

Turkish delight

At the heart of Turkey and Central Anatolia sits Ankara, Turkey's ancient capital

While Istanbul served as Turkey's capital under the Ottoman Empire, the city was invaded by the USSR and the UK during World War I. Five hundred kilometres away, well within the sprawling nation's borders, the city of Ankara offered the Turkish community a safe place to live – it remains the capital of Turkey today.

Ankara thrives as Turkey's cosmopolitan capital, boasting the nation's centre for performing arts, state opera and ballet, the Presidential Symphony Orchestra and several national theatre companies. Overlooking the city is Anıtkabir, the enormous hilltop mausoleum of Kemal Atatürk, modern Turkey's first president, who declared Ankara the capital in 1923.

STAY

For a truly authentic, luxurious experience, the Divan Çukurhan Otel offers opulence and proximity to the city centre, with remarkable decor and impeccable service. After being listed by the World Monuments Fund as one of 100 global structures that needed to be saved, the building underwent a complete restoration from 2007 to 2010, with rebuilding works faithful to the original design – with experienced chefs serving the most popular dishes of Ottoman and international cuisine, as well as Divan specialties. Superior rooms boast views of the city, garden and castle, complete with a quite unique historical fabric.

Inspired service and distinctive experiences are the norm at the JW Marriott Hotel located in

Ankara city centre. Rooms and suites feature plush bedding, marble bathrooms and floor-to-ceiling windows with Ankara city views. The hotel also offers a fully-equipped fitness centre with calming spa, luxury Turkish Hammam as well as an indoor and outdoor pool.

The Grand Hotel Ankara, formerly Rixos Grand Ankara, is a city landmark and architectural marvel located on the prestigious Ataturk Avenue. The 18 story high luxury hotel has 217 deluxe and superior rooms including suites. The extensive meeting facilities make it a draw for business people,

Below: Ankara by night with communications and observation tower Atakule lighting up the sky

and all travellers will enjoy relaxing in the spacious Rixos Grand Spa. There are two restaurants: Brasserie Restaurant serves international cuisine while Lalezar Restaurant features Ottoman.

Divan Çukurhan Otel

Divan.com.tr

JW Marriott Hotel Ankara

Marriott.com

Grand Ankara

grandankara.com/tr

DRINKS & DINNER

Located in the Gaziosmanpa quarter of Ankara, in the south of the city, Trilye Restaurant lives by the motto "Fish for health; Trilye for fish". And the period between April and May is the perfect time to visit, with an abundance of fresh swordfish, swallow and red porgy (seabream) available, plus lobster, brown crab, red mullet and one of the venomous – yet incredibly tasty – black scorpionfish.

A visit to Ankara would not be complete without a kebab. And Günaydin have done the best around since 1965. The Anatolia region is famous for its rich cuisine prepared using traditional

methods – especially its fish, but also its meat. With three different concepts in the city – a steakhouse, a kebab house and a donner and kofte – there is something for every occasion.

Prepare to be amazed and drooling at Mövenpick Hotel's Plus Restaurant. Serving Turkish specialities with an international touch, such as its coffee-inspired range; beef mignon and meatball with espresso crust, fresh spring rolls with cold-brew espresso dressing, lamb loin with coffee

herb rub, salmon sashimi with flamed off coffee beans and, of course, deconstructed puff pastry 'opera' style, with Mövenpick Ice Espresso croquant.

Trilye Restaurant

trilye.com.tr/en

Günaydinet

gunaydinet.com/eng.html

Mövenpick Hotel

movenpick.com

SEE

Sitting on a prominent lava outcrop overlooking the city, the Ankara Castle is shrouded in mystique. Some historians believe the Hittites (an ancient empire that ruled over north-central Anatolia in 1600 BC), who had a military garrison

in Ankara, built it. However, due to a lack of archeological artifacts, others believe it was the Galatians with the Romans completing the build and the Byzantines and Seljuks making restorations and additions. Other ancient sites, including the Roman Theatre, the Temple of Augustus and Rome, the Roman Baths and the Column of Julian are central to a very Roman influence on Ankara. The famous Kocatepe Mosque has become an icon for the city; constructed between 1967 and 1987 in the classical Ottoman style with four minarets. It is one of a plethora of stunning mosques, built to accommodate thousands of people, some dating back

as far as the 12th century (Alâeddin Mosque). A series of monuments and museums tell the rich and colourful history of this city, with the Monument to a Secure, Confident Future one of the most symbolic for all Turkish people. Located in Güven Park, near Kızılay Square, it bears Atatürk's advice to his people: "Turk! Be proud, work hard, and believe in yourself".

Ankara Castle

tourmakerturkey.com/ankara-castle

Kocatepe Mosque

goturkeytourism.com

Monument to a Secure, Confident Future

goturkey.com ■

