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How to see Turkey on a budget

19th June 2019 by Danai Molocho



Holidays in Turkey are about more than soaking up the sunshine. Bridging the gap between Europe and Asia, it's rich in culture and history as well as beautiful beaches. With ancient ruins to explore, bustling marketplaces to browse and a burgeoning art scene to discover, there's plenty to keep everyone occupied. Here's what to add to your hit list.



Melding together the sun-bleached beaches of the Mediterranean with the mystery and allure of the Middle East, Turkey is a fascinating destination to visit at any time of year. As an added bonus, the current pound to lira exchange rate also makes it a particularly inexpensive travel

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remains gorgeously balmy until late October. If, on the other hand, you're planning to tour Turkey's wealth of ancient sites, or go gallery-hopping and shopping in Istanbul, then it might be best to opt for a spring or early autumn holiday.



We've picked the best things to do in three of the country's most beautiful and affordable holiday destinations. All you need to do is bag the cheapest flight and hotel deals. And don't forget to pack your sunscreen!

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What to do in Dalaman



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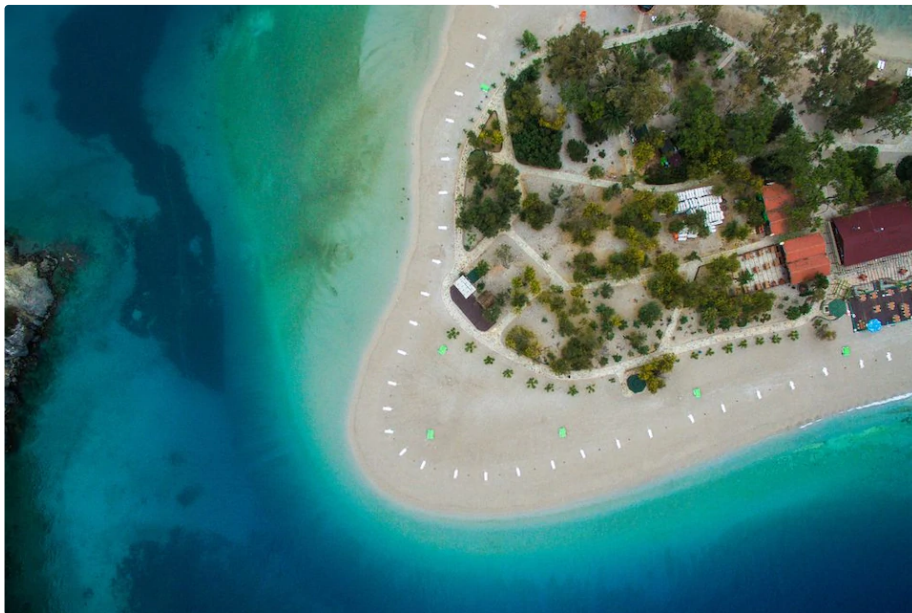
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1. Take a dip in the Blue Lagoon at Ölüdeniz



The Blue Lagoon at Ölüdeniz is Dalaman's star tourist attraction, a haven of turquoise waters surrounded by lush vegetation. One of the perks of visiting in the far more relaxed month of October is swimming alongside sea turtles shyly sticking their head out of the water. This is, after all, a protected natural park.

2. Check out the view from above



If August is your month of choice and you find there's little space to lay your beach towel, Ölüdeniz offers an even more spectacular alternative: you'll find numerous companies providing tandem paragliding flights from the imposing Babadağ mountain. Although paragliding doesn't come cheap, tandem flights here are some of the most affordable on offer. It's little wonder Ölüdeniz is one of the world's most sought-after paragliding destinations. Nothing beats the view of the Blue Lagoon from above!

3. Explore the wild beauty of the Hidden City

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Consider hiring a car to explore Dalaman's spellbinding scenery at your own pace – it's the best way to see Turkey on a budget (prices start at £27 in July). About 45km from the centre of Fethiye lies the 20km-long Saklikent Gorge, otherwise known as the Hidden City. An easy stroll along the boardwalk offers astounding views of the canyon. However, there's nothing more fun than dipping your feet in the cold water and following the adventurous path away from the crowds. The towering limestone cliffs are a sight to behold.

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What to do in Istanbul



Straddling Europe and Asia, Istanbul is the place to go if you want to combine Turkish tradition and contemporary culture, the hustle and bustle of a busy metropolis and quiet backstreets full of old-world charm. Here are three of the best things to do in Istanbul on a budget.

1. Be inspired by historic grandeur in Sultanahmet Square

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Where once stood the Hippodrome of Constantinople (the capital of the Byzantine Empire) now you find Istanbul's most buzzing and glorious square. Sultanahmet Meydanı is surrounded by some of the city's most-visited historic monuments, including the massive ex-Byzantine church (and now museum) of Hagia Sofia, and the Blue Mosque with its impressive six minarets. The latter is free to visit, but it is best to avoid prayer times.

