled, Kemal organized a resistance to Allied advance into Turkish territory, skillfully playing different powers against each other. He confined his territorial demands to the lands the Ottomans held at the end of the

¹⁰ Washington State University. Hooker, Richard. “The Ottomans.” 1996. <http://www.wsu.edu/~dee/OTTOMAN/ORIGIN.HTM>

¹¹ iExplore. “Turkey History.” No date. <http://www.iexplore.com/dmap/Turkey/History>

war and disassociated himself from the grander pan-Islamic ambitions of his Ottoman predecessors. Kemal, later known as Atatürk, signed and adhered to the Treaty of Lausanne (1923), which guaranteed non-aggression against Turkey's neighbors and afforded the time necessary to establish a modern state capable of self-defense.

The Republic of Turkey

The 1923 Constitution, already drawn up in 1921, introduced the concept of separation of powers. Only Parliament had the power to legislate. No head of state yet existed, and the judiciary was elected by members of Parliament. After the republic was formally founded in 1923, the office of President was created. The President would select a Prime Minister from among those elected to Parliament.



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Atatürk praying at opening of Parliament

This Western model of governance and administration was intended to move the republic away from the Ottoman notion that political power is derived not from society, but rather was conferred by the will of God. To this end, Kemal dismantled the religious institutional framework of governance. In addition to abolishing the *caliphate* and disbanding religious courts, he made Ankara the capital. During his 15-year rule, he established the basis for a stable polity, but did so largely by decree, acting as an “enlightened dictator.” He alone formulated policies, dismissed those who disagreed with him, and ignored the constitution when it conflicted with his state-building agenda. When the Surname Law was introduced in 1934, Mustafa Kemal was bestowed with the surname Atatürk, or “Father of the Turks,” four years before his death.

Atatürk's legacy is referred to as “Kemalism,” or strict adherence to the secularism of the republic and defense of Turkey's territorial integrity. Kemalism is akin to a civic religion in Turkey, enshrined in the Republic's successive constitutions, many of its laws, and the oaths of allegiance sworn by Turkey's presidents, lawmakers, and other officers of the state. The self-appointed guardian of this legacy is the Turkish military. As such, it has intervened when it felt a civilian-led government had become ineffective or threatened to steer the country off course.¹² Nonetheless, Turkey's desire to join the EU as a full member has necessitated a reduced role for the military in politics, a policy that has been largely accepted.¹³

In 2002, an Islamist party, the Justice and Development Party (AKP), won a landslide victory in parliamentary elections in part due to widespread dissatisfaction with the economy. This government has been led by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan. He has never fully dispelled the suspicion that his proclaimed adherence to Kemalism is mere lip service and that his intent is to allow the introduction of Islam into government.

¹² Journal for Study of Peace and Conflict. Chtena, Aira. “The Military in Modern Turkey.” 1999. <http://jspc.library.wisc.edu/issues/1998-1999/article5.html>

¹³ BBC News (International Edition). Mardell, Mark. “Turkish Army Keeps Eye on Politicians.” 7 November 2006. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6122878.stm>

While serving as mayor of Istanbul, Erdogan was sentenced to serve four months in jail for reading an Islamist poem at a public rally in 1998.¹⁴

Further electoral gains by his party in Parliament enabled the AKP to appoint a conservative Muslim, Abdullah Gül, to the presidency in the summer of 2007. Constitutional amendments under consideration in 2008, including the recently opposed move to lift the head scarf ban for university students, emphasize the rights of believers as opposed to insulating state administration from religion.¹⁵

Government

Turkey is a republican parliamentary democracy and a constitutional state. Political parties must win at least 10% of the vote in the general election to gain representation in Parliament, the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA). It is a unicameral legislature with 550 deputies elected to serve a term of five years.¹⁶ Parliament has the power to call early elections or to postpone them for up to one year in the event of war.

Every administrative province is allocated a deputy representative. The remaining slots are allotted according to the demographic distribution of the population. TGNA deputies elect the President to a single seven-year term. A two-thirds majority is required. The President appoints the Prime Minister and selects members of the Supreme Courts as well.¹⁷

Media

The first Turkish television station was launched in 1968. Until the early 1980s, Turkish television viewers were limited to a single state-run channel, the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT). The TRT, an independent government agency, had a constitutionally mandated monopoly on radio and television broadcasting.



Istanbul satellite and microwave reception

In September 1990, a commercial station (STAR 1), exploiting a loophole in the monopoly law, began broadcasting Turkish language programming beamed in via satellite from Germany. This privately owned television channel established a market niche, and had opened the door for other new private television and radio channels to compete for Turkish listeners and viewers. The number

¹⁴ Boston University Bridge. Fitzgerald, Brian. "Islamist Mobilization in Turkey: A Crisis for U.S. Interests in Middle East?" 8 November 2002. http://www.bu.edu/bridge/archive/2002/11-08/turk_pol.htm

¹⁵ Johns Hopkins University, SAISPHERE. Cornell, Svante and Kemal Kaya. "Turkey's Elections: Democratic Islamists?" 2007. <http://www.sais-jhu.edu/pubaffairs/publications/saisphere/winter07/cornell-kaya.html>

¹⁶ Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute. Celik, Aliye Pekin and Leylac Naqvi. "Turkey: Current and Future Political, Economic and Security Trends." December 2007. <http://www.cdfai.org/PDF/Turkey%20Current%20and%20Future%20Political%20Economic%20and%20Security%20Trends.pdf>

¹⁷ Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law. Collins, Mary Beth. "The Legal System of Turkey." No date. <http://faculty.cua.edu/fischer/ComparativeLaw2002/collins/History%20of%20Turkey.htm>

of local commercial radio and television stations operating without a license grew to 500 and 100, respectively, by 1993.

To re-establish some sort of regulatory control, the government bowed to reality and legalized the private media market, which had become a part of daily life for most Turks.¹⁸ Turks spend an average 5.09 hours watching television during week days and 5.15 hours on the weekends. The content is heavily entertainment oriented.¹⁹

As for print journalism, there is no censorship per se.²⁰ Yet modified versions of a 1983 press law continue to restrict newspapers from covering issues deemed to fall within the realm of national security. Publication of material inciting violence or promoting “separatism” applies to coverage of Kurdish and other sensitive issues that deviate from official policy. Journalists who run afoul of these laws risk imprisonment.²¹ Moreover, Article 301 of the Turkish penal code makes it a crime to “insult Turkishness.” The article has been used to prosecute those who express views of Turkish history that differ from the official narrative. A prominent example is public acknowledgment of what is widely referred to outside of Turkey as the Armenian Massacre of 1915.²² Specifically, this refers to the estimated one million ethnic Armenians who perished, and many more exiled, by the Young Turk insurgency.

Economy

The 1928 Constitution allowed for government management of the economy. This opened the door to “import substitution,” an industry in which imports were heavily taxed to prevent them from competing against locally made products in the domestic marketplace. Under these circumstances, there were no market incentives for local firms to improve the quality of their products. In the early 1980s, Ankara, which had accumulated a large foreign debt after oil prices were raised in the 1970s, began to prioritize exports as a means of earning hard currency.



© Dorche / flickr.com
Turkish woman weaving a rug

The clothing industry, the bulk of it non-brand name items, provides jobs for unskilled labor and accounts for the bulk of Turkey’s textile exports. Agriculture remains a strong

¹⁸ British Council. Caply, Bulent. “The Media in Turkey.” 3 March 1998.
<http://members.tripod.com/~warlight/CAPLI.html>

¹⁹ European Journalism Centre. “Media Landscape Turkey.” No date.
http://www.ejc.net/media_landscape/article/turkey/

²⁰ Country Studies. Library of Congress. “Turkey: Mass Media.” 1995.
<http://countrystudies.us/turkey/86.htm>

²¹ Committee for Protecting Journalists, Turkey. “Attacks on the Press in 2002.” 31 July 2002.
<http://www.cpj.org/attacks02/mideast02/turkey.html>

²² *An Introduction to the Modern Middle East*. Sorenson, David. “Chapter 11: Turkey [p. 262].” 2008. Colorado: Westview Press.

http://books.google.com/books?id=Zrpmm4120OUC&pg=PA262&lpg=PA262&dq=turkey+history+1982+constitution&source=web&ots=b_4h4xLEhy&sig=El0EKx1NGmIsz8YxTT6-IHIYmWw&hl=en#PPA262,M1

component of the diversified economy, although the sector is dominated by small-scale family farms, many of which rely on subsidies to turn a profit.²³ Energy transshipment represents Turkey's industry of the future. Central Asian and Caucasus energy suppliers are creating new networks of distribution that use transit routes through Turkey and into Europe.

While the financial sector has been liberalized, Turkey's levels of taxation remain high, affecting business owners and workers as well as foreign investors. Its "tax wedge," defined as the difference between gross and net pay, was 42.8% in 2006.²⁴ Such a high rate in a developing country makes working abroad, as well as seeking opportunities in the informal sector, seem attractive.

Ethnic Groups

Non-ethnic Turkish minority groups were not officially recognized after the Republic was established. During the 1930s and 1940s, the government sought to disguise the presence of its substantial ethnic Kurdish minority by referring to them as "Mountain Turks." By the 1980s, the Mountain Turks label had been replaced by "Eastern Turks" (*dogulu*).²⁵

As a condition for Turkey to join the EU, however, Ankara must demonstrate it is meeting EU standards with respect to minority group cultural autonomy, including use of the mother tongue. In Turkey, the practice of listing linguistic minorities in censuses was last used in the 1960s. While the government accepted the rights of ethnic Greek, Jewish, and Armenian citizens to retain their own languages when it signed the peace treaty of Lausanne in 1923, extending those rights to others has been seen as promoting separatism.²⁶ Thus the Kurds only received the right to speak Kurdish in public in 1991, and then only under restricted circumstances.²⁷



© Charles Roffey
Kurdish family in Istanbul

Ethnic Kurds constitute 20% of Turkey's population. A second small ethnic minority group is the Laz whose native tongue, until recently a non-written language, is known as Lazuri. Their homeland extends across the Turkish border into Georgia. Originally Christian, they have been converted to Islam.

