



## *Turkish Cultural Orientation*

*October 2014*

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*Morning fog in Istanbul*  
© John Walker

## Chapter 1: Profile

### Introduction

The Republic of Turkey emerged from the ruins of the Ottoman Empire in 1923.<sup>1</sup> Turkey has had an uneasy historical relationship with the Muslim world, yet over the course of the 20th century it has become an advanced, powerful, secular, and democratic Muslim state.<sup>2, 3</sup> Turkey is a founding member of NATO and the Turks are now seeking full membership in the European Union (EU). If Turkey is successful, it will be the first Muslim EU member state.<sup>4</sup>

From a geopolitical perspective, Turkey is part of Asia, Europe, the Middle East, the Mediterranean, and the Balkans.<sup>5</sup> Turkey is seeking an expanded role between East and West, while at the same time an elected Islamist government is trying to form a stable amalgam of traditional and modern values.<sup>6</sup>



*Street in the Old Quarter, Ankara*

© Joe Coyle

## Area

Turkey is slightly larger than the state of Texas, and straddles the continents of Asia and Europe. More than 95% of the country occupies the peninsula of Asia Minor, known as Anatolia. Thrace is the European part of Turkey and lies to the west of the Bosphorus Strait.<sup>7, 8</sup> Seas surround Turkey on three sides.<sup>9</sup> The Mediterranean lies to the south and the Black Sea lies to the north. The Aegean Sea forms the nation's western border. The nation shares land borders with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Iran, Iraq, and Syria.<sup>10</sup> The country is located in one of the most seismically active regions of the world, between the Arabian and Eurasian plates. Thus, the region is prone to earthquakes.<sup>11, 12</sup>

## Geographic Divisions

### *Aegean*

Turkey's Aegean occupies about 11% of the land area, and is one of the most beautiful in the country. The area lies along the Aegean Sea, on the nation's west coast, and sports a large number of harbors. About half of Turkey's best farmland is here, nestled in broad valleys such as the Plains of Troy. It is a region of tobacco, olives, citrus, and nut crops. The coastal plains have a mild climate. Summers can be hot, but winters are normally mild with occasional rainfall. Valleys run along the mountains. Population density along the coast is high.<sup>13, 14</sup>

### *Black Sea*

The Black Sea region, in northern Anatolia, covers 18% of Turkey's land area. The area lies along the jagged northern coast of Turkey, lined by mountain ranges that rise in the west to elevations of 1,525–1,800 m (5,003–5,905 ft) , and in the east to 3,000–4,000 m (9,842–13,123 ft). Rivers cut through the gorges of the coastal ranges. Inland access is limited to a few narrow valleys, leaving the region relatively isolated from the rest of the nation. The soil is good here, and Turks cultivate the lands along the fertile deltas. The mild and damp climate is perfect for farming.<sup>15, 16</sup>

### *Central Anatolia (Anatolian Plateau)*

The Central Anatolian region occupies about 19% of Turkey. It is a semiarid region that stretches from the Aegean, extending east, to the convergence of the Taurus and Pontus Mountain ranges. The capital of Ankara lies in this region. The highlands region ranges between 600 and 1,200 meters (1,968-3,937ft) in altitude. Two large basins dominate the landscape. The summer heat can be extreme, with little rainfall during the summer months. The Konya Ovasi, and the saline Lake Tuz, are the largest basins in the area. Frequent dust storms spread yellow powder across the plateau. Locusts can be a problem in the eastern section, in April and May. In the northwest and northeast, wooded areas cover the land.<sup>17, 18, 19</sup>

### *Eastern Anatolia*

Eastern Anatolia is the highest region of Turkey. It covers approximately 21% of Turkey's landmass. Here, the Pontus and Taurus ranges converge, to form a rugged and mostly barren landscape. The population density in this region is low, mainly because of the harsh climate and rugged mountains. Many of the peaks in these mountains are extinct volcanoes, with an average elevation of more than 3,000 m (9,843 ft). Mount Ararat is located in this region, and is the site where Noah's Ark supposedly landed.<sup>20</sup> At 5,166 m (16,949 ft), it is the highest point in Turkey. The northern highlands extend southward, reaching the mountain ranges in the south, which then descend toward the Mesopotamian plain in Iraq. Some fertile basins, such as the Mus Valley, lie at the base of the mountain ranges. The nation's largest lake is Lake Van. It is located in the Eastern Highlands, along with the headwaters of three major rivers: the Aras, which flows east into the Caspian Sea; the Euphrates, which flows south; and the Tigris, which flows south to join the Euphrates, before emptying into the Persian Gulf. Historically, the Eastern Highlands region is known as Kurdistan. This region contains only a few fertile valleys, but they support a wide-range of agricultural crops.<sup>21 , 22, 23, 24</sup>



### *Marmara*

The Marmara region takes up about 9% of the nation, and is located in the northwest corner of the country. This region straddles the European and Asian continents. It is home to the cultural capital of the nation, Istanbul, and most of the country's population. Most of the region is covered with low-lying mountains and plateaus. Many crops are grown here, including tobacco, wheat, rice, sunflowers, corn, and olives.<sup>25, 26</sup>

### *Mediterranean*

The Mediterranean region takes up 15% of the land area, and runs parallel to the Mediterranean Sea coast, along the western and central Taurus Mountains. The valleys between the sea and the mountains are very narrow, varying between 120 and 180 km (75-112 mi). The fertile plains, especially the Çukurova Plain, experience a warm climate. This makes the region ideal for farming. Reclaimed floodplains around the city of Adana make up the eastern section of the region. However, the summers can be hot, and droughts are a regular feature of life. Along the inland regions are the karst mountains, rising to elevations of up to 2,800 m (9,186 ft).<sup>27, 28, 29</sup>

### *Southeastern Anatolia*

Southeastern Anatolia is located along the borders with Iraq and Syria. Valleys and plateaus cover the area southeast of the Taurus Mountains, while the central portion is more mountainous. The eastern area is mostly flat, with rolling hills. Here, the summers are hot and dry, but the winters are normally cold and rainy.<sup>30</sup>

## Climate

**T**urkey is located in the temperate Mediterranean zone. However, variations in landscape cause significant differences in the nation's climate. The coastal regions of Turkey have a Mediterranean climate with cool, rainy winters, and hot, moderately dry summers. Mountains block the interior from mild Mediterranean influences. These mountains mostly parallel 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. Winters are uncomfortably cold, occasionally leaving outlying residents snowbound. Precipitation varies according to locale. Winters are rainy, but summers are relatively dry along the Aegean and Mediterranean coasts. The Black Sea coast is the only part of the nation to receive rainfall throughout the year, where 2,200 mm (87 in) of rain can fall. Fewer than 300 mm (12 in) of rain fall in the central plateau region and the mountains receive little rain at all.<sup>31, 32</sup>

Temperatures throughout Turkey also vary. Temperatures are moderate near Istanbul around the Sea of Marmara, averaging 4°C (39°F) in winter, and 27°C (81°F) in summer.

Temperatures are similar along the southern coast of Western Anatolia. Temperatures in the steppe regions of the Anatolian Plateau average -2°C (28°F) in the winter and 23°C (73°F) in the summer. Conversely, eastern Anatolia is much colder, and snow often covers the ground from November to April. Here the average winter temperature is -13°C (9°F), reaching just 17°C (63°F) in the summer. Summer temperatures in the southeastern Anatolian region can soar above 30°C (86°F), although the spring and fall temperatures are much milder.<sup>33</sup>



*Munsur River (upper Euphrates)*  
© Mariuripe / flickr.com

## Rivers

The headwaters of the Tigris and Euphrates, as well as several other rivers, are located in Turkey. The valley between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers was heavily irrigated in ancient times. This area is known as Mesopotamia, and is regarded as “the cradle of civilization.”<sup>34</sup> These two rivers have been the center of contemporary disputes, regarding regional water use. Countries located downriver object to any interference in water flow. Turkish water allocation and river damming policies have been, and continue to be, the focus of governmental disputes.<sup>35, 36, 37</sup>

The Euphrates is Asia’s longest river, at 2,800 km (1,740 mi).<sup>38</sup> The river flows through southeastern Turkey, and into Syria as it makes its way to Iraq. There it joins the Tigris River, before emptying into the Persian Gulf.<sup>39</sup> The Tigris is Asia’s second-longest river, at 1,900 km (1,180 mi).<sup>40, 41</sup> Much of its route cuts through remote mountainous terrain. As a result, the Tigris has been the last major river system in Turkey to be harnessed for use. Farmers use only the lower parts to meet their irrigation requirements.<sup>42</sup>

The east-flowing Aras River marks Turkey’s border with Armenia.<sup>43</sup> The Kizil River (Kizil Irmak) traverses central Turkey. Its 1,182-km (734-mi) horseshoe-shaped route makes it the longest river to flow wholly within Turkish borders. It empties into the Black Sea, immediately west of Samsun.<sup>44, 45</sup>





*Istanbul from Galata Tower*  
© Charles Roffey

## Major Cities

### *Istanbul*

Istanbul was founded around 657 B.C.E. It served as the capital city of many empires that ruled over the region. It first served as the capital of the ancient Byzantium kingdom. The city became known as Constantinople in 330 C.E., and served as the eastern capital of the Roman Empire. It was also the capital of the Turkish Ottoman Empire, until the Turkish republic was formed in 1923.<sup>46</sup> The city is no longer the nation's capital, but it is the country's largest city. It is also the nation's commercial

and cultural center, and is a major seaport. The Bosphorus Strait connects the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara, and bisects this city of more than 13 million inhabitants. This makes it the only city on two continents.<sup>47, 48, 49</sup> Tankers use the busy waterway to move oil, and ferries carry people from one side to the other.<sup>50</sup>

### *Ankara*

Ankara is located approximately 200 km (125 mi) south of the Black Sea. The city's exact age is unknown, but it was a major city around the end of the second century B.C.E.<sup>51</sup> Ankara developed as a trading center on the East-West caravan routes. Shipping had replaced land transportation by the 19th century, and the city declined in importance. It regained some of its former stature in 1923, when it became the capital of the Republic of Turkey.<sup>52</sup> The city's architecture reflects this heritage. The narrow, winding streets of its Old Quarter are built around the ruins of an ancient citadel. The new city grew up around the old, as commerce expanded. The republic's early planners were aware of the requirements of a capital city, and laid out the city's new administrative center in 1928. Thus, modern Ankara contains broad boulevards that are flanked by landscaped government office buildings and museums.<sup>53, 54</sup>



## *Izmir*

Izmir is a large port situated along the deeply indented Aegean Sea coast, at the head of the Gulf of Izmir. Izmir is historically known as Smyrna (the city). It is one of the oldest Mediterranean cities, and dates back at least 5,000 years. The city fell and was ruled by the Roman Empire. It was later occupied, during the Smyrniote Crusades, under the leadership of Pope Clement VI. A Mongol leader, Timur (aka Tamarlane), captured the city around 1425, before it became part of the Ottoman Empire. The city was burned in 1922, following a skirmish that caused the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>55, 56</sup> Izmir was rebuilt in

*Izmir*  
© Tarik Gandur

1923, the year after the founding of the Republic of Turkey. The rebuilding of Izmir featured modern features, broad boulevards, and modern buildings.<sup>57</sup> Izmir was the headquarters for NATO's Air Component Command in southeastern Europe, which was deactivated in 2013.<sup>58</sup>

## *Bursa*

Bursa is located 25 km (15.5 mi) from the Sea of Marmara. The city is nestled amid the northern foothills of the Uludag Mountains, and it is split into three regions by crosscut ravines.<sup>59</sup> Bursa was the first capital of the Ottoman Empire, and is home to numerous historical monument. This city occupies a special place in the hearts of the Turkish people.<sup>60, 61</sup> It is well-known for outstanding examples of early Ottoman architecture.<sup>62, 63</sup> Bursa used to be surrounded by forests, and was famous for its silk-weaving. However, the city has been transformed into the “Detroit of Turkey” because of urban sprawl, and the rise of the automobile industry.<sup>64</sup> Most residents of the area work in automobile factories, or in the textile industry.<sup>65</sup>



*Ottoman architecture*  
© V / flickr.com

## History

### *The Early Ottoman Empire*

The origins of the Ottoman Empire lie in the obscure reaches of western Anatolia, which is an inhospitable land. It was settled by the Oghuz Turks, who had created a farming community within the Seljuk kingdom. From this humble beginning, the Ottoman Turks established a small military state, sometime around 1300. This occurred when the Seljuk state was in decline, weakened by repeated attacks from Mongolian forces in the east. By 1400, the Ottomans had extended their influence over much of Anatolia, even as far as the Byzantine territories of European Macedonia and Bulgaria. In 1402, the Ottomans relocated their capital to Edirne on the European side, and set their sights on Constantinople, the crown jewel and capital of the Byzantine Empire.<sup>66, 67</sup>

The city represented an impediment to the westward spread of Islam. No matter how many surrounding territories converted to Islam, Constantinople remained predominantly Christian. Seizure of Constantinople by the

Ottomans would enable Islamic ascendance, and give the Ottomans control over East-West trade. Finally, Constantinople fell to the Ottomans in 1453, and they changed its name to Istanbul.

