

# **Turkey (Republic of) (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti)**

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## **Location and area**

Turkey is a republic in south-eastern Europe and south-western Asia, bordered on the northwest by Bulgaria and Greece, on the north by the Black Sea, on the northeast by Georgia and Armenia, on the east by Iran, on the south by Iraq, Syria, and the Mediterranean Sea, and on the west by the Aegean Sea. The area of Turkey is 779,452 km<sup>2</sup>. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

## **Topography**

Turkey can be divided into seven geographic regions:

1. Thrace and the borderlands of the Sea of Marmara contain a central plain of gently rolling hills. It is a fertile, well-watered area of which slightly more than one quarter is farmed. The eastern portion of this region rises as high as 2,543 m at the summit of Mount Ulu (Olympus).
2. The coastlands of the Aegean and Mediterranean region are narrow and hilly, and only about one fifth of the land is arable. To the east, much of Turkey's cotton crop is grown in the Çukurova, a plain connected with the interior through the Taurus Mountains by a pass known since antiquity as the Cilician Gates (Külek Bogazi).
3. The Anatolian coastlands of the Black Sea region rise directly from the water to the heights of the Pontic Mountains (Kuzey Anadolu Dağlari). Slopes are steep, and only about 16 % of this area is farmed.
4. Western Anatolia consists of irregular ranges and interior valleys separating the Aegean coast from the central Anatolian Plateau; farming here is restricted to less than one fifth of the total area.
5. The central Anatolian Plateau, the largest region in Turkey, is surrounded on all sides by mountains. The highest point is the summit of Mount Erciyes (3,916 m). 28 % of the region is cultivated.
6. The eastern highlands region is the most mountainous and rugged portion of Turkey; Mount Ararat (Agri Dagi) is the highest peak at 5,122 m. Less than 10 % of this area is cultivated. The eastern highlands are the source for both the Tigris (Dicle) and Euphrates (Firat) rivers.
7. South-eastern Anatolia is a rolling plateau enclosed on the north, east, and west by mountains. With about 19 % of its area farmed, south-eastern Anatolia is part of the so-called Fertile Crescent and has been important since antiquity. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

## **Water**

The Kizil (> 1,100 km), which empties into the Black Sea, is the longest river flowing entirely within national boundaries. The Büyük Menderes (Latin Maeander) drains western Anatolia into the Aegean Sea. The Tigris and Euphrates rivers flow from eastern Turkey to empty ultimately into the Persian Gulf. A number of rivers do not flow during the dry summer. Some rivers are, however, important sources of hydroelectric power and water for irrigation.

Lake Van is Turkey's largest lake; its waters are saline, as are those of another large body of water, Lake Tuz. Freshwater lakes include Beyşehir, Eğirdir, and Burdur—all in the southwest. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

## **Climate**

The Mediterranean and Aegean shores of Turkey experience long, hot summers and mild, rainy winters. Istanbul has an average January temperature of 5° C and an average July temperature of 23° C. Average annual precipitation totals 820 mm.

The central Anatolian Plateau has a continental climate with hot summers and colder winters than those along the shore. Ankara has an average January temperature of 0° C and an average July temperature of 23° C. Average annual precipitation totals 350 mm. Along the Mediterranean and Aegean coasts, nearly half the yearly precipitation, which is about 700 mm at Izmir, falls in December and January. The plateau receives only about half as much precipitation, but it is more evenly distributed over the course of the year. The eastern highlands experience even longer and colder winters. records the hottest summer temperatures in Turkey (averaging more than 30° C in July and August). (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

## **Peatlands**

Markov et al. (1988) mention a peatland area of 50 km<sup>2</sup> ha (a single peatland ?).

Öz (1996) mentions a recent wetland area of 561 km<sup>2</sup>, a recent peatland area: (< 0.3 m) of 775 km<sup>2</sup>, and a recent peatland area (> 0.3 m) of 130 km<sup>2</sup> (Stand: 1993). Evaluations are inadequate and imprecise and detailed surveys have been conducted only on four deposits. (Öz 1996).

According to the interpreted World Soil Map (Van Engelen & Huting 2002) no histosols exist in Turkey and 45,069 km<sup>2</sup> of gley soils.

## **Mire and peatland losses**

Almost all peatlands have been drained to prevent the spread of malaria and for agriculture, Annual peat extraction volume is 50,000 m<sup>3</sup> (Öz 1996).

According to Byfield & Özhatay (1997) the original peatland area in Turkey was approx. 240 km<sup>2</sup>, of which currently 30 km<sup>2</sup> remain.

Threats to peatlands include drainage for agriculture, agricultural reclamation (ploughing/cultivation), afforestation, and peat extraction

fotos: <http://www.ipcc.ie/wpturkey.html>