²³ Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. "Economic Survey of Turkey 2006." 18 October 2006. http://www.oecd.org/document/21/0,3343,en_2649_201185_37492245_1_1_1_1,00.html

²⁴ CATO Institute. Hanke, Steve. "Reflections on Turkey's Economy." 13 April 2007. http://www.cato.org/pub_display.php?pub_id=8209

²⁵ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. "Linguistic and Ethnic Groups." 1995. <http://countrystudies.us/turkey/26.htm>

²⁶ Human Rights Watch. "Questions and Answers: Freedom of Expression and Language Rights in Turkey." April 2002. <http://www.hrw.org/press/2002/08/turkeyqa041902.htm>

²⁷ The Global Review of Ethnopolitics. Somer, Murar. "Ethnic Kurds, Endogenous Identities, and Turkey's Democratization and Integration with Europe." June 2002. http://www.ethnopolitics.org/ethnopolitics/archive/volume_I/issue_4/somer.pdf

Chapter 2 Religion

Overview of Major Religions

One of the first official acts of the Atatürk government in 1923 was to abolish the notion of a state religion and to create a state where freedom of choice extended to religious practice. He succeeded. Nonetheless, Sunni Islam has been the religion of about 99% of the population for several hundred years. It continues to play a key role in the country's culture and politics. The remaining 1% of the population is composed of Greek and Armenian Orthodox Christians, Bektasi Sufi mystics, Mevlevi Sufi Dervishes, and Jews.

The country that was the cradle of early Christian colonies quickly yielded to the power and persuasion of the star and crescent—the symbol of Islam. Turkey came under the banner of Islam in the early Middle Ages. Islam's main tenet is submission to the will and word of Allah (the one God). The message of God was revealed to the Meccan prophet, Muhammad (570–632 C.E.), by the angel Gabriel in a series of 114 chapters or *sura*, which make up the Qur'an.

Islam, which also recognizes the Old Testament and the New Testament to be sacred scriptures, views Muhammad as the last of the prophets and the Qur'an to be the last sacred book revealed to man.²⁸



© Tim O'Brien
Hagia Sofia, Istanbul

Religion in Government

A department of religious affairs does exist, but its function is to administer the yearly visas for pilgrims to Mecca and to safeguard the principals of Islam. Its precursor under the Ottoman Sultans, the Ministry of Vakaf (Evkaf) together with the Office of the Grand Mufti, exercised sweeping legal authority in matters of religion and oversaw the seminaries with their vast real estate holdings. That ended with the transition to republican rule in 1923. The courts, as well as civil and criminal law, are completely secular and Islamic jurisprudence is not recognized. Inevitably, when religion appears to steer too close to politics, as it does with the issue of Islamic dress at schools and colleges, Atatürk's principle of separation of church and state is invoked.²⁹

Religion in Daily Life

The Turks are moderates in matters of religion and extremism is a rarity. Yet, Turkish Islam is permeated with traditional beliefs and rites, especially among religious women, such as the worship of saints and prominent Christian figures. One example of this is St. George's Day (23 April), when Muslims and Orthodox Greeks are likely to make the pilgrimage to the monastery on the island of Buyukada. Along the route up to the monastery, one can see knotted rags and scraps of paper tied to trees by pilgrims of both faiths. The shrine of St. Anthony of Padua in Istanbul is open to any woman, irrespective

²⁸ Turizm.Net. "Religion in Turkey." 2007. <http://www.turizm.net/turkey/info/religion.html>

²⁹ Sacred Destinations Travel Guide. "Religion in Modern Turkey." No date. <http://www.sacred-destinations.com/turkey/turkey-religion.htm>

of her faith, to offer prayers for healing. Likewise, there are countless places throughout the country that are reputed to be holy sites such as hot springs, unusual landscapes, and even the occasional holy tree.

The most obvious aspects of Islam in everyday life are found in the five pillars of the faith that are central to the daily practice of Islam. The first, *shahada*, or profession of faith, happens when a believer repeats the words “*la illahah il allah wa muhammadun rasul allah*” (There is but one God and Muhammad is his messenger). The *shahada* is to be found in the prayer call which precedes all Islamic prayer services

The second article of faith is *salat*, or prayer. Five prayers are to be said at fixed times between sunrise and just before sunset. These prayers require the worshiper to be ritually clean involving the washing of hands, face, and feet each time. In the courtyard or at the side of every mosque there are basins with running water faucets to accommodate the faithful performing ritual ablution. Daily prayer times, which vary according to the timing of sunrise and sunset, are published in newspapers.



© Adib Roy
Men performing their ablutions before prayer

Prayer times may also be identified by the sound of the *azan* (prayer call) coming from the tall tower next to the mosque, the *minaret*. The *muezzin*, or crier, no longer scales the minaret's tower to call the faithful to prayer. Now the call to prayer is announced through a loudspeaker. Ideally, prayers should be carried out at a mosque, but may be performed at home or work. However, the mid-day prayer on Friday, called the congregational prayer, is always conducted at a mosque. When prayer begins, worshippers facing Mecca stand in rows behind an *imam*, or prayer leader. In a service that consists of recitations and prostrations, the faithful bow their heads to touch the carpet floor on which they are praying.

The third article of faith, *saum* (fasting), refers to the obligation to fast from sunrise to sunset during the month of Ramadan (*Ramazan*), the ninth month of the Islamic year. The daily fasting traditionally begins at the pre-dawn moment when the *muezzin* can “distinguish a black thread from a white one.” Many Turks, but not all, observe this requirement and would be offended if a visitor were to smoke, eat, or drink water in their presence during Ramadan.

Ramadan is a striking demonstration of Muslim life. Many aspects of daily life still revolve around the constraints of Ramadan. Employees leave their work early to be at home for the breaking of the fast. Taxi drivers stop taking fares so that they, too, may be with their families for the festive meal. Some commercial establishments close early in anticipation of the *iftar*, as the meal to break the fast is called. In many places throughout Turkey, the Ottoman custom of firing a cannon to sound the arrival of sunset is observed. All adults are obligated to fast. Only the infirm, the elderly or very young, and expectant mothers are exempt from this rule. What daylight hours take away, the night time returns,

and evenings during Ramadan are filled with festivities and celebrations. Theaters are packed showing a repertory of comedies, and state television airs concerts and light entertainment well into the night.

The performance of *zakat*, or acts of charity, the fourth pillar of Islam, is incumbent on all Muslims. This extends to voluntary feeding of the poor and providing for orphans. Unlike some strict Islamic countries, Turkey has no provision for deduction of *zakat* taxes from workers' salaries.

The final pillar of faith for a Muslim is that of pilgrimage, or *hajj*. It is incumbent upon a believer to perform a pilgrimage to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina at least once in his or her lifetime. This is an annual event and is timed according to the lunar calendar of Islam. During the *hajj* season the national airlines, Turk Hava Yollari, operates hundreds of extra flights, and pilgrims can be seen at airports dressed in their ritual white clothing. It is during the *hajj* month that the most sacred of holidays, *Eid al-Adha*, or Feast of the Sacrifice, occurs.³⁰

Religious Holidays

The three-day festival that signals the end of Ramadan fasting in Turkey is called *Seker Bayrami* or Sugar (candy) Festival. It is known as *Eid al-Fitr* in Arabic. It is a holiday that brings the exchange of greeting cards, presents, festive meals, and pastries. Since it is simultaneously a state holiday, government offices close for three days.³¹

The second major holiday is *Kurban Bayrami*, known to the Arab world as *Eid al-Adha*. This commemorates the Biblical and Qur'anic account of the near sacrifice of Abraham's son to God. *Eid al-Adha* takes place about 70 days after *Seker Bayrami*. For Muslims, it is a high holiday. Special congregational prayers are held outdoors for the occasion. Across the country, nearly three million sheep or cattle are sacrificed on this day. The meat is distributed among the poor, and via meat packers, to poor Muslims throughout Africa and Asia. The holiday usually lasts for four or five days. Government offices as well as major services close for the occasion.³²

A third religious holiday, *Mevlid Serif*, commemorates the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad. On the 12th of the Islamic month, *Rabi al-Awal*, Sunni Muslims gather to pray and share festive meals. It is not a government holiday and may go unnoticed by visitors in large cities.



© Jennifer Hayes
Selling candy after Ramadan

³⁰ All About Turkey. "Islam." 2008. <http://www.allaboutturkey.com/islam-topics.htm>

³¹ Turkey Travel Planner. "Seker (Ramazan) Bayrami in Turkey." 2008. http://www.turkeytravelplanner.com/Religion/seker_bayrami.html

³² Turkey Travel Planner. Kurban Bayrami (Eid al-Adha). 2008. http://www.turkeytravelplanner.com/Religion/kurban_bayrami.html

Places of Worship

While a Muslim may theoretically worship at any spot in the universe, the usual place for worship is a mosque to which a library and study center, *medrese* (*madrassa*), may be adjoined. Each mosque also has one or more *imams*, or Islamic clergymen, assigned. Since Muslims pray in the direction facing Mecca, mosques in Turkey are situated along a northwest–southeast axis. The *mihrab*, the niche indicating the direction of Mecca, is found in the front of the prayer hall. To the right of this niche is the *minbar*, an elevated pulpit from which the *imam* delivers his sermons. Since bodily cleanliness is associated with purity of the soul, the mosque will have facilities outside for ritual ablutions (washing).



© rogiro / flickr.com
Interior of the Blue Mosque, Istanbul

Some of the world’s most beautiful Islamic architecture is found in Turkey. One of the most renowned Ottoman architects, Mimar Sinan (1489–1588), was responsible for their construction. As personal architect to Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent, Mimar Sinan completed more than 350 projects, including the Suleymaniye Mosque in Istanbul and the Selimiye in Edirne.³³ The beautiful mosques of Turkey can be visited almost without exception. However, there is etiquette for visiting places of worship.

Behavior in Places of Worship

The famous mosques may be tourist attractions, but they are simultaneously places of worship. Visitors who conduct themselves with decorum will be welcomed.

Exchange 1: May I enter the mosque?

Soldier:	May I enter the mosque?	jaameeyeh gehrehbeeleermeyem?
Local:	Yes.	ehvet

The first rule is to inquire when guided tours take place. Mosques may not be visited during periods when congregational prayers are being held. These prayers occur five times a day, most prominently at noon and mid afternoon. The general rules for visiting a mosque are as follows:

Exchange 2: When do you pray?

Soldier:	When do you pray?	neh zaamaan naamaaz kolaarsinez?
Local:	We pray at noon.	œyyleh zaamaan naamaaz kolaariz

Shoes must be removed at the entrance to the mosque. Soft leather slippers may be available at the door; otherwise, visitors are advised to wear heavy socks. There is no loud talking, eating or smoking inside. Visitors are advised not to touch ritual objects or copies of the Qur’an, nor should they climb the *minbar* or step into the *mihrab*.

