

Turkey

Business Guide

Compiled by:

Swiss Business Hub Turkey

Istanbul, October 2015

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Ordinary and official passport holders are exempted from visa for their travels up to 90 days. Visa is only valid when the purpose of travel is tourism or commerce. For other purposes, such as work and study, visas are given by Turkish Embassies or Consulates. To learn more about visa procedures, please visit www.mfa.gov.tr and contact the nearest Turkish Embassy or Consulate.

For information about the customs' regulations on entry and exit, please visit www.gtb.gov.tr.

You can also refer to the Embassy web page to get information on various topics (www.eda.admin.ch/ankara).

LANGUAGES USED FOR BUSINESS

The official language is Turkish. In business, English is the preferred language for communication. In tourism, German and Russian are most commonly spoken foreign languages which are followed by French, Italian and Arabic. Translators are available at a cost from business service provider companies.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

January 1 New Year holiday

April 23 National Sovereignty and Children's Day

May 19 Commemoration of Atatürk and Youth & Sports Day

August 30 Victory Day

October 29 Republic Day

Religious Holidays

The dates of the religious festivals change according to the Muslim lunar calendar and thus occur 10 days earlier each year.

- **Ramadan or Seker Bayrami (the Festival of Fast-Breaking):** 3-day festival.
- **Kurban Bayrami (the Festival of Sacrifice):** 4-day festival.

HEALTH AND INOCULATIONS

Turkey does not pose any unusual health risks. Hospitals render service 24 hours. Private and state-owned hospitals and private medical doctors are available in all major cities. Private care, however, can be rather expensive. Foreign visitors are advised to have medical insurance covering Turkey. The standards of state hospitals and private health care institutions in major towns are good. At least one pharmacy in each neighbourhood is open at all times.

Vaccines are recommended for visitors to Turkey include all normal childhood immunisations, plus typhoid, hepatitis B and hepatitis A. More information about health issues can be obtained from country report of the WHO (www.who.org).

In early 2008 Turkish parliament passed a smoking ban. The law is in force in closed public areas, shops, restaurants and shopping malls.

TIME ZONES

GMT+3 hours (April-September)

GMT+2 hours (October-March)

Same time zone is used all over the country.

Time difference between Switzerland and Turkey is: +1:0 hours

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Domestic: 220-240 volts, 50 Hz

Industrial: 400 380 volts; 50 Hz; 3,4 Number of wires (not including the ground wire)

Plugs: European round 2-prong plugs

Lamp Sockets: Screw type

METHODS OF PAYMENT

The currency unit is the TL as of 01.01.2009. The Council of Ministers was authorized to remove the prefix "New" from the "New Turkish Lira" and from the "New Kurus". (www.tcmb.gov.tr)

Exchange rates for Lira are quoted by the Central Bank (www.tcmb.gov.tr) and adjusted on a daily basis. TL is easily obtainable upon arrival in Turkey at any exchange office or bank. There are ATMs throughout Turkey, particularly in the big cities and around tourist centres. Credit cards (Visa, Master Card, and Diners Club) and travel checks are accepted by most of the merchants and at hotels. US dollar and Euro are also used at tourist shops and hotels for payment.

TRANSPORTATION

It is possible to use air, sea and land transportation to travel Turkey.

BY AIR

Various Airlines have regular flights to Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir, Antalya, Adana, Trabzon and Dalaman, from the major capitals and cities of the world. Most international airlines have regular flights from all major cities of the world to Turkey's international airports. 3 hours flight time from Zurich to Istanbul.

Swiss International Airlines, Turkish Airlines (THY), Lufthansa, Pegasus, Sun Express etc. flies from Zurich to Turkey.

Turkish Airlines (THY) and some Turkish private airline companies have flights to many cities in Europe, North America, Far East and Middle East.

For information and reservations please follow the links below:

www.swiss.com

www.thy.gov.tr

www.flypgs.com

www.lufthansa.com

www.sunexpress.com

THY and Anadolu Jet (www.anadolujet.com) have regular flights to other cities in Turkey. Private airline companies also fly to some major Turkish towns and offer competitive prices (e.g. Pegasus Airlines)

www.flypgs.com, Sun Express www.sunexpress.com, Onur Airlines www.onurair.com.tr, Atlas Jet www.atlasqlb.com, Izair www.izair.com.tr and Borajet www.borajet.com.tr

BY SEA

Passenger Ferries: Apart from numerous cruises in the Mediterranean, several foreign shipping companies have regular services to the ports of Trabzon, Samsun, Istanbul, Dikili Izmir, Cesme, Kusadasi, Bodrum, Marmaris, Antalya, Alanya, Mersin and Iskenderun.

