

Destination Guide for Türkiye

Overview

Destination Risk Levels

- Low Medical Risk for Türkiye
- Medium Travel Risk for Türkiye
- High Travel Risk for Hakkari, Sirnak, Diyarbakir provinces
- High Travel Risk for Areas within ten miles (16km) of the Syrian border

Diyarbakir, Hakkari, Sirnak provinces: HIGH

The stability of these areas continues to depend on the successful implementation of the ceasefire between the Turkish government and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), as well as the PKK's disarmament. The group declared a ceasefire in March 2025.

Diyarbakir, Hakkari and Sirnak provinces were affected by a significant increase in violence following the July 2015 collapse of the ceasefire between the PKK and Turkish government. Since 2015, the security forces have conducted frequent security operations in these locations and other Kurdish-majority provinces in the east of the country to uproot Kurdish militias there. The situation in major urban centres, such as Diyarbakir (Diyarbakir), has stabilised since. Nonetheless, rural areas in these provinces have remained susceptible to security incidents and targeted attacks against security and police interests.

Areas within ten miles (16km) of the Syrian border: HIGH

Hostilities in neighboring Syria have subsided following the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS)-led takeover in December 2024. In March 2025, the Syrian government reached a landmark agreement with the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) to integrate the SDF into state institutions. After the agreement was reached, Turkish and Turkey-backed forces ceased their military operations against the SDF position in the north-eastern Syria. This prompted de-escalation of hostilities in the area and lowered the risk of spillover of hostilities across the border into Turkey. Kurdish militias in the past have conducted retaliatory cross-border attacks targeting Turkey border areas in response to Turkey's military operations in north-eastern Syria.

Despite the de-escalation of hostilities, the Turkish side of the border remains militarised and restrictions for travel remain in place there. If considering travel to the border areas consult local authorities and obtain any necessary permits prior to travel.

Standing Travel Advice

- Travel to Turkey can continue with standard security precautions.
- Abide by official directives.
- Take standard precautions to mitigate the risk of petty and street crime.
- Minimise time spent in the vicinity of potential terrorist targets, including government and military interests, symbolic foreign interests, places commonly frequented by Westerners, high-profile cultural institutions, political party offices and rallies, places of worship and transport hubs.
- Seek itinerary- and profile-specific advice for accommodation and transport options.
- Carry identification documents at all times to facilitate passage through checkpoints.
- Respect local customs and legislation.

Ankara, Istanbul, other major cities in western Turkey

- Liaise with local contacts for information about planned demonstrations so that daily movements can be planned to avoid potentially affected areas; do not stop to watch or photograph protests, and leave an area immediately if a crowd begins to gather.
- Exercise increased vigilance and avoid spending prolonged periods of time in the vicinity of high profile tourist locations. At such sites, avoid large groups of people and visit at non-peak times of day.
- Minimise time spent at public transport hubs and infrastructure.
- Licensed taxis and rail are suitable for business travellers. However, private transport - with attendant benefits such as a driver's dual language capability and the option for flexible and monitored itineraries - is preferable.
- Do not self-drive unless familiar with local conditions; use a trusted local driver with appropriate language capabilities.

Provinces affected by the February 2023 earthquakes: Adana, Adiyaman, Diyarbakir, Gaziantep, Hatay, Kahramanmaras, Kilis, Malatya, Osmaniye and Sanliurfa

- Travel to MEDIUM-risk areas in provinces affected by the February 2023 earthquakes can continue, but requires preliminary itinerary-specific advice.
- Travelling to the worst affected areas in Adiyaman, Hatay, Kahramanmaras and Malatya provinces, as well as Islahiye district in Gaziantep province, requires robust journey management planning. Liaise with local contacts or security provider for logistical and operational arrangements, including secure transport and accommodation. Ensure access to reliable methods of communication and essential supplies, including water, food, medicine, fuel and cash. Do not enter damaged buildings.
- Travel to HIGH-risk areas in Diyarbakir, Gaziantep, Hatay, Kilis and Sanlifura provinces requires additional security measures accounting for the existing security threats. See additional recommendations below.

Gaziantep, Hatay, Kilis, Mardin and Sanlifura provinces bordering Syria

- Defer non-essential travel to areas within ten miles (16km) of the Syrian border rated as HIGH risk due to the risks associated with proximity to an active conflict zone and the potential for spillover violence.
- Defer all travel to the areas within five miles (8km) within the Syrian border.
- For travel to MEDIUM-risk areas of Gaziantep, Hatay, Kilis, Mardin and Sanlifura provinces, liaise with local contacts for logistical and operational support, and for information on potentially disruptive security measures. Do not self-drive; pre-arrange transport with a trusted local driver with appropriate language capabilities.

Diyarbakir, Hakkari and Sirnak provinces

- Defer non-essential travel to the cities of Diyarbakir, Hakkari and Sirnak, where the travel risks are rated as HIGH.
- Defer all travel to rural areas of Diyarbakir, Hakkari and Sirnak provinces.
- Liaise with local contacts for information on the short-notice imposition of any curfews or other potentially disruptive security measures, including occasional access restriction on internet and mobile networks. Be prepared to restrict movement at short notice and to potentially lose communications for periods of time. Factor the potential for these occasional restrictions into travel and journey-management plans. Liaise with trusted local contacts regarding curfew locations and timings, as these can change frequently.

The eastern and south-eastern provinces of Agri, Batman, Bingol, Bitlis, Erzincan, Erzurum, Igdir, Kars, Mardin, Mus, Siirt, Tunceli and Van

- Monitor developments closely, pre-arrange transport with a trusted local driver with appropriate language capabilities, and ensure you have reliable, backup communications devices.
- Minimise road travel in rural areas; undertake journeys only during daylight hours and with your local guide.
- Liaise with local contacts for information on the short-notice imposition of potentially disruptive security measures, including curfews.

Active Alerts (2)

● Notice | Category

Monitor developments amid heightened regional tensions following Israeli airstrike on Qatar

10 September 2025 at 10:57

Location : Worldwide Travel

Category : Conflict, Diplomatic issue

Monitor developments amid heightened regional tensions following an Israeli airstrike on Qatar's capital Doha on 9 September. According to Israeli officials, the airstrike on the [Katara](#) district at around 16.00 (local time), was targeting Hamas leadership. At least six people were killed in the attack, including one Qatari security official. Hamas said its leadership, reported to have been meeting to discuss the latest ceasefire proposal between Hamas and Israel in the Gaza Strip (Palestinian Territories), survived the attack. The attack, while targeted and likely a one-off in relation to Qatar, highlights the volatility in the region driven by the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict and other related hostilities.

Advice :

Inbound travellers

- Inbound travel and transit to Qatar can continue with standard security precautions.
- Consult our country pages for further information and advice for inbound business travellers and in-country workforce across the region.

In region workforce

- Monitor and abide by official directives, including any local emergency and evacuation procedures, movement restrictions, curfews and road closures.
- Avoid discussing potentially sensitive topics online or in person, as a precaution.
- Israeli and US nationals in countries across the Middle East and North Africa should exercise caution and maintain a low profile amid heightened tensions.
- Minimise time spent in the vicinity of all diplomatic missions across the region, particularly those of Israel and the US, as a precaution. Refrain from discussing regional tensions in public. Liaise with local contacts to stay abreast of potential demonstrations planned in your vicinity. Avoid all gatherings as a precaution. Expect heightened security measures near related events.
- Remain informed of the latest developments via verified sources, including International SOS alerts, diplomatic missions and local contacts. Do not act upon unverified information.

● Notice | Category

Istanbul province: Expect, avoid further political demonstrations in coming days due to risk of unrest (Revised)

08 September 2025 at 22:06

Location : Turkey

Category : Protest/Rally, Political unrest, Police/security operation, Road disruption

Expect further political demonstrations in Istanbul province **over the coming days** and avoid them due to the risk of unrest. The opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) has protested since 7 September at its [provincial headquarters](#) in [Sarıyer](#) district, following a court-ordered dismissal of its provincial leadership. This has led to nearby road closures and barricades set up by the authorities. Additional gatherings are likely, while the security forces are liable to use heavy-handed measures to disperse protesters, posing incidental risks to bystanders.

Advice :

- Expect further political demonstrations and avoid them due to the risk of unrest. Liaise with local contacts and monitor local media for information on any protests in your area. Remain prepared to respond to any related disturbances in your vicinity.
- Local nationals or journalists attending political gatherings or demonstrations should leave an area at the first sign of unrest.
- If travelling near a demonstration, ensure routes are clear before setting out and allow additional time for journeys. Do not attempt to pass through crowds or roadblocks. Instead, turn around and find an alternative route to your destination. Expect heightened security measures, especially around government buildings and security installations, and a tough security force response in areas affected by protests. Follow all official directives.
- Refrain from taking pictures of demonstrations and government and military sites and personnel. Avoid discussing political or other sensitive topics in public or on social media.
- Monitor our Turkey alerts for updates.