³³ GreatBuildings.com. “Sinan.” No date. <http://www.greatbuildings.com/architects/Sinan.html>

Exchange 3: Must I take off my shoes inside the mosque?

Soldier:	Must I take off my shoes inside the mosque?	jaameedeh aayakaabolaramoch karmaam shartmeh?
Local:	Yes.	ehvet

Men must wear long trousers and, if possible, long shirts; women should wear scarves and full length skirts and blouses.

Exchange 4: Do I need to cover my head?

Soldier:	Do I need to cover my head?	baashomuh œhrtmehm gehrekeerma?
Local:	Yes.	ehvet

Since Muslims may pray at any time in a mosque, one must be careful not to walk in front of a person praying. It invalidates his prayer and causes grave offense.

Chapter 3 Traditions

Male-Female Relationships

In even the most urbane Turkish families, relationships between males and females are governed by long-standing cultural patterns. The basic themes of traditional socialization, family loyalty, family obligations, and honor all remain strong. In practice, this means the family remains patriarchal, with tasks divided according to the traditional division of labor. Men tend to be the principal bread winner, and women, especially mothers, are responsible for the house, the meals, the cleaning, and the laundry. Women in urban areas compete successfully with men for employment in the public and private sectors. However, the rising trend for women to seek equality in both public and private life falters in the domestic sphere. Males moderate affairs of the family inside and outside the house. Male offspring are expected to follow the example of their fathers; females are expected to emulate their mothers in submission to males. Females have distinctly less social mobility than males, in particular if they are unmarried. Virtue is defined as virginity, and a family's honor can be perceived as having been compromised by its women. Marriages are frequently arranged, and dating in the Western sense is not permitted.³⁴



© Gene Bonventre
Turkish family

Greetings

The Turks are a friendly people and generally respond favorably to a friendly smile and greeting. Yet, in spite of seeming informality, be aware that Turkish culture is structured in social communication that is very formulaic.

Exchange 5: Good morning.

Soldier:	Good morning.	gUnaaydin
Local:	Good morning.	gUnaaydin

When greeting strangers for the first time, it is customary to shake hands and say *merhaba* (hello). When greeting friends or acquaintances, people usually begin by saying *nasilsiniz* (How are you?). Greetings among friends are followed by polite and sincere inquiries about one's health, family, and work.

Exchange 6: Good afternoon.

Soldier:	Good afternoon.	eeyeh gUnlehr
Local:	Good afternoon.	seezeh deh eeyeh gUnlehr

³⁴ Federal Research Division. Library of Congress. *Country Studies: Turkey*. 1995.
<http://countrystudies.us/turkey/48.htm>

When greeting friends of the same sex, Turks shake hands firmly and kiss on both cheeks. Foreigners should not attempt this gesture. In rural settings, this more traditional greeting is used with esteemed elders.

Exchange 7: How are you?

Soldier:	How are you?	naasolsonuz?
Local:	Fine, very well.	eeyem, tehshakUr ehdehrem

Out of respect, a younger person or subordinate may kiss the elder’s hands and touch them to his forehead. Young people themselves often greet each other by saying *selam* (salute). On entering an office or reception room, it is customary to say *günaydin* (good morning) or *merhaba* (hello).

Exchange 8: Good evening!

Soldier:	Good evening!	eeyeh akshaamlar!
Local:	Good evening!	seezeh deh eeyeh akshaamlar!

Likewise, when parting company people wish each other God’s blessings, *Allahaismarladik*, to which the usual response is *güle güle*. These formalities can and should be observed by foreigners as well. There is no religious or social restriction on who may use these expressions.³⁵

Exchange 9: Good night!

Soldier:	Good night!	eeyeh gejelehr!
Local:	Good night!	seezeh deh eeyeh gejelehr!

Upon entering a room where several people are gathered, it is standard practice to greet those present by moving from right to left around the room, shaking each person’s hand and giving a short verbal salutation. When addressing a young man, the title *Bey* is added behind his first name, e.g., Attila Bey.



© Charles Roffey
A friendly greeting

Exchange 10: Hi, Mr. Akin.

Soldier:	Hi, Mr. Akin.	mehrhaaba akun bey
Local:	Hello!	mehrhaaba!
Soldier:	Are you doing well?	eeyeeh meeseenez?
Local:	Yes.	ehvet

³⁵ Embassy of the Republic of Turkey, Washington D.C. “Culture.” 2004.
http://www.turkishembassy.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=343&Itemid=324

In similar fashion, the title *Hanim* is added to a young woman's first name in polite address, e.g., Miriam Hanim.³⁶ In the case of older men and women the titles are different. For a man the title is *Aabey* and for a woman it is *Abla*, e.g., Ahmet Aabey and Fathma Abla.³⁷ Turkish men will greet the women in a host's household, but their greetings remain verbal. Non-Turks of either sex should not attempt any form of physical contact, not even handshakes, with members of the opposite sex.

Hospitality and Gift-Giving

Turks have made a tradition of visiting each other and sampling the hospitality of other hosts. A visitor to the country can be quickly spun into this tradition and is likely to receive invitations to visit and dine. In cities it is customary to announce one's intention to visit days in advance; in rural areas this formality disappears and guests can drop in at any time. This can mean from 4 pm to 6 pm for afternoon tea and from 8 pm to 11 pm for meals in the evening. At a minimum, a guest can expect something to eat and drink, be it as simple as tea and cookies.



© Gene Bonventre
Family gathered for a meal, Adana

Exchange 11: I really appreciate your hospitality.

Soldier:	I really appreciate your hospitality.	meesafeerpehrvehrleeyyeenez eechen tehshakUr ehdehreehm
Local:	It is nothing.	beershehy deyyeel

To refuse hospitality is to create an offense. Guests are expected to bring a pleasant disposition to all social occasions. This includes polite conversation, avoiding those unpleasant subjects which are universal: personal problems, sex, religion, and politics. Punctuality is one indispensable aspect of courtesy. When visiting a Turkish home, one should remove his shoes at the door. Shoes bring the dirt of the street into a home. On entering a home, be sure to extend greetings to and inquire after the host's family.

Exchange 12: How is your family?

Soldier:	How is your family?	aaylehnez naasu?
Local:	They are doing fine, thank you.	tehshakUr ehdehrem, eeyeh

Visitors may bring a small gift such as sweets (baklava), fruits, or flowers. Although some Turks drink alcoholic beverages, it is not wise to bring wine or spirits as house gifts. Gracious behavior recommends the guest and honors the host.³⁸

³⁶ Kwintessential Cross Cultural Solutions. "Turkey – Turkish Language, Culture, Customs, and Etiquette." No date. <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/turkey-country-profile.html>

³⁷ Geocities. Resat Suthan "Turkish Culture." 13 July 2002. <http://www.geocities.com/resats/culture.html>

³⁸ Kwintessential Cross Cultural Solutions. "Turkey – Turkish Language, Culture, Customs and Etiquette." No date. <http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/turkey-country-profile.html>

Exchange 13: This gift is for you.

Soldier:	This gift is for you.	boonoo seezeh hehdeeyeh ehdeeyoroom
Local:	Thank you.	aafeeyeh tosoo

Eating Habits

Breakfast is a hearty foundation meal for Turks. Mealtime can begin around 7 am for city dwellers or just after sunrise for rural inhabitants. Lunch is eaten between noon and 2 o'clock in the afternoon. Dinner is customarily served between 7 and 8 pm. Turks observe Western eating habits, using knives and forks. However, washing one's hands before and after a meal is a ritual that is based in Islamic faith. In consenting to follow such practices, a dinner guest endears himself to his host.



© Charles Roffey
Turkish meal

Exchange 14: What is the name of this dish?

Soldier:	What is the name of this dish?	boo yehmeyyeen adeh neh?
Local:	This is phylo dough with cheese.	pehyneerleeh bærek

When a male guest comes to dinner, Turks usually revert to the traditional practice of men and women eating separately. If this is the case, the signal for the meal to begin is when the head of the family begins to break bread and eat. A host may wish his guest well-being before the meal by saying *afiyet olsun* (may it bring you well-being).³⁹

Exchange 15: The food tastes so good.

Soldier:	The food tastes so good.	boo yehmek chocklehzehtleh
Local:	Thank you.	aafeeyeh tosoo

Unless one is in a rural area, the meal will most likely be served at a covered table. It is a polite gesture to break and pass the large flat bread, *pita*. A guest may do the same, bearing in mind that the left hand must never be used to pass anything to a Turk, especially foodstuffs.

Exchange 16: What ingredients are used to make this dish? *

Soldier:	What ingredients are used to make this dish?	boo yehmeyyeh peesheermek eechen nehlehr kolaandoonoz?
Local:	Meat, pinto beans, oil, tomatoes and onion.	eht, faasoolyeh, yaa, doomaatehs vey soovan

*The dish is White Beans (Kuru Fasulye).

The building blocks of the Turkish kitchen are: lamb, chicken, fish, mussels, shrimp, and vegetables such as cabbage, peppers, onions, potatoes, tomatoes, beans, and eggplant.

³⁹ Geocities. "Turkish Culture. Diet." 13 July 2002. <http://www.geocities.com/resats/culture.html>

Dishes are mildly spiced with Mediterranean herbs, mainly garlic, cumin, pine nuts, and assorted paprikas. Among the things that first come to mind when Turkish food is mentioned are *shish kabob*, a grilled skewer containing chunks of lamb, onions, tomato, and peppers, and *pilaf* (*pilav* or *pilau*), a rice dish that originated in Central Asia. Fried, baked, or pureed, the eggplant plays an important part in Turkish meals. One famous dish consisting of baked eggplant and olive oil, *imam bayildi*, meaning “the imam⁴⁰ fainted,” attests to the overwhelming tastiness of the dish.⁴¹



Dress Codes

Several factors play into the choice of clothing in Turkey: religion, climate, geography, ethnic background, and public identity. While rural dress has remained largely unchanged for more than a century, urban dress in the pro-Western Atatürk era of the 1920s underwent a revolution. For women, wearing the veil was outlawed. This issue has reentered public discourse in the debate over personal rights and religious freedom. The male Turkish civil servant of Atatürk’s era was dressed like a Western gentleman. Today, Turks still dress conservatively, but comfortably. Men wear neatly tailored trousers, fashionable shirts, and polished shoes.

Exchange 17: How should I dress?