The Ottoman Empire was at its height in the mid-16th century. The empire encompassed southeast Europe (including the Balkan region and Hungary), North Africa (as far west as Morocco), the Crimea and Georgia, the Levant, Syria, Iraq, and much of the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>68, 69, 70</sup>





*Memorial at Gallipoli*  
© Simon Hooks

### *The Demise of the Ottoman Empire*

By the 19th century, Christian subjects of the multiethnic Ottoman Empire had developed ties with their European counterparts. These ties imparted an independent identity that threatened to destabilize the empire from within. At the same time, the European powers and Russia threatened it militarily. A reform movement coalesced around a group known as the Young Ottomans. They were inspired by republican (anti-monarchist) ideals. They viewed common language and culture as the basis of political identity. The Young Ottomans maneuvered to introduce constitutionalism in the 1880s.<sup>71</sup>

Succeeding the Young Ottomans was the group known as the Young Turks. This group formed under the leadership of Enver Pasha. The Young Turks launched an unsuccessful military coup in 1908, in the name of Turkish nationalism.<sup>72, 73, 74</sup>

When World War I broke out in 1914, the Ottoman leadership sided with Germany and Austria-Hungary. The Ottomans hoped that taking this position would allow them to regain territories lost in the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913.<sup>75</sup>

In 1915, the military commander, Mustafa Kemal, led the Turkish forces to victory over the Allies at Gallipoli. In the process, he won the confidence and admiration of many in the Ottoman armed forces. The war for Turkey ended with the signing of the Armistice of Mudros (30 October 1918).<sup>76</sup> Kemal organized a resistance to the advance of Allied forces into Turkish territory, once the war was lost. He skillfully played different powers against one another, after it was clear that Ottoman authority had crumbled, and he confine territorial demands to the lands held by the Ottomans at the end of the war. Kemal was an admirer of the Young Turks, and disassociated himself from the grander pan-Islamic ambitions of his Ottoman predecessors.<sup>77</sup> In 1923, Kemal signed and adhered to the Treaty of Lausanne, which guaranteed nonaggression against Turkey's neighbors, and afforded the time needed to establish a modern state, capable of self-defense.<sup>78</sup>



*Atatürk praying at opening of Parliament  
Courtesy of Wikipedia*

### *The Republic of Turkey*

The 1923 constitution, already drawn up in 1921, introduced the concept of separation of powers. Only the parliament had the power to legislate. No head of state yet existed, and parliament elected the judiciary. After the republic was formally founded in 1923, the office of president was created.<sup>79</sup>

This Western model of governance and administration was intended to move the republic away from Ottoman political and religious power. To this end, Kemal dismantled the religious

institutional framework of governance by abolishing the caliphate, and disbanding religious courts. He also made Ankara the capital.<sup>80, 81</sup> Kemal ruled for 15 years, and established the basis for a stable state. However, he did this largely by decree, acting as an enlightened dictator.<sup>82</sup> He alone formulated policies, dismissed those who disagreed with him, and ignored the constitution when it conflicted with his state-building agenda.<sup>83</sup> The Surname Law was introduced in 1934, after which Mustafa Kemal was given the surname Atatürk, meaning Father of the Turks. He took this name four years before his death.<sup>84</sup>

Atatürk's legacy is referred to as Kemalism, which is a strict adherence to secularism and the defense of Turkey's territorial integrity. Kemalism is 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. Since 1960, it has intervened four times, via coup, to remove elected governments, when it felt a civilian-led government had become ineffective, or when the government threatened to steer the country off course.<sup>85, 86, 87, 88</sup> Nonetheless, Turkey's desire to join the EU as a full member necessitated a reduced role for the military in politics, a policy that has been largely accepted.<sup>89</sup>



*Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan*  
© Serdar Kilic

### *Recent Events*

In 2002, the pro-Islamist Justice and Development Party (AKP) won a landslide victory in parliamentary elections, partly because of widespread dissatisfaction with the economy.<sup>90</sup>

The conflict between secularism and the rights of Islamists flared in 2008, when the AKP amended the constitution to lift the ban imposed by Atatürk on wearing headscarves. However, the amendment only changed the law for wearing headscarves on college campuses. To appease the secular military leadership, the AKP government decreed that only headscarves tied below the chin—a style Turks

view as more secular—would be permissible.<sup>91</sup>

Conflict between secularists and Islamists emerged, again, in 2010. At this time, prominent members of the military were arrested for plotting a coup to remove the AKP from office. The constitution was amended to allow parliament greater control over the judiciary and the military. Secularists called this a blatant attempt to undermine the secular foundations imposed by Atatürk.

Amid tense relations between the two groups, the AKP party was reelected for a third term in 2011.<sup>92, 93, 94</sup> The AKP government appointed new top military leaders, following mass resignations by military elite. This marked the first time a civilian government has named military commanders.<sup>95</sup> Turkey's future role in world politics, and its ability to resolve the secular-Islamist divide, remains unclear. However, both have far-reaching implications for the region and beyond.

Many in Turkey believe that the most significant national issue is a resolution of the Kurdish situation. Tensions between the government and the separatist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) have escalated. Following PKK attacks in October 2011, 24 soldiers were killed. In response, Turkish air force bombers and helicopter gunships carried out an incursion into northern Iraq, where most of the insurgents fled in 1999, after their leader was captured.<sup>96</sup> During this time, PKK separatists increased the intensity of their attacks in the southeastern parts of the country, where they have been waging a civil war in an effort to establish a sovereign nation.<sup>97</sup> To date, 45,000 have been killed in the conflict.<sup>98</sup> The Turkish government has thus sought aid from the international community to help resolve the unrest.<sup>99</sup>

### *2013-2014—Turkey and the Syrian Crisis*

The continuing crisis in Syria raises major concerns for the Turkish government. The escalation of fighting in Syria has driven close to one million Syrian refugees across the border, into Turkey. This has caused both a humanitarian and a security crisis.<sup>100</sup> Turkish protests against the influx of refugees are mounting.<sup>101, 102</sup> The Turkish prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, once supported the Syrians, but his position has changed. The prime minister has involved his nation more directly in the conflict, and is working to remove the Syrian president, Bashar al Assad.<sup>103</sup> The Turks have come close to direct military intervention, on several occasions. However, actions seem confined to gathering secret intelligence, and other covert operations.<sup>104</sup> A tape was allegedly leaked from a secret meeting in the Turkish foreign ministry. It suggests that Turkey may be on the verge of more direct intervention. Two-thousand truckloads of weapons and ammunition have been delivered to Syrian insurgents. The report also claims that plans are being laid to justify an attack on Syria.<sup>105</sup> Already the Turks have fired missiles into Syria, and downed a Syrian jet that invaded its airspace.<sup>106, 107</sup> The Turkish government has long been at odds with its own Kurdish population, and it fears that the situation in Syria could strengthen Kurdish positions in the region. The PKK has allegedly sent Kurdish troops to Syria to defend Kurdistan.<sup>108, 109</sup> In response, the Turkish government is constructing a wall along its southeastern border with Syria. This is an attempt by the Turkish government to stop smuggling, and illegal migrant crossings. It is also hoped that this will minimize the threat from al Qaeda fighters in Syria.<sup>110</sup>





*Workers' Party campaigning before parliamentary elections*  
© Travel Aficionado / flickr.com

## Government

Turkey is a republican parliamentary democracy.<sup>111, 112</sup> The president is the official head of state, and is directly elected to a 5-year term that may be renewed once. The president is charged with enacting parliamentary laws within 15 days of passage. Laws (except budgetary legislation) can be returned to parliament for reconsideration, at the president's discretion. If parliament passes the law again, the president must enact it or appeal to a Constitutional Court that has the right to overturn the law.<sup>113, 114</sup> The president appoints the Council of Ministers (cabinet),

and the prime minister who is the de facto head of the executive branch. The prime minister supervises the implementation of government policy, and serves on the National Security council.<sup>115</sup>

Political parties must win at least 10% of the vote in the general election to gain representation in either the parliament, or the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA). The unicameral legislature has 550 deputies, each elected to a 4-year term. Governmental power is shared by the president and the Council of Ministers, led by the prime minister. It is the prime minister, not the president, who administers the government. Both the prime minister and the Council of Ministers are responsible to parliament. The National Assembly also elects three of the 17 members of the Constitutional Court.<sup>116, 117</sup>

The constitution provides for an independent judiciary. The court system includes the Constitutional Court responsible for reviewing legislation, the Supreme Court of Appeals (Court of Cassation), a Council of State (high administrative and appeals court), a Court of Accounts, and a Military Court of Appeals. The judicial system is overseen and supervised by the High Council of Judges and Prosecutors, appointed by the president.<sup>118, 119</sup>



*Istanbul satellite and microwave reception*  
© Emi Jane

## Media

### *Print and Broadcast Media*

Turkey has several hundred private TV stations, and approximately 1,000 private radio stations. There is also a state broadcast station, and the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT). However, its media is rated as not free. Certain issues are considered highly sensitive, and journalists who cover such issues as the military, the Kurdish situation, or religion can be arrested.<sup>120, 121</sup> Broadcast stations commonly have their licenses suspended if they air sensitive material.<sup>122</sup>

Many of these sanctions on the media have been lifted, mainly due to Turkey's desire to join the EU.<sup>123</sup> However, since 2007 the government has continued to control journalists in virtually all areas of the media, using defamation laws and antiterrorism statutes. The exception is that reporters are able to criticize military generals, and write about the Kurdish minority. Approximately 500 journalists have been arrested since 2009.<sup>124</sup> Reports of journalists being attacked by the police, or imprisoned, prompted former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to express concerns about media freedom.<sup>125, 126</sup> In 2013, the large number of journalists still in official detention earned Turkey a reputation as "one of the world's biggest prisons for media personnel."<sup>127</sup>

A few conglomerates own most media in the country. These conglomerates are aligned with the military, the government, and religious groups. Most outlets have adopted a highly pro-government stance, thus media coverage in Turkey tends to be one-sided.<sup>128</sup> 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 any public acknowledgment of the Armenian Massacre of 1915.<sup>129</sup>

### Internet Control

More than 36 million Turks have internet access. Yet, the government has banned approximately 30,000 websites in the nation.<sup>130, 131</sup> In August 2011, measures to restrict internet use went into effect. Since then, users must choose between two filters.<sup>132, 133, 134</sup> Internet providers and hosting companies have been given a list of 138 banned keywords. Sites containing the banned words are supposed to be suspended.<sup>135</sup>

Until 2010, there was also a ban on YouTube. This ban was based on the pretense that the content insulted the nation's founder, Atatürk. The Supreme Court lifted the ban on YouTube in 2010. The court ruled that blocking it violated individual freedom. However, the site was again blocked in March 2014. Twitter was also blocked in 2014. The ban on Twitter was lifted in April 2014, following another ruling by Turkey's highest court.

## Economy

In 2011, the Republic of Turkey had the fastest-growing economy in Europe, and was one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. The country had a reported growth rate of 10.2%, in the first half of 2011.<sup>136, 137</sup> However, by early 2014, the country was floundering with inflation rates that were over 7%. Its currency dropped against other major currencies, and foreign investment and exports were also down.<sup>138</sup>

Turkey has traditionally relied on agriculture and industry. However, the country is currently diversifying its economy and growing its globalized services sector. Formerly, it was a closed, state-directed economy. In the 1980s, Turkey's economy began to open up. In 1995, it signed a customs union agreement with the EU. Yet in 2001, a banking and economic crisis developed, resulting in a steep downturn and high unemployment.<sup>139</sup> Unemployment has dropped in recent years, and it was holding at approximately 9% in April 2014.<sup>140</sup> Turkey's economy is projected to grow in the near term, at a growth rate between 2% and 3%.<sup>141</sup> Over the longer term, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth is expected to slow down to about 1% to 2%, through 2030.<sup>142</sup>

## Agriculture

According to 2013 estimates, the nation's agriculture sector employs 26% of the labor force, and accounts for 9% of GDP.<sup>143</sup> Nearly 40% of the land is arable, allowing for the production of a wide variety of food crops.<sup>144</sup> The main exports include hazelnuts, dried apricots, sultanas, and dried figs.<sup>145, 146, 147</sup> The chief commercial crops are tobacco and cotton.<sup>148, 149</sup>

Several initiatives have increased crop yields, including those related to irrigation projects and new farming methods. Turkey is one of the few nations in the world that is self-sufficient in food production.<sup>150</sup> Furthermore, the country is one of the largest exporters of agricultural products in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa.<sup>151</sup> Most Turkish farms are relatively small, about 5 hectares (12 acres), and are owned by the families that work them.<sup>152, 153, 154</sup>

Livestock is a profitable industry in Turkey.<sup>155</sup> Angora wool from goats (*Angora* is a variation of the spelling of *Ankara*) is a highly successful export commodity. Angora goats are raised south of the capital on the central plain.<sup>156</sup> The fishing industry is

modest, despite Turkey's extensive exposure to seas. Most fishing takes place in the Bosphorus Strait, following the fish migrations from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. Overfishing and pollution, in the Marmara Sea and Bosphorus Strait, threatens the industry. This has led to a sharp reduction in fish harvests.<sup>157, 158</sup> Aquaculture and fish farming is a young, but growing industry in Turkey. Rainbow trout, sea bream, and sea trout are the most widely raised species.<sup>159</sup>



*Turkish woman weaving a rug*  
© Dorche / flickr.com

## Industry and Manufacturing

This sector employs about 26% of the workforce and accounts for about 27% of GDP.<sup>160</sup> The textile and clothing industry represents about 25% of export sales, and annually yields more than USD 30 billion.<sup>161</sup> The Turkish automotive industry, and businesses associated with construction and electronics, is strong and growing.<sup>162</sup> Turkey is the 16th largest automobile manufacturer in the world, with plans to make it one of the top ten within a decade.<sup>163, 164</sup> Turkey is one of the leading manufacturers of home appliances in Europe.<sup>165, 166</sup>

Turkey has one of the fastest-growing iron and steel industries in the world.<sup>167, 168</sup> The mining

industry has a largely unrealized potential. The country has a variety of mineral deposits—including coal, iron ore, copper, chromium, antimony, mercury, and gold—but, industrial growth and development are relatively new.<sup>169, 170</sup> There are also oil deposits in the Sea of Marmara basin, but Turkey continues to import most of its gas and oil.<sup>171</sup>



## Service Sector

The service sector accounts for about 64% of GDP, and employs about 48% of the labor force.<sup>172</sup> Tourism and travel are important parts of this sector. This sector's contribution to the national GDP is growing even faster than the automotive industry, mining, and chemicals. Tourism is Turkey's second largest employer, and lags only behind the public sector. It accounts for 9% of all employment in the nation.<sup>173</sup> International travel to Turkey is on the rise, and the country is now the sixth most popular destination in the world.<sup>174</sup> Two important subsectors include Halal tourism, and medical tourism.<sup>175</sup> Turkey's vast historical sites, and coastal beaches, are a major draw.<sup>176, 177</sup> However, the fear of terrorism, and the ongoing violence in Syria, has produced volatility in the industry.

