

North Aegean



If the south Aegean is Turkey's younger wayward child – a noisy, boisterous show-off, desperate for attention – then the north Aegean is the older, quieter, more serious and, in truth, less popular sibling. Though it boasts a similar topography with plenty of fine beaches and dramatic cliff-top scenery, there are no dedicated resort towns of the scale and intensity of Bodrum or Kuşadası. North Aegean resorts tend to be quieter, more refined affairs, like Assos, Foça and Alaçatı, aimed more at vacationing Turks than the package hordes from Europe.

That's not to say that the north Aegean doesn't have its own urban sprawl. İzmir is Turkey's third-largest city, and just as noisy, congested and confusing as either İstanbul or Ankara. Still, if you can overlook the stupefyingly ugly suburbs and relentless, honking traffic, you'll find much to entice you, including a buzzing bazaar, a vibrant nightlife and one of the Aegean's most pleasant waterfronts.

Izmir aside, much of the region is rural. Life is arranged around the patterns of the growing, not the tourist, seasons. Indeed, such is the air of bucolic calm that it can be difficult to believe this region was once the setting for some of the bloodiest confrontations in history. Ancient ruins litter the landscape, including Troy, the most famed of all – even if the remains are far from legendary. Spectacular Pergamum does a better job of living up to its billing.

The north Aegean also boasts its own island, pretty little Bozcaada, which, with its vine-covered hills, picturesque town of old stone houses and quiet beaches, perhaps offers the finest distillation of the region's charms.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Explore the ruins of the Roman Empire at **Pergamum** (Bergama; p212), one of the country's finest ancient sites
- Windsurf by day, and fine-dine by night at **Alaçatı** (p234), the region's favourite boutique bolt hole
- Relax on the beach and sample the local vino on the idyllic, laid-back island of **Bozcaada** (p200)
- Hunt for bargains in **Izmir's** (p221) chaotic bazaar before retiring to the waterfront for an elegant sunset drink
- Tour the crumbling, atmospheric backstreets of **Ayvalık's** (p207) old town
- Clamber up the dusty slopes to Behramkale's amazing **Temple of Athena** (p205) with its glorious sea views



BANDIRMA

☎ 0266 / pop 110,250

An undistinguished 20th-century *betonville* (concrete city), the port town of Bandırma marks the junction between İzmir-bound trains and the Bandırma–İstanbul ferry line, so you may well need to pass through it.

The otogar (bus station) is 1.8km south-east of the centre, out on the main highway and served by *servis* (shuttle buses) from the centre.

Getting There & Away

At least two daily **İstanbul Deniz Otobüsleri fast ferries** (İDO; ☎ 444 4436; www.ido.com.tr; per car/pedestrian/passenger TL115/30/25) connect Bandırma with İstanbul's Yenikapı docks (1¼ hours). It's a comfortable service, with assigned seats, trolley-dollies selling fresh orange juice and sandwiches, a business-class lounge and a lift for disabled passengers.

In theory, the ferry connects with the morning train from İzmir. However, in reality it does so only from mid-July until August. The rest of the year you'll have to cool your heels in Bandırma for a couple of hours.

The *Alti Eylül Ekspresi* train departs year-round from Bandırma Gar (the main station) at 9.45am daily, arriving at İzmir's Basmane station at 3.20pm. Between April and October a second service, the *Onyedi Eylül Ekspresi*, leaves at 5.45pm, arriving in İzmir at 9.30pm (TL16, 6½ hours, 342km).

Bandırma is midway on the bus run between Bursa (TL15, two hours, 115km) and Çanakkale (TL17, 2¾ hours, 195km).

TROY (TRUVA) & TEVFIKIYE

☎ 0286

It has to be said, if it wasn't for the name – and its legendary associations – almost nobody would visit this place. Of all the breathtaking ancient sites in Turkey, the remains of what you would hope to be the most wondrous of all, the great city of Troy, are in fact among the least impressive. To get the best out of a trip here you'll have to use your imagination, and reconstruct almost all of the city's former splendour inside your head. Still, for any history buff, it's an important site to tick off the list.

History

The first people lived here during the early Bronze Age. The cities called Troy I to Troy V (3000–1700 BC) had a similar culture, but

Troy VI (1700–1250 BC) took on a different Mycenaean-influenced character, doubling in size and trading prosperously with the region's Greek colonies. Archaeologists argue over whether Troy VI or Troy VII was the city of King Priam who engaged in the Trojan War. Most believe it was Troy VI, arguing that the earthquake that brought down the walls in 1250 BC hastened the Achaean victory.

Troy VII lasted from 1250 to 1000 BC. An invading Balkan people moved in around 1190 BC, and Troy sank into a torpor for four centuries. It was revived as a Greek city (Troy VIII, 700–85 BC), then as a Roman one (Novum Ilion; Troy IX, 85 BC to AD 500). Before eventually settling on Byzantium, Constantine the Great toyed with the idea of building the capital of the eastern Roman Empire here. As a Byzantine town, Troy didn't amount to much.

The Fourth Crusaders sometimes claimed that their brutal behaviour in Turkey was justified as vengeance for Troy, and when Mehmet the Conqueror visited the site in 1462 he, in turn, claimed to be laying those ghosts to rest. After that, the town simply disappeared from the records.

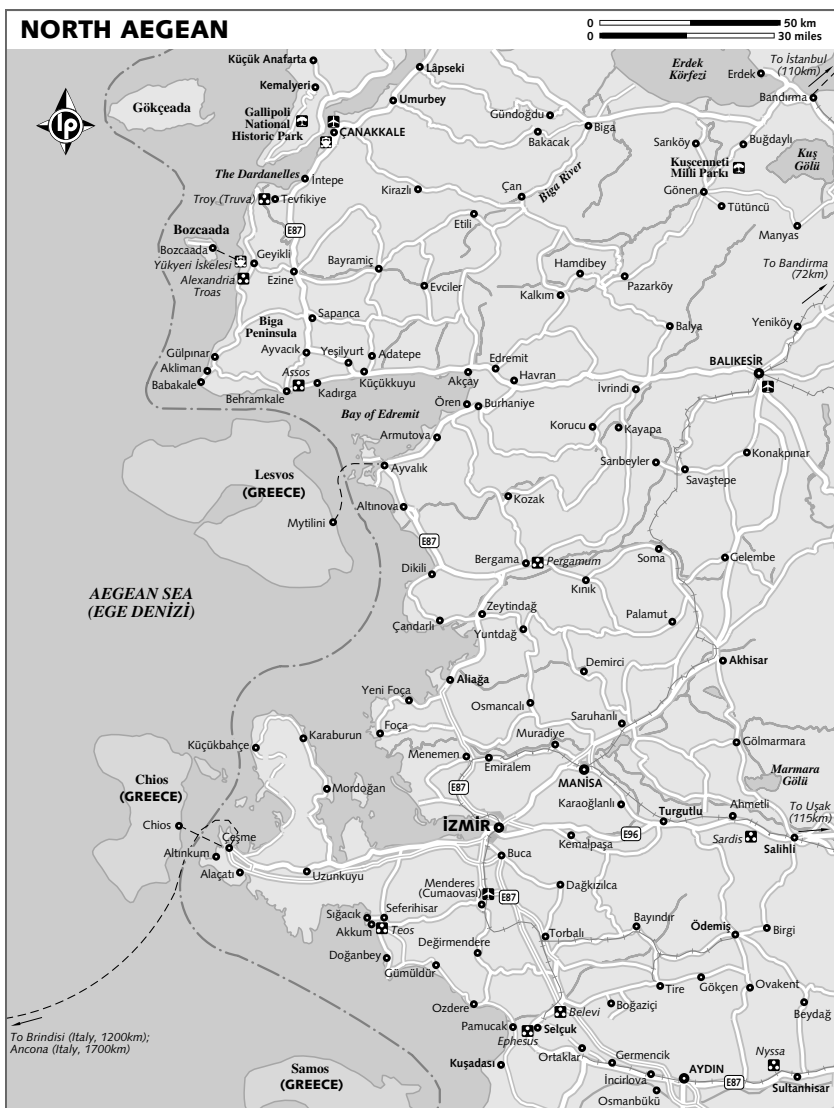
Sights

The ticket booth for the **ruins of Troy** (☎ 283 0536; per person/car TL10/3; ☎ 8.30am–7pm May–15 Sep, to 5pm 16 Sep–end Apr) is 500m before the site.

Guides are available for tours (€50, 1½ hours); inquire at the ticket booth or restaurants, or email in advance to Mustafa Askin (thetroyguide@hotmail.com). Illustrated guidebooks (TL10 to TL60) and maps (TL5) are sold at the souvenir shops.

The first thing you see as you approach the ruins is a huge replica of the city's most potent symbol – and the means of its legendary demise – a wooden horse, built by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture. You can climb up inside and admire the views through windows in the horses' sides (which presumably didn't feature in the original Greek design).

The **Excavations House**, to the right of the path, was used by earlier archaeological teams, and today holds models and superimposed pictures to give an idea of what Troy looked like at different points in its history, as well as information on the importance of the Troy myth in Western history. Opposite is the small **Pithos Garden**, with a collection of outside storage jars and drainage pipes.



Although the site is still fairly confusing, the circular path around the ruins has signboards to help you understand what you're seeing.

As you approach the ruins, take the stone steps up on the right. These bring you out on top of what was the **outer wall of Troy VIII/IX**, from where you can gaze on the fortifications of the **east wall gate** and **tower of Troy VI**.

Descend the stairs and follow the path round the walls to the right, and then up a knoll from where you can look at some original (as well as some reconstructed) red-brick **walls of Troy II/III**. Immediately above them was the site of a Graeco-Roman **Temple of Athena**, of which only traces of the altar remain today.

DISCOVERING TROY

Until the 19th century, many historians doubted whether Troy was a real place at all. One man who was convinced of its existence – to an almost obsessive level – was the German businessman Heinrich Schliemann (1822–90), who in 1871 received permission from the Ottoman government to excavate a hill near the village of Hisarlık, which archaeologists had previously identified as a possible site for the city. This was to be no slow, forensic excavation, however. Schliemann was more of an eager treasure hunter than a methodical archaeologist and quickly tore open the site, uncovering the remains of a ruined city, which he confidently identified as the Troy of Homeric legend, and a great cache of gold artefacts, which he named, with typical understatement, ‘Priam’s Treasure’. These discoveries brought Schliemann world fame, but also greater scrutiny of his rather slapdash methods, prompting no little criticism and revealing that not all of his findings were quite as he presented them.

In his haste, Schliemann had failed to appreciate that Troy was not a single city, but rather a series of settlements built successively one on top of the other over the course of about two-and-a-half thousand years. Subsequent archaeologists have identified the remains of nine separate Troys, large sections of which had been damaged during Schliemann’s hot-headed pursuit of glory. Furthermore, it was soon established that his precious treasures were not from the time of Homer’s Troy (Troy VI), but were from the much earlier Troy II.

Schliemann’s dubious attitude towards archaeological standards continued after the excavation when he smuggled part of ‘Priam’s Treasure’ out of the Ottoman Empire. Much of it was displayed in Berlin, where it was seized by invading Soviet troops at the end of World War II. Following decades of denials about their whereabouts, the treasures were eventually found hidden away in the Pushkin Museum in Moscow, where they remain while international wrangles over their true ownership continue.

Note that Troy is a popular destination for weekend school parties. Do yourself a favour and visit midweek.

Continue following the path, past traces of the **wall of Early/Middle Troy (Troy I Gate)**. Opposite are remains of the **houses of Troy II**, inhabited by a literal ‘upper class’ while the poor huddled on the plains.

The path then sweeps past **Schliemann’s original trial trench**, which was cut straight through all the layers of the city. Signs point out the nine city strata in the trench’s 15m-high sides.

Just round the corner is a stretch of wall from what is believed to have been the two-storey-high Troy VI **Palace Complex** and then, to the right, traces of an ancient **sanctuary** to unknown deities. Later, a new sanctuary was built on the same site, apparently honouring the deities of Samothrace. Nearby are remains of the **Skaean Gate** in front of which Achilles and Hector supposedly fought their duel. Eventually, the path passes in front of the Roman **Odeon**, where concerts were held, and the **Bouleuterion** (Council Chamber), bringing you back to where you started.

Sleeping & Eating

Most visitors stay in Çanakkale (p189) and visit Troy in passing. However, the atmos-

phere of the nearby village of Tefvikiye makes a pleasant change from the hassle of Çanakkale.