Soldier:	How should I dress?	naasu geeyeenmehleeyem?
Local:	Wear loose fitting clothes which cover your body.	short deeshinda raahat bee keeyaafeht geeyen

Women wear long skirts, smart blouses, and frequently, head scarves. Religion prescribes conservative dress at all times of the year and in particular for visits to a mosque. Climate and geography play a role as well. Turkey’s Mediterranean coast has mild summers that call for attire consisting of lightweight cotton shirts and blouses. Warm jackets are needed during the cool, rainy season from November through April.

Exchange 18: Is this acceptable to wear?

Soldier:	Is this acceptable to wear?	boo ehlbeeseh eeyee meh?
Local:	Yes.	ehvet

The mountainous regions of the interior record low temperatures and snow in winter months. Here, winter dress means warm, heavy jackets. In rural areas of the East and Southeast where Kurds and Armenians live, ethnic dress is more prominent. For the visitor to Turkey the best advice is to dress conservatively. For men, this means long

⁴⁰ Imam is an Islamic religious leader

⁴¹ High Beam Encyclopedia. A Dictionary of Food and Nutrition. “imam bayildi.” 2005.

pressed trousers and clean shirts; for women, it means skirts below the knees and blouses with long sleeves. For both men and women, summertime shorts are out of place.⁴²

Weddings

As part of the secular revolution of the Atatürk era, the 1926 Civil Code outlawed traditional marriage practices such as the male prerogative of having four wives. Likewise, marriages between Muslim women and non-Muslim men became legal. Representatives of the groom and bride negotiate the terms of the marriage contract in the presence of a religious official, such as an *imam*, as part of pre-wedding arrangements. The marriage ceremony, also a pre-wedding event, is a brief civil ceremony that only requires that the bride and groom appear before a state registry official in the presence of two witnesses.⁴³

When it comes to weddings, the appearance of Westernized modernity is deceiving. Traditions prevail. The traditional wedding celebration can last three days in rural areas, whereas it is usually more accelerated in urban areas. In the city, young people usually put off getting married until they have completed their education and, for men, their obligatory military service.

Exchange 19 Congratulations on your wedding!

Soldier:	Congratulations on your wedding!	aalah mayso ehtsen!
Local:	We are honored you could attend.	gehldeeyyenez eechen tehshakUr ehdehrehz

The average age for marriage is 22 for women and 25 for men. The traditional festivities commence with the *kina gecesi*, or the night of henna. It takes place at the house of the bride and is a women-only affair, attended by females from the bride’s and groom’s family. A bundle of dry henna is shredded into a silver or copper pot by an older matron who has lived a happily married life. The henna is then dissolved in hot water and when it has cooled the ceremony begins. The matron distributes henna to the guests who apply it to the hands and feet. In rural areas the face is frequently decorated as well. Gold coins are often placed in the hands of the bride, who is dressed in her bridal gown for the occasion. In song and poetry, the matron charges her with a *basi бүтiin* (meaning “whose head is complete”)—a lifetime of complete fulfillment and marital happiness.



© Argos Panoptes
Turkish wedding

Exchange 20: I wish you both happiness.

Soldier:	I wish you both happiness.	eekeenezeh deh motluluklaar deelehrem
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⁴² Turkey Travel Planner. Brosnahan, Tom. “What to Wear and Pack in Turkey.” 2008 <http://www.turkeytravelplanner.com/WhenToGo/WhatToWear.html>

⁴³ HilalPlaza.com. “Muslim Weddings in Turkey.” No date. <http://www.hilalplaza.com/turkish-wedding-customs.html>

Local:	We are honored.	tehshakUr ehdehrehz
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On the following day, the parents of the married couple serve a festive meal to family guests and friends. On the third and final day, the bride is brought to the groom's home in a caravan of decorated vehicles. In rural areas, she might be taken to her husband's home on horseback. Once at her husband's home, an afternoon and evening of dancing and feasting takes place. This marks the end of the traditional wedding celebrations.⁴⁴

Funerals

Burial customs in Turkey are not secular issues. They follow Islamic ritual closely. When death comes, the family acts quickly to carry out the rituals that accompany the burial of a Muslim within 24 hours of death, if possible. The first step in preparing the body is the *ghusl*, or ritual ablution, which is similar to that carried out before a Muslim prays. The body is washed to remove any impurities and then wrapped in a white shroud, the *kafan*. The deceased is then placed in a coffin and carried to a mosque. There it is placed on the ground with the head and face pointed toward the *qibla* of the mosque, the prayer niche in front that marks the direction of Mecca.



© Charles Roffey
Flowers for a funeral in Istanbul

Exchange 21: I would like to give my condolences to you and your family.

Soldier:	I would like to give my condolences to you and your family.	ayyelehneezeh vey seezeh baashaaloo deelehrem
Local:	Thank you.	tehshakUr ehdehrehz

The prayer that is recited for the dead is called the *janaza* and is fixed in Islamic ritual. It asks for divine blessings on the deceased and for forgiveness of their misdeeds. From the mosque, the body is borne directly to the cemetery in a funeral procession. There, the body is removed from the coffin and is lowered into the deep grave, resting so that the head faces Mecca. As the grave is sealed, mourners offer silent prayers, the most common of which ends with the Qur'anic verse stating that "all things come from Allah and unto him they return."

Exchange 22: Please be strong.

Soldier:	Please be strong.	lUtfehn koowehtleeh oolin
Local:	We will try.	ohlmaayah chaloshjayyz

Following graveside services, there is frequently a formal reception at the home of the deceased where visitors may express their condolences to the family of the departed. Under normal circumstance, foreigners would not be invited to attend a Turkish funeral.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ All About Turkey. "Marriage in Turkey." 2008. <http://www.allaboutturkey.com/marriage.htm>

⁴⁵ All About Turkey. "Funerals in Islam." 2008. <http://www.allaboutturkey.com/cenaze.htm>

Non-Religious Celebrations (Holidays)

Turkey has a lean calendar of official holidays, listing five major events that are celebrated as bank holidays and by closure of federal offices. The first holiday is the most secular and global of all: 1 January, New Year's Day. On 23 April, one can see children in Ankara marching past a giant red Turkish flag with a white crescent and a five-pointed star in the city's giant Hippodrome. Celebrated throughout Turkey, National Sovereignty Day commemorates the first meeting in 1923 of the Grand National Assembly (Turkey's congress) in Ankara.

On 19 May the country celebrates the holiday of Atatürk and Youth Sports Day which combines remembrance of the founder of the modern Republic of Turkey and recognizes the importance of youth sports competition. This is followed by Victory Day on 20 August when people celebrate the victory of the Turks over the Greeks in the 1922 War of Turkish Independence. Lastly, Republic Day comes on 29 October and harkens back to the proclamation in 1923 declaring Turkey's status as a republic.⁴⁶

Gestures

Turks of all backgrounds adhere to basic social courtesies. For example, putting one's feet on a table or desk and showing the soles of one's feet are considered offensive gestures. Likewise, smoking and crossing one's legs in the presence of elders or superiors is sure to offend. Eating or smoking on the street is not encouraged. Public displays of affection to a member of the opposite sex, even if it is one's own spouse, are strongly discouraged. The embrace that Turkish men show each other is honorific and a sign of respect. It is not to be confused with homosexuality, which incidentally is illegal and is punishable by fine and or imprisonment.

In conversation, Turks are often very animated and use hand gestures liberally to enhance verbal communication and amplify meaning. One common hand gesture is turning the palms of one's extended hands up. There are two interpretations of this gesture: the first (while shrugging shoulders) means "What can/could I do?" and the second (while tilting one's head and looking inquisitively) means "Where were you? Or what has happened?" A common facial gesture can be seen in the raising of the eyebrows and tilting of the head slightly backwards. The meaning of this is "No, thank you." If a Turk waves his extended hand, palms down, it means "come here."



© Charles Roffey
Turkish men chatting

Some gestures are obscene and to be avoided. Looking at someone and pointing to the soles of one's shoe amounts to saying "You are dirt!" Snapping one's fingers is rude. Joining one's forefinger and thumb with the hand extended to make an "ok" sign, an

⁴⁶ Q++ Studio. "Turkey Public Holidays and Bank Holidays." No date. <http://www.qppstudio.net/bankholidays2008/turkey.htm>

obscene gesture called “the fig,” is well known throughout the eastern Mediterranean world. When referring to another person, it signifies that he is a homosexual.⁴⁷

Do’s and Don’ts

Do remove your shoes when entering a mosque or a private dwelling. Shoes bring filth from the streets and defile the building, which then requires ritual cleaning.

Do bring a gift if you are invited to a person’s home. It shows your gratitude for their hospitality.

Do compliment a host for the quality of his food or his hospitality. It is a way of honoring him.

Don’t use your left hand to pass things to a Turk, least of all food. The left hand is considered dirty and is associated with personal hygiene in the toilet.

Don’t point fingers at people. This is an accusatory gesture.

Don’t bring search dogs into a house or mosque. The dog, like the pig, is seen as an unclean animal whose presence defiles the building.

Don’t walk in front of a person who is praying. It invalidates his prayer.

Don’t confront or sit next to a person of the opposite sex in public or private unless he or she is your close relative. Doing so implies physical intimacy and dishonors the other person.

⁴⁷ Business with Turkey. “Body Language in Turkey.” September 2001. http://www.business-with-turkey.com/tourist-guide/turkish_body_language.shtml

Chapter 4 Urban Life

Urbanization Issues

The percentage of Turkey's population living in urban centers like Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, and Adana is more than 70%. This is somewhat higher than that of other newly industrialized countries in Asia.⁴⁸ However, with a national population growth rate of 1.33%, the growth rate of Turkey's cities is actually declining slightly in a phenomenon called "suburbanization." This population shift is the result of rapidly expanding urban satellites.⁴⁹ Suburban squatter settlements, like Gazi Osman Pasa (Istanbul), once called *gecekond* or "built in the night", have come about through a 1947 law stipulating that once a dwelling has been built on municipal land, it cannot be destroyed. Built of brick or concrete blocks, these shantytown conglomerations form haphazard mazes of huts scattered over large areas. They lack municipal services like electricity, sewage, and paved streets. Their poverty-stricken and disenfranchised populations, mostly unemployed, have become supporters of Islamic groups. The settlements themselves are sites of frequent riots and civil unrest.⁵⁰



© Dysturb.Net / flickr.com
Gecekondu settlement, Istanbul

Health Issues

Claims by the Ministry of Health and Social Assistance that Turkish citizens in urban areas are provided with quality medical care, preventative health service, and trained personnel are credible.