The financial services subsector is also strong and has continued to grow. It is a favorite choice for international investors, receiving a significant amount of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).<sup>178, 179</sup> Business and information technology are the other subsectors showing significant potential for growth and development.<sup>180</sup>

## Ethnic Groups

### *Turks*

Ethnic Turks make up 70–75% of the population.<sup>181</sup> Turks are not one homogenous group, rather, they are divided among three major subgroups. The Anatolian Turks historically occupied the Central Plateau region of the country. The Rumelian Turks are descended from the Ottoman Turks, and have their roots in the Balkan states. The Central Asian Turks have their historical roots in the Caucasus region, southern Russia, and Central Asia.<sup>182</sup>

Part of Atatürk's vision for the new nation was to create a unified state that was based partly on the minimization of ethnic, religious, and language differences.<sup>183</sup> 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 with the term, Eastern Turks (*dogulu*).<sup>184</sup>



*Kurdish family in Istanbul*  
© Charles Roffey

## Kurds

The Kurds are the largest non-Turk ethnic group in Turkey, representing 18% of the population.<sup>185</sup> The Kurds were originally from western Asia. Today, they live mostly in the east and southeastern regions of the country. Kurdish history dates to 3000 B.C.E., and the Kurds have long inhabited mountainous regions of Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria in an area they call Kurdistan.<sup>186, 187</sup> Kurdish society is based on tribes that are divided into clans, and ruled by a chief. Most Kurds are Sunni Muslims, but about a third belong to the Alevi group of Shi'a Islam.<sup>188</sup>

The Kurds have a long and tense relationship with their compatriots, and with the government. They have a strong sense of identity, and they continue to battle for a separate homeland.<sup>189</sup> Since the 1930s, the Kurds have resisted attempts at forced assimilation, and they continue to work for the right to practice and maintain their culture.<sup>190</sup> The Turkish government allowed ethnic Greek, Jewish, and Armenian citizens to retain their languages when it signed the peace treaty of Lausanne in 1923. However, extending those rights to others has been viewed as promoting separatism.<sup>191</sup> The Kurds finally received the right to speak Kurdish in public in 1991, but only in restricted circumstances.<sup>192</sup>

## Laz

The Laz are the second smallest ethnic group. Their native tongue (Lazuri) was non-written, until recently. Their homeland extends across the Turkish border, into Georgia.<sup>193</sup> The Laz were originally Christian, but they are now mainly Muslim. There are two main Laz groups in the country. One group lives mostly in the provinces of Rize and Artvin, which are located in the Black Sea region. The other group consists of descendants of immigrants who escaped the war between the Ottoman and Russian Empires. They live in the eastern and western regions of the Black Sea, and in the region of the Sea of Marmara. Most of the Laz have moved to the urban centers in western Turkey.<sup>194, 195</sup> The group is quickly rediscovering its ethnic roots, yet only about one-third of the Laz speak their native language (Lazuri). Interest in learning their language is growing. In 2013, the first Laz newspaper in Turkey was launched in an attempt to keep the language alive.<sup>196</sup>

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## Overview: Chapter 1 Assessment

1. The Ottoman Empire was the first Turkish state to rule over Anatolia.

**FALSE**

The Ottoman Turks established a small military state, sometime around 1300. This occurred when the Seljuk state was in decline, weakened by repeated attacks from Mongolian forces in the east.

2. The founder of the modern Turkish republic, Mustafa Kemal, was called Father of the Turks.

**TRUE**

Mustafa Kemal, the first president of Turkey. The Surname Law was introduced in 1934, after which Mustafa Kemal was given the surname Atatürk, meaning Father of the Turks. He took this name four years before his death.

3. The Turkish Constitution is based on the Quran.

**FALSE**

Turkey's successive constitutions clearly define the government as secular. Even when an Islamist party won recent parliamentary elections, party leaders had to swear allegiance to the secular nature of the country.

4. The Kurds are the largest non-Turk ethnic group in Turkey.

**TRUE**

The Kurds are the largest non-Turk ethnic group in Turkey, representing 18% of the population. The Kurds received the right to speak Kurdish in public in 1991, but only in restricted circumstances.

5. The Turkish economy remains dependent on agriculture.

**FALSE**

Although Turkey is one of the largest exporters of agricultural products in the region, its economy has been diversifying and growing, driven by strong private and international investment in construction, retail trade, transportation, and communications.





*Hagia Sofia, Istanbul*  
© Tim O'Brien

## Chapter 2: Religion

### Introduction

Nearly all Turks (99.8%) are Muslim. Most (85-90%) are Sunni, and a minority is Shi'ite (10-15%). Shi'ites are concentrated mainly in the areas of Kars and Iğdir.<sup>1,2</sup> The remaining Turks are Greek and Armenian Orthodox Christians, Bektashi Sufi mystics, Mevlevi Sufi Dervishes, and Jews.<sup>3,4</sup>

Turkey is a secular state. Religious groups do not have full legal status, including Sunnis.<sup>5</sup> The government tightly controls Islam, and has done so since the republic's founder imposed secular rule in the 1920s. After the Ottoman Empire fell at the end of World War I, President Mustafa Kemal (later given the honorific title Atatürk) enacted policies aimed at rooting out Islamic cultural influences, while creating a new state.<sup>6,7</sup>

Atatürk said, "Religion is like a heavy blanket that keeps the people of Turkey asleep." Thus, the societal changes implemented under Atatürk's leadership included taking



control of the country's 70,000 mosques, restricting the building of new mosques, allowing clerics to teach only secular ideology, and placing religious instruction under the control of the Turkish Ministry of Education. The 1924 Unity of Education Law abolished traditional religious schools, and replaced them with government-run institutions for training scholars and experts on religious subjects.<sup>8</sup> Atatürk also outlawed traditional Islamic dress in public buildings, and supported the use of the Turkish language, rather than Arabic, during religious devotion.<sup>9, 10</sup> This included substituting the Turkish word Tanrı, for the Arabic word Allah, which means God.<sup>11</sup>

Turks who have challenged these secular policies, or who have openly advocated for allowing Islam to play a broader role in public life, have been jailed or otherwise dealt with harshly. In 1998, a military court sentenced the mayor of Istanbul, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, to 10 months of detention for reciting an Islamic poem at a political rally.<sup>12</sup>

The government has implemented reforms, in recent years. These reforms are meant to ease religious restrictions, especially those related to dress codes and property rights. Constitutionally mandated religious instruction in public schools has been expanded to include all religions, including atheism. The headscarf ban was lifted in 2013, except for those occupations that require a specific uniform. Wearing religious garb in public is still illegal for all, except the leaders of religious groups. However, the practice is tolerated by the police. Headscarves are still prohibited in civic spaces and government buildings.<sup>13, 14</sup>



Girls praying at Suleymaniye Mosque  
© Fiona / flickr.com

## Major Religions

### Islam

All Muslims are obliged to follow the Five Pillars of Islam, which capture the essential beliefs and rites of the religion. These include the declaration of faith (*shahada*), “There is no god but God and Muhammad is the messenger of God”; five daily ritual prayers (*salat*); fasting during the holy month of Ramadan (*sawm*); making a pilgrimage to Mecca if financially and physically able (*hajj*); and the giving of alms (*zakat*).<sup>15, 16</sup> Islam is a monotheistic religion and Muslims believe in one God. The Muslim community, or *umma*, uses the Arabic term for God, Allah. The Arabic word *Islam* means submission or surrender. Therefore, a Muslim is one who submits, or surrenders, to Allah.<sup>17</sup> Muslims believe that Muhammad is the last prophet, in a long line of prophets, which includes Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. Islam is founded on the conviction that Allah’s message was relayed to Muhammad, via the Angel Gabriel, and that God’s message is delivered to humanity in the Quran, the sacred text of Islam. Additional doctrinal guides include the *Hadith*, a collection of the words, sayings, and deeds of Muhammad; and the *Sunna*, which describes the practices of

Islam, by way of Muhammad’s example.<sup>18</sup>

### Care and Treatment of the Quran

The Quran is Islam’s holy book. It is regarded as sacred and it should be treated with respect. The Quran should not be touched with dirty hands, and it should be kept off the floor and out of latrines. The Quran should be held above one’s lap, or waist, when sitting on the floor. The Quran should also be protected with a dustcover, when not in use. Nothing should be placed on top of the Quran. Muslims often keep the Quran on the highest shelf of a bookcase.<sup>19</sup> Old or damaged copies can be properly disposed of in one of two ways: burning or burying. Burning is acceptable, if the process is conducted with respect. Texts should not be burned with trash or other items. Old or damaged

Qurans can also be buried, if they are wrapped in something clean and buried where people do not walk.<sup>20, 21</sup>

### *Sufism*

The development of Islam in Turkey is intertwined with the mystical branch of Islam known as Sufism. Most Sufis are organized into orders (or brotherhoods), and follow a particular Sufi master. Two of the largest Sufi orders in Turkey are the Naksibend and Kadiri groups, which originated in the 14th century. Folk Islam is practiced in many parts of Turkey. It derives many of its practices from Sufism. This brand of Islam allows for the veneration of saints, a practice popular throughout Turkey. The veneration of saints has been widely discouraged by the government, yet it continues to be an important tradition in the lives of many Turks.<sup>22</sup>

### *The Alevi*

The Alevi are a subset of Shi'ites. They are the largest religious minority in the country.<sup>23</sup> Approximately 70% of Turkish Shi'ites are Alevi, including about one-third of Turkish Kurds.<sup>24, 25</sup> Significant differences exist between the Alevi and their Sunni counterparts. For example, the Alevi have a more liberal attitude toward women, and they allow men and women to worship together.<sup>26, 27</sup> The Alevi also do not pray five times a day, they do not face Mecca when they pray, they rarely fast during Ramadan, and they do not prohibit alcohol.<sup>28</sup> They thus have been viewed as heretics for many years, resulting in their persecution. The Alevi have also been killed during uprisings.<sup>29, 30, 31</sup> Debate often focuses on the Alevi, and their place in contemporary Turkish society. Tensions between the majority Sunni and the Alevi continue to grow.<sup>32, 33, 34, 35</sup>

## Religion in Government

Turkey is a secular state, with freedom of religion that is guaranteed by the constitution. Religious rights are generally respected by the government, although some restrictions have been placed on Muslims and other groups.<sup>36</sup> Religious clothing, including the headscarf, cannot be worn in state-run institutions, government buildings, and public schools.<sup>37</sup> In 2010, the pro-Islamist Justice and Development Party (AKP) changed the law to allow women to wear headscarves at public universities. The headscarf ban was lifted in 2013 for all women. An exception to this occurs when a woman's occupation requires a specific uniform.<sup>38, 39</sup>

The government took control of Turkey's religious instruction, beginning with the 1924 Unity of Education Law.<sup>40</sup> Under this law, religious teaching in public schools was stopped in the early years of the republic (1927–1949). In 1949, the government began to permit the teaching of religious courses outside regular hours of instruction. A course on religion became constitutionally mandated for public secondary schools, following the 1980 military coup. Today, religious instruction is mandatory in all Turkish schools.<sup>41, 42</sup> Turkish students, in fourth grade through high school, receive government approved religious instruction.<sup>43, 44, 45</sup>

The Turkish government also supervises Muslim religious facilities, including religious schools that offer extracurricular Quranic courses. The Directorate of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet*) is responsible for regulating registered mosques. Local imams (religious leaders) are government employees, and hold the status of civil servant.<sup>46</sup>

Only civil marriages are recognized in Turkey, and religious marriages have no legal standing.<sup>47</sup> For a marriage to be legal in Turkey, a civil authority must officiate and register the wedding. A religious wedding cannot take place until after the civil ceremony has been finalized and registered with the government. A religious marriage ceremony cannot be registered, and is not recognized by the state. The parties involved are also subject to penalties.<sup>48, 49, 50</sup>

Both courts, as well as civil and criminal law, are secular. Islamic law is not recognized in any legal venue.<sup>51, 52</sup>





*Men performing their ablutions before prayer*  
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## Religion in Daily Life

Extremism is rare among the Turks, who are moderate in religious matters. When surveyed about the importance of religion in daily life, 67% of Turks responded that religion was very important to them.<sup>53</sup> Moderate views of religion abound, and it is viewed as a spiritual guide to ethical living.<sup>54</sup> Islam thus has an impact on daily life. It shapes beliefs about behavior and the organization of societal institutions. Despite the avowed secularism of the Turkish state, certain religious features are evident in the structure and fabric of daily life.<sup>55, 56, 57</sup>

The most obvious aspects of Islam in everyday life are found in the five pillars of the faith. Devout Muslims pray five times a day, and the call to prayer can be heard throughout Turkish cities and towns. Only about 27% of Turkish Muslims pray five times a day.<sup>58</sup> On the other hand, approximately 44% say that they attend mosque at least once a week, and 23% said they never attend mosque. Women are far more likely to say they never attend mosque (37%) than men (8%).<sup>59</sup> In addition, 27% of Turkish Muslims say they have never read the Quran, while only 9% say they read it every day.<sup>60</sup> Another impact of religion on daily life is whether a woman chooses to wear a headscarf.<sup>61, 62</sup> Restrictions on what the media may print or broadcast are also partly determined by politically sensitive issues surrounding Islam.<sup>63</sup>

## Religion and Gender

Turkish women were supposed to be emancipated with the establishment of the secular Turkish state in 1923. Polygamy was abolished, and a new family structure was implemented under the 1926 Turkish civil code. Women were given equal inheritance rights, access to education, and guaranteed equal rights under the constitution.<sup>64</sup>

Turks generally hold egalitarian views of men and women, nevertheless, conservative values surrounding gender relations are prevalent. Traditional family values support the view that a woman's main responsibility is to her home and family. However, a woman who attempts to achieve parity in her marriage often meets resistance from her husband. There is no official segregation in Turkish society, yet many spaces are gender specific. Furthermore, friendships between unrelated males and females are often met with social disapproval. Social interactions between unmarried men and women are often discouraged, unless there is a marriage in the offing.<sup>65, 66, 67</sup>



*Breaking the fast for Ramadan*  
© Everett Harper

## Religious Holidays and Celebrations

**R**amazān (Ramadan) occurs in the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. Turks get 2.5 days of holiday leave to celebrate.<sup>68</sup>

People fast from sunrise to sunset. Out of politeness, non-Muslims should refrain from eating and drinking in public during this time. But it is acceptable for non-Muslims to eat and drink in restaurants, cafes, or other private places.<sup>69, 70</sup>

The 3-day festival in Turkey that signals the end of Ramazan is Şeker Bayramı, or the Sugar (Candy) Festival. Known as *Eid al-Fitr* in Arabic, it is a holiday that brings the exchange of greeting cards, presents, and pastries. It is also a state holiday, thus government offices close for 3 days.<sup>71, 72</sup>

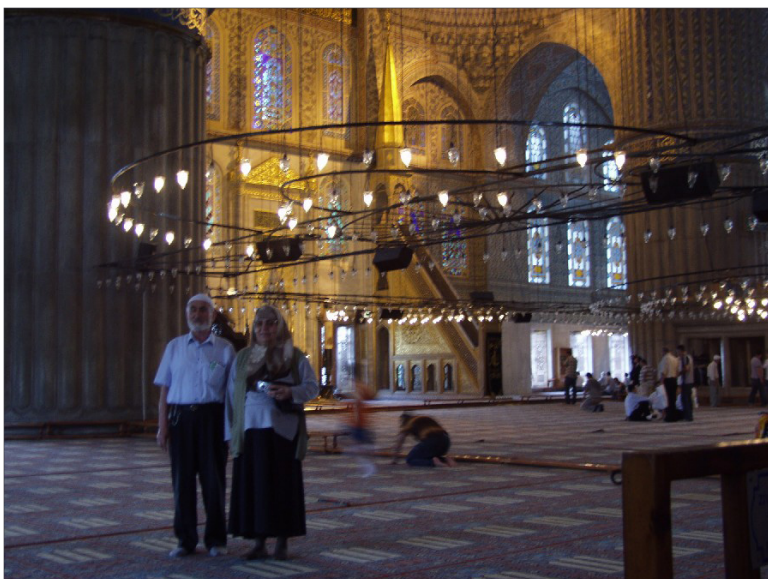
*Kurban Bayramı* is another major holiday. It is known as *Eid al-Adha* in the Arab world. This 4-day celebration commemorates the biblical and Quranic accounts of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son. *Kurban Bayramı* takes place about 70 days after Şeker Bayramı. It is a high holiday for Muslims, and special congregational prayers are often held outdoors, or in large arenas.