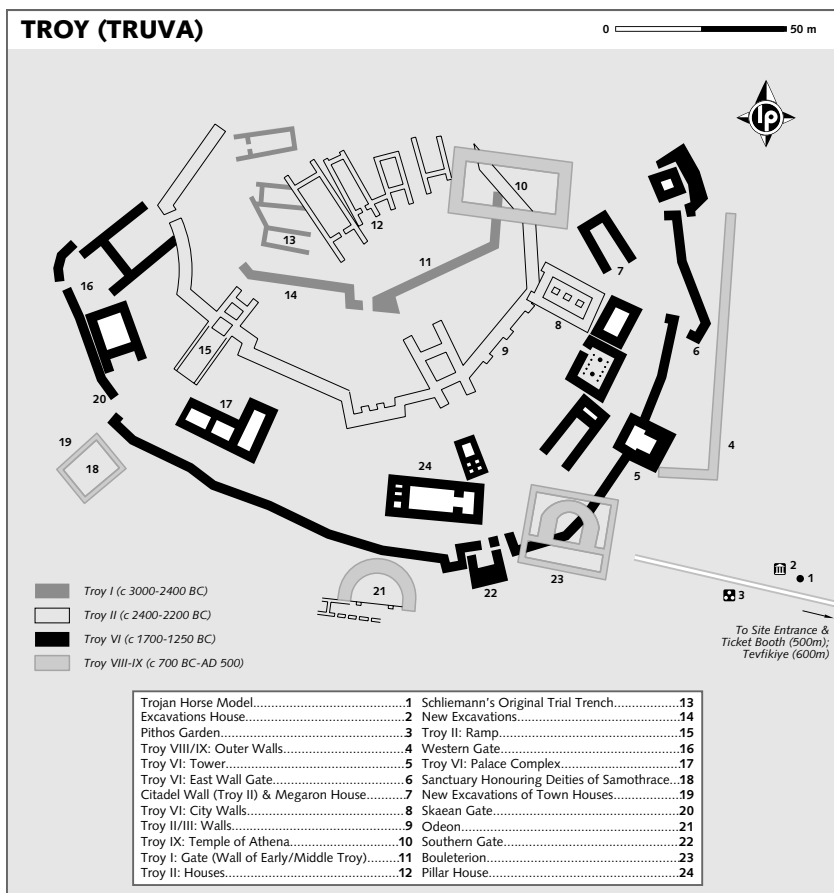
Varol Pansiyon (☎ 283 0828; s/d TL40/55) The Varol, right in the heart of the village, is clean, lovingly cared for and homely. Rooms are of a decent size, and guests can also use the kitchen.

Hotel Hisarlık (☎ 283 0026; thetroyguide@hotmail.com; s/d €25/35) This hotel is run by the family of the local guide Mustafa Askin. It’s opposite the gate to the ruins and has comfortable rooms emblazoned with the names of characters from Greek myths. The restaurant (open 8am to 11pm) serves good Turkish home cooking. Try the hearty *güveç* (beef stew).

Getting There & Away

From Çanakkale, dolmuşes (minibuses) to Troy (TL2, 35 minutes, 30km) leave every hour on the half-hour from 9.30am to 5.30pm from a station under the bridge over the Sari, and drop you right by the ticket booth.

From Troy to Çanakkale, dolmuşes leave every hour on the hour 7am to 5pm in high season and 7am to 3pm in low season.



The travel agencies offering tours to the Gallipoli (Gelibolu) battlefields also offer tours to Troy (around €25 per person). This is worth considering if you want a guided tour of both sites at an affordable rate. For details of the various tour companies, see p180.

BOZCAADA

☎ 0286 / pop 2700

Beautiful little Bozcaada. The second of Turkey's two inhabited Aegean islands (the other is Gökçeada), it's the sort of place where you arrive planning to spend a night and wind up wishing you could stay forever. A trip here also makes a good break from the usual tourist trail.

Windswept Bozcaada (formerly Tenedos) has always been known to Anatolian oenophiles for its wines, and vineyards still blanket its sunny slopes (see boxed text, p203). As in Bodrum (p267), a huge medieval fortress towers over the harbour. In its wake huddles one of Turkey's least-spoilt small towns, a warren of picturesque vine-draped old houses and cobbled streets.

The island is small (about 5km to 6km across) and easy to explore. Lovely unspoilt sandy beaches line the coast road to the south.

Be warned that outside the school-holiday period (mid-June to mid-September) you may find cafés and the like closed, except at weekends and on Wednesdays, when a market fills the main square.

Information

There is no tourist office, but you can pick up a rough map from some of the hotels, pensions and cafés, including the Ada Café.

There's a Ziraat Bankası ATM in Bozcaada town, right beside the PTT, although as it doesn't have agreements with every international bank, you'll need to bring sufficient cash with you. The **Captain Internet Kafe** (☎ 697 8507; Trüya Sokak; per hr €1.10; ☎ 9am-midnight) is nearby.

Sights

Bozcaada is a place for hanging out, rather than doing anything specific. The one official tourist attraction is the impressive **fortress** (☎ 0543-551 8211; admission TL1; ☎ 10am-1pm & 2-7pm May-Nov), in Bozcaada town, which dates back to Byzantine times, although most of what you see are later Venetian, Genoese and Ottoman additions. Inside the double walls you will find traces of a mosque, several ammunition dumps, a barracks and an infirmary.

The **church**, in the old Greek neighbourhood directly behind the castle, is sadly rarely open.

The **Bozcaada Local History Museum** (Bozcaada Yerel Tarih Müzesi; www.bozcaadamuzesi.com; Lale Sokak 7; adult/child TL5/3; ☎ 10am-8pm mid-Apr-Sep) is a treasure trove of lovingly collected island curios – maps, prints, photographs, seashells and day-to-day artefacts. It's a fascinating place where you can fossick through the island's history.

The best **beaches** – Ayana, Ayazma and Habbele – straggle along the south coast, although Tuzburnu to the east and Sulubahçe to the west are also passable. Ayazma is by far the most popular and best equipped, boasting several cafés (offering the usual Turkish fare) as well as a small, abandoned **Greek monastery** uphill.

Sleeping

BUDGET

Prices can rise dramatically in summer, although from 2009 onwards room rates are to be regulated by the municipality.

Güler Pansiyon (☎ 697 8454; Tuzburnu Yolu Üzeri; r per person TL40) Though simple, the 120-year-old farmhouse has an authentic island feel and a beautiful setting amid vineyards. There's a quiet beach 100m away with tables, sunloungers and a shower. It lies about 2.5km from town on the Tuzburnu road.

Kibele Konukevi (☎ 697 0576; www.kibelekonukevi.com; Çınar Çarşı Caddesi 90; r per person TL40; ☎) An affordable option in the fast-gentrifying Greek neighbourhood. This restored stone house boasts seven rather simple rooms done out in a striking pink, green and yellow colour scheme. There's also a pleasant central courtyard where breakfast is served.

Apart Akarsu Otel (☎ 697 8435; Gürsel Sokak 36; r per person incl breakfast TL50; ☎) With four spotless, spacious one-bedroom apartments with full kitchens, this place also boasts a fabulous rooftop terrace with views over the fortress. Reserve at least two weeks in advance.

Kale Pansiyon (☎ 697 8617; www.kalepansiyon.net; s/d TL60/80) Uphill behind the Otel Ege Bozcaada, the Kale has simple but fastidiously clean rooms and an open-buffet breakfast (on a terrace with lovely views) that gets top marks from travellers. Pakize, the owner, is keen to please and makes delicious jam.

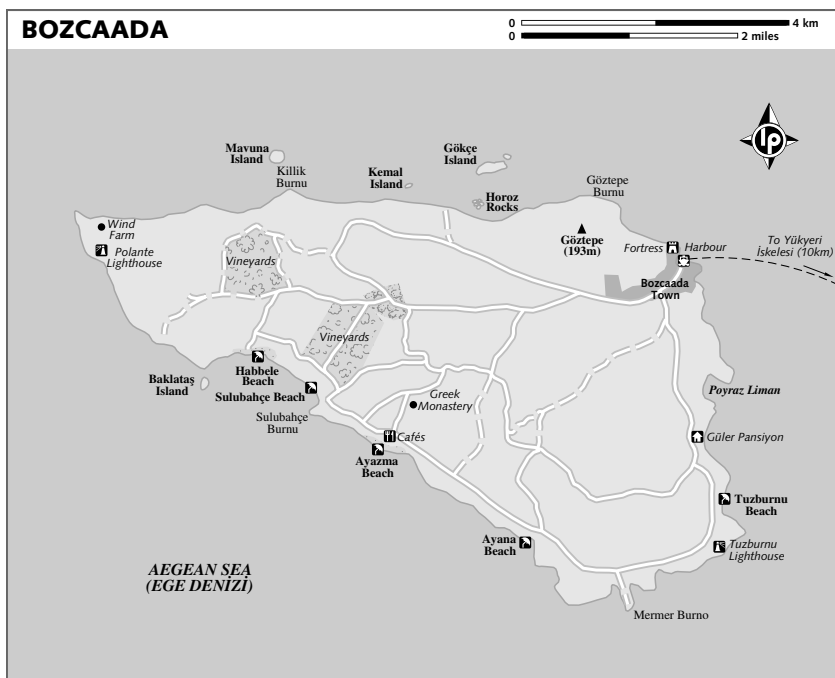
MIDRANGE

Otel Ege Bozcaada (☎ 697 8189; www.egehotel.com; Bozcaada Kale Arkası; s/d TL75/150; ☎ 10 Apr-15 Nov; ☎) A 19th-century primary school now turned into a cavernous hotel with 35 attractively furnished rooms, each with the name of a poet, and an extract of their verse, engraved on the door. Six rooms have balconies with views over the fort.

Hotel Katina (☎ 236 2421; www.katinaas.com; Eylül Caddesi 20; r per person TL75; ☎) Terribly 'boutique', this renovated 150-year-old house has seven very stylish rooms – wooden floors and uplighting – equipped with LCD TV screens, large beds and swish bathrooms. Here and there some of the original stonework has been left exposed to add some nice rustic touches. Breakfast is served at the hotel's smart café.

Otel Kaikias (☎ 697 0250; www.kaikias.com; in Turkish; per person TL80; ☎) Though built in 2001, the building has been artfully decorated to appear aged with antique Greek furniture, paintings and photos. Rooms boast wooden floors, four-poster beds (draped with white muslin) and marble bathrooms. Four rooms have fort views.

Rengigül (☎ 697 8171; www.rengigul.net; Atatürk Caddesi 31; s/d TL80/120) This character-filled 138-year-old Greek house has six tastefully decorated, antique-strewn rooms (Özcan, the owner, also runs an art gallery and clearly has a good eye), a cosy lounge and library area, and a large, peaceful, walled garden.



Eating

Always check the price of fish before ordering. There have been complaints from some travellers about the exorbitant prices in some restaurants.

Café at Lisa's (☎ 697 0182; Liman Sokak; ☎ 8.30am-midnight; 🍽️) At the southern end of the harbour 200m from the disembarkation point, this charming café is run by Lisa, an Australian who also runs the local rag (so is very au fait with all the island goings-on!). It's a great place for breakfast (TL4 to TL10) – Lisa's omelettes are legendary – cake (TL3 to TL5), soup (TL5) or salad (TL6 to TL8).

Koreli (☎ 697 8098; Yali Caddesi 12; ☎ noon-midnight) In business now for three generations, this charming place by the harbour clearly knows what it's doing, and roars with regulars who come for the *köftes* (meatballs; TL6) or fresh seafood such as *kalamar tava* (fried squid; TL12).

Sandal Restaurant (☎ 668 1025; Alsancak Sokak 31; ☎ 9am-2am) With its strict blue-and-white colour scheme (which even includes the boat stuck to the outside wall), there's no mistaking the Greek influence here. It's renowned for its

fish dishes and stews, and the *kalamar tava* (TL10) are finger-lickin' good.

Boruzan (☎ 697 0352; Liman Sokak 10; fish mains TL10-15; ☎ 9am-2am) A buzzing harbourside place, Boruzan is particularly good for mezes, which feature produce from the restaurant's own vegetable patch, and simple seafood dishes, such as *kalamar tava* (TL10) and octopus meatballs (TL8). A second branch opens in summer at Ayazma Beach.

Güverte (☎ 668 9582; İstiklal Sokak 7; ☎ 8am-midnight) Diagonally opposite Sandal, this is a cosy little choice with vine-shaded tables and a wide selection of mezes, including *cevizli kabak* (zucchini with walnuts and yoghurt; TL5), and plenty of good fish and seafood (TL10 to TL15).