Exchange 23: Is there a hospital nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a hospital nearby?	yaakinda haastaaneh vaar ma?
Local:	Yes, in the center of town.	ehvet, shehreen mehrkehzeenden vaar

In 2006, infant mortality had declined by two-thirds since 1990. Life expectancy for females stood at 73.9 years (69.0 for males) and there were more than 1.3 provisions of the Social Insurance Law, which requires workers to contribute to the national health insurance scheme.

Exchange 24: Is Dr. Güven in, sir?

Soldier:	Is Dr. Güven in, sir?	dooktor gUvehn orada muh?
Local:	No.	haayir

⁴⁸ U.S. Department of State. "Background Notes: Turkey." January 2008.

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3432.htm>

⁴⁹ European Regional Science Association. "43rd Conference of the European Regional Science Association. Differential Urbanization in Turkey: 1955–2000." August 2003.

<http://www.ersa.org/ersaconfs/ersa03/cdrom/papers/335.pdf>

⁵⁰ Archnet Digital Library. "Squatter Settlements." No date. http://archnet.org/library/sites/one-site.jsp?site_id=3941

The public health program, including vaccinations for infants and children, is administered through urban primary care clinics. Secondary or specialized medical care is provided by government hospitals. A growing number of citizens have elected to participate in private health insurance and to consult physicians in private practice. The doctors at private hospitals are more likely to speak foreign languages.⁵¹

Exchange 25: What is your telephone number?

Soldier:	What is your telephone number?	tehlefon noomaranuz neh?
Local:	My phone number is 0- 312- 223- 4613	tehlefon noomaram sufur UchyUhzoneekee eekeeyUhzyeermeehUch kurkaltonUch

Turkey’s major cities also have large international hospitals like the *Balgat Amerikan Tesisleri* (American Hospital, Ankara) or the *Sisle* (French Hospital, Istanbul). Among the principal health hazards in Turkey are viral hepatitis (A and B strains) and infectious, water-born intestinal diseases. Visitors are urged to drink bottled mineral water, which is available everywhere. Occasional cases of malaria have been reported in far eastern Turkey. The incidence of HIV/AIDS is relatively low at less than 0.02% of the total population.⁵²

Exchange 26: Do you know what is wrong?

Soldier:	Do you know what is wrong?	boonoon nehsee bozook?
Local:	No.	haayir

Education and Schools

The public school system, which requires attendance between the ages of six and fourteen, provides five stages of free education: primary, middle school, secondary, vocational, and university. The majority of the nation’s 50,000 primary schools are located in urban areas, as are its 1,500 secondary schools. While 93% of all children finish primary school, only about 57% finish secondary school. Urban schools are well-attended and the teacher-to-student ratios are acceptable at 1:30 for primary schools and 1:22 for secondary schools. Historical gender statistics show that enrollments for males are slightly higher than that for females. Private education is available in the major cities and is generally rated superior to the state-



© Lee Gillen
Turkish schoolchildren

⁵¹ European Observatory on Health Care Systems. “Health Care Systems in Transition: Turkey.” 2002. <http://www.euro.who.int/document/e79838.pdf>

⁵² UNAIDS. “Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. Turkey.” June 2006. <http://www.unaids.org/en/CountryResponses/Countries/turkey.asp>

sponsored public schools.⁵³ Lastly, Turkey boasts 24 private and 53 public colleges and universities.⁵⁴

Employment Issues

For several years, the two principal sectors of the Turkish economy most closely identified with urban areas, services and industry, have demonstrated above average growth. The services sector grew by 6.1.% and industry by 7.4% in 2006.⁵⁵ Yet unemployment continued to hover above 10% for the same period.⁵⁶ More than 75% of the unemployed are males between the ages 18 and 45. Persistent high unemployment has actually driven some city dwellers to rural areas in search of employment in the agricultural sector. Following worsening economic conditions in European countries, waves of expatriate workers have returned to Turkey, adding to the country's employment woes.

Favorite Pastimes

The main pastime for men in Turkey is a visit to the *kahve*, or café. Men literally spend hours here in low-voiced discussions of cotton or tobacco prices, family issues, public affairs, and politics.

Exchange 27: I would like coffee or tea.

Soldier:	I would like coffee or tea.	kaaveh vehya chay eesteeyoroom
Local:	Sure.	taabee

While drinking coffee, tea, or *ayran* (a mixture of yoghurt and water) and occasionally smoking a *hookah* or water pipe, they play *tavla*, a local version of backgammon. Many cafés open early in the morning and serve breakfast to commuters. In addition, cafés usually sell sweets like *baklava*. The bill at a *kahve*, if there is one written up at all, is not itemized and is seldom more than a small slip of paper.



© Jo Guldi
Conversation in a café

Exchange 28: Are you still serving breakfast?

Soldier:	Are you still serving breakfast?	haalaa kaavaltuh vehreeyormoosoonoz?
Local:	Yes.	ehvet

⁵³ UNICEF. Child Info Statistics. "Education Statistics: Turkey." December 2007.

http://www.childinfo.org/areas/education/pdfs/CEECIS_Turkey.pdf

⁵⁴ International Higher Education. "The Development of Private Higher Education in Turkey." 2006.

http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/soe/cihe/newsletter/Number45/p11_Guruz.htm

⁵⁵ Economic Cooperation Organization. "Country Report. Real Economy." No date.
http://www.ecosecretariat.org/Countries/Turkey/tab_report.htm

⁵⁶ IndexMundi. "Turkey Unemployment Rate." 2007.

http://www.indexmundi.com/turkey/unemployment_rate.html

The *hammam*, or Turkish bath, is another pastime that both men and women can enjoy. These steam baths are often situated near a mosque, and they provide a place for bathing as well as a congenial meeting place.

Exchange 29: Where is your restroom?

Soldier:	Where is your restroom?	toowaalehteeneehz nehredeh?
Local:	That room to your left, over there.	ohradaa, sol taarafta

At least one day a week is designated as women’s day at the baths. Women come in groups with friends bringing their toiletries, flannels, brushes, depilatories, shampoos, and *pestemal*, which are striped towels worn as bathrobes. Some stay for hours gossiping, relaxing, and sipping tea from the giant *samovars* at tea time.

Restaurants

Meals at restaurants are served from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. (lunch) and from 7 p.m. to as late as 11 p.m. for dinner. Guests often wash their hands before sitting down at the table and can be observed doing so again when the meal has finished. This is part of Islamic personal hygiene. By emulating this practice a visitor can endear himself to his hosts.



Exchange 30: This food is very good.

Soldier:	This food is very good.	boo yehmek chocklehzehtleh
Local:	It’s döner kebab.	boo beer dæhnehr kehbaap

Restaurants in Turkey range from the informal *lokanta* (diner) and kebab house found on every street corner to specialty restaurants in the large luxury hotels. Each geographic region has its own culinary fare. Restaurants along the Aegean or Mediterranean coasts feature seafood and vegetarian meals.

Exchange 31: I’d like some hot soup.

Soldier:	I’d like some hot soup.	soojaak choorbaa eesteeyoroom
Local:	Sure.	taabee

Cappadocia is famous for its wines; Anatolia and other regions in the east for meat dishes and spicy sauces. Visitors should remember that mainstream restaurants often do not serve alcoholic beverages. Likewise, they may also have separate dining rooms for single men and for families, designated by the sign *aile salonu*.

Exchange 32: What type of meat is this?

Soldier:	What type of meat is this?	boo eht neh ehtee?
Local:	Lamb.	koozeh ehtee

Meals are never eaten hurriedly. They often begin with starters called *meze*, which consists of countless small dishes, hot and cold, such as bean and pickled vegetable salad, *börek* or flaky meat pastry, and *cacik*, cucumber salad in yoghurt. Meat dishes like grilled *kebab* and *kofte* (spicy meatballs) may be part of the main course, which is served with vegetarian dishes like stuffed cabbages, peppers, wine leaves, or eggplant (*dolma*).

Exchange 33: May I have a glass of water?

Soldier:	May I have a glass of water?	soo reejaa ehdehbeeleeer meeyem?
Local:	Yes, right away.	ehvet, hehmehn

A variety of Turkish fast food can be found in the street stalls serving *döner kebab* (sliced, grilled meat in pita bread). These food stalls are generally located on busy corners or in side streets from mid afternoon to late in the evening. The food, while simple, is tasty and wholesome. Turks usually have their sweets and pastries in the afternoon with coffee or tea, and prefer to follow their meals with fresh fruit that is in season, such as melons, apricots, or grapes.



© John Picken
Table filled with mezes

Exchange 34: Do you have dessert?

Soldier:	Do you have dessert?	taatlooz vaar ma?
Local:	Yes, we have <i>kazan dibi</i> .*	ehvet, kaazaan deebee vaar

* caramelized milk pudding

When one's meal is finished, a nod to the waiter should signal him to bring the bill. Guests dining together will be presented with one bill, since Turks are unaccustomed to splitting checks or to guests who wish to "go dutch".

The bill usually includes a service charge, which is not to be confused with a tip. It is customary to discretely put a tip of about 10% into the hand of the waiter when leaving the restaurant. Visitors who have been invited to dinner by a Turk should understand that the host pays for the meal and also leaves the tip.

Exchange 35: Can I have my total bill, please?

Soldier:	Can I have my total bill, please?	hehsaabo reejaa ehdehbeeleeer meeyem?
Local:	Yes, of course.	ehvet, taabee keh

The Market Place

It will take several generations for the European-based supermarkets like Carrefour, Metro, or Migros, which are found in Ankara and Istanbul, to replace the popular markets or bazaars of Turkish towns and cities.

Exchange 36: Do you sell hand-crafted items?

Soldier:	Do you sell hand-crafted items?	ehl eeshee saatyoomsoonoz?
Local:	Yes.	ehvet

Each town has at least one marketplace. Large cities tend to have one in each district. Throughout Turkey they open at 9 a.m. and remain open, with a lull during the mid afternoon, until 8 or 9 p.m., seven days a week except for Muslim holy days.

Exchange 37: How much longer will you be here?

Soldier:	How much longer will you be here?	neh kaadaar zaamaan daaha boorada ohlajaksunuz?
Local:	Three more hours.	Uch sayyat daah

Traders in the grand covered bazaars still pay a trade tax as they did under the Ottoman Empire several hundred years ago. This tax, in part, pays for the services of the roving *zabita*, or municipal market police, who protect both customers and merchants.

Exchange 38: Is the bazaar nearby?