Destination Guide for Türkiye

Before You Travel

Visa Requirements

IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

British

Passport Required: Yes
Visa Required: No/1
Return Ticket Required: Yes

Australian

Passport Required: Yes
Visa Required: Yes
Return Ticket Required: Yes

Canadian

Passport Required: Yes
Visa Required: No/1
Return Ticket Required: Yes

USA

Passport Required: Yes
Visa Required: No/1
Return Ticket Required: Yes

Visas

Nationals of other countries can check visa requirements and other details on the [official website](#). Nationals of countries mentioned [here](#) are eligible to obtain visa [online](#) (e-visa). A copy of the e-visa should be presented at the time of arrival and verified by immigration officials. Business travellers and foreign nationals intending to stay for more than 90 days will need to procure a visa. Business travellers require an invitation letter from a company to obtain business visas. Those intending to stay for more than three months must obtain a residence permit prior to arrival. Visa fees vary for different nationalities. Foreign nationals may refer to the government's [website](#) for further information on visa fees. A transit visa is not necessary for those passengers who do not leave the transit lounge.

Procedures

Foreign nationals staying in Turkey for more than 90 days are required to apply for a short-term residence permit at the Provincial Directorate of Migration Administration to extend their residence. They must also register with the local police within one month of their arrival.

Entry/Exit Requirements

Entry/Exit requirements

All nationals are required to have a passport with at least six months' validity and for 60 days beyond the date of entry if applying in advance, proof of onward tickets and sufficient funds to sustain their stay in the country are also mandatory. Foreign nationals should make sure that their passports display an entry stamp on arrival by Turkish immigration officials to

avoid fines, detention and deportation. Foreign nationals must ensure that their passport has at least two blank pages, otherwise they will be denied entry.

There are no restrictions on the import of local or foreign currencies. The export of Turkish items of national value is illegal. However, foreign nationals can export such items after obtaining a receipt and a museum export certificate issued by the Turkish customs office.

Cultural Tips

CULTURAL ISSUES AND ETIQUETTE

General Tips

- During the Islamic fasting month of Ramadan, attitudes are relaxed compared with other countries in the Middle East, particularly in western Turkish cities. However, business travellers are advised to be respectful and not smoke, eat or drink outside or in the street during daylight hours, especially in strongly conservative provincial towns such as Kayseri (Kayseri province), Konya (Konya province), Erzurum (Erzurum province) and much of the south-east.
- Avoid discussing controversial political or historical issues.
- Homosexuality is legal, though the authorities may introduce some restrictions relevant to LGBTQ+ individuals, including bans on public LGBTQ+ activities. Societal attitudes towards the LGBTQ+ community are sometimes intolerant, and violence is occasionally directed towards its members.
- Insulting the nation by insulting the national flag, the name and the image of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (the founder of Republic of Turkey) is unlawful.

Getting There

METHOD OF ARRIVAL

By air

The main international airport is the newly built Istanbul Airport ([IST, Istanbul province](#)). The charter and budget flight terminal, Sabiha Gökçen International Airport ([SAW, Istanbul province](#)), is located on the Asian side of the city. There are also international airports in the capital Ankara, western Izmir, southern Adana and south-western Antalya provinces. Dalaman International Airport ([DLM, Mugla province](#)), located in the south-west of the country, is used mainly by foreign charter airlines.

Security at all airports is adequate. Passengers may be required to produce identification, generally passports and flight tickets, to enter airport perimeters and terminals. Allow plenty of time to pass through security checks, especially during peak hours. Screening and baggage checks are carried out during the entry at airport terminals and again on entry to departure lounges. Passengers may be politely frisked and asked to remove their coats and shoes. Laptop computers must be removed from cases, and passengers may be asked to switch them on. Passports and boarding cards (which are stamped) must be shown, and business travellers may be required to identify baggage on the tarmac before it is loaded. On arrival, there are random baggage searches at customs. Officials can be obstinately suspicious about expensive consumer durables (but not cameras). However, Turkish nationals are more likely to attract their attention than short-term business travellers.

Airlines have variable security standards. The European Commission's [website](#) can be consulted for a list of airlines banned within the EU, and the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)'s [website](#) contains a database of aviation accidents and statistics.

By land

Turkey shares borders with Armenia (border remains closed), Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Iran, Iraq and Syria. Rail journeys can experience delays and be time consuming for business travellers. In addition, Syria's security situation has made cross-border travel hazardous, which has resulted in the partial closure of border crossings with Turkey. There is a potential for the spillover of violence and associated incidents along the countries' shared frontier.

Procedures

Foreign nationals staying in Turkey for more than 90 days are required to apply for a short-term residence permit at the Provincial Directorate of Migration Administration to extend their residence. They must also register with the local police within one month of their arrival.

Getting Around

BY AIR

Turkey is a large country, making air travel the quickest and most efficient way to travel between cities. There is an extensive network of internal flights by state-run [Turkish Airlines](#) and other private firms. Tight security at airports in the country's western cities reduces the risk of terrorist attacks. Security onboard Turkish Airlines flights and other airlines is generally good.

BY ROAD

When possible, business travellers should use licensed taxis or hire a private driver rather than self-drive. Turkey has a relatively high rate of traffic accidents and fatalities. A lack of familiarity with the local road conditions, standards or driving regulations can exacerbate such risks. Severe traffic congestion in major urban centres can also contribute to driving difficulties and associated risks.

Car hire is widely available at main hotels, airports and travel agents, though it is expensive. Basic insurance is usually included, but a collision damage waiver is not. Traffic drives on the right. Foreign nationals require an international driver's permit to drive in the country. To obtain a local licence, they are required to attend driving lessons before the driving test, which is conducted in the Turkish language. Foreign nationals can use their local licence to drive in Turkey for six months and convert their local licence by contacting the registrar's office (Nufus Mudurlugu).

All drivers must carry their license and car hire documents at all times, and wear front seatbelts as prescribed by law, though local drivers often ignore this rule. Foreign nationals should contact and wait for the police if involved in a fatal accident; otherwise, an agreement between two parties is enough for insurance claims.

Driving outside major cities after dark should be avoided; factors such as inadequate lighting, pedestrians and unidentified objects on the roads make driving hazardous. Fines are imposed on offences such as the use of mobile phone while driving and the blood-alcohol threshold is among the lowest in Europe. Thoroughfares in the tourist-frequented western, south-western and coastal regions are in good condition. However, severe traffic congestion and a lack of parking spaces in most major cities can cause considerable delays.

Road travel in the eastern and south-eastern provinces should be conducted in conjunction with a trusted local driver with appropriate language capabilities and during daylight hours only. Factor in the potential for heightened security measures – including ad-hoc curfews, road closures and checkpoints – to disrupt travel in journey-management plans.

BY TAXI

Metered taxis are inexpensive and found easily in major towns and cities. Licensed taxis are yellow and can be hailed from the street or at taxi ranks. Travellers should avoid unmetered taxis, as the driver may not have the appropriate permits to operate and negotiating a fare may prove difficult. Tipping is not customary, though drivers will often round up the fare. There have been reports of drivers dropping passengers 'near' their destination (but in reality, a considerable distance away) and disappearing, sometimes swindling them. Passengers should always check the amount of money they hand over to the driver, so that the latter cannot claim later to have been paid a lower amount.

App-based ride-sharing services, such as Uber, are available in Istanbul. There have been several instances in which passengers and drivers in ride-share vehicles have faced harassment and assault due to tensions between rival operators. Exercise caution if using these services, such as by setting pick-up and drop-off locations away from established taxi ranks and maintaining a low profile when entering and exiting the vehicle.

BY TRAIN

Passenger services are operated across the country by the Turkish Republic State Railways. 'Express' trains operate between the capital Ankara, Izmir (Izmir province) and Istanbul province. These are comfortable (first-class compartments are air-conditioned) but slow, often taking twice as long as bus services. A high-speed express service links Ankara and Istanbul. The night train (yatakli) between Istanbul and Ankara offers clean and comfortable sleeper compartments, with the trip taking around eight hours. Business travellers should make reservations for all train services.

A high-speed railway link connecting Turkey and Bulgaria is also in the making with the first line connecting Kapikule-Svilengrad.

BY OTHER MEANS

While intercity buses are available between MEDIUM travel risk locations, private transport – with attendant benefits such as a driver's dual language capability and the option for flexible and monitored itineraries – is preferable for business travellers.

Business Women

BUSINESSWOMEN

There have been reports of an increasing trend of sexual harassment of foreign women travelling alone, though incidents of rape are rare. Sexual harassment can vary from inappropriate comments by men to touching or groping on public transport. If faced with such an incident, move to the closest safe, public location (restaurant, shop, hotel, or similar locations) as quickly as possible. If you believe you are being followed, take action to make bystanders aware of the situation.

Businesswomen are advised to observe more conservative attitudes in rural areas to avoid unwanted attention. For example, outside main hotels in rural areas and conservative towns, a woman eating alone may feel uncomfortable at best and be harassed at worst, though travelling alone in taxis or by air should not present particular problems.

There are no cultural restrictions on attire for businesswomen in Turkey's major cities, though dressing modestly is also likely to limit unwanted attention. For travel to rural areas or the south-east, women are advised to dress more conservatively. Long-sleeved blouses and skirts below the knee or trousers are recommended.

Women should also follow security precautions such as:

- Politely refusing invitations that would take you beyond your personal comfort levels, even if faced by amicable pressure to behave otherwise.
- Refraining from travelling alone after dark in areas where you may find yourself isolated.

Working Week

WORKING WEEK

- Working week: Monday to Friday
- Government offices, banks and other offices: 08.30-12.00 and 13.30-17.00
- During the summer season the working hours in some cities in the Aegean and Mediterranean regions are between 07.00 and 14.00.