2. Haggle for souvenirs at the Grand Bazaar

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One of Istanbul's most popular tourist attractions, the Grand Bazaar (Kapalıçarşı) has a rich history that stretches back over 5 centuries. Goods on sale in the 4400 shops under its vaulted ceilings include handcrafted shawls, ceramics, lamps and jewellery. They are not always authentic, or fairly priced, but haggling here is half the fun. If anything, it offers a great chance to chat with the local traders. And if you can bargain like a pro you'll walk away with a handful of cheap and colourful treasures.

3. Capture the stunning panorama of the Bosphorus Bridge

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The Bosphorus Bridge, connecting Istanbul's European and Asian sides, is hands down one of the city's most photogenic sights. But you don't need to spend a fortune on a dinner cruise or the nearby seafood restaurants to soak up the spellbinding panorama. Grab instead a delicious Turkish kumpir (baked potato) from the street food vendors in Ortaköy and find the perfect spot by the water to marvel at the 1,560 metre-long suspension bridge, illuminated at night by incredibly atmospheric LED lights.

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What to do in Antalya



Dreaming of floating in aquamarine waters and walking winding trails in the woodlands? A gateway to the scenic routes of the Turkish Riviera, Antalya offers all of the above, as well as

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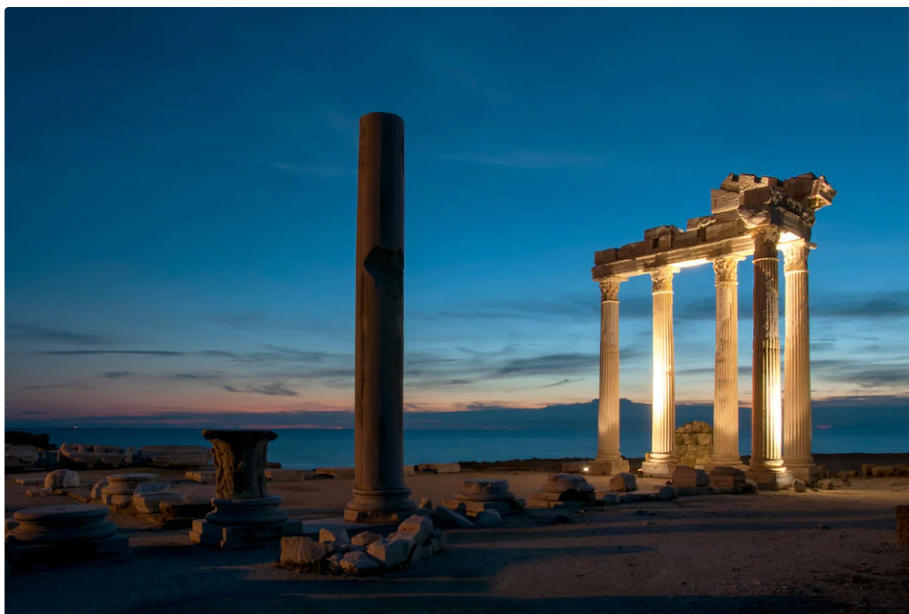
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You don't have to travel far from the city centre for a dip in the Turkish Riviera's strikingly blue waters. Konyaalti Beach, near Kaleiçi (Old Town), is Antalya's No1 attraction with showers, sunloungers and a range of restaurants and bars within easy reach. Fun things to do at the beach include jet skiing and walking down Konyaalti's palm-fringed promenade with Mount Olympus providing an unbeatable backdrop to the west.

2. Wander the ancient ruins of Aspendos and Perge



About 50 km east of Antalya lies Aspendos, the Greco-Roman city best known for its stunningly preserved Roman amphitheatre. It dates from the 2nd century AD and, if you visit here during high season, you'll also catch a host of opera and ballet performances. Guided day trips from Antalya cost between £50-60, so it's worth hiring a car to explore the area's splendid monuments and tourist attractions in your own time. Things not to miss are also the ancient city of Perge, the quiet seaside town of Side and the Duden Waterfalls.

[Hire a car in Antalya](#)

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There are several budget options for a Turkish bath around Antalya, but it's worth making your first hammam an experience to remember. The 600-year-old Sefa Hamam is the city's most atmospheric public bath house, popular with both tourists and locals. A traditional hammam here costs around £8 (40 Turkish liras). But, at these prices, why not splurge a little more and truly pamper yourself? Combine hammam, peeling, hot soap and oil massages for the bargain price of £24 (180 liras), and we promise: Your cheap holidays in Turkey will leave you feeling like royalty!

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