Soldier:	Is the bazaar nearby?	yaakinda paazaar vaar ma?
Local:	Yes, over there on the right.	ehvet, orada sayyda

The bazaars are usually divided into two sections: artisan wares and household and personal items such as clothing, appliances, and toiletries. In large bazaars that cater to tourists, merchants often accept major credit cards. However, slightly better prices can be arranged if a customer pays in cash using dollars or Euro currency. The Turkish Lira, abbreviated TL, is freely traded on the world market and there is no restriction on the exchange of currencies.

Exchange 39: Do you accept U.S. currency?

Soldier:	Do you accept U.S. currency?	ahbehdeh doolaara kaabol ehdehr meeseenez?
Local:	No we only accept Turkish lira.	haayir, saadejeh turk leeraaseh kaabol ehdeeyorooz

Exchange rates appear in daily newspapers and are frequently displayed in shops. Visitors should note that very few shops in Turkey accept travelers' checks. Since Turkey has an 18% value-added tax (KDV), it is worth a visitor's effort on large purchases to ask the merchant for a *fatura* (receipt) in order to make a tax refund claim.

Exchange 40: Can you give me change for this?

Soldier:	Can you give me change for this?	boonoon eechen baana boozok paaraa vehreer meeseenez?
Local:	No.	haayir

When shopping at the bazaar, customers should know that merchants often have additional styles and colors in their storeroom and will gladly display them if asked. Likewise, it is prudent to examine merchandise before making a purchase. The unwritten law of all markets is: let the buyer beware.

Exchange 41: Do you have any more of these?

Soldier:	Do you have any more of these?	boonlaardan seezdeh daaha vaar ma?
Local:	No.	haayir

The artisan section of the bazaar is worth a visit, if only to admire the richness of Turkish art. There is stunning gold and silver jewelry with settings of precious stones. Those with a blue glass eye inset, *boncuk*, are said to ward off the evil eye.

Exchange 42: May I examine this close up?

Soldier:	May I examine this close up?	boona beeraaz baakabeeleer meeyem?
Local:	Sure.	taabee



© V / flickr.com
Grand Bazaar, Istanbul

Hand-painted ceramics from Avanos and goat-hair bedspreads from Ankara are popular, as are the elegant crystal and hand-blown glasswares from the Pasababce glassworks. Altinyildiz textiles and Desa Deri brand leather goods (shoes, handbags, and cases) are signs of quality throughout Turkey. Perhaps the most famous of Turkey's traditional crafts are its carpets and flat woven *kilims*. To admire them in the bazaar is free; to buy intelligently requires some knowledge of the art of rug making, its weaves and knots, borders, motifs, designs, and also its origins. Turkey has ten principal rug weaving regions.⁵⁷

Exchange 43: Can I buy a carpet with this much money?

Soldier:	Can I buy a carpet with this much money?	ehleemdekee paaraa eeleh haala saatin aalabeeleer meeyem?
Local:	No.	haayir

Transportation

Turkey has a well-developed network of air, rail, bus, ferry, and taxi facilities. By bus or coach is probably the most comfortable way to get around the country. The three leading intercity bus companies, Kamil Koc, Varan, and Ulusoy, are franchise operations and their fares are controlled by the state. They operate clean, modern buses with trained drivers and, on long hauls, make a 30-minute rest stop every four hours. The bus stations, *otogar*, are seldom located in the center of the city, but the bus companies often operate shuttle service from the city center to the bus station.

Exchange 44: Will the bus be here soon?

Soldier:	Will the bus be here soon?	otobUs yaakindaa gehlejaak meh?
Local:	Yes.	ehvet

⁵⁷ *Eyewitness Travel Guide: Turkey*. [p. 354–359.] 2003. New York: DK Publishers.

The *dolmus*, or minibus, easily recognizable by its beige and blue color, is inexpensive cheap and ideal for short trips. It follows a fixed route and, at commuter hours, is usually filled with passengers. The Greater Istanbul municipality operates a network of city buses (orange), tramways, and the Metro, or underground. Together these three transport systems connect all major points in metropolitan and suburban Istanbul.



Taxis are easily recognizable. They are yellow and can be found at taxi stands near major sites. They can also be flagged down on the street.

Exchange 45: Where can I get a cab?

Soldier:	Where can I get a cab?	taksee nehrehdehn boolabeeleerem?
Local:	Over there.	oraada

In major cities the taxis are metered, but some drivers will consent to accepting a fare off meter. This is best arranged before entering the cab.

Exchange 46: Can you take me there?

Soldier:	Can you take me there?	behnee oraya gøetUhrUrmUsUnUz?
Local:	Yes, I can.	ehvet, gøetUhrUrUm

Train travel on the state-owned railway system, *Turkiye Cumhuriyet Devlet Demiryollan* (TCDD), is not as fashionable as that of western European railways. However, it is clean, comfortable, inexpensive, and efficient. Train stations accept major credit cards in payment for long-distance travel.

Exchange 47: Is there a train station nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a train station nearby?	yaakindaa trehn eestaasyoono vaar ma?
Local:	No.	haayir

Ferry service in Turkey is operated by the government-owned Turkish Maritime Lines (TDI). The ships follow routes connecting the ports of Alanya, Brindisi (Italy), Cesme, Girne (Northern Cyprus), Istanbul, Izmir, and Venice. There are smaller catamaran connections to Rhodes, Trabazon, Bodrum, and small coastal islands.

Car rental is popular, although more expensive than other forms of transportation. Major international rental agencies are located in the large hotels in all major cities. The requirements for rental are: an international driving license, a valid passport with Turkish visa stamp, a major credit card, and a minimum age of 18. Renters should read the terms of the rental contract closely, since many policies do not cover broken windshields or car theft.

Exchange 48: Where can I rent a car?

Soldier:	Where can I rent a car?	nehredehn aaraba keeraalayabeeleerem?
Local:	Downtown.	sheheerdehn

Cars are rented with an empty tank and returned with an empty tank as well. Gas stations are plentiful along major transportation routes, but they are not self-service. It is customary, if filling the tank, to give a small tip to the station attendant who will also clean the car windows. Motels for long distance travelers can also be found next to the gas stations along major highways.

Exchange 49: Is there a gas station nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a gas station nearby?	yaakindaa behnzeen eestaasyon vaar ma?
Local:	Yes.	ehvet

Except in remote rural areas, cars in need of repair can be serviced at mechanic shops near the gas stations. Spare parts are sometimes difficult to obtain, but Turkish mechanics are renowned for their ability to repair just about anything. Most towns have an industrial area, *sanayi*, where the *oto sanayi*, or specialized auto repair shops, are located.



© Neil Anderson
Gas station in Istanbul

Exchange 50: Is there a good auto mechanic nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a good auto mechanic nearby?	yaakindaa yee beer aaraba taameerjeeseh vaar ma?
Local:	Yes.	ehvet

The Turkish national airline, Turk Hava Yollari, operates a regular service that connects Istanbul's Atatürk International Airport with 35 major airports throughout the country. Flights may be booked on the Internet, but tickets are cheaper if purchased after arriving in the country. The airport ground handling service, Havas, operates an airport shuttle from the Istanbul city center to the airport.⁵⁸

Exchange 51: Which road leads to the airport?

Soldier:	Which road leads to the airport?	haangeh yohl haavaalaanuhnah geedeeyor?
Local:	The road heading east.	dooyya geede hn yohl

⁵⁸ EnjoyTurkey.com, "Transportation: Turkey." December 2006.
<http://www.enjoyturkey.com/Transportation/Transportation.htm>

Street Vendors and Beggars

Turkey is basically a safe place to visit, but visitors should bear in mind that the country has undergone rapid social change in a short period of time. Urban centers bulge with people who have abandoned traditional ways of life.

Exchange 52: Please, buy something from me.

Local:	Please, buy something from me.	IUhtfehn, behndehn beershey aalun
Soldier:	Sorry, I have no money left.	koosrah baakmayin, heech paaraam kalmadah

Unemployment is high and there is a significant gap between rich and poor. Visitors can encounter street vendors apart from the traditional bazaars. Many are trying to make a honest living, but some operate scams. Beggars, mostly youths, can also be seen in many public places like train and bus stations. Some are drug addicts who have resorted to stealing.

Exchange 53: Give me money

Local:	Give me money	baana paaraa vehr
Soldier:	I don't have any.	heech paaraam yok

Visitors lacking knowledge of the culture and language do well to avoid beggars. Pickpockets also operate in the same crowded areas. In general, it is best not to wander off into lonely places or to engage in conversation with street vendors or beggars. Any harassment should be reported to a policeman.

Chapter 5 Rural Life

Land Distribution

Over half of the total land surface of Turkey has been developed for agricultural use.⁵⁹ Several waves of ownership redistribution plans since the emergence of the republic in 1923 have resulted in the large land holdings of the Ottoman Empire being divided up into small farms⁶⁰ involving individual or group owners.



© Kevin Buehler
Citrus grove in Turkey

Exchange 54: Do you own this land?

Soldier:	Do you own this land?	boo aaraazee seezeh mee ayyet?
Local:	Yes.	ehvet

Under Article 683 of the Turkish Civil Code, citizens are in fact guaranteed the right of private land ownership and the right to dispose of the land through inheritance or by sale.⁶¹ Land use studies have demonstrated that Turkish farms persistently fail to achieve high productivity because of failed land management policies, lack of irrigation, and insufficient fertilization.

Rural Economy

An estimated 36% of the total work force is employed in the rural agricultural sector working these small farms. Some grow cash crops, others, subsistence produce. The main products include tobacco, cotton, wheat, olives, sugar beets, pulses (peas, beans, and lentils), oil seeds, citrus fruits, and livestock.⁶² In 2007, these products represented 4% of Turkey's exports and amounted to 10.5% of the country's gross national product (GNP).^{63, 64} A small and tightly regulated agricultural market exists for the legal cultivation of the opium poppy.⁶⁵

Rural Transportation

⁵⁹ AllAboutTurkey. "Turkish Facts and Figures." 2008. <http://www.allaboutturkey.com/info.htm>

⁶⁰ One hectare = 10,000 square meters = 2.47 acre

⁶¹ International Federation of Surveyors. "Concept of Ownership in Land Arrangement Studies in Turkey." 2002. http://www.fig.net/pub/fig_2002/TS7-16/TS7_16_cagdas_demir_gur.pdf

⁶² AllAboutTurkey. "Turkish Facts and Figures." 2008. <http://www.allaboutturkey.com/info.htm>

⁶³ GNP is the total value of all final goods and services produced within a nation in a particular year.

⁶⁴ U.S. Department of State. "Background Note: Turkey. Economy." January 2008.