Language & Money

LANGUAGE

Turkish is the official language. Most business people and administrators have a good working knowledge of English. Business travellers are unlikely to encounter language problems with hotel clerks or company receptionists, though a few words of Turkish will always be appreciated. It is a good idea to familiarise yourself with Turkish pronunciation, particularly with regard to place names.

MONEY

Turkish lira (TL) is the official currency. US dollars and euros are accepted at many establishments, including some hotels, international retail chains and tourist-oriented restaurants and cafes. If necessary, foreign nationals should ask vendors to write down the figure. Taxi drivers may refuse payment in anything other than the local currency.

Banks and private bureaux de change are the best places to change money. In Istanbul (Istanbul province), many souvenir shops and hotels quote their prices directly in US dollars or other foreign currency. Foreign nationals may encounter difficulties when attempting to exchange traveller's cheques in US dollars or euros, and are advised to use only well-known brands of traveller's cheques. Major credit cards such as Visa, MasterCard, Eurocard and American Express are accepted in hotels, restaurants and shops. ATMs are widely available and accept cards such as Visa, Mastercard, Cirrus, Maestro, Eurocard and Plus, which are common throughout the country.

Tipping

TIPPING

Most hotels and restaurants will include a service charge with the bill. If it is not included, a tip of around 10% is suitable for most restaurants and taxis.

Geography & Weather

CLIMATE

Climate overview

- There are four different climate zones in Turkey.
- The southern and south-western coast has a Mediterranean climate with hot summers and mild winters.
- The northern coast bordering the Black Sea has a temperate climate with warm and humid summers and mild winters. The region experiences rainfall throughout the year.
- The central Anatolia region, in the interior, has a continental climate with hot and dry summers and cold and snowy winters.
- The Marmara region experiences a transitional moderate climate. Winters are usually shorter in the region.
- Monitor the [Turkish State Meteorological Service](#) website for latest weather updates.

Earthquakes

- Turkey lies on one of the most seismically active zones, situated at the junction of four tectonic plates.
- Offshore earthquakes also pose a risk of tsunamis in coastal areas.
- Earthquakes are also common along the North Anatolian and East Anatolian fault lines.
- In February 2023, magnitude 7.8 and 7.5 earthquakes respectively struck Gaziantep and Kahramanmaras provinces, causing extensive infrastructure damage and travel disruption in several provinces.
- More than 10,000 aftershocks followed, which killed around 55,000 people in Turkey and Syria.
- The [Ministry of Interior, Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency](#) monitors earthquakes in Turkey.

Flooding and landslides

- Heavy rain and rainstorms often lead to floods and flash floods, especially along the Black Sea coast, including the commercial capital Istanbul.
- Flooding can lead to infrastructure damage and disrupt both air and overland travel.
- Landslides caused by heavy rain are common in mountainous regions.

Forest fires

- The Mediterranean and Aegean regions are prone to forest fires in the summer months.
- Such fires can affect residential areas, leading to temporary airport and flight disruption, evacuations, poor air quality and road closures.

Snowfall

- Eastern Anatolia region is prone to heavy snowfall between December and April.
- Heavy snowfall can lead to airport and road closures, including in Istanbul.

GEOGRAPHY

Turkey is located between south-eastern Europe and Asia. The part of the country that is located on the European continent is known as Thrace; the region that falls in Asia is known as Anatolia. The country is bordered by the Black Sea to the north, Georgia and Armenia to the north-east, Iran to the east, Iraq to the south-east, Syria and the Mediterranean to the south, the Aegean Sea to the west, and Greece and Bulgaria to the north-west. More than half of Turkey is more than 3,300 feet (1,000 metres) above sea level, with mountain ranges extending in an east-west direction parallel to the northern and southern coasts. The Kizilirmak, Sakarya, Tigris, Euphrates, Meric and Seyhan are the country's major rivers. The country is administratively divided into 81 provinces, which consist of numerous districts.

International Dialing & Power

DIALLING CODES

Country Code : 90

IDD Prefix (International Direct Dialling) : 00

NDD Prefix (National Direct Dialling) : 0

COMMUNICATIONS

The internal and international telephone service is reliable. There is extensive mobile communications coverage throughout the country using the GSM system. Business travellers may use roaming. Alternatively, local SIM cards (Turkcell, Turk Telekom and Vodafone) are widely available.

Internet use is widespread. Data connections and internet access from handheld devices may be slower in provincial areas. The postal system is relatively efficient for domestic purposes. International courier services are widely available.

Information Security

The primary concern for travellers is pervasive cybersurveillance by the authorities. Journalists, NGO workers and students are particularly vulnerable to such surveillance. Internet filtering is also in place and thousands of people in Turkey have reportedly faced criminal prosecution for social media posts perceived to be inflammatory.

Advice

- Minimise the amount of devices you bring in country; only carry devices that are absolutely essential. Clean devices, containing only data necessary for the trip and with no access to shared networks, should be used if targeted attacks are likely.
- Ensure all devices you bring in-country are well secured through strong passwords, and that all storage devices have full disk encryption.
- Ensure all software, including anti-virus protection, is up-to-date prior to travel; avoid updating software while away.
- Avoid connecting to insecure Wi-Fi networks where possible. Public Wi-Fi connections are almost always unencrypted, allowing attackers to easily instigate man-in-the-middle attacks, where they redirect your browsing request to a malicious website and then, run malware on your device.
- If necessary, only connect to public networks using a Virtual Private Network (VPN). Always familiarize yourself with the legal status of any VPN or application in your destination country prior to travel. Be aware of other relevant legislation, including compliance requests that allow the authorities to inspect devices.
- Keep devices on your person as much as possible. If unattended, ensure devices are powered down.
- Limit location tracking/turn off your phone's location function to deter surveillance, with the exception of our Assistance App or other essential applications. Turn off Wi-Fi and Bluetooth when not in use.
- Run a thorough check of all devices upon your return and use the 'forget network' setting if you did connect to any public Wi-Fi networks.
- Comply with local legislation. This includes any official requests to inspect devices. If this occurs, inform your IT department as soon as possible and exercise caution when using the device after. Power off devices prior to approaching customs.

ELECTRICITY

Calendar

Holidays & Security Dates

2025

29 Oct Republic Day

National holiday

10 Nov Anniversary of Atatürk's death in 1938

Commemorative events are usually organised to mark the day.

2026

01 Jan New Year's Day

In many countries, if this holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, a public holiday is declared for the following Monday.

21 Mar - 24 Mar Nowruz Novruz Persian New Year

Expect disruption and avoid all gatherings around Nowruz / Novruz (Persian New Year, or spring festival), which begins on 21 March this year and lasts for several days. The festival is a national holiday in Albania, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. It is also celebrated in south-eastern Turkey and northern Iraq, which have large Kurdish populations.

23 Apr National Sovereignty and Children's Day

19 May Commemoration of Atatürk/Youth and Sports Day

15 Jul Democracy and National Unity Day

30 Aug Victory Day

Destination Guide for Türkiye

Medical Overview

Medical Care

Excellent

Standard of Health Care

Let International SOS assist you.

International SOS will assist you to find suitable inpatient or outpatient care, will provide language assistance and may be able to pay your medical expenses.

Inpatient care

Selected hospitals provide medical care of an international standard. Tertiary-level care is available in many of the major cities. Most doctors speak English and/or Turkish, but many of the nursing staff may not.

In general, private hospitals are preferred. Public hospitals tend to be older and may offer lower levels of customer service.

Medical Contact

Emergency Numbers, hospital and clinic contact information

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Ambulance : 112

Fire service : 110

Police : 155

Hospitals & Clinics

Acibadem Ankara Hospital

Sokak No 6 Yukan Dikmen 630 Mahallesi Cankaya

90 3125934444

ankarainfo@acibadem.com

Guven Hospital

No. 29 Simsek Sokak Kavaklidere

90 3124572563, 90 3214572525

insurance@guven.com.tr, aliihsan.oksuz@guven.com.tr

Acibadem Altunizade Hospital

Number 1 Altunizade Mah. Yurtcan Sokagi Uskudare

90 2166494444

atzops@acibadem.com.tr

Acibadem Atakent University Hospital

16 Halkali Merkez Mah. Turgut Ozal Bulvarari 16 Kucukcekmece

90 2124044444

atakinfo@acibadem.com.tr

Acibadem Maslak Hospital

Buyukdere Caddesi No 40 Maslak
90 2123044444
masops@acibadem.com

Istanbul Florence Nightingale Hospital

Abide-I Huerriyet Cadesi No 166 Sisli district
90 212 375 61 61 (english), 90 5497272660
international@groupflorence.com, apply@florence.com.tr

KOC University Hospital

Topkapi, Ko? ?niversitesi Hastanesi 34010 Zeytinburnu/Istanbul, T?rkiye 4 Davutpasa Caddesi Maltepe Mahallesi
90 2123112020, 90 2124678700, 90 8502508250
kuhops@kochealthcare.org

Acibadem Kent Hospital

8229/1 Sokak Number 56 Cigli
90 8502225368
info@kenthospital.com

Izmir Economy University Medicalpoint Hospital

1825th Street, No:12, Yeni Girne Boulevard, Karsiyaka
90 7480803535
ips@mph.com.tr, info@mph.com.tr

Vaccinations

Routine and additional

Hepatitis A

Recommended for all travellers and international assignees, especially groups at higher risk including:

- long-term and frequent visitors.
- adventurous travellers who travel to more remote locations or stay in areas with poor sanitation.
- gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (see [US CDC](https://www.cdc.gov)).
- people who use illicit drugs.
- those with liver disease.