In the past, it was common to sacrifice a lamb, and then share it with others. However, Turks are now more likely to make a charitable donation. People wear their best clothes during this holiday period, and family visits are common.<sup>73</sup> Government offices and many businesses close.<sup>74</sup>

Turks also celebrate *Mevlid Serif*, which commemorates the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad. *Mevlid Serif* is not an officially recognized Islamic holiday, nor is it a government holiday. However, Sunni Muslims often gather to pray and share festive meals on the 12th day of the Islamic month of *Rabi al-Awal* to commemorate this date.<sup>75</sup>

76





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

## Buildings of Worship

The mosque is the house of worship for Turkey's Muslims. The architectural features of the nation's oldest mosques resemble the square and rectangular Catholic churches in Rome. Over time, this design gave way to circular mosques with domes. The Ottomans added even more innovations, including a social and religious section around the mosque. Such structures often contained schools, libraries, and even hospitals. The Ottomans also introduced the half-dome architectural style.<sup>77</sup>

All mosques contain a *mihrab*, which is the niche indicating the direction of Mecca. It is found in the front of the prayer hall, in every mosque. To the right of this niche is the *minbar*, an elevated pulpit from which the imam delivers sermons.<sup>78, 79</sup> Mosques in Turkey are often situated along a northwest-southeast axis, because Muslims pray in the direction of Mecca during congregational prayers.<sup>80, 81</sup>

Some of the world's most beautiful Islamic architecture is found in Turkey. Mimar Sinan (1489–1588) was one of the most renowned Ottoman architects, and was responsible for the construction of many mosques and buildings. Mimar Sinan was the personal architect to Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent. He completed more than 255 projects, including the Süleymaniye Mosque in Istanbul and the Selimiye in Edirne.<sup>82</sup>

Alevi Muslims do not worship in mosques. Rather, their house of worship is called a *cemevi*. This structure is often circular and contains pillars. It is large enough to accommodate the dances of Alevi worshippers. Sometimes the *cemevi* is the central feature of a large complex called a *vakfi* or *dergah*, which houses libraries, schools, and cemeteries.<sup>83</sup>

## Behavior in Buildings of Worship

### Mosques

The country's famous mosques are both tourist attractions, and places of worship. Visitors who conduct themselves with decorum will be welcomed, although some mosques may not allow non-Muslim visitors.<sup>84</sup> It is always best to ask.

#### Exchange 1: May I enter the mosque?

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

Mosques may not be visited during congregational prayers, unless there is a visitors' area.<sup>85, 86</sup> Prayers occur 5 times a day, most prominently at noon and mid-afternoon. There are general rules for visiting a mosque, and these must be followed.

#### Exchange 2: When do you pray?

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

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 Quran, nor should they climb the *minbar* (elevated pulpit), or step into the *mihrab* (niche indicating the direction of Mecca).<sup>87, 88</sup>

#### 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. Women should wear full-length dresses or skirts, and must wear a headscarf when entering the mosque. It is acceptable to wear short sleeves, but short pants are forbidden. In the larger and more popular mosques, attendants may provide robes for women to wear.<sup>89, 90</sup>

#### Exchange 4: Do I need to cover my head?

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





Fresco at Nevşehir Monastery  
© ayca / flickr.com

It is important to be aware of people praying in a mosque—and Muslims may be praying at any time. Walking in front of someone who is praying invalidates the prayer, and causes grave offense.<sup>91, 92</sup>

### Cemevis

In general, rules for visiting a *cemevi* are more relaxed than the rules for visiting a mosque. Some Alevi prefer that women cover their heads, and that both men and women cover bare arms. However, no stringent prescription mandating such attire exists. People may dress in whatever fashion they wish when visiting a *cemevi*. Visitors must sit in a circle once inside the building, although they cannot extend their legs. Special exemptions to sit in chairs may be granted for the ill, or for persons with special needs.<sup>93</sup> It is best to be conservative and respectful when visiting, and to inquire about any rules for a particular house of worship.

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## Overview: Chapter 2 Assessment

1. The majority of Turks are Muslims.

**TRUE**

Islam is the religion of nearly the entire population. Most Turks are Sunni, but there is a significant number of Shi'ites. Some 70% of Muslims belong to the Alevi sect.

2. There is no government official overseeing religious affairs, because of the secular nature of the Turkish government.

**FALSE**

The Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) is a government official who regulates registered mosques.

3. The legal system of Turkey follows Islamic legal codes.

**FALSE**

The courts, as well as civil and criminal law, are secular.

4. Only civil marriages are legally recognized in Turkey.

**TRUE**

Marriages in Turkey must be performed by authorized officers and then registered with the government to be legal. Religious weddings cannot take place until after a civil ceremony has been finalized.

5. Freedom of religion is guaranteed by the Turkish Constitution, yet the government tightly controls the type of Islam practiced in the country.

**TRUE**

The Turkish Constitution guarantees freedom of religion, but the government controls religious instruction and supervises Muslim religious facilities.





*Turkish family*  
© Gene Bonventre

## Chapter 3: Traditions

### Introduction

Several significant dimensions provide a general picture of a culture. One dimension is the power distance. Turks score relatively high on this, suggesting that they are relatively dependent and hierarchical, and expect power within society to be unequally distributed. Turks also score high on the “collectivism” dimension, thus demonstrating a high degree of interdependence. This is reflected in the tendency to place the needs of the group above one’s individual needs.<sup>1</sup>

The concept of honor is also significant in the life of many Turks. Like many other places in this region, a family’s honor is deeply intertwined with their female family member’s





*A friendly greeting*  
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sexuality. The concept of female sexuality extends to include modesty in dress, and the maintenance of gender roles. The traditional role of men is to ensure the family's honor is upheld in the community. Thus, a man will act to ensure that no one in the community does or says something disrespectful to the women in his family. To achieve this, a man will insist that the women in his family not act in a way that would provide others an opportunity to make claims against them. In a 2005 study, the definition of honor was expanded to include such attributes as honesty, pride, integrity, self-respect, and fairness.<sup>2</sup>

The concept of honor in Turkish society is powerful, and it often leads to consequences as severe as honor killings. Depending on the economic circumstances of the perpetrator, other solutions may be implemented, such as financial settlements.<sup>3</sup> Both males and females have been the victims of honor killings in Turkey. Recent legislation stipulates stiffer penalties for such crimes, yet they still occur.<sup>4, 5, 6, 7</sup>

Turks are a patriotic people, with a deep respect for their national flag. They do not display their flag on T-shirts, shorts, or items such as luggage and ashtrays. To do so, would be a sign of disrespect. Along with patriotism, Turks exhibit generosity. They commonly invite visitors to join them in a meal, no matter how common or meager the food. Many visitors are put off by what they perceive as undue staring, but Turks like to look at people.<sup>8</sup> Above all, Turks are a gregarious people, who love to gather with friends for celebrations, or to enjoy life.<sup>9</sup>

## Greetings

It is customary to shake hands, and say *merhaba* (hello), when greeting strangers for the first time. People usually begin by saying *nasilsiniz* (How are you?), when greeting friends or acquaintances. Friends often inquire about family, friends, or health.<sup>10, 11</sup>

### **Exchange 5: Good morning.**

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

### **Exchange 6: Good afternoon.**

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

Turks may greet friends of the same sex with a kiss on both cheeks. In recent years, men have begun to touch their temples together, instead of kissing cheeks.<sup>12, 13</sup> Males should not offer to shake hands with a woman, unless she extends her hand first.<sup>14</sup> Out of respect, younger people will kiss an elder's right hand, and touch it to his or her forehead.<sup>15</sup>

### Exchange 7: How are you?

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

When entering an office or reception room, it is customary to say *günaydin* (good morning), or *merhaba* (hello). It is standard practice to greet the person nearest to you, and then move from right to left around the room, offering a brief greeting.<sup>16</sup>

### Exchange 8: Good evening!

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

When parting company, people wish each other *Allahaismarladik* (God's blessings), to which the usual response is *güle güle* (goodbye/go with a smile).<sup>17</sup> Other common leave-taking expressions include *hoscaka* (stay well), *gorusuruz* ("see you later"), *kendine iyi bak* (take care), and even bye-bye.<sup>18</sup>

### Exchange 9: Good night!

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



*Friendly smiles*  
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## Titles

When addressing a man, the title *Bey* is added after his first name: for example, Attila Bey. In similar fashion, the title *Hanim* is added in polite address to a woman's first name: Miriam Hanim.<sup>19, 20, 21</sup> For a man older than oneself, the title *Aabey* (*Abi*) is commonly used. For a woman who is older than the speaker, the proper title is *Abla*. Both titles are added after the other's first name--Ahmet *Aabey* and Fatma *Abla*. Professional titles are also use, such as doctor, manager, or boss.<sup>22, 23, 24</sup>

### 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

## Eye Contact and Personal Space

Turks appreciate direct eye contact, and regard it as a sign of sincerity in communication. Some women, especially those who are more devout, may avoid making direct eye contact with men.<sup>25, 26</sup> Turks generally require less personal space than is common in the United States. Turks often stand very close to one another. When speaking, it is appropriate to leave about an arm's length between speakers. For friends and family, the distance is generally less. Take care not to back away from a Turk who is standing close to you, as this is likely to be seen as unfriendly.<sup>27, 28</sup> Many Turks like to touch each other while carrying on a conversation. Men often hold hands with each other, as do women, who may also put their arms around each other's waists while walking. However, such contact between men and women is likely to be seen as inappropriate. In most cases, it is also inappropriate to touch another person's leg, because this is regarded as a sexual overture.<sup>29</sup>

## Male-Female Relationships

Women are guaranteed equal rights with men under the law. However, tension between traditional and modern values underlies most interactions.<sup>30, 31</sup> Male and female relationships, in most urban families, 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 breadwinner, while women, especially mothers, are responsible for the house, the meals, the cleaning, and the laundry.<sup>32, 33, 34</sup>

Women in urban areas compete successfully with men for employment in the public and private sectors. Yet, the trend for women to seek equality in public and private life falters in the domestic sphere. Males direct family affairs, inside and outside the home. Male offspring are expected to follow the example of their fathers, while females are expected to emulate their mothers.

Furthermore, a family's honor is challenged if there is even the slightest perception that a woman has lost, or is in danger of losing her virtue (virginity). Thus, marriages are frequently arranged, and dating in the Western sense is not permitted.<sup>35, 36, 37</sup> All of this means that females have distinctly less social mobility than males, especially if they are unmarried.

Urban women have much more latitude in their lives, and they are less constrained by the patriarchal attitudes that prevail in rural areas. Rural women are much more likely to wear the headscarf, and to dress in loose, shapeless, brown robes. Men and women in rural areas are often more segregated, than are their urban counterparts. Men frequent teahouses, and women stay at home. Men and women are likely to sit separately in some rural households, particularly when guests are present. Similar behavior may occur in shared taxis, where a woman's modesty must be protected.<sup>38</sup>



## Hospitality and Gift-Giving

**T**urks have a tradition of paying visits. A visitor to Turkey is likely to receive invitations to visit, and dine, quickly becoming engulfed in the tradition. In cities, it is customary to announce a visit, days in advance. This formality disappears in rural areas, and guests drop in at any time.<sup>39</sup> At a minimum, a guest can expect something to eat and drink, be it as simple as tea and cookies.<sup>40</sup>

### **Exchange 11: I really appreciate your hospitality.**

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

Refusing hospitality is an offense. Guests are expected to be pleasant on all social occasions. This includes making polite conversation, and avoiding subjects related to personal problems, sex, religion, and politics.<sup>41</sup> Punctuality is an indispensable aspect of courtesy.<sup>42</sup> It is customary to remove your shoes at the door, before you enter a Turkish home. Many Turks have slippers available for guests. Avoid asking the host personal questions.<sup>43</sup>

### **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 baklava (or other pastry), fruit, flowers, a small plant holder, or a vase. It is not appropriate to bring wine or spirits as house gifts, even though some Turks drink alcoholic beverages. Be aware that Turks usually do not open a gift in front of the person who brought it.<sup>44, 45</sup>

### **Exchange 13: This gift is for you.**

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

## Eating Habits and Types of Food

### *Eating Customs*

**B**reakfast begins around 7 a.m. in cities, and just after sunrise for rural inhabitants. Lunch is eaten around noon, and dinner between 7–8 p.m. Turks generally use knives and forks, although some food is eaten with the hands. As a rule, the knife remains in the right hand, and the fork in the left.<sup>46</sup>

#### **Exchange 14: The food tastes so good.**

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



*Family gathered for a meal, Adana*  
© Gene Bonventre

Except in rural areas, meals are usually served on a covered European-style table, with chairs and cutlery. This became popular in the late 18th century.<sup>47, 48</sup> Males and females might eat separately if a male guest comes to dinner.<sup>49</sup> The host, or hostess, usually says *afiyet olsun* (enjoy your meal or *bon appétit*), to signify the start of the meal. The appropriate response is *elinize sağlık*, which expresses appreciation for the food, and the one who prepared it. The signal to begin drinking wine or *raki* (the Turkish national drink) is a toast made by the host.<sup>50</sup>

In traditional households, the hostess serves guests instead of sitting down to eat. Generous amounts of food are often served. It is acceptable to refuse an offering of more food. Refuse firmly, but politely, if you really do not want a second

helping.<sup>51</sup>

It is also acceptable to reach for food, or even to stand up and reach for food, on the other side of the table.<sup>52</sup> It is impolite to leave food on your plate. Put the knife and fork side by side on the plate, or cross them in the middle of the plate to signify that you are finished.<sup>53, 54</sup>



*Turkish tea and desserts*  
© umami / flickr.com

## Turkish Food

Basic Turkish kitchen food items include lamb, chicken, fish, and vegetables such as cabbage, peppers, onions, potatoes, and eggplant.<sup>55</sup> Dishes are mildly spiced with Mediterranean herbs, mainly garlic, cumin, pine nuts, and assorted paprikas. Well-known Turkish foods are kabob – consisting of lamb chunks, onions, tomatoes, and peppers grilled on a skewer – and pilaf (*pilav* or *pilau*), which is a rice dish that originated in Central Asia.<sup>56, 57</sup>

Fried, baked, or pureed eggplant plays an important role in Turkish meals.<sup>58</sup> The name of a famous dish that consists of baked eggplant and olive oil—*imam bayildi* (the imam fainted)—

attests to the overwhelming tastiness of the food.<sup>59</sup>

Another popular dish is called *brek*, a word that is generally used for stuffed pastry. The pastry is often filled with spinach, or other vegetables, and white cheese made from sheep's milk.<sup>60</sup>

### Exchange 15: What is the name of this dish?

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

*Etili Kuru Fasulye* is a stew made with white beans, and beef or lamb. It is a favorite national dish, and is frequently served with pickles and pilaf.<sup>61</sup>

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

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



*Turkish conservative dress*  
© Charles Roffey

## Dress Codes

Turks primarily wear Western-style clothing. Fashion from Europe is especially popular with young people. Muslim women might wear a headscarf, although they are prohibited from doing so in state-run institutions and government buildings.<sup>62, 63, 64</sup> Wearing headscarves in public buildings has not been permitted in Turkey since the 1920s.<sup>65</sup>

People are more conservative outside the main cities, thus, dress should be similarly modest.