Ada Café (☎ 697 8795; www.bozcaada.info; Çınar Çeşme Sokak 4; köfte TL7, meals TL10-15, beer TL4; ☎ 8am-noon May-Sep) The İstanbul-born owners, Melih and Semra, have thrown themselves wholeheartedly into island life, running this popular café, which serves good snacks (such as pilchards wrapped in vine leaves), and becoming an unofficial tourist information point for visitors. The red poppy cordial (TL15 for a bottle) is a speciality.

FINE WINE

Bozcaada has been one of the country's great wine-growing regions since ancient times when enormous quantities of wine were used to fuel the debauchery at festivals for Dionysus, the Greek god of wine. Nobody is quite sure why, but some magical alchemy of the island's climate, topography and soil make-up just seems to suit the growing of grapes. There are four winemakers on the island: Ataol, Corvus, Talay and Yunatçılar. **Talay** (☎ 0286-697 8080; www.talay.com.tr; Lale Sokak 5; 🕒 8.30am-6pm), one block west of the *belediye* (town hall) in Bozcaada town, allows visits to its premises. You can tour the bottling unit and fermentation tanks and also taste and buy wines (TL7 to TL35) at the little shop opposite. It has plans to open a wine museum in the future.

If travelling in June, try to coincide with the annual Wine Festival, which offers free tastings, tours of the wine houses and lectures on the processes of viticulture.

Battı Balık (☎ 697 881; Alsancak Sokak; mains TL10-18; 🕒 9.30am-12.30am) A recent arrival to the restaurant scene; the former grocery store has been transformed into a rather elegant dining space with an outside seating area illuminated by paper lanterns. As the name suggests, fish and seafood dominate the menu, although it also does a mean line in cheeses.

Around 50m from the Sandal restaurant, **Bozcaada Tüketim Market** (☎ 697 8046; Alsancak Sokak 20; 🕒 8am-1am high season, 9am-9pm low season), with fresh bread and fruit, cheeses and meats, is great for getting up a picnic.

Drinking

Polente (☎ 697 8605; Yalı Sokak 41; 🕒 8pm-2am) Polente, off the main square, plays an eclectic mix of music, including Latin and jazz, and attracts an equally eclectic mix of locals and visitors (mostly 20- and 30-somethings). Waterside bonfires keep out the chill in winter.

Salhane Bar (Liman Sokak 4; 🕒 9am-3am high season) Bozcaada's hippest – and certainly most striking – hot spot, housed in a converted slaughterhouse on the waterfront. It's a good place for a drink and a dance; it really starts rocking after midnight.

Bar Ali (☎ 697 8001; Çınar Çarşısı Caddesi 12; 🕒 8am-4am high season) The waterfront seating area overlooks the fortress, and, festooned with cushions, beanbags and deckchairs, is the place to wind down at the end of the day. Inside there's a more formal area where you can tuck into wines and cheese, plus a mezzanine with comfy leather chairs.

Getting There & Away

Ferries depart from Yükyeri İskelesi (Yükyeri harbour) 4km west of Geyikli, south of Troy. Dolmuşes from Çanakkale otogar run to

Geyikli (55km) about every 45 minutes during the day (TL5.5, one hour); tell the driver to drop you off at the harbour. Coming back from Bozcaada, minibuses from the harbour go to Çanakkale, Geyikli and Ezine.

In low season, boats leave Yükyeri İskelesi daily at 11am, 3pm and 7pm. In high season, there's an extra daily service at 9pm, and on Friday to Sunday at midnight. From Bozcaada to Yükyeri İskelesi, boats leave at 7.30am, noon and 6pm in low season. In high season, there are extra daily services at 10am, 2pm, 4pm, 8pm and, from Friday to Sunday, 11pm. Return tickets per person/car cost TL3/23 and the journey takes 35 minutes.

For confirmation of ferry departures and times, phone **Geyikli ticket office** (☎ 632 0263) or **Bozcaada ticket office** (☎ 697 8185).

If you're coming to Yükyeri İskelesi with public transport from the south, go first to Ezine, where dolmuşes usually connect with the ferries. In high season many intercity buses connect with the first boat, so go straight to the port.

Getting to Behramkale/Assos by public transport is not straightforward. You may have to take a bus from Yükyeri İskelesi to Ezine otogar (TL0.75, 30 minutes), then walk out to the main Çanakkale-Ayvacık highway and flag down an Ayvacık minibüs (TL1.50, 30 minutes). In Ayvacık you'll have to get a third minibüs on to Behramkale (TL1.50, 30 minutes).

Getting Around

Frequent dolmuşes connect Bozcaada town with the Ayazma, Sulubağçe, Habbele and Mermer Burno beaches in high season (TL1.50, 15 minutes). To walk from Bozcaada town to Ayazma takes about 1½ hours.

BİGA PENINSULA

☎ 0286

With your own transport you may want to visit the isolated Biga Peninsula and its assorted, all-but-forgotten ruins along the way. You can go by public transport too, but be prepared for lots of waiting along exposed roadsides.

Alexandria Troas

Ten kilometres south of Geyikli lie the ruins of **Alexandria Troas** (admission TL5), scattered around the village of Dalyan.

After the collapse of Alexander the Great's empire, Antigonos, one of his generals, took control of this land, founding the city of Antiocheia in 310 BC. Later, he was defeated in battle by Lysimachus, another of Alexander's generals, who took the city and renamed it in honour of his late commander. After a period of Roman occupation, an earthquake eventually destroyed much of the city.

The site is undeniably atmospheric, with its great grass-strewn ruins, but also rather confusing, with little in the way of clear signage. Much of the site remains buried and excavations are ongoing. So far archaeologists have identified a theatre, palace, temple, agora (marketplace), necropolis, harbour, city walls and what is believed to be the largest Roman bathing complex in Anatolia.

Infrequent dolmuşes run between Ezine and Dalyan, or you can get here by bus from Çanakkale otogar.

Gülpinar

Gülpinar is a one-street farming town south of Geyikli with few services beyond a petrol station. However, it was once the ancient city of **Khrysa**, famous for its 2nd-century-BC Ionic temple to Apollo and its mice. An oracle had told Cretan colonists to settle where 'the sons of the earth' attacked them. Awaking to find mice chewing their equipment, they decided to settle here and built a temple to Smintheion (Lord of the Mice). The cult statue of the god, now lost, once had marble mice carved at its feet.

The remains of the **Apollon Smintheion** (admission incl museum TL5; ☎ 8am-5pm) lie 300m down a side road off the main road (look for the sign 100m after the post office if coming from Babakale). The wonderful reliefs with illustrated scenes from the *Iliad* found amid the ruins are kept in the site's **museum** (☎ Jul-end Aug).

Buses to Gülpinar run from Çanakkale and Ezine. From Gülpinar there are buses to Babakale (TL1.25, 15 minutes) and onwards to Behramkale (TL2, one hour).

Babakale (Lekton)

From Gülpinar a road heads 9km west through a line of coastal developments to Babakale, the westernmost point of mainland Turkey. It's a small, sleepy fishing village that seems almost overwaded by the vast, restored Ottoman **fortress** overlooking its attractive small harbour.

The fort was built to combat pirates and is notable for being the last Ottoman castle built in present-day Turkey. There's not much else to look at, beyond views of Lesvos and Bozcaada over the water, but it's a pleasant place to unwind for a day or two.

The **Uran Hotel** (☎ 747 0218; s/d €14/28; 🏠) on the seafont has simple but sea-breeze-fresh rooms of a reasonable size. Three have harbour views. There's also a large terrace overlooking the fortress and harbour and a good and very reasonably priced **fish restaurant** (☎ 747 0218; 🕒 7.30am-midnight). Try the speciality, *kalamar* (TL8).

Buses from Gülpinar (TL1.25, 15 minutes) to Behramkale (TL1.75, one hour) stop at Babakale.

BEHRAMKALE & ASSOS

☎ 0286

Behramkale and Assos are the names of two separate parts of the same settlement: an old hilltop Greek village spread out around the ruins of an ancient temple to Athena (Behramkale); and, at the bottom of the hill, a former working harbour, with a small pebbly beach, which over the past two decades has seen its old stone buildings and warehouses transformed into boutique hotels and restaurants (Assos). They make a fine combination, although, if you can, try to avoid visiting on weekends and public holidays from the beginning of April to the end of August, when tourists pour in by the coach load.

History

The Mysian city of Assos was founded in the 8th century BC by colonists from Lesvos, who later built its great temple to Athena in 530 BC. The city enjoyed considerable prosperity under the rule of Hermeias, a one-time student of Plato who also ruled the Troad and

Lesvos. Hermeias encouraged philosophers to live in Assos, and Aristotle himself lived here from 348 to 345 BC, and ended up marrying Hermeias' niece, Pythia. Assos' glory days came to an abrupt end with the arrival of the Persians, who crucified Hermeias and forced Plato to flee.

Alexander the Great drove the Persians out, but Assos' importance was challenged by the ascendancy of Alexandria Troas to the north. From 241 to 133 BC the city was ruled by the kings of Pergamum.

St Paul visited Assos briefly during his third missionary journey, walking here from Alexandria Troas to meet St Luke before taking a boat to Lesvos.

In late-Byzantine times the city dwindled to a village. Turkish settlers arrived and called the village Behramkale. Only the coming of tourism revived its fortunes.

Orientation & Information

Approaching the village from Ayvacık, look out for the 14th-century Hüdavendigâr Bridge, to the left of the road. At the crossroads, the road left leads to the scruffy beach at Kadırğa (4km), the road right to Babakale and Gülpınar. Go straight ahead until you reach a fork in the road, then left (uphill) along the rough road for the old village, or straight on (downhill) to the harbour. Both roads are very steep.

The village road winds up through a small square, with a teahouse and a bust of Atatürk, to the peak of the hill, which offers a spectacular view towards the Greek island of Lesvos (Mytilini or Midilli in Turkish).

Note that there's no bank, ATM, post office, petrol station, tourist office or pharmacy in Behramkale or Assos.

Sights & Activities

Right on top of the hill in Behramkale village is the 6th-century Ionic **Temple of Athena** (admission TL5; ☎ 8am-dusk). The short tapered columns with plain capitals are hardly elegant, and the concrete reconstruction hurts more than helps, but the site and the view out to Lesvos are spectacular and well worth the admission fee.

Beside the entrance to the ruins, the 14th-century **Hüdavendigâr Camii** is a simply constructed Ottoman mosque – a dome on squinches set on top of a square room – built before the Turks had conquered Constantinople and assimilated the lessons

of Sancta Sophia. It's one of just two remaining Ottoman mosques of its kind in Turkey (the other is in Bursa).

Villagers set up stalls all the way up the hill to the temple, touting herbs, woollen socks and locally made kilims (woven rugs).

Ringing the hill are stretches of the **city walls** of medieval Assos, which are among the most impressive medieval fortifications in Turkey. Scramble down the hillside to find the **necropolis**. Assos' sarcophagi (from the Greek, 'flesh-eaters') were famous. According to Pliny the Elder, the stone was caustic and 'ate' the flesh off the deceased in 40 days. There are also remains of a late-2nd-century-BC **theatre** and **basilica**.

Sleeping

Where you sleep depends on whether you prefer the picturesque and lively Assos harbour (even if the interiors of the lovely stone houses are often something of a letdown), or the more peaceful and atmospheric Behramkale village.

In high season, virtually all the hotels around the harbour insist on *yarım pansiyon* (half-board), though you could try negotiating.

ASSOS

Çakır Pansiyon (☎ 721 7048; www.assoscakirpansiyon.com; camp site per person TL8, s/d incl breakfast TL40/60, half-board TL60/80; ♿) Around 100m east along the seafront from the town entrance, this pension has simple but clean rooms in wooden bungalows, and a small camping site. It boasts its own floating platform where breakfast is served, while dinner is provided in a delightful lantern-lit restaurant.

Yıldız Saray Hotel (☎ 721 7025; www.yildizsaray-hotels.com; r incl breakfast TL180; ♿) Though rooms are on the small side, they're traditionally furnished, attractive and good value. All eight have direct sea views overlooking the harbour, and three have access to a small terrace. The brasserie-style restaurant has a good reputation. The owners also operate another hotel, just east along the coast at Kadırğa.

Hotel Behram (☎ 721 7044; www.behram-hotel.com; s/d with half-board TL120/180; ♿) On the front, by the town entrance, this has smallish rooms, although they are enlivened by some nice bright decor and are well equipped. There's also a good open-air restaurant right on the water, and a range of tours (to Bergama, Babakale, Troy etc) is offered.