Hepatitis A is a viral disease that causes liver inflammation. The virus is present in the faeces of an infected person. It spreads through contaminated food and water and is common in areas with poor sanitation. Person-to-person spread also occurs, when the virus is inadvertently transferred into the mouth, including during sexual activity. People at higher risk of infection include men who have sex with men, illicit drug users and people with liver disease.

Not everyone gets symptoms. If symptoms do occur, they begin two to four weeks or more after infection and can last for weeks or months. Symptoms include fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, diarrhoea, nausea/vomiting, abdominal pain/discomfort, jaundice (yellow colour of the skin and eyes), dark urine, clay-coloured stool, joint pain and itching. Many infected people suffer only a mild illness. Most cases recover fully after four or more weeks. However, for some, the disease can be severe, and occasionally is fatal. There is no specific treatment and cases are managed through supportive therapy. Prevention is through vaccination, attention to hygiene, and access to safe food and water.

[Watch the Hepatitis Video Podcast](#) (Vimeo)

[View Viral Hepatitis Infographic Poster](#) (PDF)

The Disease

Hepatitis is a general term that means inflammation of the liver. Medications, poisons, alcohol and infections can all cause hepatitis.

Hepatitis A is inflammation of the liver caused by a virus. The virus is highly contagious. People are mostly infected through eating or drinking contaminated food or water, or through direct contact with an infected person. Usually people make a full recovery, however occasionally the disease can be severe or fatal. There is an effective vaccine available.

Transmission

The illness is transmitted via the “faecal-oral route”. The virus is present in the stool of an infected person. Others are infected when they consume food / drink contaminated with the virus. This is more common in areas with poor sanitation systems and limited access to clean water.

It is also possible to get the disease via direct contact with an infected person's faecal matter, for example through incompletely washed hands, sexual contact or through shared illicit drugs.

Symptoms

Not everyone gets symptoms. Most childhood infections will be asymptomatic or mild. Most adults will develop symptoms, and severity increases with age.

If symptoms do occur, they begin two to four or more weeks after infection and can last for weeks or months. They include any or all of the following:

- fever
- fatigue
- loss of appetite
- diarrhoea
- nausea/vomiting
- abdominal pain/discomfort
- jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes)
- dark urine, clay-coloured stool
- joint pain
- itching

Most people make a full recovery. About 10 to 15% of symptomatic persons with hepatitis A may experience relapse or prolonged illness up to six months. Sometimes the disease is severe and can be fatal (less than 1% of all cases), particularly in older people, and those with other underlying liver disease (such as infection with hepatitis B or C). It is thought to be due to the immune mechanisms rather than infection levels.

Diagnosis

Blood tests are required to confirm the diagnosis.

Treatment

There is no specific medication to treat hepatitis A. Medications to relieve symptoms should only be used under medical advice as they may contribute to damage of the liver.

Prevention

Prevention is through **hygiene**, careful selection of **food and water**, and **vaccination**.

Good hygiene, and choosing safe food and water are important, especially in areas where hepatitis A is common:

- Maintain a high level of personal hygiene, including during sexual activity.
- Do not drink tap water. Choose boiled or bottled water from reputable sources, water that has been treated with chlorine or iodine, or carbonated beverages.
- Avoid ice, as it may have been made with unsafe water.
- Ask locally which restaurants and hotels serve safe food.
- Select food that has been thoroughly cooked while fresh and served very hot.
- Do not eat raw shellfish.

Vaccination is effective, widely available and generally recommended for any traveller who has not already had the vaccine (or the disease). Two doses, given six months apart, are required for lifelong immunity. All travellers should consider it, particularly:

- If travelling to areas with high rates of hepatitis A.
- When living conditions are crowded or have poor sanitation.

- Men who have sex with men.
- Illicit drug users.
- People with liver disease.

Postexposure prophylaxis: After exposure, people who are not immune may be recommended Hepatitis A vaccination or immune globulin (antibodies) as soon as possible (within two weeks) to prevent infection.

Risk to travellers

Hepatitis A is common in areas with limited access to sanitation. People who live with an infected person, men who have sex with men, illicit drug users and people with liver disease are at higher risk in any area.

US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [Hepatitis A Information](#)

European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) [Factsheet about hepatitis A](#)

Hepatitis B

Recommended for most travellers and international assignees, especially:

- For long-term or frequent visitors, and health-care workers.
- For adventurous travellers who travel to more remote locations.
- If possibility of new sexual partner, needle sharing, acupuncture, dental work, body piercing or tattooing during visit.

Many travel health professionals recommend hepatitis B vaccination for all travellers, regardless of destination.

The Disease

The hepatitis B virus, like HIV, is transmitted through contact with blood, blood products or body fluids. Modes of transmission include:

- Unprotected sexual intercourse
- Infected blood transfusions
- Needle sharing by IV drug users
- Use of unsterilized needles, syringes or equipment
- From mother to child during childbirth

Symptoms develop between 45 and 160 days after infection when the virus invades the liver causing fever, abdominal pain, nausea and loss of appetite. Jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes) is a common feature and the urine may become dark. There is no specific treatment and recovery usually takes about four weeks. Many individuals may have no symptoms but can still be infectious to others.

Approximately 1 in 10 of those infected do not recover fully and suffer ongoing liver damage called chronic hepatitis B - this can eventually cause liver cirrhosis and/or cancer. The very young and the elderly are more likely to develop a chronic infection.

Vaccination

In many countries, hepatitis B is included in the routine childhood immunizations and need not be repeated. For unvaccinated travelers:

Routine schedule

- Individual hepatitis B vaccination requires a series of three injections given on days zero, 30 and after 6-12 months.
- A combined vaccine for hepatitis A and B is available in many countries. It also requires a series of three injections given on days zero, 30 and after six months.

Accelerated schedule

Can be used for travelers who will depart before the first two doses of the routine schedule can be given:

- Use an *individual* hepatitis B vaccine
- Doses on days 0, 7 and 21
- Fourth dose required after 6 months

Accelerated combined hepatitis A and B vaccine

- Doses on days 0, 7 and 21
- Fourth dose of hepatitis B alone or the combined vaccine required after 12 months

[Watch the Hepatitis Video Podcast](#) (Vimeo)

[View Viral Hepatitis Infographic Poster](#) (PDF)

The Disease

Hepatitis B is a viral disease affecting the liver. It is transmitted through contact with blood, blood products or body fluids of an infected person. It can cause a mild illness but occasionally can develop into a chronic illness.

Transmission

The hepatitis B virus, like HIV, is transmitted through contact with blood, blood products or body fluids (e.g. semen, saliva) on broken skin. Modes of transmission include:

- Unprotected sexual intercourse with an infected partner
- Infected blood transfusions
- Needle sharing by IV drug users
- Use of unsterilized needles, syringes or equipment
- From mother to child during childbirth
- Contact with wounds of an infected person

The virus remains viable outside the body on any surface for about seven days and can lead to infection. Blood spills including dried blood can be infectious.

Symptoms

Symptoms develop between 30 and 180 days after exposure to infection. Hepatitis B can either be acute (short term illness) or chronic (long term illness). Most people will not develop symptoms during the acute phase. Others experience fever, pain in muscles and joints, abdominal, nausea and loss of appetite. Jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes) is a common feature and the urine may become dark. Recovery may take several weeks.

Risk of chronic illness is related to age. Babies who get infected from their mothers or those that get infected before five years of age are very likely to develop chronic infection. Less than 5% of adults and about 90% of children may develop chronic infection. In chronic illness, virus continues to remain in the body although people do not have symptoms. Many individuals may appear healthy but can spread the infection to others. Life threatening conditions such as liver cirrhosis and/or cancer may develop.

Diagnosis

The disease can be confirmed by blood tests.

Treatment

There is no specific cure for the disease. Treatment is mainly supportive, consisting of rest, adequate nutrition and medications to reduce discomfort.

Prevention

Avoid direct contact with body fluids.

Vaccine: This can prevent the illness and its serious outcomes such as cirrhosis and cancer. In many countries, hepatitis B vaccination is included in the routine childhood immunizations.

Risk to Travellers

Most travellers are at low risk unless they have contact with the infected blood or body fluids.

[CDC Hepatitis B information](#)

Measles

- Recommended for all travellers and international assignees.
- All travellers should be up to date with their measles vaccination (schedule differs by country). Vaccination for adults is available as MMR (measles, mumps and rubella), two doses given at least four weeks apart are required.

Some individuals [cannot be vaccinated](#) due to certain health conditions.

Measles is a highly contagious viral disease that can have serious complications.

Transmission

Measles spreads very easily when an infected person talks, coughs, or sneezes, releasing droplets into the air. If a healthy person breathes in these droplets, they can get sick. The virus can stay in the air and infect people for up to 2 hours after the infected person has left. It can also land on objects and surfaces, where it can live for several hours. If you touch these surfaces and then touch your face, you can get infected.

A person with measles is infectious from four days before the appearance of the rash until four days after it has appeared. After being exposed to the virus, approximately 90% of people who are not immune will become infected.