Women should cover their arms and legs and wear loose-fitting clothes. Shorts are unacceptable for men and women in these areas, and they are never acceptable in mosques.<sup>66</sup> Traditional costumes are generally reserved for special occasions among people living in rural areas.<sup>67</sup>

### **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 in rural areas wear long skirts and headscarves. Religion advocates conservative dress at all times of the year, especially during visits to a mosque. Climate and geography also impact clothing. Turkey's Mediterranean coast has mild summers that call for lightweight cotton shirts and blouses. Warm jackets are needed during the cool, rainy season that runs from November–April.<sup>68</sup>

### **Exchange 18: Is this acceptable to wear?**

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

Ethnic dress is more prominent in the rural areas of east and southeast Turkey, where Kurds and Armenians live. The best advice for visitors is to dress conservatively. For men, this means long pressed trousers and clean shirts; for women, it means skirts below the knee and long-sleeve blouses. Shorts are inappropriate for both men and women.<sup>69, 70</sup>





*Turkish men chatting*  
© Charles Roffey

## Nonreligious Celebrations (Holidays)

New Year's Day, 1 January, is the first holiday of the year. It is the most secular and widely celebrated holiday in the nation. Urban residents enjoy firework displays that begin at midnight on New Year's Eve. Parties and other celebrations continue until dawn. The morning of 1 January is usually quiet. People typically visit those relatives and friends who did not attend New Year's Eve celebrations.<sup>71</sup>

National Sovereignty and Children's Day is on 23 April. National Sovereignty Day is celebrated throughout Turkey. It commemorates the first meeting of the Grand National Assembly (Turkey's Congress) in Ankara in 1923. On this day, in Ankara, children march past an enormous Turkish flag in the city's giant Hippodrome. The children then act as symbolic legislators, sitting in parliament for the day.<sup>72</sup>

The first of May is Labor and Solidarity Day. Some Turks participate in demonstrations to demand better working conditions, or to protest government policies. Others avoid public gatherings, because they can erupt into violence. Many Turks use this day work to join friends and family on a picnic.<sup>73</sup>

The country celebrates Atatürk Day, and Youth and Sports Day on 19 May. This day commemorates the Republic's founder, and recognizes the importance of youth sports. During a 10-day marathon, young athletes carry the Turkish flag from Samsun, on the Black Sea, to Ankara, in the heart of Anatolia. Sports events take place throughout the nation. Many Turks lay wreaths at Atatürk's tomb, commemorating the birth of the nation's founder.<sup>74</sup>

Victory Day is celebrated on 30 August. This day commemorates Turkey's victory over Greece at the end of the 1922 Turkish War of Independence. Military parades add to a mood of national pride. Pictures of Atatürk adorn residential and shop windows, and the Turkish flag is flown across the nation.<sup>75</sup>

Republic Day is celebrated on 29 October. It commemorates the 1923 proclamation of Turkey's status as a republic.<sup>76</sup> Performances are dedicated to the republic. Performances include theatrical presentations, poetry, and traditional dances. Parades and speeches also mark the occasion, and many people visit Atatürk's tomb to lay a memorial wreath. There are often traditional processions with flags and bands, followed by firework displays in the evening.<sup>77</sup>

## Dos and Don'ts

**Do** remove your shoes when entering a mosque or a private dwelling. Shoes defile the building, which will then require ritual cleaning.

**Do** raise your eyebrows and move the head slightly upward to signal No. Shaking one's head from side to side in Turkish DOES NOT mean No.

**Do** take time for small talk.

**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 the food or the hospitality. It is a way of honoring the host.

**Do** ask permission before taking someone's picture.

**Don't** use your left hand to pass items to a Turk, especially food. The left hand is considered dirty and is associated with personal hygiene.

**Don't** point your fingers at anyone. This is an accusatory gesture.

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

**Don't** walk in front of a person who is praying. It invalidates his or her prayer.

**Don't** approach or sit next to someone of the opposite sex. It implies physical intimacy, challenging their honor.

**Don't** snap your fingers at other people. It is considered rude.

**Don't** use your thumb and forefinger to make an OK sign. It has sexual connotations, and is extremely insult when directed at someone.

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## Overview: Chapter 3 Assessment

1. In the family, Turkish men retain their traditional position as head of the household.

**TRUE**

Women have equal status with men under the law, yet the family remains essentially patriarchal. Men are the principal breadwinners, and moderators, of family affairs.

2. Turks often wear T-shirts displaying the image of their flag.

**FALSE**

Turks consider it disrespectful to display the image of their flag on clothing, luggage, and similar items.

3. It is acceptable for a foreign male to initiate a handshake with a Turkish female when greeting her for the first time.

**FALSE**

Non-Turks, of either sex, should not initiate any form of physical contact with a member of the opposite sex, including a handshake. A foreign male should only shake hands with a Turkish woman if she extends her hand first.

4. In rural areas, guests often drop by for a visit without prior notice.

**TRUE**

In rural areas, formalities disappear and guests drop by at any time, with the expectation of being offered food and drink.

5. In Turkey, insulting someone's honor can be fatal.

**TRUE**

The concept of honor in Turkish society is powerful and can lead to consequences, such as honor killings. Both males and females in Turkey have been the victims of honor killings.



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

## Chapter 4: Urban Life

### Introduction

The Republic of Turkey is one of the most rapidly urbanizing countries in the world.<sup>1</sup> Approximately 72% of the population currently lives in urban centers.<sup>2</sup> Turkish cities, such as Istanbul—the second-largest metropolitan area in Europe—have extensive infrastructure. These cities offer advanced technologies and modern luxuries for the affluent.<sup>3, 4</sup> For example, Bursa bustles with upscale activity, has the most developed ski resort in Turkey, and reflects a diversity of architectural influences, including Byzantine, Persian, and Arab.<sup>5, 6, 7</sup>

The cities also offer women freedom from patriarchal controls, and opportunities to compete with men for employment in the public and private sectors.<sup>8, 9</sup> On the other



hand, a lack of housing for the poor, and high levels of poverty, unemployment, crime, and terrorism remain problematic.<sup>10, 11, 12, 13</sup> These societal issues, with the exception of terrorism, are common developing industrialized nations.

## Urbanization Issues

Migrants, from various ethnic groups, are drawn to Turkey's cities. However, since the 1980s, most newcomers are peasants.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, since the 1990s, displaced Kurds make up the largest migrating ethnic group, mostly living on the outskirts of cities in squatter settlements. This is largely due the fast pace of migration, compared to the slower pace of government investment and housing construction.<sup>15, 16</sup> Many of these settlements are known as shantytowns—*gecekondu*, which means “built in the night.” They lack electricity, sewage, and other municipal services, and this has raised concerns within the government.<sup>17, 18, 19</sup> Investments by the United Nations and European Commission have led to urban renewal and revitalization in Istanbul, and other areas. This has encouraged the affluent to move back to city centers. Thus, gentrification has displaced many of the older, less affluent residents.<sup>20</sup>

The rural-to-urban population shift began in the 1950s, driven by a desire for a better life. Yet, many of today's migrants are unemployed, destitute, disenchanted, and ripe for recruitment by Islamic groups.<sup>21, 22, 23</sup> Approximately 8.9% of the urban population lives below the poverty line, compared to a nationwide poverty rate of about 18%. Urban poverty rates have slightly improved in recent years, however, air pollution remains serious.<sup>24, 25, 26</sup> Industrial expansion in Bursa and Kayseri continues to raise concerns about pollution levels, even as improvements are made in some cities.<sup>27</sup>

Turkey's cities, especially Istanbul, suffer from massive transportation problems.<sup>28, 29</sup> Istanbul was recently rated as the second-worst city in the world for traffic jams and congestion. Roads are so congested that there is no longer any real rush hour; streets and highways are busy all day long. It can take an hour or more to travel just a few kilometers.<sup>30, 31</sup>

Ethnic tensions appear to be on the rise in some urban centers. Demonstrations and clashes across ethnic and religious lines have become increasingly violent. In several cases, these activities have resulted in fatalities. Some of the rising tensions may be related to the ongoing crisis in Syria.<sup>32, 33, 34, 35</sup>



*Bucuk vendor*  
© ccarlstead / flickr.com

## Work Problems in Urban Areas

Urban unemployment is a major concern. It appears to be higher than overall national unemployment, which runs at a rate of 9.1%.<sup>36</sup> In some cities, unemployment rates were about 16% in 2013.<sup>37</sup> Unemployment was highest among urban youth; about 20% of youth, aged 15-19 are unemployed, with an almost equal number (22%) of those aged 20-24 out of work.<sup>38</sup> Rates for women in those age groups were even higher: 25% and 28% respectively.<sup>39</sup> Based on overall population statistics during the same time-period, the unemployment rate for young people between the ages of 15-19 is 16%. It was slightly higher for those between the ages of 20-24 (20%).<sup>40</sup> Among children aged 6-17, 6% were engaged in economic activity in 2012. Of these, nearly half lived in urban areas and most were males. About 50% of employed children go to school.<sup>41</sup>

The ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) stated that the main reason for unemployment is a lack of skills, not problems with the Turkish economy. There is a disconnect between the skills

required for new jobs, and those possessed by job seekers. The government has thus introduced vocational training programs, in an effort to resolve this.<sup>42</sup> Data suggests that workers who completed high school, or vocational training, have the same rate of unemployment as those with higher degrees. Among university graduates, the effects are particularly acute. The lack of correspondence between educational training, and requisite job skills, has contributed to declining employment among the most educated. These findings support the notion that schools are not providing the skills necessary to find a job. Those who leave school early, can gain those skills through apprenticeship and experience.<sup>43, 44</sup>

## Healthcare

### Healthcare and Hospitals

Healthcare facilities in Turkey vary. Urban hospitals in Ankara, Antalya, and Istanbul generally meet Western standards.<sup>45</sup> Healthcare services are limited in rural areas.<sup>46</sup> Many hospitals have modern facilities and U.S.-trained personnel. Services for obstetric care fall below Western standards, although hospitals in Ankara and Istanbul are adequate.<sup>47</sup> The country suffers from a shortage of trained doctors and nurses, especially general practitioners.<sup>48</sup>

#### Exchange 19: 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

Turkey's recent spending increases on public healthcare have had positive results.<sup>49</sup> Infant mortality has declined considerably. Life expectancy has improved, which currently stands at 75 years for females, and 71 years for males.<sup>50</sup> A number of advances guarantee that nearly all citizens are covered by public health insurance. The public sector is the major provider of healthcare, yet a growing number of people in urban areas are seeking care in private facilities, or with private physicians.<sup>51</sup>

#### Exchange 20: Is Dr. Güven in, sir?

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

In 2010, the government instituted the family practitioner system to provide low-cost healthcare. Public health centers allow patients to seek treatment without going to more expensive hospitals. The 21,000 physicians staffing these centers are general practitioners, not specialists. Patients who require advanced or special care can be referred to a specialist.<sup>52, 53</sup> Informal payments are common mostly for outpatient services, or to part-time physicians in the private sector.<sup>54</sup>

#### Exchange 21: 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 UchyUhzoneekkee eekeeyUhzyeermeehUch kurkaltonUch

Turkey's major cities also have large international hospitals, such as *Balgat Amerikan Tesisleri* (American Hospital, Ankara) and *Şişle* (French Hospital, Istanbul). Istanbul also has an Italian hospital (*Tophane*), a German hospital (*Taksim*), an international hospital (*Yeşilköy*), a Jewish hospital (*Ayvansaray*), and the English Admiral Bristol Hospital (*Nişantaşı*).<sup>55</sup>

### Exchange 22: Do you know what is wrong?

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

### Pharmacies

Pharmacies are usually open every day, except Sunday, yet some medications are still difficult to obtain. It is therefore advisable to carry a supply of necessary medications when you visit the country.<sup>56</sup> Pharmacies also provide some medical advice and first aid. It is possible to get injections at a pharmacy, or have a nurse come to your home to give a shot if you are too ill to go out. Many people use pharmacies for relatively routine matters, because hospitals are overcrowded, expensive, and often have long wait times.<sup>57</sup>

## Education and Schools

The stated goal of education in Turkey is to create a “unified citizenry with a secular national identity.”<sup>58</sup> The educational system is divided into four levels: preschool, primary, secondary, and higher education.<sup>59</sup> The Ministry of National Education governs preschool, primary, and secondary education. Preschool is voluntary. Higher education is directed by the Council of Higher Education.<sup>60</sup>

Primary education through eighth grade is compulsory and coeducational, because of the educational reforms that were implemented in 1997.<sup>61, 62</sup> State-run schools are free, and are mainly attended by students with fewer socioeconomic resources.<sup>63</sup> Secondary education, although not mandatory, is also tuition-free in the public schools. Secondary schools are of two types: general high school (*diğer lise*) and vocational/technical high school (*meslek lisesi*). Some high schools specialize in only one area of study, such as the social sciences, the fine arts, or the sciences.<sup>64, 65</sup> Fee-based private schools are also available. In addition, open primary schools provide distance learning for citizens who were previously unable to complete the mandatory 8 years of primary education.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Before graduating from high school, students must pass the university entrance examination to be eligible to continue their studies at a 2-year institution, or at one of the nation's public or foundation (private) universities. Most of these institutions are located in urban centers.<sup>68, 69</sup>

The net enrollment rate for primary schools in Turkey is about 99%, indicating that nearly all students are enrolled. Enrollment numbers drop to around 67% in



secondary school, and even further for higher education 36%.<sup>70</sup> Almost all students complete primary school. Over the last two years, about one-third of Turkish students were enrolled in secondary school.<sup>71,72</sup> Class sizes are larger than in most developed countries.<sup>73</sup>

## Restaurants

**R**estaurants stay open from early morning, until late at night. Diners can choose expensive restaurants (*restoran*), or informal eateries (*lokanta*). There also are *hazir yemek* (ready food) establishments that specialize in prepared foods. Lunch is the best choice for such eateries, because food is probably at its freshest.<sup>74</sup>

### **Exchange 23: I would like coffee or tea.**

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

### **Exchange 24: Are you still serving breakfast?**

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



*Conversation in a café*  
© Jo Guldi

Meals often start-off with something called *meze*. This consists of several small dishes, such as bean and pickled-vegetable salad, *börek* (flaky meat pastry), and *cacik* (cucumber salad in yogurt). Meat dishes, such as grilled kebab and *kofta* (spicy meatballs), are the main course. This will be accompanied by vegetable dishes, such as stuffed cabbages, peppers, grape leaves, and eggplant.