BEHRAMKALE

Old Bridge House (☎ 721 7426; www.assos.de/obh; camp sites TL10, dm/d TL20/100; ☹ Mar–Nov; ☹ ☹) Near the Ottoman bridge at the entrance to town, the Old Bridge House is a long-time travellers' favourite, offering four large double rooms, a six-bed dorm and three garden-set cabins. The helpful and hospitable owner, Diana, is a mine of information about the area.

Dolunay Pansiyon (☎ 721 7172; s/d TL25/50) Right in the centre of the village by the dolmuş stop, the Dolunay is a homely affair with six spotless, simple rooms set around a pleasant courtyard. There's also a pretty terrace with sea views where you can have a scenic breakfast.

Timur Pansiyon (☎/fax 721 7449; timurpansiyon@yahoo.com; s/d TL35/60; ☹ Apr–mid-Sep) The 200-year-old Timur, remote, rustic and rather ramshackle, is not unlike a shepherd's croft. Its characterful rooms may prove a bit basic for some, but the fabulous setting above the village right beside the temple more than compensates.

Eris Pansiyon (☎ 721 7080; www.erispansiyon.com; Behramkale Köyü 6; s/d TL90/130; ☹ Apr–Nov) Set in a stone house with pretty gardens at the far end of the village, this pension has fairly ordinary (for the price) but pleasant and peaceful rooms. Afternoon tea is served on a terrace with spectacular views over the hills. It also has a library and book exchange, and Clinton, the retired American owner, needs only the smallest excuse to tell you all about the area's history.

ourpick Biber Evi (☎ 721 7410; www.biberevi.com; s/d incl breakfast TL150/200, half-board TL170/240; ☹) A real delight – this old stone house boasts a peaceful garden, a small terrace with lovely views, and a gourmet restaurant. Rooms are Ottoman-rustic in style complete with *gusulhane* – washing facilities hidden in a cupboard! – and under-floor heating. Bookings need to be for a minimum of two nights.

Eating & Drinking

In contravention of the way these things usually work, the settlement at the bottom of the hill is actually the 'posh' part of town where prices, if not standards, are higher than at the top. Be sure to check the cost of fish and bottles of wine before ordering.

ASSOS

Uzunev (☎ 721 7007; mains TL10-16; ☹ 10am–midnight) Uzunev is considered the best fish restaurant

in town, and has pleasant tables on the terrace and seafront. Try the succulent speciality, sea bass à l'Aristotle (steamed in a special stock), or the delicious seafood meze (TL10 to TL12). In high season after 10pm, it metamorphoses into a disco-bar.

Grand Assos (☎ 721 7723; mezes TL14, fish TL14-20; ☹ 11am–midnight) In the same block as the Hotel Behram, and serving a good selection of fresh fish (including sea bass and red snapper) and lobster (choose your favourite from the tank outside) in an attractive waterfront dining area.

BEHRAMKALE

Aile Çay Bahçesi (☎ 721 7221; tea TL1.10, soft drinks TL1.50; ☹ 7am–midnight) For a coffee or Coke on the main square, this place has a pleasant shaded terrace offering attractive views. It serves *gözleme* (savoury pancakes; TL3) good enough to gobble, and drinks.

Assos Kale Restaurant (☎ 721 7430; ☹ 8am–1am Apr–Oct) On the road leading up to the temple, the Kale has a pleasant shaded terrace and is a great place for a quick eat, offering good home cooking at reasonable prices. Try the delicious *mantı* (Turkish ravioli; TL4) or homemade creamy *ayran* (yoghurt drink).

Assos Restaurant (☎ 721 7050; Main Sq; köfte & kebabs TL6-9; ☹ 7am–midnight) The diminutive but endearing Assos provides excellent home cooking at pleasing prices and is highly recommended. It offers no less than 25 dishes including veggie options. Take a table on the tiny terrace overlooking the main square.

Biber Evi Restaurant (☎ 721 7410; Biber Evi Hotel; mezes TL8-14, mains TL16-28; ☹ 7.30am–10pm) The 'Chilli House' serves superb Turkish cuisine made from ingredients fresh from its kitchen gardens. It even smokes its own fish. The charming owner, Lütei (an ex-actor and theatre director), also boasts a famous collection of malt whiskies.

Getting There & Away

Regular buses run from Çanakkale (TL7.50, 1½ hours) to Ayvacık, where you can pick up a dolmuş (which leaves when full) to Behramkale (TL3, 20 minutes). Some dolmuşes make a second stop down in Assos, but some don't, obliging you to switch to the shuttle service.

Alternatively, you can get to Behramkale from Gülpınar (TL3, one hour) or Küçükkuuy (TL4, one hour).

In low season, dolmuşes run much less frequently and you can have trouble getting away from Behramkale. If you do visit then try to get to Ayvacık as early in the day as you can to catch a dolmuş to Behramkale. If you miss the last one, Ayvacık has a couple of hotels, or a taxi will cost around €25 to €30.

Driving is not permitted in the centre of either Behramkale or Assos. You'll have to park and walk up or down.

Getting Around

In summer, there's a regular shuttle service throughout the day between Behramkale and Assos (TL1), which also connects with buses from Assos to Ayvacık. When there's demand, an extra dolmuş is put into service; it leaves when it's full. In winter, workers shuttle back and forth and you can normally jump on one of their buses.

AYVACIK

☎ 0286 / pop 7610

Heading to or from Behramkale you may have to transit Ayvacık, which has a big **Friday market** where women from the surrounding villages sell fruit, vegetables and baskets. Those in long satiny overcoats or brightly coloured headscarves are the descendants of Turkmen nomads who settled in this area.

Two kilometres out of Ayvacık on the Çanakkale road you can also visit the **Doğal Boya Arştırma ve Geliştirme Projesi** (Dobag; Natural Dye Research & Development Project; ☎ 712 1274; fax 712 1705; ☎ 9am-6pm), which was set up in 1981 to encourage villagers to return to weaving carpets from naturally dyed wool. At about €245 per sq metre, the rugs in the upstairs exhibition hall are certainly not cheap (about five times the cost of those in the Ayvacık carpet cooperative) and the great majority are exported, but the prices are hardly extravagant considering what goes into the process, with every stage – shearing, carding, spinning, weaving, knotting and dyeing – done by hand. Unfortunately the women weavers themselves are paid little and their working conditions aren't great. Still, the project has achieved some good things for the community.

Getting There & Away

Regular buses run to/from Çanakkale (TL7.50, 1½ hours). There are also regular buses to Ayvacık from Ezine, Behramkale and Küçükkuuy.

BAY OF EDREMIT

☎ 0286

From Behramkale a four-lane highway heads east along the shores of the Bay of Edremit. There are several camping grounds out here and several hotels right on the lengthy beach at **Kadırga**, 4km east of Behramkale (firmly package-holiday territory).

The road continues east to rejoin the main coastal highway at **Küçükkuuy**, where you could pause to inspect the **Adatepe Zeytinyağı Museum** (admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm), housed in an old olive-oil factory and explaining the process of making olive oil.

From Küçükkuuy, head 4km northeast up into the hills to visit the pretty village of **Adatepe**, a cluster of old stone houses, many of them restored as second homes for wealthy İstanbullular. Here you'll find the blissfully tranquil **Hünnap Han** (☎ 752 6581; www.hunnaphan.com; s/d half-board TL175/225), a restored house with large, traditionally decorated rooms, a lovely garden and stone courtyard.

Alternatively, you could travel 4km northwest into the hills to **Yeşilyurt**, which has not been quite so sensitively restored but where the **Öngen Country Hotel** (☎ 752 2434; www.ongen.country.com; s/d half-board TL120/240) offers rooms with attractive modern decor and spectacular views over the wooded hillside.

In high season, four or five buses a day run back and forth between Behramkale and Küçükkuuy, passing through Kadırga. To get to Adatepe and Yeşilyurt from Küçükkuuy you'll need to take a taxi (around TL12 return to either).

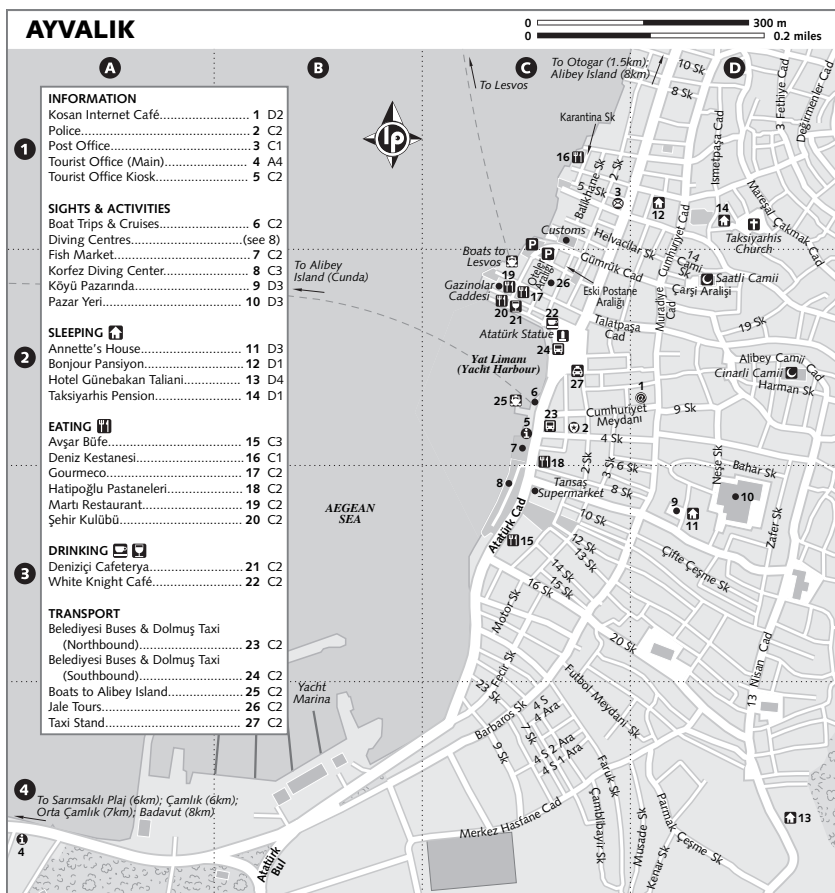
The road continues east along the Bay of Edremit, passing a depressing sprawl of holiday villages, hotels and second-home developments aimed at the domestic tourist market.

At Edremit, the road turns south towards Ayvalık. **Edremit** is little more than an important local transport hub. Coming from Ayvacık to Ayvalık, or from Bandırma via Balıkesir, you may well have to change in Edremit. South of Edremit there's a fine, 5km-long beach with sulphur springs at **Akçay**, while the beach at **Ören** stretches for 9km, making either of them possible places to break your journey.

AYVALIK

☎ 0266 / pop 34,650

At first glance, there would appear to be little remarkable about the seaside resort and



fishing town of Ayvalık (the name means Quince Orchard). Though pleasant enough, its seafront is a facsimile of a number of others along this stretch of coast, with a harbour filled with excursion boats, a palm-tree-lined waterfront and plenty of tourist-oriented fish restaurants. Back from the front, however, it's a different story. Here, a charmingly crumbly old Greek village provides, in the words of local hotel owner Annette Steinhoff, a 'wonderful outdoor museum'. Horses and carts clatter down narrow streets lined with picturesque shuttered houses – some restored, many more ignored and left to decay. The whole place has an appealingly tumbledown feel to it, with life proceeding at torpor pace amid the shadows – headscarf-wearing women hold

court from their doorsteps while dogs sleep at the roadside and cats prowl the bins.

Olive-oil production is the traditional business around here, and is still thriving with lots of shops selling the end product (the broken chimney next to the Tansaş supermarket in the centre of town belongs to a now abandoned olive-oil factory), although these days the town is perhaps better known as a gateway to local islands, including Alibey, just offshore, and the Greek island of Lesvos.

Orientation & Information

Ayvalık is small and manageable by foot, although the otogar is 1.5km north of the town centre and the tourist office 1.5km to the south. A road lined with grand mansions leads

a few kilometres south of Ayvalık to Çamlık and Orta Çamlık, which have a scattering of pensions and camping areas popular with holidaying Turks. The heaving package-resort of Sarımsaklı Plaj (Garlic Beach), also called Küçükköy, is 6km south of the centre.

Kosan Internet Café (Cumhuriyet Meydanı; per hr TL2;

☎ 8am-1am) A few blocks inland from the front.

Post office (İnönü Caddesi) At the northern end of town just off the main street.

