

Republic of Turkey



The current Republic of Turkey is just shy of 100 years old, having been formed in its current state after the breakup of the Ottoman Empire following World War I. A few years later, in 1922, the Turkish War of Independence was fought and won by the side led by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, who became the first president of the newly formed state, abolishing the long standing tradition of monarchy and beginning to implement changes that would make Turkey a more western country in terms of thought, philosophy, and customs. Turkey later became a charter member of the United Nations, as well as NATO.

In more recent events, the reforms made to westernize Turkey by Ataturk have been stalled by current president Tayyip Erdogan. Since becoming president in 2014, Erdogan has set about reversing old laws like freedom of the press and setting standards for secularism for the first time in the country's history. Due to these changes, he has been widely criticized for his actions, and as a result, many journalists have been imprisoned and the government has blocked social media sites like Facebook and Twitter on more than one occasion. In July 2016, there was an attempted military coup to take power away from Erdogan, sending the country into a state of emergency that in April 2017 saw a referendum take place that gave more power to President Erdogan. In a narrow vote, Erdogan won the referendum, leading some to call the result the end of democracy in Turkey and the start of a dictatorship.

Geography

Official name: Republic of Turkey

Conventional Short Form: Turkey

Region: Asia & Europe

Area: 783,356 sq km

Bordering Countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Iran, Iraq, Syria

Physical features: The majority of Turkey sits on what is popularly referred to as the Anatolian Plateau, has roughly 7,200 kilometers of coastline, and has its highest point in the eastern part of the country at 5,137 meters.

Climate: The climate of Turkey is varied. The areas near the coast in the southwest of the country experience hot summers with cool winters, the areas near the coast in the northwest of the country have warm summers and cold winters, while the inland parts of the country in the east may have snow on the ground for four months out of the year.

Natural Hazards: Earthquakes

People and Society

Population: 79,814,871 (20th in the world)

Ethnic Groups: The biggest ethnic group living in Turkey are Turks, with Kurds and Arabs making up some minority groups.

Official Language: Turkish

Other Languages Spoken: Arabic, English

Religions: Muslim (99.8%), Jews/Christians (0.2%)

Capital city: Ankara

Other major cities: Istanbul, Izmir, Bursa

Median age (*half the people are younger than this age and half are older*)

Male: 30.1

Female: 31

Total population: 30.5 (2016 est.)

Literacy rate (*percentage of the population 15 and older who can read and write*)

Male: 98.4

Female: 91.8

Total population: 95 (2015 est.)

Life expectancy at birth (*average number of years to be lived by those born in the same year*)

Male: 72.5

Female: 77.3

Total population: 74.8 (2016 est.)

Government

Country Founded: October 29, 1923 (succession to Ottoman Empire)

Type of Government: Unitary Parliamentary Constitutional Republic

Country Leaders

President: Recep Tayyip Erdogan

Prime Minister: Binali Yildirim

Allies: NATO countries

Enemies: Israel, ISIS

Economy

Currency: Turkish lira

GDP: \$861 billion (2017 est.)

Natural Resources: Coal, iron ore, copper, mercury, gold, hydropower

Unemployment Rate: 10.9% (2016 est.)

Population Below Poverty Line: 21.9% (2015 est.)

Major exports and imports

Exports: Apparel, foodstuffs, textiles, transport equipment, metal manufactures

Imports: Machinery, chemicals, transport equipment, fuel, semi-finished goods

Biggest trading partners

Exports: Germany, United Kingdom, Iran, Italy, United States, France

Imports: China, Germany, Russia, United States, Italy

More information can be found at:

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tu.html>