**Exchange 25: I'd like some hot soup.**

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

A *kebab i* is a restaurant that sells meat. *Ocakbaşı* are fireside versions, often without menus, where diners eat whatever the cook is serving. *Meyhanes* are taverns, where diners get large selections of *mezes* (starter dishes) and a meat dish.<sup>75</sup>

**Exchange 26 What type of meat is this?**

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

**Exchange 27: This food is very good.**

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

Turkey does not have a strictly vegetarian cuisine, however, there are many vegetable dishes and alternatives that allow vegetarians to eat well.<sup>76</sup>

**Exchange 28: May I have a glass of water?**

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

*Pastanes* are pastry shops where baklava, biscuits, and cakes abound.<sup>77</sup>

**Exchange 29: Do you have dessert?**

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

\* caramelized milk pudding



*Istanbul restaurant  
© John Picken*

### *Bills and Tipping*

When the meal is finished, nod to the waiter as a signal for the bill. Guests dining together are always presented with just one bill. Keep in mind that Turks are unaccustomed to splitting checks, and guests do not pay for their own food.<sup>78</sup> Thus, the person who issued the invitation is the one who is expected to pay.<sup>79</sup>

### **Exchange 30: Where is your restroom?**

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

The bill usually includes a service charge (not to be confused with a tip), but it does not include taxes.<sup>80</sup> Many restaurants add an automatic service charge of 10%. It is customary to leave an additional 5% tip, on top of the service charge. If no service charge has been added, it is appropriate to leave a 15% tip.<sup>81, 82</sup>

### **Exchange 31: 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 Marketplace

### *Markets and Shopping*

Shops and department stores in city centers are usually open from 9 a.m.–6 p.m., but stores in residential areas stay open as late as 10 p.m.<sup>83</sup> Stores are closed on Sundays.<sup>84</sup>

#### **Exchange 32: Do you sell hand-crafted items?**

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

Shopkeepers often greet shoppers on the street, inviting them to look over their wares. Often shoppers share tea with them. This is a sign of Turkish hospitality, and does not obligate one to make a purchase.<sup>85</sup>

#### **Exchange 33: 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

Merchants dislike dealing in small change. Thus, they may give you a packet of matches or a pack of gum, instead of cash change.<sup>86</sup>

#### **Exchange 34 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

Every city has a weekly bazaar. These are extremely popular, because goods are cheaper than in the regular shops. Bazaars may specialize in items such as produce, but larger ones generally offer a wider variety of goods.<sup>87</sup>

#### **Exchange 35: Is the bazaar nearby?**

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

#### **Exchange 36: Do you have any more of these?**

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



A universal rule of bargaining is for merchants to begin with a high price, and for buyers to counter with a low price. The usual result is meeting somewhere in the middle. If you cannot get a price you think is fair, it is appropriate to walk away.<sup>88</sup>

### Exchange 37: May I examine this close up?

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



*Paying for tea*  
© Ekke Vasli

### Money and ATMs

The official currency of Turkey is the New Turkish Lira (TRY).<sup>89</sup> In July 2014, USD 1 was equal to about TRY 2.1.<sup>90</sup>

Purchases should be made in Turkish Lira (TRY), however, foreign currency is generally accepted in the shops, hotels, and restaurants in tourist areas.<sup>91, 92</sup> It is easy to convert USD into TRY, and vice versa. Ensure that TRY bills are intact (worn spots and rips or tears are acceptable), or they cannot be exchanged.<sup>93</sup> It is not illegal to take TRY out of Turkey, but try to change them back into USD or Euros before leaving the country. TRY have almost no value outside of Turkey.<sup>94</sup>

### Exchange 38: 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 39: 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

ATM machines are readily available, and it is easy to get cash. Credit cards are not widely accepted outside of the major cities and tourist areas, especially American Express.<sup>95, 96</sup> Travelers checks are also difficult to exchange, and most places charge a premium.<sup>97</sup> It is also worth the effort to ask for a *fatura* (receipt) on large purchases, in order to submit a claim for a tax refund on Turkey's 18% value-added tax (KDV).<sup>98</sup>

## Transportation

Turkey has a well-developed network of air, rail, bus, ferry, and taxi facilities. There are a number of transportation options for traveling in and between cities. Most public transportation is safe and reliable, although poor rail conditions have raised concerns about train travel. In addition, some Turkish aircraft have been hijacked. The U.S. State Department strongly discourages the use of public transportation in the southeastern region, because of frequent terrorist attacks.<sup>99, 100, 101</sup>

### Buses and Trams

Bus or coach is probably the most comfortable way to get around the country. Buses are usually clean and well maintained, and provide a safe means of travel in urban areas. Most cities have a central bus station (*otogar*), and costs are generally affordable. City buses usually require a prepaid ticket, however, some private companies in Istanbul allow either cash or tickets.<sup>102</sup> City buses can become extremely crowded, so it is best to move close to a door before you intend to get off.<sup>103</sup>

#### Exchange 40: Will the bus be here soon?

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



*Taxis in Istanbul*  
© Charles Roffey

Trams are available in some of the major urban areas. They offer a quick, and relatively inexpensive, way to get around.<sup>104</sup>

### Dolmuş and Taxis

The easily recognized beige-and-blue *dolmuş*, or minibus, is inexpensive and ideal for short trips. It follows a fixed route, and during commuter hours it is usually filled with passengers.<sup>105, 106</sup>

Taxis are also easy to recognize. They are yellow, they are found at taxi stands near major sites, and they can be flagged down.<sup>107</sup>

### Exchange 2441: Where can I get a cab?

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

In major cities, taxis are metered. However, some drivers will accept a fare off meter. This is best arranged before entering the cab.<sup>108</sup> Drivers in major urban centers, like Istanbul, often demand that foreigners pay a flat rate. Such fares are usually inflated. If the driver refuses to use the meter, find another cab. Only agree to a flat fee if you are on a private tour.<sup>109</sup>

Taxis may be arranged by calling the company, or they may be hailed on the street. Arranged taxis are generally safer.<sup>110</sup> Passengers should always sit in the back seat. Never accept food or drink from the driver.<sup>111</sup>

### Exchange 42: Can you take me there?

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



*Istanbul train station*  
© Andrea Campi

### *Trains and Airplanes*

Train travel on the state-owned railway system, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Devlet Demiryollari* (TCDD), is not as fashionable as travel on Western European railways. Trains are relatively inexpensive, with railcars that are not always clean, and toilets that are often substandard and dirty. Eastern and central Turkey are well served by rail. However, no trains run along the coast, except between Izmir and Seluk.<sup>112</sup> Recently, a number of fatal accidents and derailments have raised concern.<sup>113</sup>

### Exchange 43: Is there a train station nearby?

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

There is regular domestic airline service between Istanbul's Atatürk International Airport, and 30 cities throughout the country. Flights may be booked outside the country on the Internet, but tickets are cheaper if purchased in the country.<sup>114</sup> A number of Turkish planes have been hijacked in recent years.<sup>115</sup>

## Ferries

It is possible to get around Istanbul by ferry or bus. There are terminals for purchasing tickets, on both the European and Asian sides of the city. Ferries are frequent and cheap, but they tend to be slower than the sea bus (high-speed ferry). Although sea buses are quick and more comfortable than conventional ferries, they offer less frequent service at a higher price. They are also more vulnerable to weather conditions.<sup>116</sup> Several high-speed ferries cross the Sea of Marmara.<sup>117</sup>

## Cars

Traffic accidents in Turkey are frequent, and many are fatal.<sup>118, 119</sup> Drivers frequently ignore traffic regulations. Roads around major cities are generally well maintained. However, drivers experiencing trouble often place a pile of rocks in the road, 10–15 m (33–49 ft) behind their vehicle, instead of turning on emergency flashers. Potholes, missing sewer covers, and other road hazards, as well as drivers who fail to turn on lights, make night driving especially dangerous.<sup>120, 121</sup> Severe winter storms and heavy traffic can create hazardous driving conditions on coastal roads, especially in the area of Gallipoli Peninsula Peace Park.<sup>122</sup>

### Exchange 44: Where can I rent a car?

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

Gas stations are plentiful along major transportation routes, but they are not self-service. It is customary to give a small tip to the station attendant who is filling gas, who will then clean the car windows. Most stations accept credit cards or cash.<sup>123</sup>

### Exchange 45: Is there a gas station nearby?

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

### Exchange 46: 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
Local:	The road heading east.	dooyya geedeahn yohl





*Policemen in Hakkari*  
© Andrea Giudiceandrea

## Street Crime and Safety

Crime in Turkey is generally low, however, street robbery and pick pocketing are common in both major tourist areas and large cities. Do not accept food or drink (which can be drugged) from strangers. Avoid people who approach you with offers to change money, or accompany you to a restaurant or bar. Do not accept rides from strangers. Use only registered yellow taxis, and be sure to take note of the registration number before entering.<sup>124, 125</sup> A number of sexual assaults have been reported in coastal tourist areas.<sup>126</sup>

The threat of terrorism is high, especially in the southeastern part of the country. Attacks occur in both rural and urban centers in this region. Security is high throughout the provinces, and all restrictions must be followed. Bombings have occurred in public areas, on public transportation, and in garbage bins on public streets.<sup>127, 128, 129, 130</sup>

### Beggars

Beggars are increasingly common in Istanbul. A recent study found that people are becoming more fearful of beggars. A number of Turkey's beggars are refugees fleeing the violence in Syria. Some have noted that beggars are also becoming more aggressive. It is best to avoid beggars to avoid the risk of potential attacks, including sexual assaults.<sup>131, 132, 133, 134</sup> Many people avoid areas frequented by beggars, or dismiss them with the phrase *Allah versin* (May God give you), and walk away.<sup>135</sup>

A large number of children beg on Istanbul's streets. Some are known to be working for organized gangs. It is best not to give them money, because it encourages the exploitation of children. If children are successful at making money, they attract organized crime. Child begging is a petty crime, largely overlooked by authorities. Begging by adults generally meets with stiffer penalties.<sup>136, 137, 138</sup>

### Exchange 47: Give me money

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

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## Overview: Chapter 4 Assessment

1. Approximately one-half of the Turkish population lives in urban areas.

**FALSE**

About 72% of Turkey's population lives in urban centers.

2. Outside major cities, Islamic groups target the residents of slums for recruitment.

**TRUE**

Many migrants today are unemployed, destitute, disenchanted, and ripe for recruitment by Islamic groups.

3. Public education, from grades one through twelve, is free and mandatory in Turkey.

**FALSE**

Primary education through eighth grade is free and compulsory. Secondary school, although free, is not mandatory.

4. Most urban population growth comes from an influx of Armenian migrants from rural areas of Turkey.

**FALSE**

Migrants, from various ethnic groups in Turkey, are drawn to the cities. However, since the 1980s, most newcomers are peasants. Furthermore, since the 1990s, displaced Kurds have made up the largest migrating ethnic group, mostly living on the outskirts of cities in squatter settlements.

5. The urban unemployment rate is higher than the national average.

**TRUE**

Urban unemployment appears to be higher than the overall national rate of 9.1%. In some cities, the 2013 unemployment rate was around 16%.



*Turkish town and rural roads*  
© Kevin Buehler

## Chapter 5: Rural Life

### Introduction

More than half of Turkey's land is agricultural, supporting both crops and livestock.<sup>1</sup> Turkey is the largest producer, and exporter, of agricultural products in Eastern Europe, the Middle, and North Africa. It has some of the most fertile agricultural areas in the world.<sup>2</sup> About 31% of its land is suitable for growing crops. Turkey is ranked 22nd in the world, in terms of arable land as a percentage of land area, as compared to the United Kingdom (ranked 41st at 24%), and the United States (ranked 58th at 19%). Thus, the United Kingdom and the United States each have less arable land than Turkey.<sup>3</sup>

Turkey's food and beverage industry is largely dependent on the country's agricultural sector. It is ranked fifth in the world, behind China (fourth), Brazil (third), the United States (second), and the European Union (EU). The EU is the world's largest importer



and exporter of food and beverage products.<sup>4</sup> Turkey is one of the few nations that is relatively self-sufficient in food production for its people, even though Turkish farmers have been slow to adopt modern agricultural practices.<sup>5</sup>

The population shifted from primarily rural to urban, in the mid-1980s. Since then, the size of the rural population has remained constant at about 24 million.<sup>6</sup> Today, only about 28% of Turks live in rural areas.<sup>7</sup> Poverty throughout rural Turkey remains high, especially in eastern and southeastern Anatolia. In 2007, nearly 47% of the population in these areas experience higher poverty levels than the national poverty rate of 18%.<sup>8</sup> <sup>9</sup> Much of rural poverty results from unemployment, seasonal work, and low wages caused by the shift away from agriculture, to an urban economy.<sup>10</sup>



*Turkish countryside near Ephesus*  
© V / flickr.com

## Land Distribution and Ownership

After the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, the landholdings of the Ottoman Empire were divided into small farms for individual or group ownership.<sup>11</sup> For various reasons, Turkey's first attempts at land reform were unsuccessful. By 1970, it was clear that the number of small farmers, or landless peasants, remained essentially unchanged.<sup>12</sup> More land reforms followed, but they also failed to accomplish their stated goals. Today, 79% of the nation's farms, representing 34% of the total land, are smaller than 10 hectares (25 acres), while 67% are less than 5 hectares (12.5 acres). About 85% of agricultural holdings are farmed by their owners, and only 2% of the holdings are rented or shared.<sup>13, 14, 15</sup>

### **Exchange 48: Do you own this land?**

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

Significant fragmentation of farms, into increasingly smaller parcels, resulted from inheritance laws. These laws stated that, upon a landowner's death, 25% of the land would be allocated to the surviving spouse, with the rest being divided into equal shares for each of the surviving children. These laws had the effect of creating ever-smaller farms, making it difficult for farmers to make a living. This resulted in increased production costs, with a reduction in marketing capacity. It became impractical to use more advanced agricultural techniques and farm machinery, on these small plots



of land.<sup>16</sup> To stop this defragmentation, the government passed a law specifying a minimum size for sustainable agriculture. It then began the implementation of a land consolidation program, meant to end partitioning.<sup>17, 18</sup> By 2013, however, only 10% of all agricultural land had actually been consolidated.<sup>19</sup>

Recently, Turkey's government agreed to return property seized from Jewish and Christian trusts. The government is sympathetic to non-Muslim groups, and it is working to equalize land ownership regulations. The change in policy was prompted by recent rulings by the European Court of Human Rights. It ordered Turkey to pay compensation, in several cases related to religious discrimination. The European Union (EU), which Turkey hopes to join, has also mandated the elimination of laws and policies that discriminate against non-Muslims.<sup>20</sup>



*Turkish women picking cotton*  
© Brian Harrington Spier

## Rural Economy

Agriculture was once the main driver of the Turkish economy, but it is no longer the dominant economic engine.<sup>21</sup>