Tourist office Main branch (☎ 312 2122; Yat Limanı Karşısı); Kiosk (Yat Limanı; ☎ Jun-Sep) The main tourist office is beyond the yacht marina, but in high season you can get information, including decent maps, from the kiosk on the waterfront south of the main square, Cumhuriyet Meydanı.

Sights & Activities

There are few specific sights but Ayvalık's old town is a joy to wander around, with its mazy tangle of cobbled streets lined with wonderfully worn-looking Greek houses. Thursday plays host to one of the region's largest and most vibrant **markets**, when stalls seem to fill the whole town. There are two main parts: the **köyü pazarında** (the villagers market) and the **pazar yeri** (bazaar). A daily **fish market** also

takes place on the front next to the terminal for the ferry to Alibey (p211).

Otherwise, most of the major activities tend to be out of town. There are a number of good, sandy **beaches** a few kilometres to the south. Sarımsaklı is the most famed and will inevitably be the most crowded, as this is hard-core, package-holiday country. Stay on the bus a bit longer till you reach Badavut to the west, and you'll find some much more deserted stretches.

The offshore waters have a number of good dive sites (see boxed text, p210) and in the summer there are daily ferries to Lesbos, as well as **cruises** (per person incl meal TL10-12) around the bay's islands, stopping here and there for some sunbathing and swimming. They usually depart at 11am and return at 6pm. Excursions to more far-flung destinations, such as Assos, can also be arranged.

Sleeping

Taksiyarhis Pension (☎ 312 1494; www.taksiyarhispension.com; r without bathroom per person TL28) Rooms of all shapes and sizes fill a pair of 120-year-old Greek houses behind the eponymous church. It has a lot of character, with exposed

GHOSTS FROM THE PAST

Walking the quiet backstreets of Ayvalık, it can be difficult now to appreciate that you are passing the relics and remains of one of the most traumatic events in the country's history – the great population exchange that took place soon after the creation of the Turkish state (see p39).

The early 1920s hold mixed memories for the town. Pride over its role in the Turkish War of Independence – it was here that the first shots were fired – is tempered by what happened afterwards when the Ottoman Greeks who made up the majority of the population were forced to abandon the land of their birth and relocate to the Greek island of Lesbos, while the Turks from that island were, in turn, compelled to start new lives in Ayvalık. Despite the enormous distress this must have caused, the Ayvalık-Lesbos exchange is nonetheless regarded today as one of the least damaging episodes of the period. The reasons why the exchange caused, in the words of journalist Fatih Turkmenoglu, 'less pain' than many others had much to do with the proximity of the two communities, which enabled people from both sides to continue visiting their former homes – mixed though their emotions must have been during those trips. Furthermore, both communities were involved in the production of olive oil and so would have found much that was familiar in the other.

Today, whispers from the past are everywhere. Some of the locals still speak – and a few of the restaurants still have their menus in – Greek. Many of the town's former Greek Orthodox churches remain standing, albeit now converted into mosques. The Ayios Ioannis has become the Saatli Camii (Clock Mosque, so named for its clock tower), while the former Ayios Yioryios is today the Çınarlı Camii, named after the *çınar* (plane trees) that presumably once grew here, although, in a rather poignant analogy for the town itself, none now remain. One of the grandest of all the old Greek churches, the Taksiyarhis, was never converted. However, it no longer functions as a church either, but rather sits empty and forlorn, waiting to be 'transformed into a museum' at some unspecified future date.

DIVING OFF AYVALIK

The waters around Ayvalık are famed among divers for their red coral. However, as most of it grows at depths of between 30m and 42m, reaching it is not an activity for beginners. There are various dive companies in Ayvalık that can organise trips to see the coral and its attendant marine life, including moray eels, grouper, octopus and sea horses. One of the best is the **Korfez Diving Center** (☎ 0286-312 4996; www.korfezdiving.com; 📍 Mar-Nov), whose boat is moored by the fish market. A day's diving (including two dives, lunch, all equipment hire and insurance) costs €50 per person. The company also runs various PADI courses, including a two-day open-water course for €290.

wooden beams and a jumbly assortment of cushions, rugs and handicrafts. Travellers are well catered for with a communal kitchen, a book exchange and bicycles for hire. For an extra TL7 you can enjoy breakfast on a vine-shaded terrace.

Bonjour Pansiyon (☎ 312 8085; www.bonjourpansiyon.com; Fevzi Çakmak Caddesi, Çeşme Sokak 5; s/d without bathroom TL30/60; 📍) In a fine-looking house that once belonged to an ambassador to the sultan, this has a musty, faded grandeur to it with aged furniture and antique knick-knacks filling every corner. The 12 rooms are immaculately presented and you receive a terrific welcome from the owners, Hatice and Yalcin. Just two rooms have bathrooms. Breakfast is available for TL8.

our pick Annette's House (☎ 312 5971; www.annetteshouse.com; Neşe Sokak 12; s/d incl breakfast €21/42) On a quiet square (Thursdays excepted when it's the site of the villagers market), this is an oasis of calm and comfort. Nothing is too much trouble for the efficient Annette, a retired German teacher, who presides over a charming collection of large, clean, well-decorated rooms (in order to keep things clean, guests are asked to remove their shoes) and a pleasantly shady breakfast garden.

Hotel Günebakan Taliani (☎ 312 8484; www.talianihotel.com; 13 Nisan Caddesi 33; r incl breakfast €65, apt €80; 📍 Apr-Dec) A lovely hotel set in lush gardens and occupying a hillside location perched above the town. Its five rooms and five apartments are beautifully decorated (the apartments have balconies overlooking the seafont). The delightful owner, Meliha, a retired teacher from Ankara, oversees the lavish breakfasts of cheeses, biscuits, jams and olives (the hotel produces its own olive oil) served on a flower-filled terrace.

Eating RESTAURANTS

Şehir Kulübü (☎ 312 1088; Yat Limanı; fish per 500g TL15; 📍 10am-2am) Jutting right over the water, the

'city club' has long been the top choice for reasonably priced fish. There's no menu. Instead, you choose your fish (bass, bream, sole etc) from the giant freezer, and the accompanying mezes (TL4 to TL7) from the pick-and-point counter.

Martı Restaurant (☎ 312 6899; Gazinolar Caddesi 9; mains TL14-22; 📍 7.30am-midnight) A good choice if the Şehir Kulübü is full, this has an excellent reputation. It specialises in Ayvalık and regional specialities as well as fish.

Deniz Kestanesi (☎ 312 3662; Karantina Sokak 9; mains TL14-28; 📍 11am-midnight) Perhaps the smartest and certainly the most expensive restaurant in town, the 'sea urchin' is a very stylish indoor/outdoor affair right on the waterfront, with wooden floors, high ceilings, leather chairs and great views of the twinkling lights of Alibey. Fish and seafood dishes are both expertly prepared and, something of a rarity, elegantly presented.

CAFÉS & QUICK EATS

Hatipoğlu Pastaneleri (☎ 312 2913; Atatürk Caddesi 12; tea/coffee TL1.10/1.50; 📍 6.30am-midnight; 📍) With a great selection of traditional Turkish puds, pastries and cakes, this popular patisserie makes a terrific breakfast or tea stop. Try the Ayvalık speciality, *lok* (sponge oozing honey; TL3).

Gourmeco (☎ 312 2141; Gazinolar Caddesi 4C; 📍 8am-10pm Mon-Sat, 8am-6pm Sun) Located beneath the Hotel Ayvalık Palas, this mellow, traditional coffeehouse serves a wide range of flavoured Turkish coffees and herbal teas (TL2 to TL3), as well as food fashioned from local ingredients, including sandwiches, crêpes and salads (TL5 to TL7).

Drinking & Entertainment

Denizçi Cafeterya (☎ 312 1537; Gazinolar Caddesi 1; beer TL3; 📍 7.30am-12.30am) Occupying the southwest corner of the quay, in among the fish restaurants, is this perfect spot for a sundowner. It

also serves light meals and snacks, including pizzas (TL6.50 to TL9.50) and *Ayvalık tost* (TL3; see boxed text below).

White Knight Café (☎ 312 3682; Cumhuriyet Meydanı 3; beer TL3; ☎ noon-midnight) Popular café by the statue of Atatürk, overseen by the ever-welcoming Ahmet and his British wife, Anthea. The vibe is mellow and chilled, except when major soccer matches are shown, and it sells previous-day European newspapers as well as the *Hürriyet Daily News*.

Getting There & Away

BOAT

From June to September, at least one boat sails daily to Lesvos, Greece (passenger one way/return €40/50, car €60/70, 1½ hours). From October to May, boats sail twice a week (Wednesday and Thursday), returning from Lesvos to Ayvalık on Thursday and Friday. Note that you *must* make a reservation (in person or by telephone) 24 hours before. When you pick up your tickets, bring your passport.

For information and tickets, contact **Jale Tours** (☎ 312 2740; Gümrük Caddesi 24).

BUS

Coming from Çanakkale (TL12, 3¼ hours, 200km) or Edremit (TL6, one hour, 56km) some buses will drop you on the main highway, from where you'll have to hitch to the centre. Çanakkale/Truva and Metro bus companies, however, have a *servis*.

There are frequent buses from İzmir to Ayvalık (TL7.50, three hours, 150km), and it is also possible to make a day trip to Bergama from Ayvalık (TL6, 1¼ hours, 45km). Hourly Bergama buses leave from the main terminal and drive slowly south through town so you can pick them up in the main square.

If driving, you might want to opt for the slightly slower, more scenic route to Bergama

via Kozak, which winds through idyllic pine-clad hills.

Getting Around

The town centre is served by *dolmuş* taxis (white with red stripes running around them) that stop to put down and pick up passengers along a series of short set routes. You can catch them heading in either direction at the main square. Destinations include Armutçuk, 1km to the north of town, and across the causeway to Alibey Island. All journeys cost TL1.50.

Heading further afield, Ayvalık *belediyesi* (town) buses (TL2 to TL3) run right through town from the otogar to the main square, then south to the tourist office and onto Çamlık, Orta Çamlık and the beaches of Sarımsaklı.

Minibuses (TL1.50 to TL2) also depart for the beaches from beside the Tansaş supermarket sign south of the main square.

A taxi from the otogar to the town centre costs TL5; to Alibey Island from the town centre costs TL10.

Driving through the fiendishly narrow one-way streets of Ayvalık's old town can be a very stressful experience. You'd be better off parking at one of the car parks along the waterfront. They generally cost TL6/9 per day/night.

ALİBEY ISLAND

Named after a hero of the Turkish War of Independence, Alibey Island, known to the locals as Cunda, lies just offshore, facing Ayvalık across the water. It's linked to the mainland by a causeway and is generally regarded as a quieter extension of Ayvalık itself, with residents of both communities regularly shuttling back and forth between the two. Accessible both by *dolmuş* taxi and the more pleasant option of the ferry, the island makes for a fine day trip from Ayvalık.

The ferry will drop you at a small quay, in front of which is a long line of fish restaurants.

FAST FOOD – AYVALIK STYLE

Ayvalık may have made its name as an olive-oil producer, but these days it's better known throughout Turkey for a rather less refined culinary offering – *Ayvalık tost* (Ayvalık 'toast'). The town's take on fast food consists of a large baked roll into which is stuffed all manner of ingredients, including cheese, *sucuk* (spicy veal sausage), salami, pickles and tomatoes. The whole thing is then covered (unless you specifically request otherwise) in lashings of ketchup and mayonnaise. It's available at cafés and stalls throughout town. **Avşar Büfe** (☎ 0266-716 6611; Atatürk Caddesi 67; ☎ 24hr high season, 8am-2am low season) is probably the most famous purveyor. *Tost* costs TL1 to TL3 depending on the size, but take note – a large one will keep you going for an entire day.

Behind these sits a small, distinguished-looking town made up of old (and in parts rather dilapidated) Greek stone houses. As with Ayvalık, the people here were compelled into a population exchange in the early 1920s; in this instance with Muslims from Crete.

To the north of the ferry stop is the town's main square, where there's a large public map pointing out the island's main historic sites. There is no tourist office, but the branches in Ayvalık should be able to provide you with all the relevant information, including maps. Behind the square is a small tourist market with stalls selling jewellery and various other trinkets.

One of the most famous relics of the town's Greek past, the **Taksiyarhis church** (not to be confused with the church of the same name in Ayvalık), sits perched on a hill, just inland from the town. Though it avoided being turned into a mosque, the church suffered severe damage during an earthquake in 1944, and today stands in picturesque decrepitude. Inside are some faded and rather forlorn-looking frescoes.