Symptoms

Measles symptoms usually start 7-14 days after being exposed to the virus. Early signs include a high fever, cough, runny nose, and red, watery eyes. Small white spots, known as Koplik's spots, may appear inside the mouth. A few days later, a red, blotchy rash starts on the face and spreads to the rest of the body.

Measles can lead to serious complications, especially in young children, adults over 20, pregnant women, and people with weakened immune systems. Common complications include ear infections and diarrhea. More severe complications can be pneumonia, which is a lung infection, and encephalitis, which is swelling of the brain. These severe complications can sometimes be fatal.

Pregnant women who contract measles have an increased chance of miscarriage and pre-term delivery. Their babies may also experience low birth weights and birth defects.

Diagnosis

This illness is usually diagnosed clinically. If necessary, a lab test can confirm measles.

Treatment

There is no particular treatment for measles. Symptoms can be managed with over-the-counter preparations, good nutrition

and adequate fluid intake. Antibiotics are required if there are bacterial complications (such as pneumonia, ear infection). Sick people should be isolated from non-immune people, and should not go out in public until at least four days after their rash appears.

Prevention

Measles can be effectively prevented by vaccination, which many countries routinely administer during childhood. The MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccine is highly effective and safe, providing lifelong immunity for most people after two doses. Vaccination not only protects individuals but also helps prevent the spread of the virus within communities.

People who are not immune and are at higher risk for complications (such as pregnant women, unvaccinated infants and people with weakened immune systems) may be given a dose of antibodies if exposed to the virus.

In addition to vaccination, good hygiene practices, such as regular handwashing and avoiding close contact with infected individuals, can help reduce the risk of transmission.

Risk to Travellers

Measles occurs throughout the world. Outbreaks are common in areas where there is low vaccination coverage. Measles is highly contagious and can spread quickly in places where people gather, such as airports and tourist destinations. Anyone who has not been immunised, or has not previously had measles, is at risk of infection.

- International SOS article on [measles, mumps and rubella vaccination](#)
- [CDC Measles Information](#)
- See routine childhood vaccination schedules: [Australia](#), [Canada](#), [Europe](#), [USA](#), [UK](#)

Rabies

Consider for certain travellers, especially:

- For international assignees and long-term visitors.
- For children who tend to play with animals and may not admit to being bitten or scratched.
- If you are travelling to a location where quality medical care may not be available immediately after being bitten/scratched by an animal.
(Unvaccinated people need immunoglobulin within 24 hours of an animal injury, and this medication is scarce in some countries. If you are pre-vaccinated, you do not need this immunoglobulin after an injury.)
- If contact with dogs, monkeys or other potentially rabies-carrying animals is likely.
Jogging increases your risk of dog bite.

Rabies is a viral disease contracted when bitten or scratched by an infected (rabid) animal, often a dog. Once it enters the body, the virus travels along nerves and causes paralysis. As it reaches important organs like the spinal cord and the brain, it causes coma and death.

In countries where rabies is present in animals or bats, ALL animal / bat bites, scratches and licks to broken skin must be treated seriously. Rabies vaccination is very effective in preventing rabies, even after a bite/scratch by a rabid animal.

Rabies vaccination

Pre-exposure vaccination is often recommended for expatriates and long-term visitors to destinations where rabies is present. It's especially recommended if quality medical care may not be available after being bitten or scratched by an animal. Pre-exposure treatment can be especially useful for children, since they may not tell their parents that they have been bitten/scratched.

Pre-exposure vaccination makes it easier to treat a bite or scratch. That's important because some types of rabies treatment can be in short supply in many countries, even in cities.

If bitten, scratched or licked (on broken skin) by an animal:

- Immediately cleanse the wound with soap and water and a povidone-iodine solution if available.
- Seek medical advice from a qualified source or your assistance company.
- Notify local health authorities immediately. You may need *post-exposure vaccination*, even if you have had pre-exposure vaccination. (THIS CAN BE LIFE SAVING.)

[Watch the 1 minute Rabies Video Podcast on Vimeo](#)

[Download the Rabies Facts Infographic PDF](#)

The Disease

Rabies is a preventable viral disease. It occurs in more than 150 countries worldwide and is transmitted to humans from domestic and wild animals.

Transmission

People can get it when they are bitten or scratched by an infected or "rabid" animal – most frequently a dog. Rabies from bats is common in the Americas, Australia and Western Europe. Human exposure to rabies through foxes, coyotes, raccoons, skunks, jackals, mongooses and other carnivore species is known but less common.

Symptoms

Symptoms take a highly variable time to develop, usually between one to three months but may take up to a year. When they begin, they are non-specific such as fever, tingling or numbness near the bite site. As the virus travels along the nerves, it causes neurologic symptoms: anxiety, paralysis, and characteristic hydrophobia. People with hydrophobia experience muscle spasms in the muscles used for swallowing when they see, hear or think about water. Eventually, rabies causes delirium, convulsions, coma and death.

Diagnosis

A patient is suspected to be suffering from rabies if there is a history of an animal bite. Clinical diagnosis is difficult unless rabies-specific signs appear. Generally, several tests are necessary to diagnose rabies ante-mortem (before death) in humans.

Prevention

Don't handle any domestic animal unless you are certain it does not have rabies. Never handle wild animals and keep your distance from them.

Rabies vaccination

In rabies-affected countries, *pre-exposure vaccination* is often recommended for expatriates and long-term visitors - especially if they will not be able to get quality medical care after being bitten or scratched by an animal. It is especially important for children, since they may not tell their parents that they have been bitten or scratched. The vaccine is usually given in your home country prior to travel, in a series of two injections (days 0 and 7).

Post-exposure vaccination is used after someone has interacted with an animal that may be rabid. It must be given soon after the bite or scratch, and can be life saving.

Following a bite or scratch or lick (on broken skin) by an animal:

- Immediately clean the wound with soap and water and a povidone-iodine solution if available.
- Seek medical advice from a qualified source or your assistance company.
- Notify local health authorities immediately to assess the need for rabies *post-exposure vaccination*, even if you have had pre-exposure vaccination. (THIS CAN BE LIFE SAVING).

For people who *did NOT* have a pre-exposure vaccination:

- Rabies immunoglobulin (RIG) is injected into and around the wounds
- Four doses of rabies vaccine are required, given on days 0, 3, 7 and 14 (or days 0, 3, 7, 14 and 28).

For people who *DID* have a pre-exposure vaccination:

- Two doses of rabies vaccine are required (given on days 0 and 3).
- Rabies immunoglobulin (RIG) is **not** required.

Risk to travellers

Rabies is found on all continents except Antarctica. Worldwide, most cases of human rabies occur in Asia, Africa and Latin America, in places that have large numbers of stray dogs. People living in rural areas, especially children are at higher risk of dog bites. Certain activities, such as cycling and running, can raise your risk of being chased and bitten by a dog.

[WHO information on rabies](#)

[CDC](#)

Typhoid fever

Recommended for adventurous and long-term travellers, especially those who will:

- Visit friends and relatives.
- Eat from local vendors or restaurants.
- Be exposed to conditions of poor sanitation.
- Visit smaller cities or rural areas.

Typhoid fever is a serious infection caused by *Salmonella typhi* bacteria. People are infected through ingesting contaminated food or water. Choosing safe food and water and vaccination reduces the risk of developing the disease.

Symptoms usually begin one to three weeks after exposure. Although typhoid fever is often called a diarrhoeal disease, some patients do not have diarrhoea. Persistent, high fever is typical. Other early symptoms are flu-like: body aches and pains, weakness, loss of appetite and a continuous dull headache. A rash with pink spots may appear on the chest and abdomen of some patients. In severe cases, perforation of the bowel can cause severe bleeding or infection in the abdomen, which can be fatal.

Typhoid is treated with antibiotics. However there is a growing problem of antibiotic resistance. "Extensively drug-resistant" (XDR) typhoid is present in some locations and does not respond to many of the antibiotics which are usually used against typhoid, making preventive measures even more important. Vaccination is recommended for people travelling to locations where typhoid is consistently present.

The Disease

Typhoid fever is a serious infection caused by *Salmonella Typhi* bacteria. It spreads either through intake of contaminated food or water or close contact with an infected person. Raw fruit and vegetables, and shellfish are often associated with typhoid.

Symptoms

The symptoms usually begin seven to 21 days after exposure. The typical feature of the disease is persistent high fevers. While typhoid fever is often called a diarrhoeal disease, not all patients have diarrhoea. Symptoms include high fever, body aches and pains, weakness, stomach ache, loss of appetite, cough and diarrhoea or constipation. Some people may develop a rash. If left untreated, symptoms worsen and life threatening complications may develop.

Some people can carry the bacteria without any symptoms ("carriers") and are a source of infection.

Diagnosis

Lab tests done on blood, stool and urine samples help diagnose the illness.

Treatment

Typhoid is treated with antibiotics. However there is a growing problem of antibiotic resistance. 'Extensively drug-resistant' (XDR) typhoid is present in some locations and does not respond to many of the antibiotics which are usually used against typhoid, making preventive measures even more important.

Prevention

Typhoid is prevented through careful selection of safe food and water and vaccination. Maintaining hygiene measures and choosing safe food and water is important because typhoid vaccines do not provide complete protection.