However, agriculture is still an important part of life in the rural areas. Nearly one in four rural Turks works in agriculture, and almost all (93%) are women.<sup>22</sup> Agriculture has been a major factor in keeping rural unemployment rates down to about half those found in urban areas. When one removes agriculture from consideration, rural unemployment is only marginally lower than in urban areas.<sup>23, 24</sup> Nevertheless, the government is working to diversify the economy in both rural and urban areas.<sup>25, 26</sup>

Lower unemployment rates do not translate into better economic circumstances for most. Poverty among the rural population can be as much as three times higher than in urban areas. In 2009, for example, about 9% of the urban population lived below the poverty line. Yet, nearly 39% of rural folks lived in poverty.<sup>27, 28, 29</sup> Rural poverty levels remained relatively unchanged in 2011.<sup>30 31</sup>

## *Agriculture*

An estimated 26% of the Turkish workforce is employed in the agricultural sector, with most workers (77%) employed by small- and medium-sized enterprises.<sup>32, 33</sup> Agriculture accounts for approximately 9% of national GDP.<sup>34</sup> The main crops include tobacco, cotton, wheat, olives, sugar beets, pulses (peas, beans, and lentils), citrus fruit, and livestock.<sup>35</sup> Agricultural products are an important source of export revenue.<sup>36</sup> A small, and tightly regulated, market exists for the legal cultivation of the opium poppy.<sup>37</sup>

Most farmers rely on rainfall to water their crops. The government intends to improve infrastructure and build irrigation facilities to help improve crop yields, particularly in Southeastern Anatolia. The small size of most farms compromises their ability to benefit from larger-scale production, or from the use of modern equipment and technology.<sup>38</sup>

Livestock is also an important source of revenue. The most prevalent type of livestock are sheep and goats, but cattle are also produced in significant numbers.<sup>39</sup> Aquaculture is relatively new to the Turkish economy, and is mostly centered in the Aegean region. The fisheries subsector is expected to grow by 65%, by 2023. Most of the fisheries' revenue will come from rainbow trout, sea trout, sea bream, and carp, as well as mussels. Fish farms now account for about 25% of all fishery production.<sup>40, 41</sup> Conventional fishing takes place mainly in the Black and Mediterranean Seas.<sup>42</sup>

## *Non-agricultural sectors*

Economic diversification, rural development projects, and the poverty associated with agricultural wages have pushed many people to work in other sectors. Agricultural jobs are giving way to jobs in other sectors. By 2006, 41% of rural jobs were non-agricultural, with many seeking work in Turkey's expanding mining sector, or on construction sites.<sup>43</sup> Commerce and the service sector are the most rapidly expanding areas for employment.<sup>44, 45</sup> Tourism is also becoming increasingly important, and efforts to develop the industry are underway. Rural tourism is becoming more popular among foreign visitors, providing a source of income for many rural families.<sup>46, 47</sup>



*Gas station in Istanbul*  
© Neil Anderson

## Rural Transportation

### *Cars*

The vast majority of Turkey's roadways are paved.<sup>48</sup> Turkey's roads are heavily used, carrying 95% of the freight that is traveling to and from major sea and air cargo centers, and 95% of all passenger traffic.<sup>49</sup> Unpaved drainage ditches act as medians on four-lane rural roads. Narrow roads, with steep grades, twists and turns, also pose a hazard.<sup>50</sup>

Driving is dangerous at all times. Traffic fatalities are common, and Turkey has one of the highest traffic-accident rates in the world.<sup>51</sup> Drivers frequently ignore traffic regulations, and many

drivers fail to turn on their lights at night. Turks can be bold drivers, and may attempt to pass on a curve. Rural roads are especially dangerous, because of potholes, missing signs, and other hazards. Driving in rural areas should be avoided after dark.<sup>52, 53, 54</sup> Potential hazards include animals roaming the streets, slow-moving farm machinery, and horse carts. Following the harvest, smoke from burning fields can reduce visibility.<sup>55</sup>

### *Buses*

Public transportation, and travel, are generally safe in most rural areas. However, travel in the southeastern part of Turkey should be restricted to daylight hours. Public transportation in the southeast should be avoided.<sup>56, 57</sup> Air travel is advisable when traveling to this region.<sup>58</sup>

Bus travel in the eastern parts of Turkey can be dangerous, mainly because of poor road conditions. Buses are frequently involved in fatal accidents. This includes plunging over cliffs, or off mountains. Overcrowded buses can be cramped and uncomfortable. Buses in rural areas, especially in southeastern Turkey, are subject to long searches at frequent checkpoints.<sup>59</sup>





*Children in the village of Mardin*  
© Mete Dönmez

## Healthcare

Healthcare may be limited in rural areas, and standards may fall below Western standards.<sup>60, 61</sup> However, Turkey implemented the Health Transformation Program (Sağlıkta Dönüşüm Programı), and overall health indicators have improved, but less so in rural areas.<sup>62</sup> Changes provide more access to primary and secondary healthcare to rural residents, and new staff has been assigned to areas with shortages. A significant change is the introduction of family practitioners, who provide first aid, basic maternity care, and preventive medical care. The new family practitioner system has increased access to healthcare throughout the nation, increased the level of care, and improved patient satisfaction.

<sup>63, 64, 65</sup>

### Exchange 49: 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

Physicians serving in family practitioner centers generally lack sufficient training. Thus, the level of care, especially for chronic conditions and the elderly, needs improvement.<sup>66</sup> There are substantial differences between Turkey's rural and urban populations, when it comes to certain health issues. For example, rural women are less likely to receive adequate care during pregnancy, and infants and children are also more likely to die from illness or injury.<sup>67, 68 69, 70</sup> Immunization are also lower in rural Turkey.<sup>71</sup>

### Exchange 50: My arm is broken, can you help me?

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

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) cautions travelers to rural eastern districts to be careful due to the prevalence of tuberculosis, hepatitis A and B, occasional outbreaks of typhoid fever, and the possibility of malarial infection.<sup>72</sup>



## Education

Unlike their urban counterparts, rural schools lack facilities. Such facilities include libraries, instructional and information technology, and laboratories for science classes.<sup>73, 74</sup> Many village schools do not offer education beyond the 5th grade, and nearly 40% of villages lack a primary school. Students in these villages are bused to consolidated schools, or they attend boarding schools in larger towns.<sup>75, 76</sup>

### Exchange 51: Is there a school nearby?

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

The number of rural students advancing beyond primary school (32%) falls substantially below urban rates (54%).<sup>77</sup> Attendance is also a problem. Children in Turkey are required to attend school from ages 6–14, yet many fail to do so. Female attendance lags behind that of males. Two-thirds of all students who fail to attend primary school are girls.<sup>78</sup>

### Exchange 52: Do your children go to school?

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

In the rural eastern provinces, females account for only a third of the student population. Female illiteracy is approximately 21%–39%, in some regions. About 50% of all females drop out of school by grade 5, compared to 20% of males. Conservative cultural values, regarding women's behavior and roles, are one reason for the discrepancy.<sup>79, 80</sup>



*Men chatting in Bitlis village*  
© Antonio Perez Rio

## Village Life

Lifestyles in the remote countryside remain closely rooted in ancestral customs, despite modern improvements to villages and agricultural equipment.<sup>81, 82</sup> While many traditional elements of village life are maintained, other aspects of life are slowly changing.<sup>83, 84</sup> Satellite dishes dot the landscape, and cell phones are common.<sup>85</sup> Accesses to electricity, improved transportation, and modern sanitation have also improved the standard of living for rural residents.<sup>86, 87</sup>

Rural villages tend to have a somewhat older population, because many young people have migrated to the cities.<sup>88, 89</sup> Rural dwellers also tend

to be more conservative than urbanites. Rural women rarely go out alone, and men and women do not normally socialize together.<sup>90</sup> Beaches, restaurants, theaters, and other public places are often divided into two sections: bachelor and family. Men will often go out to coffeehouses, and stay for hours.<sup>91</sup>

Summer is one of the busiest times of the year in rural villages, since this is when most weddings take place.<sup>92</sup>

### **Exchange 53: Do you know this area very well?**

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



Village elder  
© Jürgen Hefele

## Local Governance

The basic unit of Turkish national governance is the village (*köy*). This is a designation applied to settlements with fewer than 5,000 inhabitants.<sup>93, 94, 95</sup> Villages have three administrative arms: the Village Association, the Council of Elders (*ihhtiyar meclisi*), and the Village Headman (*muhtar*). The Village Association is composed of village residents over the age of 18, and is the decision-making body. One of the more important duties of the *ihhtiyar meclisi* is electing the *muhtar*, and the Council of Elders.<sup>96</sup>

The Council of Elders implements and oversees village affairs, purchases land for public buildings

(including schools), and arbitrates disputes among residents. Their size depends on the size of the village, but councils have 8-12 members. The minimum age for election to the council is 25. In addition to those members elected by the Village Association, its membership must include the school principal, and the local religious leader (*imam*). It is headed by the *muhtar*.<sup>97, 98</sup>

### Exchange 54: Can you take me to your mayor?

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

### Exchange 55: Does your mayor live here?

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

The *muhtar* is the head of the Village Administration. It is the most powerful administrative body. Any citizen over the age of 25, who has lived in the village for at least six months, may vote in elections for the *muhtar*, who serves a five-year term. The duties are considerable, such as maintaining peace within the village, and representing the village. The *muhtar* also gathers village residents to help during disasters, fires and floods.<sup>99</sup>

Women have the right to full participation in local government. In 2011, 99.8% of all *muhtar* were men, and 99.8% of the members of the Council of Elders were male. Women did slightly better at the neighborhood level, where about 2% served as neighborhood headmen, or in the council of elders.<sup>100</sup>

**Exchange 56: 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

**Checkpoints**

Civilian and military authorities consider checkpoints necessary, since Turkey is a transit point for drugs, weapons, and terrorists en route to and from Central Asia. The *Jandarma* (military police who patrol rural areas) and the *Emniyet Polisi* (security police) staff the checkpoints.<sup>101</sup>

**Exchange 57: Where is the nearest checkpoint?**

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

**Exchange 58: Is this all the ID you have?**

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

If you are stopped at a checkpoint, roll down the driver's side window. Lower the passenger side window, also, if your vehicle has tinted windows. If stopped at night, turn the inside lights on and roll down the windows. Do not make sudden movements, and obey all directives promptly. Be prepared to show identification, and vehicle registration. Turkish authorities may restrict access to some areas of the country, especially in the southeastern region. They may also require vehicles to travel in a convoy.<sup>102, 103</sup>

**Exchange 59: Show us the car registration.**

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

The Turkish Armed Forces occasionally launch air and ground strikes against Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) targets near the Iraqi border, where movement is severely restricted.<sup>104, 105</sup>



**Exchange 60: Please get out of the car.**

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

**Exchange 61: Are you carrying any guns?**

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

The border area remains precarious, because of the ongoing crisis in Syria,. The border was closed on various occasions in 2013 and 2014. It was reported that NATO was considering its options, after receiving a request to help seal the border between the two nations..<sup>106, 107, 108, 109</sup>



*Friendly police at rural checkpoint*  
© Daniel N. Lang

## Landmines

The Republic of Turkey is a signed the Mine Ban Treaty of September 2003, and has indicated that it is prepared to comply with all provisions in the treaty. However, the nation has not enacted any domestic laws to implement the treaty.<sup>110</sup>

### **Exchange 62: Is this area mined?**

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

The Turkish government destroyed its stockpile of antipersonnel mines in December 2011. However, Turkey did retain approximately 16,000 antipersonnel devices for training and research. The government defends its possession of so many antipersonnel devices, by claiming that it needs them to train personnel to clear minefields. The government also rationalizes that there is no ceiling on the number of antipersonnel devices a nation may possess.<sup>111</sup>

### **Exchange 63: Did these people threaten you?**

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

Mines were laid in Turkey along the Syrian border, between 1956 and 1959, and on some sections of its borders with Armenia, Iran, and Iraq. This was done to prevent illegal crossings between countries. In addition to the border areas, a significant number of munitions exist in other locations. In 2013, Turkey said there were 3,514 areas containing mines, covering approximately 214 sq km (83 sq mi). These areas are located primarily on the Syrian border. Other potentially dangerous sites exist along the nation's borders with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Iran, and Iraq. There are an additional 704 areas containing mines, mostly around Turkish military installations.<sup>112</sup>

## Endnotes

- 1 Agricultural land includes arable land, land with permanent and temporary crops, permanent pastures, kitchen gardens, meadows, and land lying fallow. See The World Bank, “Agricultural Land (% of Land Area),” 2011, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/AG.LND.AGRI.ZS>
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## Overview: Chapter 5 Assessment

1. The unemployment rate in rural areas is higher than in urban centers.

**FALSE**

Agriculture has been a major factor in helping to keep rural unemployment rates about half those of urban areas. When one removes agriculture from consideration, the rural unemployment is only marginally lower than in urban areas.

2. Turkey has eliminated all opium production within its borders.

**FALSE**

A small and tightly regulated market exists, for the legal cultivation of opium poppies in Turkey.

3. About 40% of the villages in Turkey do not have a primary school.

**TRUE**

Nearly 40% of villages lack a primary school. Students are bused to consolidated schools, or attend boarding schools in larger towns.

4. Approximately two-thirds of all farms in Turkey are smaller than 5 hectares (12.5 acres).

**TRUE**

Today, 79% of the nation's farms, representing 34% of the total land, are smaller than 10 hectares (25 acres) and 67% are less than 5 hectares (12.5 acres).

5. Various types of security checkpoints are common in rural areas.

**TRUE**

Checkpoints are necessary, because Turkey is a transit point for drugs, weapons, and terrorists coming from, and going to, Central Asia. The Emniyet Polisi (security police) and the Jandarma (military police in rural areas) man checkpoints.