Car Ferries: There are several car ferries for tourists who wish to bring their cars while sightseeing. Connections run from Venice, Ancona, Brindisi, and Bari to Istanbul, Izmir, Cesme, Kusadasi, Marmaris, and Antalya. But car travel has disadvantages too: expense (fuel is expensive), and sometimes having to drive when you'd rather take public transport.

Lines between Turkey and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus:

Tasucu - Girne

Alanya - Girne

Mersin - Gazimagosa

Ferry lines between Turkey and the Greek Islands

Ayvalik - Midilli (Lesbos)

Cesme - Sakiz (Chios)

Kusadasi - Sisam (Samos)

Bodrum - Istankoy (Cos)

Bodrum - Simi (Symi)

Marmaris - Rodos (Rhodes)

Fethiye - Rodos (Rhodes)

For more information and reservations please refer to Turkish Maritime Lines (www.tdi.com.tr).

BY ROAD

Zurich - Istanbul, approximately 2,340 km.

Northern Route: Germany, Austria, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey. /

Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Turkey. /or Macedonia, Greece, Turkey

Southern Route: Italy, with a ferry to Turkey.

BY RAIL

Rail transportation, is available between major cities. Turkey began a programme of high-speed rail connections in 2009. There are proposed connections from Istanbul to Ankara via Eskişehir and Polatlı and a proposed line from Ankara to Sivas. Another line from Polatlı to Konya is also under construction.

After completion, it is estimated that travel time between Istanbul and Ankara will be reduced from six and a half hours to three hours and ten minutes.

Train journeys can be made to Istanbul directly from and via some of the major cities in Europe. For information and reservations please refer to Turkish Railways (www.tcdd.gov.tr).

BY COACH

Buses are an efficient and affordable way to travel around the country. A large number of bus companies provide frequent day and night services between all Turkish cities. Local Tourism Information offices usually have the bus schedule for their areas. There are some companies having bus services between Turkey and Austria, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Switzerland, and Greece; also Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Syria.

Urban transport Istanbul

Bus, Taxi, Dolmus (a van or mini-bus), tram and metro (in some major towns) are used for inner city transportation in Istanbul. A taxi is the fastest but not cheapest option, though fares in Turkey are cheap compared with those in Europe. Each taxi is equipped with a taxi-meter.

Both chauffeur-driven and self-driven rentals are also available in large towns. Most international companies are represented.

Istanbul has a comprehensive transport infrastructure largely run by IETT (Istanbul Electric Tram and Funicular Company) including:

- Funiculars: Istanbul has two funicular lines. The Tunel (T), which connects Karaköy and Tunel Square and the Kabataş-Taksim Funicular (F1) which connects the sea bus station and tram stop in Kabataş to the metro station in Taksim
- Light Rail: Between Bağcılar Merkez and Kabataş (T1), Topkapı and Mescidi Selam (T4),
- Metro: Istanbul has an underground system. From from Yenikapı and Atatürk Airport (M1A), Yenikapı and Kirazlı (M1B), Yenikapı and Hacıosman (M2), Kirazlı and Olimpiyat and Başakşehir (M3), KADIKÖY and Kartal (M4), Levent and Boğaziçi (M6). Further underground lines are under construction
- Trams: There are two historical tramlines in Istanbul. The first was opened in 1990 and links Tunel to Taksim (T2) and the 2003 Moda tramway loop in Anatolia (T3)
- Metrobüs: is a 50 km (31.1 mi) bus rapid transit route with 45 stations which follows the city's ring-road via Avcılar, Zincirlikuyu and the Bosphorus Bridge to Söğütluçeşme using dedicated bus lanes for much of the route.