The nicest parts of the island are to the west, where there are good beaches for sunbathing and swimming, and to the north, much of which is taken up by the **Patriça Nature Reserve**, which has a number of good walking routes, and from where you can see the ruins of the Greek **Ayısıği Manastırı** (Moonlight Monastery) on an offshore island.

Sleeping & Eating

Alibey has some decent places to stay, though most are over the restaurants and likely to be noisy.

Ada Camp (☎ 327 1211; www.adacamping.com; Alibey Adası; camp sites per person/car TL15/12, per tent TL3-8, r in caravan/bungalow TL50/70; ☞ Apr-Nov) The island's largest and best-equipped camping ground lies 3km to the west of town. The air-conditioned bungalows are simple but spotless, although the grounds are a little worn-looking. The site boasts its own beach and restaurant. Guests can also use the kitchen.

Zehra Teze'nin Evi (☎ 327 2285; www.cundaevi.com; Namik Kemal Mahallesi 7; s/d TL60/80; ☞) Occupying a 136-year-old house right beside the Taksiyarhis church, this pension has attractive, traditionally decorated rooms.

Bay Nihat (Lale Restaurant; ☎ 327 1063; seafood mezés TL10-14; ☞ noon-midnight) A very attractive 150-year-old Greek house, with a neat

seafront dining area, this has a huge range of excellent and often highly unusual mezés (squid eggs, clams in whisky, octopus and pomegranate etc), which have won several pan-Turkey awards.

Papalina Restaurant (☎ 327 1041; Sahil Boyu 7; mezés TL6, fish mains TL18-24) Named after the *papalina balık*, a local fish speciality (one portion TL6), this has a lovely position right next to the fishing boats and has a cheery, bustling atmosphere, with waiters gliding through the chequered tables.

Drinking & Entertainment

Delikedi Café (☎ 327 1412; Belediye Sokak 16; beer TL4; ☞ noon-1am) In a restored old stone house, its walls adorned with brightly coloured modern art, this is a great place to while away the evening with comfy leather seats and an easy-going atmosphere. The music, a mixture of Western and Turkish beats, gets louder and steadily more intense as the night progresses.

Taş Kahve (☎ 327 1166; Sahil Boyu 20; coffee TL1.10; ☞ 7am-midnight) A local institution – smoky, cavernous and very atmospheric, all the town tittle-tattle takes place here. It's also good for a cheap Turkish breakfast (TL5).

Getting There & Around

Boats to Alibey Island (June to August; TL2, 15 minutes) leave from a quay behind the tourist kiosk just off the main square in Ayvalık. Alternatively, you can take a dolmuş taxi from the other side of the road, which will get you there slightly more slowly (around 20 minutes) and slightly more cheaply (TL1.50). Dolmuş drop off at the eastern end of the esplanade.

BERGAMA (PERGAMUM)

☎ 0232 / pop 58,210

As Selçuk is to Ephesus, so Bergama is to Pergamum, a small, workaday market town that's become a major stop on the tourist trail because of its proximity to some most remarkable ruins – in this instance Pergamum, site of the Asclepion, the pre-eminent medical centre of Ancient Rome. It's less of a one-note town than Selçuk, but then it doesn't attract nearly the same volume of visitors, giving it a more laid-back, friendly feel than its southern rival. As a result, many visitors end up falling for Bergama.

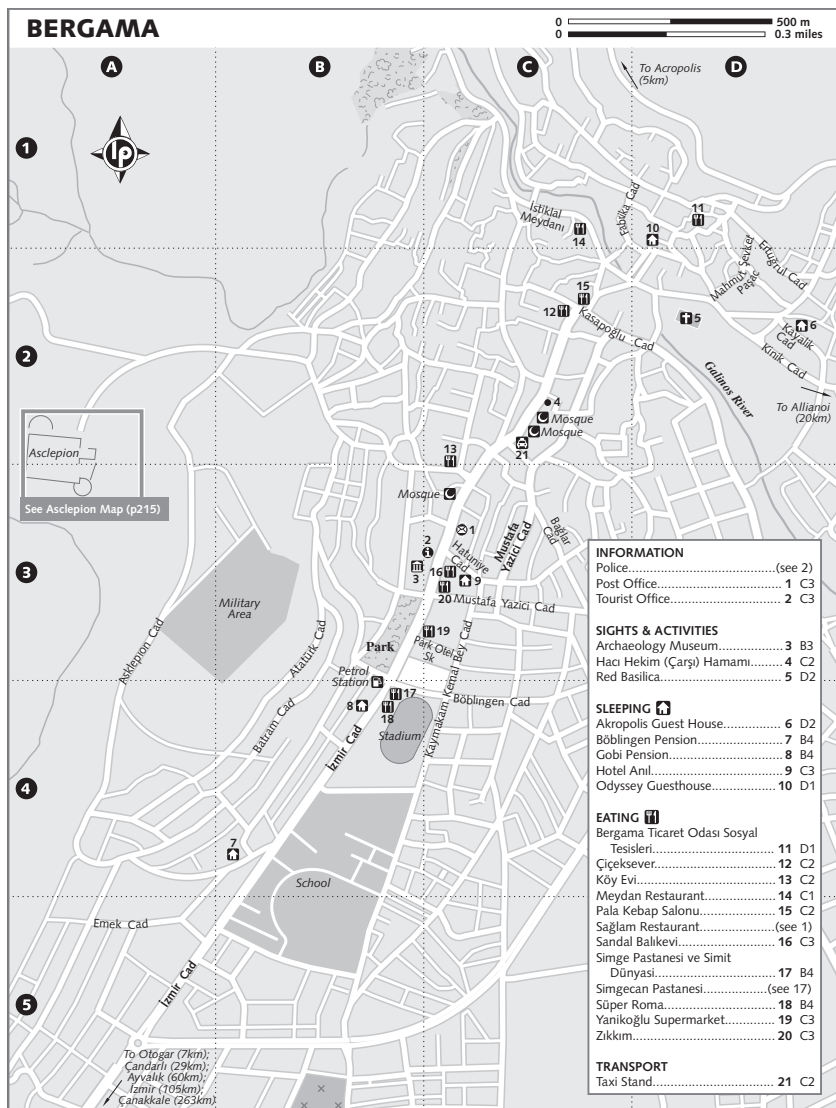
There has been a town here since Trojan times, but Pergamum's heyday was during the

period between Alexander the Great and the Roman domination of all Asia Minor when it was one of the Middle East's richest and most powerful small kingdoms.

History

Pergamum owes its prosperity to Lysimachus, one of Alexander the Great's generals, who

took control of much of the Aegean region when Alexander's far-flung empire fell apart after his death in 323 BC. In the battles over the spoils Lysimachus captured a great treasure, estimated at over 9000 gold talents, which he entrusted to his commander in Pergamum, Philetarus, before going off to fight Seleucus for control of Asia Minor. But Lysimachus lost



the battle and was killed in 281 BC, whereupon Philetarus set himself up as governor.

Philetarus, a eunuch, was succeeded by his nephew Eumenes I (263–241 BC), who was in turn followed by his adopted son, Attalus I (241–197 BC). Attalus declared himself king, expanding his power and forging an alliance with Rome.

During the reign of Attalus' son, Eumenes II (197–159 BC), Pergamum achieved its greatest glory. Rich and powerful, Eumenes founded a library that would in time rival that of Alexandria, Egypt, then the world's greatest repository of knowledge. He also added the Altar of Zeus to the buildings already crowning the acropolis, built the 'middle city' on terraces halfway down the hill, and expanded and beautified the Asclepion. Inevitably, much of what the Pergamese kings built hasn't survived the ravages of the centuries (or the acquisitive enthusiasm of Western museums), but what has is impressive, dramatically sited and well worth visiting.

Eumenes' brother Attalus II kept up the good work but under his son, Attalus III, the kingdom began to fall apart again. With no heir, Attalus III bequeathed his kingdom to Rome, and the kingdom of Pergamum became the Roman province of Asia in 129 BC.

Orientation & Information

The most handsome, if rather tumbledown, part of town flanks the Galinos River to the north: the Muslim neighbourhood is on the west bank, the Ottoman Greek one on the east.

Of Bergama's four main sights, only the museum is in the town centre. The two main archaeological sites are several kilometres out of town.

Modern Bergama lies spread out either side of one long main street, İzmir Caddesi, along which almost everything you'll need can be found, including hotels and restaurants, the banks, PTT and museum. Most of the pensions and hotels offer free internet access to their guests.

Tourist office (☎ 631 2851; İzmir Caddesi 54; ☎ 8.30am–noon & 1–5.30pm) Just north of the museum, it offers little more than a sketch map.

Sights & Activities

Bergama's attractions open from 8.30am to 6.30pm daily in high season and 8.30am to 5.30pm in low season (except the museum, which is closed on Monday).

ARCHAEOLOGY MUSEUM

Right in the centre of town, the **Archaeology Museum** (Arkeoloji Müzesi; ☎ 632 9860; İzmir Caddesi; admission TL2) boasts a small but substantial collection of artefacts, including a wealth of coins (Greek, Roman and Byzantine) and the obligatory abundance of pottery. Most interestingly, it also features a collection of statues from the 4th century BC that formed part of the so-called 'Pergamum School' when sculptors, breaking with the more grotesque and stylised traditions of previous centuries, first began to represent the gods as recognisably human with expressive features.

Look out too for finds from the nearby, and quite probably doomed, site of Allianoi (see p218), as well as a scale replica of the Altar of Zeus (the original is in Berlin). The recently restored ethnography gallery focuses on the crafts and customs of the Ottoman period with dioramas representing folk dancing and carpet weaving.

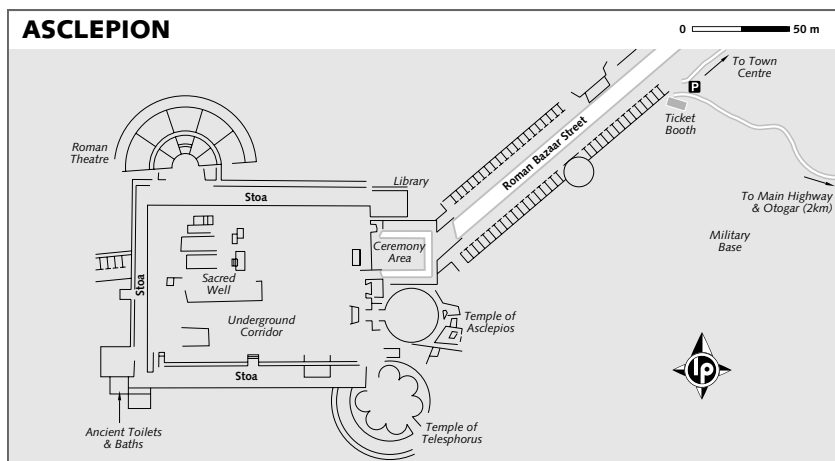
ASCLEPION

An ancient medical centre, the **Asclepion** (Temple of Asclepius; admission/parking TL10/3) was founded by Archias, a local citizen who had been cured at the Asclepion of Epidaurus (Greece). Treatments included massage, mud baths, drinking sacred waters and the use of herbs and ointments. Diagnosis was often by dream analysis.

Pergamum's centre came to the fore under Galen (AD 131–210), who was born here, and studied in Alexandria, Greece and Asia Minor, before setting up shop as physician to Pergamum's gladiators. Recognised as perhaps the greatest early physician, Galen added considerably to knowledge of the circulatory and nervous systems, and also systematised medical theory. Under his influence, the medical school at Pergamum became renowned. His work was the basis for Western medicine well into the 16th century.

Two roads head up to the Asclepion. One runs from the centre of town. The other is at the western edge of town, cutting up in front of the Böblingen Pension – look for the Asklepion Restaurant, which marks the turning. Taking the latter road, the ruins are about 3km from the tourist office. This road passes through a large Turkish military base; be off it by dusk and don't take photos.

A Roman **bazaar street**, once lined with shops, leads from the car park to the cen-



tre where you'll see the base of a column carved with snakes, the symbol of Asclepius (Aesculapius), god of medicine. Just as the snake sheds its skin and gains a 'new life', so the patients at the Asclepion were supposed to 'shed' their illnesses. Signs mark a circular **Temple of Asclepius**, a **library** and a **Roman theatre**.

You can take a drink from the **Sacred Well**, although the plastic tube out of which the water flows doesn't look particularly inviting, and pass along the vaulted underground corridor to the **Temple of Telesphorus**, another god of medicine. Patients slept in the temple hoping that Telesphorus would send a cure or diagnosis in a dream. The names of Telesphorus' two daughters, Hygeia and Panacea, have passed into medical terminology.