*Family in Cappadocia*  
© Ekke Vasli

## Chapter 6: Family Life

### Introduction

**T**he family is the strongest Turkish institution. In the absence of state welfare programs, the family ensures the survival of its members. Turks rely on the family to meet a variety of needs; in return, they accept the responsibilities that come with being part of the group.<sup>1</sup>

Turks have a strong family support network, which also sets the social behavior of family members.<sup>2,3</sup> Turks tend to protect the honor of their family, going to great lengths to avoid disgracing them. Honor killings still occur as a means of regaining honor. Family feuds also occur, as a means to get revenge for perceived wrongs.<sup>4,5</sup> Increasingly, urbanization is leading to significant changes in family structure and dynamics.<sup>6,7</sup>





*Grandfather, father and daughter*  
© Charles Roffey

## Typical Household

Traditional Turkish families are large and multigenerational, consisting of parents, children, and other blood relatives who often living in close proximity. However, the rural-to-urban population shift has resulted in the decline of extended families, and a rise in nuclear families, consisting of a father, a mother, and their children. Today about 81% of Turkish households are nuclear, rather than traditional.<sup>8</sup>

### Exchange 64: How many people live in this house?

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

Traditional extended families typically include three generations living together, such as grandparents, adult sons and their wives and their children, and unmarried daughters. Traditional extended families are more typical in rural areas, where families have nearly twice as many children as their urban counterparts.<sup>9</sup> Fertility rates in the eastern region are higher than in other parts of the country, where rates have been declining since the 1990s.<sup>10, 11</sup>

### Exchange 65: Does your family live here?

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

The rise of single-child households is one of the changes related to modern families. Recent surveys show that nearly 40% of Turkish households have only one child. This trend predominates among educated parents.<sup>12, 13</sup> Women with higher levels of education are more likely to live in households without children.<sup>14</sup>

### Exchange 66: Did you grow up here?

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

## Male-Female Interactions in the Family

The Turkish family is still predominantly patriarchal, despite rapid social modernizations. For example, the status of a young bride is still quite low, and she is expected to care for all the adults in the household.<sup>15, 16</sup> Her status within the family improves, however, when she bears a son.<sup>17</sup>

Mothers generally enjoy close relationships with their sons. The bond between them is often stronger than the bonds between husbands and wives.<sup>18</sup> Fathers are generally less affectionate with their children, especially boys, as a sign of their household. Familial bonds are strongest among members of the same gender.<sup>19</sup>

The division of labor follows traditional gender roles that rarely intersect. Women are responsible for household management, and care of the children. Household expenses are generally managed by men, who are the primary breadwinners. Men are also responsible for defending the family's honor.<sup>20, 21</sup> Shopping represents one exception to this rule, as it is shared by both men and women.

Women are granted full legal rights under the Turkish constitution. However, the cultural values of Islam often compete to define the roles of women, with gender separation often practiced by the devout.<sup>22, 23</sup> The ruling AKP party has also demonstrated a desire to increase gender separation based on Islamic principles, particularly in education.<sup>24, 25</sup> While gender often dictates where male and female activities take place, some of these customs are changing. Nevertheless, women still tend to predominate in the home, while men are more likely to predominate in outside public spaces.<sup>26, 27</sup>

The rates of sexual abuse and domestic violence are high. The country ranks as one of the worst in the world (120 out of 136) for violence against women.<sup>28</sup> Nearly 42% of women have suffered some kind of abuse in their lifetime.<sup>29</sup> Estimates indicate that 28,000 women were assaulted in 2013, and 214 were murdered by a spouse or lover.<sup>30</sup>

### Exchange 67: Do you have any brothers?

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





*An elder from Mardin*  
© Zeynep Kanra

## Status of the Elderly and Children

### *Elderly*

In 2013, approximately 8% of the population was 65 years of age, or older.<sup>31</sup> Just over half (56%) were women.<sup>32</sup> The provinces of Sinop, Kastamonu, and Çankırı have the highest percentage of elderly. The provinces with the lowest percentage of elderly included Hakkari, Şırnak, and Van with about 3% each.<sup>33</sup> The number of people 60 years of age or older is expected to grow dramatically, and will comprise about 30% of the population in 2050.<sup>34</sup>

The elderly have traditionally held a position of respect and status in Turkey. Respect for the elderly remains a core value among Turks, especially in rural areas, despite changes in family structure and demographics.<sup>35</sup> Older people are considered important, with the family providing psychological, social, and economic support for its elderly members.<sup>36</sup> <sup>37</sup> A majority (55%) of elderly Turks expressed a desire to live with their children, and nearly 70% of live with, or near, their children. Approximately 22% of all Turkish households had at least one elderly member.<sup>38, 39</sup>

There are increasing efforts to expand social and economic services for older people, especially among the poor, because nursing homes and other eldercare facilities are relatively rare.<sup>40, 41, 42</sup> Of the eldercare facilities that do exist in rural areas, most are underused. This is because Turks strongly believe in taking care of their own family members.<sup>43</sup> There is also a severe shortage of such facilities in the nation's cities.

## Children

Children are highly prized in Turkish families, and are cared for at home by a mother or other female relatives.<sup>44</sup> Children do not have a rigid routine, and they are frequently indulged. They go everywhere with their parents, and they are generally welcome.<sup>45</sup>

### Exchange 68: Are these people part of your family?

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



*New mother in Konya*  
© Charles Roffey

Parents show love toward their children, but they also exercise strong discipline. Girls are socialized to be passive and self-sacrificing for the good of other family members, while boys are trained to be strong, independent, and authoritative.<sup>46</sup> An overwhelming preference for boys does not exist in Turkey, yet male and female children have different roles, and opportunities. Girls are less likely to attend school. They are more likely to stay home so they can help with household chores, or to engage in economic pursuits.<sup>47, 48</sup>

Many Turks, especially in rural areas, value children for their economic contributions.<sup>49,</sup>  
<sup>50</sup> Nearly 6% of children between the ages of 6 and 17 are laborers, even though there are laws

prohibiting full employment for children under the age of 15. About 45% of child laborers live in urban areas, compared to about 55% in rural areas, and about 31% are female.<sup>51, 52, 53</sup> Rural children often work long hours in the fields, while many urban children work in the informal sector shining shoes, selling food, or begging.<sup>54, 55</sup>

## Married Life, Divorce, and Birth

### *Marriage*

Marriage is an important institution in Turkey.<sup>56</sup> Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has encouraged all women to have at least three children, to reinforce the importance of marriage and children.<sup>57, 58</sup>

#### **Exchange 69: Congratulations on your wedding!**

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



*Turkish wedding*  
© Argos Panoptes

Only civil weddings are legal and eligible to be registered with the government.<sup>59</sup> Many couples have both a religious and a civil wedding, but the civil wedding must occur first to avoid legal penalties.<sup>60</sup>

It is illegal to marry before the age of 18, except in special circumstances. For example, children under the age of 18 may legally marry with parental consent. In 2013, nearly 3% of legal marriages involved underaged girls. This number increased to 20% in the Mediterranean, Northeast Anatolia, and eastern Central Anatolia regions.<sup>61</sup>

Other data, show that the rate of child marriages is much higher. In 2006, nearly 32% of women were married before reaching the legal age of

18.<sup>62</sup> A study in 2013 showed that nearly 40% of all marriages involved under-aged girls. Only 18% of these girls were literate.<sup>63</sup>

Many Turks delay marriage until they have met their military obligations, and educational demands. The average age for marriage is 25 for women, and 29 for men.<sup>64</sup> The 1926 Civil Code outlawed polygamy, and legalized marriages between Muslim women and non-Muslim men.<sup>65</sup>

Western-style dating is still uncommon in Turkey, except in urban areas where couples are freer to select their own mates. Rural couples are also chaperoned, and families play a bigger role in selecting and approving marriage partners.<sup>66, 67</sup>

According to a custom from Ottoman times (*Görücülik*), older females from the family of a marriageable young man, visit the home of a suitable young woman to pass final judgment on whether she would make a good wife.<sup>68, 69</sup>



## Divorce

The 2013 divorce rate in Turkey was approximately 1.6%, one of the lowest in the world.<sup>70, 71</sup> Either spouse may initiate divorce proceedings, for any number of reasons including adultery, domestic violence and abuse, or desertion. Women generally take back their family name (if they had assumed the husband's last name), but they may keep their married name in certain circumstances. Turkey has community property law, thus allowing both spouses to retain equal shares of property and possessions in the event of a divorce.<sup>72</sup> By law, the custody of children must be granted to one parent or the other, as decided by a judge. Alimony may be ordered.<sup>73</sup> In most cases, a woman cannot remarry until 300 days after the dissolution of the marriage.<sup>74</sup>

A woman still faces social disapproval for a failed marriage, although attitudes toward divorce are changing. Family and children are viewed as the normal state of affairs, and women who divorce undermine traditional family structure.<sup>75</sup> A 2009 poll conducted in 17 nations, showed that 72% of respondents believe divorced women in Turkey are treated worse than non-divorced women.<sup>76</sup>

## Birth

The birth of a child is usually a time of great joy in a Turkish household, and is accompanied by rituals and celebration. One tradition, still largely practiced, is washing a mother and her newborn on the 40th day after birth. This ceremony is known as *kirklama* (making the forties), and is intended to keep the mother and child safe from illness.<sup>77</sup> When a pregnancy is announced in the family, it is customary for the mother-in-law to give a gold bracelet to the expectant mother.<sup>78</sup> Another life-cycle event is the *sunnet*, or circumcision ritual. This ritual is held in the summer for boys between the ages of 5–15, and is usually followed by music, dancing, a festive meal, and an exchange of presents.<sup>79, 80</sup>



*Family on the way to the Sunnet ritual*  
© Charles Roffey



## Family Social Events

### Weddings

Urban weddings are similar to those in the West, and involve a ceremony followed by a reception. In rural areas, weddings may follow more traditional practices, and commonly last three days. The *kina gecesi* (henna evening) marks the beginning of traditional celebrations. Women gather to decorate the hands of the bride with henna, and to sing and dance. On the second day, the parents of the prospective couple serve lunch and dinner to the guests. On the final day, the bride is delivered on horseback to the groom's home, after which traditional dances take place. These ceremonies are losing popularity, however, because of the expense.<sup>81, 82</sup>

#### Exchange 70: I wish you both happiness.

Soldier:	I wish you both happiness.	eekeeneezeh deh motluluklaar deelehrem
Local:	We are honored.	tehshakUr ehdehrehz



*Flowers for a funeral in Istanbul*  
© Charles Roffey

### Funerals

Burial customs in Turkey are not secular. They follow Islamic ritual, and they are performed within 24 hours of death, if possible. The first step in preparing the body is the *ghusl*, or ritual ablution, which is similar to the ablution a Muslim performs before praying. The body is washed to remove impurities. It is then wrapped in a white shroud (*kafan*). The deceased is placed in a coffin and carried to a mosque, where the body is then removed from the coffin, and positioned in the ground with the right side facing Mecca. The dead are commonly buried without a coffin.<sup>83, 84</sup>

#### Exchange 71: 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

A religious ceremony is often held seven days after death, during which the Quran is read at home.<sup>85</sup> The dead are commemorated once again with ceremonies and special

meals, on the 40th and 52nd days after death, and on the yearly anniversary of the death.<sup>86, 87</sup>

### Exchange 72: Please be strong.

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

A reception is usually held at the home of the deceased, where visitors may express their condolences to the family, following a graveside service. A meal reaffirms the belief that the dead still need nourishment in the afterlife. Turks commonly believe that their failure to perform traditional mealtime rituals will cause the deceased's spirit to disturb living relatives.<sup>88</sup> In addition, Turks often visit the graves of their deceased relatives to remember them with prayers.<sup>89</sup>

## Naming Conventions

Before the 1930s, wives and children took the husband's/father's first name as their last name. Since that time, however, family names have been used. Married women can take their husband's last name, or use both their family name and their husband's.<sup>90</sup>

All Turkish first names have a meaning, and children are sometimes assigned a name that suggests the time of birth, such as *Bayram* (feast), *Şafak* (dawn), or *Bahar* (spring). Other children might be given a name related to events surrounding their birth, such as *Yağmur* (rain) or *Tufan* (storm). Parental attitudes are revealed in names like *Yeter* (enough, no more children) or *Songül* (last rose).<sup>91, 92</sup>

In rural areas, it is customary for the imam, or an elderly person, to hold the child in the direction of Mecca, while reciting the child's name and the opening verse of the Quran.<sup>93</sup> Rural and urban residents uphold the tradition of having grandparents, or other older relatives, give the child his or her second name. Turks generally use their second name. For example, a child named Mehmet Sardar Çiller, would likely be known as Sardar or M. Sardar.<sup>94</sup>

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## Overview: Chapter 6 Assessment

1. The traditional extended family is the most common type of household in Turkey.

**FALSE**

Increasing urbanization has led to a change in family structure. Although extended families were once the norm, today about 81% of Turkish households are nuclear. Extended families are more common in rural regions.

- Male circumcision is an important family celebration.

**TRUE**

An important celebration is the sunnet, or circumcision ritual. It is held in the summer for boys between ages 5–15, and is usually followed by music, dancing, an exchange of presents, and a festive meal.

2. Nursing homes in Turkey are uncommon.

**TRUE**

Nursing homes and other facilities for the support of the elderly are relatively rare, but there are increasing efforts to expand social and economic services for the elderly.

3. Most village weddings take place in the fall.

**FALSE**

In rural villages, most weddings take place in the summer, which makes it one of the busiest times of the year.

4. Children in Turkey take the surname of their father.

**TRUE**

Before the 1930s, wives and children took the husband's/father's first name, as their last name. Since that time, Turks have used family names.



## ***Turkish Cultural Orientation: Final Assessment***

1. Turkey has numerous natural resources.  
**True or False?**
2. Ankara was founded in 1923 as the capital of the new Republic of Turkey.  
**True or False?**
3. Governmental power in Turkey rests largely with the president.  
**True or False?**
4. The Ottoman Empire was geographically larger than modern Turkey.  
**True or False?**
5. The Turkish military has only once removed a democratically elected government from power in Turkey.  
**True or False?**
6. Atatürk forbade the Turkish people from calling their Muslim god “Allah,” during the process of modernizing Turkey.  
**True or False?**
7. Turkish women are required to cover their heads with scarves in public.  
**True or False?**
8. Visitors to Turkey are allowed to enter well-known mosques throughout the country.  
**True or False?**
9. Students must study religion in Turkish public schools.  
**True or False?**
10. Religious holidays in Turkey are not observed by the state.  
**True or False?**

11. When addressing a younger person in Turkey, it is common to attach a title to the person's first name—Bey for men and Hanim for women.  
**True or False?**
12. When entering a room filled with people, it is appropriate to greet all present by going in a left-to-right direction.  
**True or False?**
13. Urban Turks typically eat on a low table while sitting on the floor.  
**True or False?**
14. Guests should make it a point to be punctual when arriving at someone's home for dinner.  
**True or False?**
15. You should place the knife and fork on opposite sides of the plate when you have finished a meal.  
**True or False?**
16. It is acceptable to divide the cost of a meal among guests.  
**True or False?**
17. Stores are generally closed on Sundays, in the urban centers of Turkey.  
**True or False?**
18. It is illegal to take Turkish lira out of the country.  
**True or False?**
19. Most public transportation is safe and reliable in Turkey.  
**True or False?**
20. Most Turks frequently give money to beggars.  
**True or False?**

21. The higher employment rates in rural Turkey mean that the poverty rate is lower than in urban areas.  
**True or False?**
22. Communities with at least 5,000 residents have a municipal government.  
**True or False?**
23. The headman of a village is called a belediye reisi.  
**True or False?**
24. In rural areas, males and females tend to socialize separately.  
**True or False?**
25. Women are prohibited from holding public office in villages.  
**True or False?**
26. Because of social changes, the status of the elderly has declined in Turkey.  
**True or False?**
27. The divorce rate in Turkey is high.  
**True or False?**
28. There is a strong and clear preference for male children in Turkey.  
**True or False?**
29. Polygamy is legal in Turkey.  
**True or False?**
30. Turks generally use their second given name in daily life.  
**True or False?**

## Turkish Cultural Orientation: Further Reading

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