- Maintain a high level of personal hygiene; wash hands frequently with soap and water.
- Drink only bottled or treated water or hot beverages.
- Select safe food. Meals should be thoroughly cooked and served hot. Avoid under-cooked or raw meat, fish or shellfish. Eat only fruit that you peel yourself.

Vaccination is recommended people travelling to locations where typhoid is consistently present.

Primary vaccination

Primary vaccination and booster doses for typhoid are the same. They can be either:

- A single injection.
- A series of three or four oral capsules taken on alternate days (differs country-to-country).

Booster

- After injected typhoid vaccination (Vi), a booster may be recommended at 2-3 years.
- After oral typhoid vaccination (three capsules), a booster may be recommended at 3-5 years.
- After oral typhoid vaccination (four capsules), a booster may be recommended at 3-5 years.

Risk to Travellers

High-risk areas are those with poor hygiene and sanitation and limited access to safe water. The disease is common in destinations such as the Indian subcontinent and other developing countries in Asia, Africa and Central and South America.

[CDC Typhoid information](#)

Routine Vaccinations

COVID-19

All travelers should ensure they are up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations. Recommendations vary between countries.

Influenza

Annual vaccination is recommended. Vaccination is especially important for people at higher risk of severe disease, including::

- Young children
- Pregnant individuals
- People 65 years and older
- People with underlying health conditions

Measles-Mumps-Rubella

Vaccinations against measles, mumps, and rubella are routine in childhood, and are usually available as a combined vaccine "MMR".

Everyone should be immune to these diseases before travel.

There are outbreaks of measles in many locations.

If you are unsure of your immunity, consult your doctor well in advance of travel.

See routine childhood vaccination schedules: [Australia](#), [Canada](#), [Europe](#), [USA](#), [UK](#)

Polio

Vaccination against polio is routine in childhood in many countries. See routine childhood vaccination schedules: [Australia](#), [Canada](#), [Europe](#), [USA](#), [UK](#)

All adults should ensure they are immune to the disease before they travel abroad. If unsure of your immunity, consult your health professional. You may need a *primary vaccination* or a *booster*. Booster recommendations vary by country.

Tetanus-Diphtheria-Pertussis

Vaccinations against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis are routine in childhood.

See routine childhood vaccination schedules: [Australia](#), [Canada](#), [Europe](#), [USA](#), [UK](#)

All adults should ensure they are immune to these diseases before they travel abroad. If unsure of your immunity, consult your health professional. You may need a *primary vaccination* or *booster*. Booster recommendations vary by country.

Varicella

Varicella (chickenpox) vaccinations are included in the routine childhood immunization schedule of some countries. See routine childhood vaccination schedules: [Australia](#), [Canada](#), [Europe](#), [USA](#), [UK](#)

All adults should ensure they are immune to varicella before they travel abroad. If unsure of your immunity, consult your health professional.

Health Threats

Known health threats for this country

Anthrax

Anthrax is an acute infectious disease caused by the spore-forming bacterium *Bacillus anthracis*. It most commonly occurs in hoofed mammals, though humans can also become infected. The serious forms of human anthrax are cutaneous anthrax, inhalation anthrax and intestinal anthrax.

Symptoms of anthrax are different depending on the mode of infection. Generally, symptoms develop within seven days of exposure.

Cutaneous anthrax is a skin infection and accounts for 95% of all naturally-occurring anthrax infections. The main risk factor is contact with animal hides or hair, bone products, and wool. The disease can also be spread through contact with infected animals. Hence, the populations most at risk for anthrax include farm workers, veterinarians, and tannery and wool workers. Bacteria infects a person through cuts or abrasions on their skin. An itchy skin lesion, similar to an insect bite, then develops - usually within two weeks of exposure. This lesion may later blister and then break down, resulting in a black ulcer. The ulcer is frequently painless but surrounded by significant swelling. Sometimes painful lymph nodes may develop. Often, a scab forms, then dries and falls off within two weeks. In 20 percent of untreated individuals, the infection may spread through the bloodstream and become fatal. However, death is extremely rare among individuals who receive appropriate treatment. Initial symptoms of *inhalation anthrax* infection may resemble a common cold. After several days, the symptoms may progress to severe breathing problems and shock. Inhalation anthrax is often fatal.

Intestinal anthrax may follow the consumption of contaminated food and is characterized by acute inflammation of the intestinal tract. Initial signs of this disease are nausea, loss of appetite, vomiting and fever. These are followed by abdominal pain, vomiting of blood and severe diarrhea.

Direct person-to-person spread of anthrax is extremely unlikely; it may not even be possible. Therefore, there is no need to immunize or treat people who have been in contact with infected people unless they also were also exposed to the same source of infection (usually, a sick animal).

People who have been exposed to anthrax can take antibiotics to prevent infection. It is necessary to treat anthrax infections early; a delay lessens chances for survival. Anthrax usually is susceptible to penicillin, doxycycline and fluoroquinolones.

An anthrax vaccine can also prevent infection. Vaccination against anthrax is not recommended for the general public and is not available.

Rabies

Rabies is a viral disease contracted when bitten or scratched by an infected (rabid) animal, often a dog. Once it enters the body, the virus travels along nerves and causes paralysis. As it reaches important organs like the spinal cord and the brain, it causes coma and death.

In countries where rabies is present in animals or bats, ALL animal / bat bites, scratches and licks to broken skin must be treated seriously. Rabies vaccination is very effective in preventing rabies, even after a bite/scratch by a rabid animal.

Rabies vaccination

Pre-exposure vaccination is often recommended for expatriates and long-term visitors to destinations where rabies is present.

It's especially recommended if quality medical care may not be available after being bitten or scratched by an animal. Pre-exposure treatment can be especially useful for children, since they may not tell their parents that they have been bitten/scratched.

Pre-exposure vaccination makes it easier to treat a bite or scratch. That's important because some types of rabies treatment can be in short supply in many countries, even in cities.

If bitten, scratched or licked (on broken skin) by an animal:

- Immediately cleanse the wound with soap and water and a povidone-iodine solution if available.
- Seek medical advice from a qualified source or your assistance company.
- Notify local health authorities immediately. You may need *post-exposure vaccination*, even if you have had pre-exposure vaccination. (THIS CAN BE LIFE SAVING.)

Crimean-Congo Fever (CCHF)

Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF) is a viral disease that affects animals and humans. It is transmitted to humans by an infected tick bite or upon direct contact with an infected person or animal's blood and other fluids or tissues. Symptoms occur within one to twelve days of exposure to infection. The illness presents with fever, chills, headache, body ache and haemorrhage (bleeding). Continued bleeding leads to shock and death about ten days after symptoms begin. Around 40 per cent of all infected people die. If the patient survives, recovery is long and slow.

The risk to travellers is low. High-risk groups include agricultural workers, healthcare workers, military personnel, and people who camp in rural areas. Prevention is mainly by avoiding tick bites. Wear long sleeves and long pants and use insect repellents. There is no safe, effective, and widely available vaccine for CCHF.

West Nile Virus

Primarily a disease of birds, West Nile virus (WNV) can infect humans. The most common route for a human infection is via mosquitoes. The mosquito feeds on an infected bird or other animal, then bites a human and introduces the virus into their body.

Most people who get WNV develop no symptoms. Of the 20 percent who do get ill, most develop mild symptoms 3-14 days after being bitten: fever, head and body ache, nausea and vomiting. Sometimes the lymph nodes swell or a rash appears on the trunk.

In fewer than one percent of all human cases, the person develops a serious, possibly fatal, infection. Symptoms may include high fever, headache, stiff neck, disorientation, muscle weakness, tremors and paralysis. The brain and membranes surrounding the brain and spinal cord may get inflamed, which can cause coma and death. Patients who recover from a serious WNV infection may suffer permanent brain damage.

There is no specific treatment for the disease, or vaccine to protect against it. To avoid infection, prevent mosquito bites in areas where the virus circulates. Wear long sleeves and long pants, and use insect repellents.

Air Pollution

Poor air quality, also known as "haze", "smog" and "air pollution", can negatively impact one's health. Some groups are especially vulnerable to problems caused by polluted air. These include children, the elderly and anyone with underlying chronic health problems such as heart disease, emphysema, bronchitis or asthma.

The chemicals in polluted air can affect the lungs resulting in wheezing, coughing, shortness of breath and even pain. Polluted air can also irritate the eyes and nose, and may interfere with immune system function. Long-term exposure can result in reduced lung function, particularly in children. It can also lead to lung cancer.

Limiting exposure to polluted air is the best way to prevent health problems. When air quality is poor, it may be advisable to avoid outdoor physical activities. While indoors, keep doors and windows closed, and use an air conditioner on 'recirculate' if possible. If the air quality is frequently problematic, consider using an air cleaner. During particularly bad periods, you may want to wear a mask while outside. Ask your healthcare provider before using a mask, especially if you have underlying health conditions.

See the International SOS [Air Pollution website](#) - use your membership number to log in.

Altitude

Altitude illness is a potentially fatal condition that can affect people who normally live at a low altitude and travel to higher altitudes. It can occur from elevations of 1,500 meters onwards but is more common at elevations above 2,500 meters (8,000 feet).