Soft drinks are available from the glut of stalls by the Asclepion entrance, albeit at a hefty premium.

RED BASILICA

The cathedral-sized **Red Basilica** (Kinik Caddesi; admission TL5) was originally a giant temple to the Egyptian gods Serapis, Isis and Harpocrates built in the 2nd century AD. It's still an imposing-looking place, though rather scattered and battered-looking these days with bits of modern piping and corrugated iron lying amid all the antique clutter – a testament to the site's ongoing funding difficulties. Be careful as you make your way around as several sections of the basilica's high walls are severely damaged.

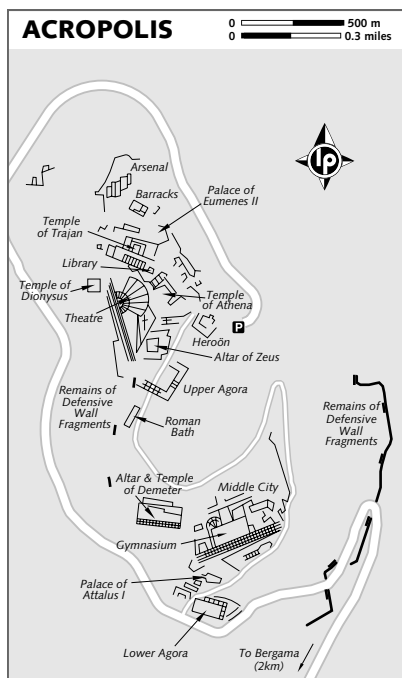
During its pagan pomp, this must have been an awe-inspiring place. In his Revelation, St John the Divine wrote that this was one of the seven churches of the Apocalypse, singling it out as the throne of the devil. Look for a hole in the podium in the centre, which allowed a priest to hide and appear to speak through the 10m-high cult statue. The building is so big that the Christians didn't convert it into a church but built a basilica inside it. One tower now houses the small Kurtuluş Camii, which is currently closed for restoration.

The curious red flat-brick walls of the large, roofless structure are visible from midway down the road to the acropolis. You can easily walk to the Red Basilica, or stop your taxi there on your way to or from the acropolis.

ACROPOLIS

The road up to the **acropolis** (admission TL10; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm) winds 5km from the Red Basilica, around the northern and eastern sides of the hill, to a car park (TL3) at the top. Next to the car park are some souvenir and refreshment stands. If you're planning to walk to the site, take plenty of water as you won't be able to stock up on the way.

A line of rather faded (and in some places completely obliterated) blue dots marks a suggested route around the main structures, which include the **library** as well as the marble-columned **Temple of Trajan**, built during the reigns of the emperors Trajan and Hadrian and used to worship them as well as Zeus. It's the only Roman structure surviving on



the acropolis, and its foundations were used as cisterns during the Middle Ages.

The vertigo-inducing, 10,000-seat **theatre** is impressive and unusual. Its builders decided to take advantage of the spectacular view and conserve precious building space on top of the hill by building the theatre into the hillside. In general, Hellenistic theatres are wider and rounder than this, but at Pergamum the hillside location made rounding impossible and so it was increased in height instead.

Below the stage is the ruined **Temple of Dionysus**, while above the theatre is the **Altar of Zeus**, which originally was covered with magnificent friezes depicting the battle between the Olympian gods and their subterranean foes. However 19th-century German excavators were allowed to remove most of this famous building to Berlin, leaving only the base behind.

Piles of rubble on top of the acropolis are marked as the **Palaces of Attalus I** and **Eumenes II**, and there's an **Upper Agora**, as well as fragments of the once-magnificent defensive **walls**.

To see everything, walk down the hill behind the Altar of Zeus, passing the **Roman bath**,

the **Altar and Temple of Demeter** and the **Middle City** where one of the houses, known as Bau Z ('Building Z') has some fantastic restored mosaic floors. Beyond is the **gymnasium** (with bath, auditorium and cult hall) and **Lower Agora**. Take care as the path down is steep and not always clearly marked.

HAMAM

Situated near the Kulaksız Cami, **Hacı Hekim (Çarşı) Hamamı** (men only; ☎ 8am-11pm) charges TL25 for the full works.

Sleeping

Odyssey Guesthouse (☎ 653 9189; www.odysseyguesthouse.com; Abacıhan Sokak 13; dm TL10, s/d without bathroom TL20/35) The four floors of this 180-year-old house hold seven clean (but rather sparse) rooms, each furnished with its own copy of Homer's *Odyssey* (rather a nice touch). There's a trading library for guests, and Ersin, the friendly proprietor, oversees the breakfasts served on the rooftop terrace, from where there are views of the Red Basilica.

Gobi Pension (☎ 633 2518; www.gobipension.com; Atatürk Bulvarı 18; s/d without bathroom €14/22, with bathroom €20/32; ☎) On the main road behind a shady terrace draped in greenery, this is a great family-run place with bright, cheery rooms, most of which have brand-new private bathrooms (with 24-hour hot water, another recent innovation). Five have air-con and four have balconies with garden views. It's well set up for travellers, with a communal kitchen, laundry service and free wi-fi.

Böblingen Pension (☎ 633 2153; dincer-altin@hotmail.com; Asklepion Caddesi 2; s/d TL35/55; ☎) This pension run by the friendly Altın family is spotless, although some of the rooms are a little musty and the bathrooms are rather basic. Still, it has a cosy sitting area, as well as a book exchange and laundry service. To find it, look for the sign to the Asclepion off the main road.

ourpick Akropolis Guest House (☎ 631 2621; www.akropolisguesthouse.com; Kayalık Caddesi 5; s/d €20/49; ☎) This 150-year-old stone house is the closest Bergama gets to boutique. Eight attractively decorated rooms surround a peaceful pool and garden. There's also a restaurant set in a lovely old barn and a terrace at the top of a small tower with views of the acropolis. It's a gem, and good value, too.

Hotel Anıl (☎ 631 1830; www.anilhotelbergama.com; Hatuniye Caddesi 4; s/d incl breakfast €37/50; ☎) The

Anıl's main attraction is its central location. The rooms have everything you need, including fairly decent bathrooms, wi-fi and TVs, but somewhat insipid decor, in contrast to the alarming pink colour of the exterior. The covered roof terrace has great panoramic views. The four-course set menu is €10.

Eating

RESTAURANTS

Bergama Ticaret Odası Sosyal Tesisleri (☎ 632 9641; Ulucamii Mahallesi; mezes TL5, mains TL6-8; 🕒 10.30am-11pm) A new restaurant set up and run by Bergama municipality in a beautifully restored 200-year-old Greek house 100m north of the Ulu Camii. Here, you can eat great food in great surroundings at great prices (kept low by the municipality).

Meydan Restaurant (☎ 633 1793; İstiklal Meydanı 4; mains TL6-9; 🕒 7am-midnight) One of three branches of this Bergama institution serving simple regional food at fair prices. It also has tables outside. Try the Bergama speciality, *lahmacun* (wheat cakes with minced meat).

Sağlam Restaurant (☎ 632 8897; Cumhuriyet Meydanı 47; mains TL6-11; 🕒 8am-11pm) This large, simple place is well known in town for its high-quality home cooking. It does a good selection of mezes, which change daily, and specialises in delicious kebaps.

Sandal Balıkevi (☎ 631 6116; Hatuniye Caddesi 6; fixed menus TL10; 🕒 8am-midnight) Well-run, popular fish restaurant next to the Hotel Anıl with tables inside and out. Fish is fresh and prices are reasonable. There's live music on some evenings.

QUICK EATS

Süper Roma (İzmir Caddesi, Sitat Dükkanları 19; 2 scoops TL1.50; 🕒 8am-1am Apr-Aug) Head here on a hot summer's day for ice cream.

Zikkim (İzmir Caddesi 39; pides TL2-4; 🕒 7am-midnight) With shady garden seating just off the main road, this makes a welcome mid-town pit stop, serving cheap and tasty kebab sandwiches (chicken TL4, lamb TL6) and salads (white-bean salad TL3).

Pala Kebap Salonu (☎ 633 1559; Kasapoğlu Caddesi 4; kebaps €2.20; 🕒 8am-11pm Mon-Sat) Though small and simple, this place is terrifically popular in Bergama and the food is delicious. Try the spicy Bergama *köfte* (TL6).

Çiçeksever (☎ 633 3822; Banklar Caddesi 71; 🕒 7.30am-10.30pm) Just a few doors down from, and similar to, the Pala.

CAFÉS

Köy Evi (Village House; ☎ 632 4816; Galinos Caddesi 12; 🕒 7.30am-9pm) This is a fabulous family-run place with cosy seating inside or out in the courtyard. Menus change daily, but regular specialities include *gözleme* (TL2) and *mantı*.

For a coffee and a cake in between the sightseeing, **Simgce Pastanesi ve Simit Dünyası** (☎ 631 1034; İzmir Caddesi 19; 2 pastries TL1, ice cream TL0.75; 🕒 7am-midnight) and, next door, **Simgce Pastanesi** (☎ 631 1034; Böblingen Caddesi 4; 🕒 7.30am-1am) are considered the best patisserie in town and are run by two brothers. There's a good selection of pastries, cakes and Turkish puddings.

SELF-CATERING

Bergama has a bustling Monday market (🕒 8am-6pm), which stretches for about 3km from the otogar to the Red Basilica. It's great for fresh fruit and veg. Böblingen Caddesi and the area around the old bus station are good for picnic-hunting. Cheese, olives, fresh bread and dried fruit are all sold. Also near here is **Yanikoğlu Supermarket** (☎ 632 7942; Merkez Çamıpark Karşısı Karş 21, İzmir Caddesi; 🕒 8am-midnight).

Getting There & Away

Buses run to İzmir (TL10, two hours, 110km) every 45 minutes, to Ayvalık (TL7.50, 1¼ hours, 60km) at least every hour, and to Ankara (TL50, eight to nine hours, 916km). For İstanbul, there are nightly (daily too in high season) buses, but it's cheaper and quicker, surprisingly, to go to İzmir first and take an express bus from there. For Bursa, take the Ayvalık bus.

Bergama's new otogar lies 7km from the centre at the junction of the highway and the main road into town. From here a dolmuş service shuttles into town (TL2). A taxi should cost around TL15 during the day, TL20 at night. Dolmuşes to Dikili, Ayvalık and Çandarlı also leave from here at least every half-hour.

Getting Around

Bergama's sights are so spread out that it's hard to walk round them all in one day. The Red Basilica is over 1km from the tourist office, the Asclepion is 3km away and the acropolis is over 5km away. A more convenient option is to book a taxi for a 'City Tour'. From the centre to the acropolis, basilica, Asclepion and museum, it should cost around TL50 to

TL60 in high season, TL40 to TL50 in low season. Taxis wait near some of the mosques and around the otogar.

AROUND BERGAMA

Allianoi

In 1998 local farmers made an exciting discovery in the Valley of Kaikos at Allianoi, 20km east of Bergama – the remains of a Roman spa and asclepion, among the oldest and best preserved yet found. A fine statue of Aphrodite on display in the Bergama museum (p214) came from Allianoi.

Unfortunately, the archaeological site is now a centre of controversy. The Valley of Kaikos is the proposed site of the new Yortanlı Dam – already built, although not yet open – which will bring vital water reserves to the region, but also submerge the archaeological site under 17m of water. The archaeologists in charge of the site have started a petition to save it, which has attracted over 30,000 signatures, but it looks to be a losing battle. Although 90% of the site remains unexcavated, the government took the decision in late 2007 to open the dam, albeit not before the site has been surrounded by a wall and covered with a layer of (hopefully) protective clay – essentially re-burying the site (and the problem) in the hope that future generations might be able to come up with a solution.

At the time of writing, the floodwaters had still not arrived, but the bulldozers (employed to cover the site in 'protective' clay) have, and, according to the *Hürriyet Daily News*, have already caused significant damage to the site. Turkish archaeologists and students are working feverishly at the site to uncover and rescue what they can. For more information on Allianoi, visit www.europanostr.org/save_allianoi.html.

There is no bus service, but you could try taking the infrequent bus from Bergama to Paşakoy (TL5, 45 minutes), which can drop you at the turn-off to Paşaka, and then walk the 1km to Allianoi. Returning to Bergama is tricky. You can only try hailing a passing bus. A taxi here from Bergama costs TL50 to TL60.