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3432.htm>

⁶⁵ International Relations and Security Network, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology. "Opium: Legal Solutions." 23 November 2007. <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/news/sw/details.cfm?id=18392>

Of the 426,906 km (256,143 mi) of highways and secondary roads linking rural Turkey to urban centers, only 177,550 km (106,530 mi) are paved.⁶⁶ These highways carry 92% of freight traveling to and from the country’s major sea and air cargo centers and 95% of all passenger traffic.⁶⁷ Only a small portion of the highway network consists of four-lane motorways. Roads are often crowded in suburban areas, and with maximum speeds of 90 km/hr (55 mi/hr) driving in rural areas can be tedious. Driving is on the right side of the road and is at all times hazardous. Gasoline and service/repair stations are strategically placed along major routes, and many service plazas also have dining and motel facilities. When leaving major roadways, gas and service stations are fewer and farther between.⁶⁸



© Kevin Buehler
Turkish town and rural roads

Exchange 55: Is there lodging nearby?

Soldier:	Is there lodging nearby?	yaakinda konaklama tehseese vaar ma?
Local:	Yes.	ehvet

Turks can be daring drivers, and passing on a curve seems not to faze them. Visitors who attempt to drive on country roads need to be vigilant at all times. Rural roads are especially dangerous, because there are unexpected potholes and there is often an absence of guide signs.

Exchange 56: May I use your phone?

Soldier:	May I use your phone?	tehlefonoonoozoo koolanaabeeleer meeyem?
Local:	Sure.	taabee

Health Issues

Health care in rural areas is marginal and not equal to the standard of urban areas. Government health care centers provide most first aid, basic maternity care, and preventative medicines.

Exchange 57: Is there a medical clinic nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a medical clinic nearby?	yaakinda beer kleenek vaar ma?
Local:	Yes, over there.	ehvet, orada vaar

Most of Turkey’s quality health care is centralized in the middle and upper middle-class districts of urban areas where physicians in private practice and private hospitals have

⁶⁶ The 2008 World Factbook. “Turkey Transportation.” 2008.

http://www.theodora.com/wfbcurent/turkey/turkey_transportation.html

⁶⁷ UNECE – United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. “Transportation Situation in Turkey in 2004.” <http://www.unece.org/trans/doc/transsitdocs/2004turkey.pdf>

⁶⁸ My Merhaba. “Traveling by Car.” No date. <http://www.mymerhaba.com/Traveling-by-Car-in-Turkey-75.html>

established their markets. Residents of rural areas can only obtain secondary and specialized care through hospitals in the principal cities.

Exchange 58: My arm is broken, can you help me?

Soldier:	My arm is broken, can you help me?	koloom kurildah, baana yaardim ehdebeeleer meeseenez?
Local:	Yes, I can help you.	ehvet, yaardim ehdehrem

In addition to tuberculosis, hepatitis A and B, and occasional outbreaks of typhoid fever, the Center for Disease Control advises travelers to Turkey’s rural, eastern districts of the possibility of malarial infection.⁶⁹

Schooling

Rural schools lag behind urban schools in several areas. Most commonly, they lack facilities such as libraries, instructional and information technology, and laboratories for science classes. In addition, two issues in particular characterize rural schooling in Turkey.

Exchange 59: Is there a school nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a school nearby?	yaakinda okool vaar ma?
Local:	Yes.	ehvet

The first is attendance. Children are required to attend school from the age of six through fourteen. For females, attendance tends to lag behind that of males from middle school onward. Secondly, the rural school curriculum is modified somewhat to include vocational and agricultural training. Nonetheless, the National Apprenticeship and Vocational Education Law, dating from 1983, permits formal vocational training only after the students are 15 years old.



© Mete Dönmez
Children in the village of Mardin

Exchange 60: Do your children go to school?

Soldier:	Do your children go to school?	chochooklaar okoolaa geedeeyor ma?
Local:	Yes.	ehvet

In spite of a high teacher-to-student ratio (1:30), literacy among rural youth is in excess of 95%.⁷⁰ Students pursuing education at the secondary level or higher usually have to commute to the nearest city.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Department of Health and Human Services. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. “Information for Travelers to Turkey.” 01 August 2007. <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/destinationTurkey.aspx>

⁷⁰ UNESCO Institute for Statistics. “Education in Turkey.” 2006. http://www.uis.unesco.org/profiles/EN/EDU/countryProfile_en.aspx?code=7920

⁷¹ The World Bank. Foreign Aid Office. Kuitunen, Hannu. “Qualitative Assessment of Rural Schools in Turkey.” 31 May 2004. http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTTURKEY/Resources/361616-1142415001082/Qualitative_Assessment_by_Kuitunen.pdf

Village Life

The basic unit of Turkish national governance is the village or *köy*, a designation applied to settlements with fewer than 2,000 inhabitants. Settlements with a population greater than 2,000 but less than 20,000 are referred to as *kasaba*. Rural lifestyles in the *köy* are markedly different from those of urban centers. In the remote countryside, lifestyles remain closely rooted to ancestral customs despite modernity and mechanization of fishing, herding of livestock, and farming.⁷² Women can be seen working in the fields picking cotton or tobacco, dressed in the traditional *salvar* (baggy trousers) and their colored headscarves. Men, also dressed in *salvar*, can be observed loading donkey carts or sitting with their friends in the *kahve* (café). There are few vehicles, and village notables can usually be identified by the vintage Mercedes parked in the driveway.

Exchange 61: Do you know this area very well?

Soldier:	Do you know this area very well?	boo jeevaareh ee beeleyor moosoonoz?
Local:	Yes.	ehvet

Rural dwellings are small and the furniture is basic. Large carpets cover the common living areas, and small benches around low, round tables—*meydan*—are used for meals. Folding mattresses, stored by day, are unfolded at night as an entire family sleeps under heavy quilted blankets in a communal room that is heated by a wood-fired stove, or *soba*.

Gender Issues

In urban areas, much came of Atatürk's emancipation of women. His far-reaching reforms failed, however, to reach into the hearts and minds of men in rural Turkey. For example, custom requires that wives by and large still defer unquestioningly to their husbands. Wives do all the domestic chores, and many women work in the fields as well. It is not uncommon to see a man riding a donkey while his wife walks alongside. Polygamy is still practiced in some remote areas. Men in rural areas often pay cash for young wives, and girls are still sold to families as servants. Because men enjoy greater social status, women are expected to bear male children. And if asked how many children a man has, he might not include daughters in his answer.⁷³



© Brian Harrington Spier
Turkish women picking cotton

Who's In Charge

Authority in the *köy* centers around the *muhtar*, or chief elder, who is chosen by an assembly of adult male inhabitants and functions much like a mayor in a Western setting.

Exchange 62: Can you take me to your mayor?

Soldier:	Can you take me to your mayor?	behnee muhtaara gøetUrUrmUsUnUz?
Local:	Yes.	ehvet

⁷² Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. *Country Studies: Turkey*. "Village Life." 1995. <http://countrystudies.us/turkey/44.htm>

⁷³ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. *Country Studies: Turkey*. "The Status of Women." 1995. <http://countrystudies.us/turkey/49.htm>

The assembly is also tasked with choosing the *ihitiyar meclisi*, or council of elders. Ideally, this council includes the village school teacher and the *imam*. Visitors to a rural region who encounter difficulties should request assistance of the *muhtar* since he is the most knowledgeable individual when it comes to civil affairs.



© Antonio Perez Rio
Men chatting in Bitlis village

Exchange 63: Does your mayor live here?

Soldier:	Does your mayor live here?	muhtaar boorada muh ootoorooyor?
Local:	Yes.	ehvet

The *muhtar* is responsible to district and provincial authorities, and presides over duties like tax collection and civil ceremonies.

Exchange 64: Respected mayor, we need your help / advice / opinion.

Soldier:	Respected mayor, we need your help / advice / opinion.	saayin muhtaar, yaardumunuza ehteeyajumuz vaar
Local:	Yes.	ehvet

He also frequently mediates in disputes between villagers, and is empowered to impose administrative fines for violation of village ordinances.

Exchange 65: Where is the nearest checkpoint?

Soldier:	Where is the nearest checkpoint?	ehn yaakun kontrol noktaaso nehredek?
Local:	It's two kilometers.	eekee keelomehtreh ætedeh

Checkpoints

Checkpoints serve several purposes in Turkey, not least of which is the protection of citizens. The *Jandarma* (gendarmes), or military police, who patrol rural areas, and *Emniyet Polisi* (security police) both carry out law enforcement duties and man checkpoints.

Exchange 66: Is this all the ID you have?

Soldier:	Is this all the ID you have?	keemlek behlgelehreeneez boo kadar ma?
Local:	Yes.	ehvet

It is obligatory to carry some form of identification in Turkey, e.g., a passport or driving license. Whether riding in public conveyances or in private vehicles, citizens and foreigners are often asked to produce some valid form of photo identification.

Exchange 67: Show us the car registration.

Soldier:	Show us the car registration.	arabaanun roosaatunuh gøestehren
Local:	OK.	pehkee

Some areas of Turkey, e.g., Siirt, Mardin, Hakkari, and Sirnak, have been under martial law, and vehicles traveling to or coming from these areas are likely to be searched. Searches are routine and the best way to expedite them is to be courteous and produce all documents requested.



© Andrea Giudiceandrea
Policemen in Hakkari

Exchange 68: Please get out of the car.

Soldier:	Please get out of the car.	IUhtfehn arabadaan eeneen
Local:	OK.	pehkee

Civilian and military authorities view checkpoints as a necessity because Turkey has been a transit point for drugs, weapons, and terrorists coming from and going to Central Asia. Likewise, there have been terrorist attacks in recent history.

Exchange 69: Are you carrying any guns?

Soldier:	Are you carrying any guns?	yaanunuzda seelaah vaar ma?
Local:	Yes.	ehvet

Land Mines

The Republic of Turkey is a signatory to the Mine Ban treaty of September 2003, and has indicated that it is prepared to comply with all provisions of the treaty process. It has also signaled its willingness to participate in the multinational project to clear the contaminated Soviet-era weapons depot in Azerbaijan.

Exchange 70: Is this area mined?

Soldier:	Is this area mined?	boo boehlgeh maayunluh ma?
Local:	Yes.	ehvet

In talks spanning 2004 and 2005, Turkey declared a stockpile of 297 million antipersonnel mines (APM) together with a note that approximately 920,000 APMs were emplaced in various eastern border regions. Turkey simultaneously declared that in 2004 and early 2005, 16,065 square m (172,922 square feet) had been cleared of land mines. In spite of progress on the Turkish side, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)⁷⁴ continues to use landmines in support of its cross-border insurgency tactics.