People most at risk are those who have experienced altitude illness before, people who have heart or lung problems and people under the age of 50. There are three different types of altitude illness: Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), High Altitude Cerebral Edema (HACE) and High Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE). AMS is the most common and mild form of altitude

illness. HACE and HAPE are more severe. HACE is a medical emergency and if not treated and managed quickly, can result in coma and death. Management of altitude illnesses involves immediate descent and oxygen treatment. Most people who are affected, even those who develop HACE or HAPE, recover completely if moved to a lower elevation. There are medicines that can be administered by trained medical professionals.

Anyone travelling to high altitudes, especially higher than 2,500 meters, should be aware of and recognise the symptoms of altitude illness. See your travel health professional before departure, for individual advice on preventive measures, especially if you have ever suffered altitude sickness in the past, or if you have an underlying medical condition.

Cutaneous Larva Migrans

Cutaneous Larva Migrans (CLM) is a skin infection caused by parasites known as hookworms. Animals such as dogs and cats host these parasites and shed the parasite eggs in their faeces. The eggs then hatch into larvae. Transmission occurs through direct skin contact with contaminated sand or soil. The larva penetrates the outermost layers of the skin. A pricking or itching sensation may be experienced when the larva penetrates the skin. Within a few hours, a rash can develop at the entry point. As the larva moves, creeping tracks or snake-like reddish tracks will develop. Severe itching and mild swelling may also occur. CLM usually resolves itself without any treatment. Some anti-parasitic medications may be used to shorten the duration of infection.

There is no medication to prevent the infection. Avoid walking barefoot at the beach and avoid direct skin contact with infected sand or soil. Use a clean towel or mat to sit or lie on the sand.

Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A is a viral disease that causes liver inflammation. The virus is present in the faeces of an infected person. It spreads through contaminated food and water and is common in areas with poor sanitation. Person-to-person spread also occurs, when the virus is inadvertently transferred into the mouth, including during sexual activity. People at higher risk of infection include men who have sex with men, illicit drug users and people with liver disease.

Not everyone gets symptoms. If symptoms do occur, they begin two to four weeks or more after infection and can last for weeks or months. Symptoms include fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, diarrhoea, nausea/vomiting, abdominal pain/discomfort, jaundice (yellow colour of the skin and eyes), dark urine, clay-coloured stool, joint pain and itching. Many infected people suffer only a mild illness. Most cases recover fully after four or more weeks. However, for some, the disease can be severe, and occasionally is fatal. There is no specific treatment and cases are managed through supportive therapy.

Prevention is through vaccination, attention to hygiene, and access to safe food and water.

Travellers diarrhoea

Travellers' diarrhoea is the most common travel-related illness. It usually occurs within the first week away from home. It is spread through contaminated food and water.

Prevention is through choosing safe food and water, and paying attention to hygiene. Select food that is thoroughly cooked while fresh and served hot. Avoid undercooked or raw meat, fish or shellfish. Avoid salad and raw vegetables unless you can wash them with clean (treated) water and you peel them yourself.

Unless you are certain that the tap water is drinkable - choose bottled water and beverages, avoid ice.

Typhoid fever

Typhoid fever is a serious infection caused by *Salmonella typhi* bacteria. People are infected through ingesting contaminated food or water. Choosing safe food and water and vaccination reduces the risk of developing the disease.

Symptoms usually begin one to three weeks after exposure. Although typhoid fever is often called a diarrhoeal disease, some patients do not have diarrhoea. Persistent, high fever is typical. Other early symptoms are flu-like: body aches and pains, weakness, loss of appetite and a continuous dull headache. A rash with pink spots may appear on the chest and abdomen of some patients. In severe cases, perforation of the bowel can cause severe bleeding or infection in the abdomen, which can be fatal.

Typhoid is treated with antibiotics. However there is a growing problem of antibiotic resistance. "Extensively drug-resistant" (XDR) typhoid is present in some locations and does not respond to many of the antibiotics which are usually used against typhoid, making preventive measures even more important. Vaccination is recommended for people travelling to locations where typhoid is consistently present.

HIV, Hepatitis B and C, and STIs

HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C are spread by contact with bodily fluids (especially blood and semen).

- unprotected sex,
- needle sharing during IV drug use, or
- unsafe blood or medical/dental instruments.

Genital herpes (HSV), genital warts (HPV), gonorrhoea, chlamydia, syphilis and most other sexually transmitted diseases are spread by genital contact.

Prevention:

- In many countries, hepatitis B is now a routine childhood immunisation and need not be repeated. All non-immune travellers should consider vaccination.
- Always use new condoms (preferably brought from your home country).
- IV drug users should not share needles.
- Avoid having tattoos or piercings done.
- In healthcare settings, make sure that needles and syringes are sterile and not shared between patients.
- Call International SOS or your corporate medical department if you are hospitalised.
- Be aware of your risk when assisting anyone with an injury. Protect yourself from contact with bodily fluids.
- Seek medical attention within 24 hours if you accidentally come into contact with someone else's bodily fluids.

Hepatitis B

The Disease

The hepatitis B virus, like HIV, is transmitted through contact with blood, blood products or body fluids. Modes of transmission include:

- Unprotected sexual intercourse
- Infected blood transfusions
- Needle sharing by IV drug users
- Use of unsterilized needles, syringes or equipment
- From mother to child during childbirth

Symptoms develop between 45 and 160 days after infection when the virus invades the liver causing fever, abdominal pain, nausea and loss of appetite. Jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes) is a common feature and the urine may become dark. There is no specific treatment and recovery usually takes about four weeks. Many individuals may have no symptoms but can still be infectious to others.

Approximately 1 in 10 of those infected do not recover fully and suffer ongoing liver damage called chronic hepatitis B - this can eventually cause liver cirrhosis and/or cancer. The very young and the elderly are more likely to develop a chronic infection.

Vaccination

In many countries, hepatitis B is included in the routine childhood immunizations and need not be repeated. For unvaccinated travelers:

Routine schedule

- Individual hepatitis B vaccination requires a series of three injections given on days zero, 30 and after 6-12 months.
- A combined vaccine for hepatitis A and B is available in many countries. It also requires a series of three injections given on days zero, 30 and after six months.

Accelerated schedule

Can be used for travelers who will depart before the first two doses of the routine schedule can be given:

- Use an *individual* hepatitis B vaccine
- Doses on days 0, 7 and 21
- Fourth dose required after 6 months

Accelerated combined hepatitis A and B vaccine

- Doses on days 0, 7 and 21
- Fourth dose of hepatitis B alone or the combined vaccine required after 12 months

Measles

Food & Water

Drink bottled water. Care with food.

Food Risk

Food is generally safe. It may be wise to avoid street vendor food.

Water and Beverages

Tap water is generally considered not safe and it is recommended to:

- Drink only bottled or boiled water or carbonated drinks.
- Avoid ice, as it may have been made from unsterile water.

Be cautious when consuming alcoholic beverages, as there have been reports of methanol poisoning and counterfeit alcohol.

- Do not drink homemade brews.
 - Consider the quality of the facility where you will purchase beverages.
 - Avoid drinks containing spirits poured from previously opened bottles.
 - Canned and bottled drinks that you open yourself are safer. Inspect to ensure the seals have not been tampered with.
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Rabies

Avoid domestic and wild animals and bats

Rabies

Risk exists. Avoid contact with stray dogs, cats and other animals. Access to post-exposure treatment may be limited.

Destination Guide for Türkiye

Security Overview

Personal Security

STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

- Travel to Turkey can continue with standard security precautions.
- Abide by official directives.
- Take standard precautions to mitigate the risk of petty and street crime.
- Minimise time spent in the vicinity of potential terrorist targets, including government and military interests, symbolic foreign interests, places commonly frequented by Westerners, high-profile cultural institutions, political party offices and rallies, places of worship and transport hubs.
- Seek itinerary- and profile-specific advice for accommodation and transport options.
- Carry identification documents at all times to facilitate passage through checkpoints.
- Respect local customs and legislation.

Ankara, Istanbul, other major cities in western Turkey

- Liaise with local contacts for information about planned demonstrations so that daily movements can be planned to avoid potentially affected areas; do not stop to watch or photograph protests, and leave an area immediately if a crowd begins to gather.
- Exercise increased vigilance and avoid spending prolonged periods of time in the vicinity of high profile tourist locations. At such sites, avoid large groups of people and visit at non-peak times of day.
- Minimise time spent at public transport hubs and infrastructure.
- Licensed taxis and rail are suitable for business travellers. However, private transport - with attendant benefits such as a driver's dual language capability and the option for flexible and monitored itineraries - is preferable.
- Do not self-drive unless familiar with local conditions; use a trusted local driver with appropriate language capabilities.

Provinces affected by the February 2023 earthquakes: Adana, Adiyaman, Diyarbakir, Gaziantep, Hatay, Kahramanmaras, Kilis, Malatya, Osmaniye and Sanliurfa

- Travel to MEDIUM-risk areas in provinces affected by the February 2023 earthquakes can continue, but requires preliminary itinerary-specific advice.
- Travelling to the worst affected areas in Adiyaman, Hatay, Kahramanmaras and Malatya provinces, as well as Islahiye district in Gaziantep province, requires robust journey management planning. Liaise with local contacts or security provider for logistical and operational arrangements, including secure transport and accommodation. Ensure access to reliable methods of communication and essential supplies, including water, food, medicine, fuel and cash. Do not enter damaged buildings.
- Travel to HIGH-risk areas in Diyarbakir, Gaziantep, Hatay, Kilis and Sanlifu provinces requires additional security measures accounting for the existing security threats. See additional recommendations below.