- Marmaray: the 13.6-km (8.5-mile) rail connection between European and Asian Istanbul via a tunnel beneath the Bosphorus joins the stations at Yenikapı and Sirkeci in Europe with the stations at Üsküdar and Ayrılık Çeşmesi in Asia—makes it possible to cross from Old Istanbul in Europe to Üsküdar in Asia in a matter of minutes.
- For further information on transport in Istanbul www.istanbul-ulasim.com.tr

Public transport can be paid for in Istanbul by using a Smart Ticket (*Akbil*). The system is an electronic ticket that is valid for all public transport in the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality. The *Akbil* comes in the form of a key fob and is obtained for a small deposit from major transport centres. Travel credits are then loaded on the ticket up to the value of 150 Lira. Top up credits are available at most public transport locations including bus stops and ferry ports.

HOTELS

Turkey offers a wide array of very comfortable and modern facilities to any budget. The Turkish Tourism offices can provide a Hotel Guide that lists numerous hotels licensed by the Ministry of Tourism. Licensed hotels and other licensed accommodation establishments in any city can also be found at www.turizm.gov.tr and www.hotelguide.com.tr.

COMMUNICATION

Telephone, telegram and fax services both domestic and international have been integrated into direct dialling system. Regular mail services, parcel post services (land/air), express mail services are available. Turkish post and telephone offices are easily recognisable by their PTT and Turk Telekom signs. Major post offices are open 8:00–24:00, Monday to Saturday. Small post offices have the same hours as government offices.

It is possible to exchange money at some PTT branches at the current international exchange rate. PTT has agreements with local banks and makes simple banking operations. An express postal service (Acele Posta Servisi - APS) operates from Turkey to about hundred other countries for letters, documents, and small packages.

How to dial:

- Same area calls: seven digit number
- From area to area calls: 00 + area code + number
- International calls: 00 + country code + area code + number
- Code to call Switzerland: 00 41 + area code + number
- Code to call Turkey: 00 90 + area code + number

CELL PHONES AND INTERNET

Local mobiles work with one of three main operators (Turkcell, Vodafone and Avea). A line or a low-end mobile can be bought for long stays.

- From Cell Phone to area calls: 00 + area code + number

Internet service providers are available (TTNET, Superonline, Vodafone) Some cafés, restaurants and hotels provide wireless service.

BUSINESS HOURS

Government Offices:

8:30 - 12:30; 13:30 - 17:30 (closed Saturday and Sunday).

Banks:

9:00 - 12:30; 13:30 - 17:00 (closed Saturday and Sunday).

Some banks provide services during lunch breaks. At Atatürk Airport 00:00 – 23:59 and in some Shopping Malls 10:00-18:30.

Shops:

9:30 - 19:30 (In major cities, closing times vary and the shops in big malls are opened till 10:00 - 22:00 or midnight in tourist areas).

On the first day of the Ramadan (Seker) and Kurban religious holidays, majority of shops and bazaars are closed.

Most of the private companies work on Saturday for half day or full day.

ADDRESSES AND OPENING HOURS OF THE EMBASSY OF THE COUNTRY IN SWITZERLAND

The information on Swiss Embassy, Consulate General and honorary consuls are provided below.

ADDRESSES OF THE SWISS EMBASSY AND CONSULATES

Ambassade de Suisse

Atatürk Bulvarı 247 P.K. 25

06692 Kavaklıdere Ankara

Phone: 90-312-457 31 00

Fax: 90-312-467 11 99

E-mail: ank.vertretung@eda.admin.ch

Web site: www.eda.admin.ch/turkey

Opening hours: 08:00-17:15 (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday)

08:00-13:00 (Friday), closed on Saturday and Sunday

(12:15-13:15 lunch break)

Consulat Général à Istanbul

1. Levent Plaza, A Blok Kat.3

Büyükdere Cad. No.173

P.K. 90 34330 Levent, Istanbul

Phone: 90-212- 283 12 82

Fax: 90-212- 283 12 98

E-mail: ist.vertretung@eda.admin.ch

Opening hours: 08:30-11:00 (Monday-Friday) closed on Saturday and Sunday

Consul Honoraire de Suisse à Izmir

TTL Tütün A.S.