⁷⁴ PKK is an acronym for the People's Congress of Kurdistan.

Exchange 71: Did these people threaten you?

Soldier:	Did these people threaten you?	boo eensanlaar seezee tehdet mee ehteelehr?
Local:	No.	haayir

Probably as a result of PKK emplacements, there has been a noticeable increase in casualties resulting from mines or unexploded ordnance. Visitors to the country are not permitted access to the border regions.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Landmine Monitor. "Turkey." 2005. <http://www.icbl.org/lm/2005/turkey.html>

Chapter 6 Family

Typical Household

The family is the strongest social institution in Turkish culture. In the absence of state welfare schemes, ensures the survival of its members. There are two distinct variants: the extended and the nuclear family.



© Ekke Vasi
Family in Cappadocia

Exchange 72: How many people live in this house?

Soldier:	How many people live in this house?	boo ehvdeh kach keeshee yaashyor?
Local:	Ten.	ohn

The extended family generally includes three generations living together. Typically these are grandparents, adult sons and their wives, unmarried daughters, and the son's children. This model is characteristic of rural communities throughout the country.

Exchange 73: Does your family live here?

Soldier:	Does your family live here?	ayyelehnez booraada mutohyor?
Local:	Yes.	ehvet

The number of members in an extended family explains the physical size of rural homes, which frequently have ten or more rooms. Urban families, on the other hand, tend to be nuclear, with a husband and wife and their unmarried children.

Exchange 74: Did you grow up here?

Soldier:	Did you grow up here?	booraadamuh bUyUdUhnUz?
Local:	Yes.	ehvet

The size reduction in families reflects an adaption to life in more constrained urban circumstances, where food must be purchased rather than grown. About 70% of Turkish households are inhabited by nuclear families and less than 25% by extended family units.⁷⁶

Roles and Responsibilities

With the exception of upper middle-class and the very urbane families, family structure in Turkey is still dominated by patriarchy, i.e., the father or grandfather is regarded as the principal authority figure.

⁷⁶ EnjoyTurkey.com. "Life Style: Family." December 2006.
http://www.enjoyturkey.com/info/culture/Life_Style.htm

Exchange 75: Where do you work, sir?

Soldier:	Where do you work, sir?	nehredeh chalushuyorsoonoz?
Local:	I am a farmer, sir.	behn cheftcheyeem ehfehndem

Gender remains the single most important determinant of status and space allocation within the family. The house remains largely a woman's domain while the public sphere is a man's. Women are in charge of domestic affairs including cooking, cleaning, and laundry.

Exchange 76: Are you the only person in your family who has a job?

Soldier:	Are you the only person in your family who has a job?	ayyelehneezdehn beer tek seez mee chalushuyorsoonoz?
Local:	No.	haayir

Men are expected to support the family and maintain an honorable standing in the surrounding community. At home a husband has authority over his wife, sons, and unmarried females.⁷⁷

Exchange 77: Are you married?

Soldier:	Are you married?	ehvleemeeseenez?
Local:	No.	haayir

Males and Females in the Family

The manner in which men and women in a family interact is largely a reflection of the conflict between tradition and modernity. Yet, even among the most contemporary of urbanites, traditional patterns of interaction have prevailed.



© Ben Grozier
Grandmother, mother and son

Exchange 78: Do you have any brothers?

Soldier:	Do you have any brothers?	ehrkehk kaardeshlehreenez vaar ma?
Local:	Yes.	ehvet

In the foreground are values like family loyalty and the importance of fulfilling family obligations. In rural settings, parents and their married children remain close, often living in the same building. Friendships between men and women are uncommon, except perhaps among upper-class families.

Exchange 79: Is this your wife?

Soldier:	Is this your wife?	esheenez boo haanuhm ma?
Local:	Yes.	ehvet

⁷⁷ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. *Country Studies: Turkey*. "Gender Relations." 1995. <http://countrystudies.us/turkey/48.htm>

The factor that moderates relationships between men and women, married or unmarried, is honor, and in the case of unmarried females, virginity. Brothers and sisters in a family play together when they are children. Yet when they reach puberty they cease to spend time together. Male siblings tend to be protective of their female counterparts. Turkish society neither condones nor recognizes friendships between young unmarried couples. Dating in the western sense does not exist. The traditional roles assigned to the genders restrict social interaction to a greater extent than occurs in western families.⁷⁸

Exchange 80: Are these your children?

Soldier:	Are these your children?	boonlaar chochooklaaruanuaz ma?
Local:	Yes.	ehvet

Married Life

Procreation, not companionship, is the rationale behind married life in Turkey. A woman gains status in married life when she fulfills her prime duty: bearing sons. Throughout the life of a male child, the relationship between mother and son remains close.

Exchange 81: Is this your entire family?

Soldier:	Is this your entire family?	bUtUhn ayyeelehnezboo moo?
Local:	Yes.	ehvet

The father is present as a distant authority figure. The lack of emotional warmth between husband and wife in a marriage may be one reason for a woman’s strong attachment to her male offspring.

Birth is a demonstration of the continuity of the family, and at the same time, proof that a wife has fulfilled her husband’s expectations. At one time, only the birth of a male child provided assurance of the survival of a family. When a pregnancy is announced in the family, it is customary for the mother-in-law to give a golden bracelet to the expectant mother.



© Charles Roffey
New mother in Konya

Exchange 82: Are these people part of your family?

Soldier:	Are these people part of your family?	boo eensaanlaar seezeen ayyelehnezdehn mee?
Local:	No.	haayir

In rural areas, midwives frequently preside over births. In urban areas, maternity wards of general hospitals oversee delivery. Following the birth, the mother is expected to remain at home for 40 days. For working women, maternity leave is automatically guaranteed by

⁷⁸ Kinsey Institute. *The Continuum Complete International Encyclopedia of Sexuality*. Francoeur, Robert and Raymond Noonan, Ed. “Turkey [p. 13].” 2003. <http://kinseyinstitute.org/ccies/pdf/ccies-turkey.pdf>

labor laws. Three days after the birth, the mother can receive guests and their gifts. In rural areas, it is common for families to plant trees to honor the birth of a child. Chestnut, mulberry, and apple trees are planted for a female child, whereas poplar or pine trees are chosen for a male child.

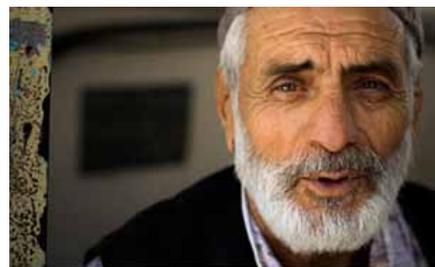
Divorce under equitable conditions was made legal and practical by the Civil Code of 1926. Either partner may initiate divorce proceedings, but is obligated to prove the shortcomings of the other partner. No divorce is recognized as being legal unless a decree has been issued by a judge in civil proceedings. Nonetheless, divorce remains uncommon and unpopular. Women frequently chose to remain married for the sake of the children. Likewise, the prospect of losing financial support makes divorce a less attractive alternative. Legislation to “democratize” divorce and to provide settlement of common property issues as well as financial support is before the Parliament. If approved and implemented, it may change the rates of divorce.⁷⁹

Family Celebrations

In addition to the joyous and solemn festivals that surround life cycle events, two family-oriented celebrations are worthy of mention. The first is the *sunnet*, or circumcision rituals, held during the summer months. Boys between the ages of 5 and 15 have this operation, which is usually held to the accompaniment of music, dance, exchange of presents, and festive meals. *Görücü* (the ones who see) is another ceremony that dates from Ottoman times and concerns only the females of the family. In this ceremony, older females from the family of a marriageable young man visit the home of a suitable young lady. They come to pass a final judgment on whether she would make a good wife for the young man. The young lady is asked to cook a pot of rice, which is served to the visiting ladies. The rice is then thrown in handfuls at an outer wall. If chunks stick on the wall, the girl loses her chances of marrying the would-be suitor, as good Turkish rice should never be sticky.⁸⁰

Status of the Elderly, Children, and Young Adults

Demographic statistics describe Turkey as a country with a very young population. Approximately 10% of the population is under the age of five and 32% is under the age of 15.⁸¹ Yet the numbers are deceptive because culture and tradition in Turkey outweigh descriptive statistics. The old dominate the young, who are expected to respect their elders. In extended rural families this means that offspring will not smoke, argue, or behave in a nonchalant way in front of senior family members. Each member of the family, including children, has a niche in the matrix of family support and is expected to contribute to the material betterment of the family. In urban, nuclear families, relationships have changed somewhat. A young



© Zeynep Kanra
An elder from Mardin

⁷⁹ Turkish Odyssey. “Part 3: People, Family.” 2004.

<http://www.turkishodyssey.com/turkey/culture/people.htm>

⁸⁰ *Culture Shock: Turkey*. Bayraktaroglu, Arin. 2000. Portland: Graphic Arts Center Publishing Company.

⁸¹ Marriage and Family Encyclopedia. “Turkey: Family Life and Structure.” 2008.

<http://family.jrank.org/pages/1718/Turkey-Family-Life-Structure.html>

wife no longer has a live-in mother-in-law to cope with and a young husband no longer has to yield to the day-to-day decisions of his father. One aspect of family relationships remains unaltered: the status of the elderly. Nursing homes that care for aging senior citizens do exist, but they are very unpopular. Families are expected to care for aging parents at home. To place an aging parent in a nursing home brings dishonor on the family.⁸²

Naming Conventions

Turkish surnames follow a patronymic pattern, i.e., a child takes the father's surname. All first names have a meaning, and children are sometimes assigned a name that suggests the time of birth, e.g., Bayram (feast), Safak (dawn), or Bahar (spring). Other children might be given a name related to events surrounding the birth, e.g., Yumur (torrential rain) or Tufan (storm). Still other names might suggest the parents' attitudes toward the birth, e.g., Yeter

(enough, no more children) or, in the case of a girl, Songul (last rose). In rural areas, it is also customary at the naming of a child for the *imam* or an elder person to hold the child in the direction of Mecca while reciting the child's name together with the opening verse of the Qur'an.⁸³



© Zeynep Kanra
Girl from Mardin

⁸² Marriage and Family Encyclopedia. "Turkey: Changes in Family Life." 2008.
<http://family.jrank.org/pages/1720/Turkey-Changes-in-Family-Life.html>

⁸³ EnjoyTurkey.com "Family: Naming a Child." 2006.
http://www.enjoyturkey.com/info/culture/Life_Style.htm