Gaziantep, Hatay, Kilis, Mardin and Sanlifu provinces bordering Syria

- Defer non-essential travel to areas within ten miles (16km) of the Syrian border rated as HIGH risk due to the risks associated with proximity to an active conflict zone and the potential for spillover violence.
- Defer all travel to the areas within five miles (8km) within the Syrian border.
- For travel to MEDIUM-risk areas of Gaziantep, Hatay, Kilis, Mardin and Sanlifu provinces, liaise with local contacts for logistical and operational support, and for information on potentially disruptive security measures. Do not self-drive; pre-arrange transport with a trusted local driver with appropriate language capabilities.

Diyarbakir, Hakkari and Sirnak provinces

- Defer non-essential travel to the cities of Diyarbakir, Hakkari and Sirnak, where the travel risks are rated as HIGH.
- Defer all travel to rural areas of Diyarbakir, Hakkari and Sirnak provinces.
- Liaise with local contacts for information on the short-notice imposition of any curfews or other potentially disruptive security measures, including occasional access restriction on internet and mobile networks. Be prepared to restrict movement at short notice and to potentially lose communications for periods of time. Factor the potential for these occasional restrictions into travel and journey-management plans. Liaise with trusted local contacts regarding curfew locations and timings, as these can change frequently.

The eastern and south-eastern provinces of Agri, Batman, Bingol, Bitlis, Erzincan, Erzurum, Igdir, Kars, Mardin, Mus, Siirt, Tunceli and Van

- Monitor developments closely, pre-arrange transport with a trusted local driver with appropriate language capabilities, and ensure you have reliable, backup communications devices.

- Minimise road travel in rural areas; undertake journeys only during daylight hours and with your local guide.
- Liaise with local contacts for information on the short-notice imposition of potentially disruptive security measures, including curfews.

Crime

Limited to hot spots

CRIME

In main cities, petty crime, including pickpocketing, bag snatching, overcharging and a variety of scams, is the main crime risk facing foreign nationals in Turkey, particularly in the tourist areas of the capital Ankara, Istanbul and Izmir. Business travellers should keep an eye on their belongings at all times and should not display expensive items, such as cameras and mobile phones.

Care should also be taken at ATMs, especially at night. Foreign exchange transactions are more secure if made in a bank or bureau de change, as instances of card skimming at ATMs have been reported. If accosted, business travellers should not attempt to resist, as muggers may be armed with knives.

Fraudsters target foreign nationals, including business travellers, for various scams. The most common scheme involves drink bar scams, in which young men approach lone male visitors. Variations of the scam exist, and may involve multiple people. The individual is at the end presented with a large sum to pay by credit card. Incidents of drink-spiking with sleeping drugs to rob people are common in downmarket bars, on buses, shared taxis or minibus (*dolmus*) and trains, which business travellers should avoid. In Istanbul, taxi scams include taking a longer route and switching Turkish lira banknotes.

There has been an increase in racially-motivated violence, allegedly fuelled by a growing influx of refugees. Violent crimes sporadically occur but rarely target business travellers. Consequently, business travellers of Middle Eastern descent may occasionally face hostility and condescension.

Terrorism

Direct risk to foreigners

TERRORISM

Kurdish militancy

The PKK's decision to disband, which was announced in May 2025, reduces the risk of militant attacks by Kurdish groups across the country. The group began the disarmament process later in July.

Over the years, Kurdish armed groups have staged attacks, primarily in the south-east of the country, targeting government and military personnel and assets. These have included roadside bombings, ambushes, kidnaps and occasional mass-casualty bombings. Periodic attacks attributed to these groups have also taken place in major urban centres, such as Istanbul (Istanbul province) and the capital Ankara.

In November 2022, a bombing on Istiklal Avenue in Beyoglu district (Istanbul) killed six people and injured 81 others. No group claimed responsibility, though the authorities said that Kurdish separatists were behind the attack. In October 2024, the PKK claimed responsibility for a bombing near a state-run aerospace firm in Ankara province, which resulted in at least four people killed and several others injured.

Following its decision to disband, the PKK has ceased its operations across the country. While this marks a positive development for the country's security environment, other smaller Kurdish armed groups may continue their operations if they disagree with the conditions of the PKK's deal with the Turkish authorities. Such activity is likely to remain concentrated in the Kurdish majority south-east of the country.

Leftist groups

The main ultra-leftist organisation active in the country is the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front (DHKP-C), which was formed in 1978. While its capabilities are far less than those of the PKK, the group continues to stage sporadic attacks targeting mainly Turkish security personnel or political party offices. In February 2024, one person was killed and five others were injured in a shooting attack at a police checkpoint leading to a courthouse in Istanbul. The authorities attributed the incident to the DHKP-C. The attack followed a lull in group's activity. Before this, the last major attack claimed by the group dated back to 2015.

Islamist terrorism

Turkey experienced significant Islamist militant violence between 2015 and 2016, including multiple high-profile attacks in major urban centres claimed by the extremist Islamic State (IS) group. To curb the threat posed by militancy in the country, the security forces launched extensive counter-terrorism operations across Turkey. These operations aimed to reduce militant groups' capabilities, including those of the IS, leading to a lull in attacks in recent years.

Despite the decrease in attacks, however, the IS retains a presence in the country. This has been evidenced by periodic arrests of suspected IS militants and announcements of thwarted militant plots over the years. Separately, the IS claimed

responsibility for an attack at the Santa Maria Draperis church in Sariyer district (Istanbul) in January 2024, reflecting group's intent to carry out attacks despite its reduced capabilities.

Kidnapping

KIDNAPPING

Kidnapping does not pose a major concern for foreign nationals in most areas of Turkey, including Ankara and Istanbul, as the effectiveness of the security forces acts as an effective deterrent in most circumstances. In February 2021, a Qatari businessman and several of his companions were kidnapped for ransom in Iskenderun (Hatay province). Such incidents, however, remain rare, are typically opportunistic in nature and could be carried out by organised criminal groups for financial gain.

Social Unrest

SOCIAL UNREST

Demonstrations, strikes and rallies are common and can be prompted by a range of issues, including socio-economic woes and political developments. The security forces sometimes resort to heavy-handed measures to disperse gatherings posing incidental risks to bystanders. Nationwide anti-government demonstrations occurred following the 19 March 2025 arrests of more than a hundred high-profile figures, including businessmen, political activists, journalists and Istanbul mayor Ekrem Imamoglu. The security forces used baton charge, pepper spray and rubber bullets to disperse crowds.

Issues involving Kurdish militias and communities in Syria, and the Turkish government's policies towards them, have also triggered widespread protests. Over the years, dozens of Kurdish mayors have been removed from their postings in Kurdish-majority provinces, including following 2024 local elections, which prompted demonstrations in Kurdish-majority south-eastern provinces.

Demonstrations and small-scale security incidents are also common during electoral campaigns. Although foreign nationals are unlikely to be targeted, they face incidental risks if caught in the vicinity of such incidents, particularly those involving the use of tough crowd-control measures.

Conflict

CONFLICT

Kurdish insurgency

In July 2025, the Kurdistan Workers' Party's (PKK) conducted a symbolic ceremony commencing group's disarmament process. The group announced its decision to disband in May 2025, marking an end to the decades-long conflict between the PKK and the Turkish government. Earlier, in February, PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan, who remains in jail, called on the group to disarm and dissolve.

For years, the conflict had primarily been confined to rural and mountainous areas of the HIGH travel risk Diyarbakir, Hakkari and Sirnak provinces. The PKK had also claimed responsibility for attacks in larger cities, including the capital Ankara and Istanbul (Istanbul province). Since 2016, the PKK had been waging low-intensity guerrilla warfare, and its weakened position in Turkey led the group to expand its presence in neighbouring countries, including northern Iraq and Syria.

While the PKK's decision to disband marks a positive development for the country's security environment, the whole process is likely to take months as Turkey seeks the group and its affiliates' dissolution not only in Turkey, but also neighboring Iraq and Syria.

Border areas with Syria

The security environment along the Turkish-Syrian border remains complex. The intensity of Turkey and Turkey-backed forces' operations in northern Syria has subsided after the Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in March 2025 signed an agreement with the interim government to dissolve and integrate its civil and military institutions into the Syrian state.

Turkey considers the Kurdish-led People's Protection Units (YPG) – a PKK-affiliated group and an integral part of the SDF – a terrorist organisation. It has threatened to launch a military operation against the YPG unless it disbands. The SDF's dissolution therefore presents an opportunity to resolve tensions peacefully.

Nevertheless, the SDF's dissolution remains a complex process with its own hurdles, as the group insists on retaining a degree of autonomy with the state, something the interim government is opposed to. Meanwhile, it remains unclear if PKK-affiliated groups in Syria will align with the PKK's decision to disband. The uncertainties associated with these dynamics continue to drive the risk of a resumption of hostilities in northern Syria between Kurdish and Turkish and Turkey-aligned forces there. This, in turn, risks undermining border security between the two countries.

Cyprus

Turkey is involved in a dispute with Greece over the status of Cyprus, which was divided in 1974. This is unlikely to lead to a direct confrontation, but is a source of occasional political tension. Although UN-led talks over a potential Cyprus reunification re-emerged in April 2021, the issue remains unresolved.