7093 Sokak No : 18 Pinarbasi

35060 Bornova, Izmir

Phone: 90-232- 479 13 00

Fax: 90-232- 479 13 67

E-mail: izmir@honrep.ch

(Opening Hours: 09:00-18:00)

Consul Honoraire de Suisse à Antalya

The Sense Deluxe Hotel

07330 Manavgat – Antalya

Phone: 90-242- 763 0241

Fax: 90-242- 763 0243

E-mail: antalya@honrep.ch

(Opening Hours: 09:00-18:00)

Consul Honoraire de Suisse à Mersin

Atako International Transport, Shipping and Trading Co. Ltd.

Hanri Atat Sok. No: 8

Güven Ishani, Kat: 3, 33070 Mersin

Phone: 90-324- 238 68 30

Fax: 90-324- 232 20 57

E-mail: mersin@honrep.ch

(Opening Hours: 09:00-18:00)

Consul Honoraire de Suisse à Gaziantep

Vakant

Phone: 90-212-283 12 82

Fax: 90-212-283 12 98

E-mail: ist.vertretung@eda.admin.ch

(Opening Hours: 08:00-17:00)

For the other Embassies please visit www.mfa.gov.tr/consular.htm. Working hours of the Embassies are generally between 8:00/9:00-17:00/18:00, though there would be some exceptions for some days.

TIPS FOR INITIATING BUSINESS CONTACTS

To conduct a preliminary market research in advance is advisable. Some key factors to become successful are comprehensive research of market opportunities, diligent searching for the right partner, and competitive pricing. Price is an important element in Turkish buying decisions. Turkish people appreciate visitors being polite, and respectful of Turkish traditions.

It is very important to work with a right Turkish partner to understand local market conditions, the functioning of government organisations and the mechanism of local business. It is advisable to make short term representation agreements (e.g. one or two years) on project or product basis at the beginning, in lieu of full representation, if you are not sure about the power and success of your local representative. Caution is recommended when seemingly easy ways are offered to make and complete business deals. A good after sales support and up to date products help to increase credibility and reliability of foreign firms that operate in the Turkish market.

Swiss companies established in the country and the commercial division of the Swiss Embassy are useful source of information that can be utilised. Currently more than 600 companies in different sizes having Swiss capital are operating in Turkey.

BUSINESS PRACTICES

Most of the Turkish people regard themselves as Europeans and they have considerable patriotism. Commercial visitors are advised to be aware of Turks' sensitivities, pride, history, and culture. In major cities a western way of life is observed. The atmosphere in large cities in Turkey is similar to some European cities. Turkish people are very hospitable. Do not expect to get right down to business in a meeting with a Turkish business person. Some preliminary "small talks" allows him/her to get to know you and then business negotiations start. An effort by the visitor to speak a little Turkish is appreciated. In general, personal relationship is an important basis for a successful business relationship. Exchange of business cards during business meetings is customary.

Although Friday is the Muslim holiday, business is conducted as other days of week. Sunday is official day of rest. Business is made during twelve months of a year but July and August are less busy months due to vacations.

Business dress is usually conservative, with dark suits for men and suits and heels for women. The traditional and formal way to address a Turk is by his or her first name followed by "Bey" for man (e.g. Mehmet Bey) and "Hanım" for woman (e.g. Yasemin Hanım).

SPECIAL FEATURES ON THE MARKET

If the product offered for the local market has world-wide reputation, and proven sale performance in other markets, these factors will help promotion efforts considerably. Turkish consumers in the middle and upper classes are well aware of global brands and are often willing to pay extra for recognised brand names and new technology products.

In recent years - though due to political reasons a rose can be observed – In general Turkish women do not wear burkas or any of the head-to-toe coverings. You will see Turkish women dressed modestly and wearing headscarves, this is not required and has more to do with family traditions and personal religious expression. You will more likely see Turkish, women wearing stylish western clothing. Women in Turkey are free to enjoy all of the freedoms that men do, and also serve in prestigious positions in business and government. The freedom of woman is guaranteed by the constitution of the Republic of Turkey. Less than a decade ago Turkey also had a woman prime minister.

Political uncertainties and economic ups and downs are usual in Turkey. However, despite such negative aspects, Turkey has a very dynamic economy. After having a severe economic crisis in the past, Turkey has gone thru an unprecedented period of high growth.

Some other useful links for Business Guide:

www.invest.gov.tr

www.tourismturkey.org

www.worldbiz.com

www.businessturkiye.net

www.doingbusiness.org

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