Turkey

Definition: Turkey from Collins English Dictionary

1 a republic in W Asia and SE Europe, between the Black Sea, the Mediterranean, and the Aegean: the centre of the Ottoman Empire; became a republic in 1923. The major Asian part, consisting mainly of an arid plateau, is separated from European Turkey by the Bosporus, Sea of Marmara, and Dardanelles.
Languages: Turkish (official), Kurdish, and Arabic minority languages. Religion: Muslim majority. Currency: lira.

Summary Article: Turkey
From Philip's Encyclopedia

The Republic of Turkey lies in two continents. The European section (Thrace) lies W of a waterway between the Black and Mediterranean seas - the Bosporus, the Sea of Marmara (Marmara Denizi) and a narrow strait called the Dardanelles.

Most of the Asian part, Anatolia or Asia Minor, consists of plateaux and mountains. These rise to 5,165m [16,945ft] at Mount Ararat (Agri Dagi) near the border with Armenia. Earthquakes are common. Deciduous forests grow inland with conifers on the mountains. The plateau is mainly dry steppe.

Climate

Central Turkey has a dry climate, with hot, sunny summers and cold winters. The driest part of the central plateau lies S of Ankara, around Lake Tuz. W Turkey has a Mediterranean climate, while the Black Sea coast has cooler summers.

History

In ad 330 the Roman Empire moved its capital to Byzantium, renaming it Constantinople. Constantinople became the capital of the East Roman (or Byzantine) Empire in 395. Seljuk Turks from central Asia invaded Anatolia in the 11th century, introducing Islam, and made Konya their capital. In the 14th century another group of Turks, the Ottomans, conquered the area. In 1453 the Ottoman Turks under Muhammad II took Constantinople, ending the Byzantine Empire. They made the city their capital, renamed it Istanbul and built up the massive Ottoman Empire, which lasted until the 20th century but finally collapsed after World War 1 with the punitive Treaty of Sèvres of 1920. Nationalists, led by Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), launched a war of independence. In 1923 Turkey became a republic, with Kemal as its president. Atatürk's 14-year dictatorship created a secular, Westernized state.

In 1938 Atatürk died, and Ismet Inönü succeeded him. Turkey remained neutral throughout most of World War 2 and joined NATO in 1952. In 1960 a military coup led to the creation of a second republic. In 1965, Süleyman Demirel became prime minister. The country applied to join the European Economic Community in 1987 but Turkey's conflict with Greece, together with its invasion of northern Cyprus in 1974, have led many Europeans to treat Turkey's aspirations with caution.

Politics

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After a military coup in 1980, civilian government was restored with a new constitution in 1982. In 1998, the government banned the Islamist Welfare Party for violating secular principles. In 1999, the largest numbers of parliamentary seats were won by the ruling Democratic Left Party and the far-right Nationalist Action Party. In 2001 the Turkish parliament adopted reforms to ease the country’s entry into the European Union, including formally recognizing men and women as equals.

In the elections of 2002 the moderate Islamic Justice and Development Party (AKP) won 362 of the 500 seats in parliament. None of the parties in the former ruling coalition won even 10%. Turkey finally agreed to recognize Cyprus as an EU member, and this led to EU membership talks being formally launched in October 2005 with negotiations expected to take about 10 years. In 2006, however, the talks were partially suspended over failures to put the recognition of Cyprus into practice.

In the 1980s and 1990s civil war was a problem in the E and SE of Turkey. Fighting took place between Turkish forces and those of the secessionist Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). Over 30,000 people died and the Turkish government has frequently been accused of violating the human rights of the Kurds. A ceasefire was reached in 1999, but broke down in 2004 as violence resumed.

**Economy**

Turkey is a 'lower-middle-income' developing country. Agriculture employs 40% of the people, and barley, cotton, fruits, maize, tobacco and wheat are major crops. Livestock farming is important and wool is a leading product. Manufacturing is the chief activity, including processed farm products and textiles, cars, fertilizers, iron and steel, machinery, metal products and paper products. Turkey receives more than 9 million tourists a year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>area</th>
<th>774,815sq km [299,156sq mi]</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>population</td>
<td>70,414,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>capital (population)</td>
<td>Ankara (3,203,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>government</td>
<td>Multiparty republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ethnic groups</td>
<td>Turkish 80%, Kurdish 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>languages</td>
<td>Turkish (official), Kurdish, Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>religions</td>
<td>Islam (mainly Sunni Muslim) 99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>currency</td>
<td>New Turkish lira = 100 kurus</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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