ÇANDARLI

☎ 0232

The small and tranquil resort town of Çandarlı (ancient Pitane) sits on a peninsula jutting into the Aegean, 33km south of Bergama. It's dominated by a small but stately 14th-century

restored Genoese castle (admission free; 🕒 24hr Jul & Aug), which has sporadic opening hours outside high season, and has a sandier beach than some of its neighbours. It makes a good base for a couple of days off.

Local tourism fills most of the pensions in high summer. From late October to April/May it's pretty much a ghost town.

Most of the shops, internet cafés and the PTT are within spitting distance of the bus stop. The castle, the restaurants and the pensions line the seashore. Market day is Friday.

Sleeping

Most of the hotels and pensions lie west of the castle, facing a thin strip of coarse sand.

Hotel Samyeli (☎ 673 3428; www.otelsamyeli.com; Sahil Plaj Caddesi 18; s/d TL35/55; 🗺️) In the middle of the bay, Hotel Samyeli has simple, spotless and cheerful rooms (20 have little balconies, 14 with sea views) and a seafront fish restaurant. Reserve in advance (a week in summer).

Hotel Emirgan (☎ 673 2500; www.otelsamyeli.com; Talat Emmi Caddesi 1; s/d half-board TL45/90; 🗺️) Operated by the same owners as the Hotel Samyeli, the Emirgan is 150m to the west and right on the beach. It's tranquil and quiet and all rooms have direct sea views.

Eating

For fresh fruit, the daily *çarşı* (market), in the shadow of the town mosque, is a good place to replenish.

Kalender (☎ 673 3490; Çarşı 14; 🕒 10am-midnight, 24hr high season) One of the cheaper options along the seafront. Tuck into a couple of mezes and a grilled catch-of-the-day for around TL20 – although be sure to check prices first.

Samyeli Restaurant (☎ 673 3428; Sahil Plaj Caddesi 18; small portion fish & seafood TL10-15; 🕒 8am-midnight) Belonging to the hotel of the same name, but with a good reputation for fish, the restaurant has tables right on the seafront.

Drinking & Entertainment

Pitaneou Cafe-Bar (☎ 673 3916; Sahil Plaj Caddesi 27; beer TL4; 🕒 11am-midnight, to 3am high season) A trendy hang-out with pleasant tables under vines on the seafront, it claims to play 'the best music in Turkey'. Snacks are available.

Musti Bar (☎ 673 3991; Sahil Plaj Caddesi 38a; beer TL4; 🕒 11am-3am) On the seafront one block west of the castle, this is currently Çandarlı's one and only dancing 'hot spot'.

Getting There & Away

Frequent buses run between Çandarlı and İzmir (TL7.50, 1½ hours) via Dikili (TL2, 15 minutes). At least six minibuses run daily to and from Bergama (TL3, 30 minutes).

YENİ FOÇA

☎ 0232 / pop 3470

This delightful small resort set around a harbour boasts a strip of coarse beach and an unusually large number of crumbling Ottoman mansions and old Greek stone houses. Long discovered by second-home hunters, Yeni Foça now has its fair share of modern monstrosities alongside the aged marvels. Nevertheless, it's a pleasant place to laze away a day or two. There are some more secluded beaches to the south towards Foça (Eski Foça).

The traditionally styled **Otel Naz** (☎ 814 6619; Sahil Caddesi 113; s/d €17/33) is at the far, western end of the bay about 500m from the harbour. It has large, quite attractively decorated rooms, seven with sea views and three with balconies. It's good value, and there's a café-bar out front.

On the far eastern side of the bay, the endearing little **Tan-say Restaurant** (☎ 814 5599; Kordon Caddesi 11; mains TL8-16; ☎ 9am-10pm) looks like a kind of Turkish bistro. There are a couple of tables on the seafront, and the food and prices are impressive. Try the *karides* (shrimps; TL10).

Buses leave every half-hour to İzmir (TL5.50, 1¾ hours) and every two hours to Foça (TL2). Taxis to Foça cost around TL25.

FOÇA

☎ 0232 / pop 13,260

If Çandarlı is a bit too quiet and Kuşadası (south Aegean) too noisy, Foça could be just the ticket. Sometimes called Eski Foça (Old Foça) to distinguish it from its newer, smaller neighbour (Yeni Foça) over the hill, Foça hugs twin bays and a small harbour. Graceful old Ottoman-Greek houses line a shoreline crowded with fishing boats and overlooked by a string of restaurants and pensions.

Eski Foça, the ancient Phocaea, was founded before 600 BC and flourished during the 5th century BC. During their golden age, the Phocaeans were great mariners, sending swift vessels powered by 50 oars into the Aegean, Mediterranean and Black Seas. They were also keen colonists, founding Samsun

on the Black Sea, as well as towns in Italy, Corsica, France and Spain.

More recently, this was an Ottoman-Greek fishing and trading town. It's now a prosperous, middle-class Turkish resort with holiday villas gathering on the outskirts.

Orientation & Information

Foça's seafront is divided into two bays by a peninsula, at the end of which sits an old and much restored Byzantine castle. To the north is the Küçük Deniz (Small Sea), which is the most picturesque part of town, comprising a harbour filled with small fishing vessels, a long esplanade (where people fish) and a line of restaurants and pensions. There's also a thin, dusty beach and a number of swimming platforms.

The Büyük Deniz (Big Sea) to the south is a more no-nonsense sort of place with just a couple of restaurants. This is where the town's excursion boats and big fishing vessels moor.

The otogar, on the edge of the Büyük Deniz, is just east of the main square. Walk west past the taxi rank to your left, turn right (north) and you'll be on the main drag, such as it is. A stroll up its pedestrianised confines will take you past the tourist office, the PTT and several banks until you reach, after around 350m, the harbour. Continue along the right-hand (eastern) side to find the pensions.

Captain Net (☎ 812 3411; Fevzi Paşa Mahallesi 210 Sokak 26a; per hr €0.85; ☎ 9am-1am) Running parallel to the east of the main street in a narrow alley.

Tourist office (☎ /fax 812 1222; Cumhuriyet Meydanı; ☎ 8.30am-noon & 1-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-7pm Sat)

Sights & Activities

Little remains of **ancient Phocaea**: a ruined theatre, remains of an aqueduct near the otogar, an *anıt mezarı* (monumental tomb), 7km east of town on the way to the İzmir highway, and traces of two shrines to the goddess Cybele.

In recent years, the townsfolk made an exciting new discovery near Foça high school. Known as the **Temple of Athena**, the site was found to contain, among other things, a beautiful griffin and a horse's head believed to date to the 5th century BC. Excavations are undertaken there every summer.

If you continue past the outdoor sanctuary of Cybele you'll come to a partially rebuilt fortress called **Beşkapılar** (Five Gates), which was built by the Byzantines and repaired by the Genoese and the Ottomans in 1538-39,

FOÇA'S SEALS

Foça's offshore islands provide some of the last remaining homes to the endangered Mediterranean monk seal, once common throughout the region. There are thought to be fewer than 400 left in the world, so you shouldn't bank on seeing one. Thankfully, much of Foça's offshore area is now a protected zone, the extent of which was extended in 2007. For more information on the Mediterranean monk seal, contact **SAD-AFAG** (Underwater Research Society-Mediterranean Monk Seal Research Group; ☎ 0312-440 3520; www.sadafag.org), which is based in Ankara but oversees protection programs in Foça, Karaburun and Bozyazi.

The seals' habit of basking on rocks and their wailing plaintive cries are believed to have been the inspiration for the legend of the Sirens, as featured in Homer's *Odyssey*.

Living on rocky islands, the sirens were strange creatures, half-bird, half-woman, who used their beautiful, irresistible singing voices to lure sailors towards them, where their ships would be dashed against the rocks, and the sailors killed. Odysseus supposedly only managed to resist their entreaties by having himself lashed to his ship's mast.

Appropriately enough, one of the seals' favourite modern basking spots is the Siren Kayalıkları (Siren Rocks), a collection of small islets, just off Foça's shore, although these days it is the seals' lives, rather than those of local sailors, that are in danger.

and clearly much restored since. Another fortress, the **Dışkale** (External Fortress), guards the town's approaches from the end of the peninsula that shapes the southwestern arc of the bay. It's best seen from the water (on a boat trip) as it's inside a military zone.

BOAT TRIPS

In summer (May to September) boats leave daily between 10.30am to 11.30am from both the Küçük Deniz and Büyük Deniz for day trips around the outlying islands with various swim stops en route. Trips cost TL15 to TL20 (but negotiate prices) and include lunch and water.

Sleeping

Foça has plenty of budget sleeping places but few midrange or top-end options.

Siren Pansiyon (☎ 812 2660; www.sirenpansiyon.com; 161 Sokak 13; s/d TL35/50) The Siren is a short walk from the seafront, very quiet, and a spotless, pleasant and good-value choice. Seven rooms have balconies, and there's a roof terrace. Guests have use of the kitchen.

Hotel Villa Dedem (☎ 812 2838; www.villadedemhotel.com; Sahil Caddesi 66; s/d from TL35/60; 🍷) It enjoys a central quayside location, but you might struggle to claim a room in summer, as it tends to welcome the same (Turkish) families back year after year, and specialises in long-term rentals. Still, if you get lucky, try to bag one of the eight rooms with sea views.

Hotel Grand Amphora (☎ 812 3930; İsmetpaşa Mahallesi 206 Sokak; s/d €35/45; 🍷 🍷) Not quite

as grand as the name would suggest, this is nonetheless the only hotel in town with a pool (albeit small), and it's good for sun-soaking on the sunloungers. Rooms are small but comfortable. It's just beyond Foça hospital on the seafront.

our pick **Foçantique Boutique Hotel** (☎ 812 4313; www.focantiquehotel.com; Sahil Caddesi 154; d incl breakfast €130-168) The town's top choice for comfort and style, lying at the far, quiet end of Küçük Deniz. The beautiful old Greek stone house has been lovingly restored and features beautifully decorated rooms, of varying sizes, filled with Turkish antiques and modern conveniences: satellite TV, coffee-makers, DVD players etc. The set menu at the restaurant is TL35 and there's also an apartment for longer stays (three-day minimum from €163).

Eating

Foça has a decent Tuesday market, which is a good place to stock up for a picnic. There are also various grocery stores.

Sedef (☎ 812 2233; Atatürk Mahallesi 53; mezés TL3.50; 🍷 9am-midnight) On the harbourside square, Sedef's meat-heavy menu makes a welcome change from the fishy norm. Enjoy a decent kebab (TL8 to TL11) and watch town life pass by.

Celep (☎ 812 1495; Sahil Caddesi 48; mezés TL4-5, fish TL20-28; 🍷 9am-midnight) In among a glut of seemingly identical establishments, all with tables lined up along the front, Celep nonetheless maintains its reputation as the town's finest purveyor of fish, which you select your-

self from the giant freezer (sole, sea bass, bream and turbot are usually available) and then send it off to be prepared according to your fancy.

Ridvan Ustannın Yeri (☎ 812 6867; İŞ Bankası; stews TL4-6; ☎ 24hr) The perennially popular chain, this one opposite the tourist office, serves good staple cooking at pleasing prices at outdoor tables just off the main square.

Fokai Restaurant (☎ 812 2186; Sahil Caddesi 11; ☎ 10am-midnight) On the waterside, this is a fish restaurant in the Celep mould, but a touch cheaper. Specialities include fish slow-cooked in yoghurt and garlic (TL12).

Drinking

Neco Café & Bar (☎ 812 5020; Sahil Caddesi 10; tea TL1, beer TL4; ☎ 24hr) Consisting of little more than a few tables under an awning, this café and bar is much loved by locals, for whom it is a favourite daytime tea stop. It's a little more boisterous in the evening.

Keyif Café & Bar (☎ 812 2313; Sahil Caddesi 42a; beer €2.25; ☎ 9am-4am) Slightly funkier than the nearby Neco – it's got a glitter ball – Keyif plays predominantly Western music and has an inside bar where dancing has been known to occasionally take place.

Getting There & Away

Frequent buses connect Foça with İzmir (TL5.50, 1½ hours, 86km), passing through Menemen (for connections to Manisa). To get to Bergama, go to Menemen, wait on the highway and flag down any bus heading north.

Three to five city buses run daily from Foça to Yeni Foça (TL2, 30 minutes, 25km); the timetable is in the otogar. These buses also pass the pretty, small coves, beaches and camping grounds north of Foça.

If you're staying in the area for a few days you might want to hire a car from **Foça Rent-a-Car** (☎ 812 2496; Favzi Paşa Mahallesi 191/7), near the harbour.

İZMİR

☎ 0232 / pop 2.6 million

Though you may eventually fall for its charms – its hectic nightlife, great shopping and top-notch museums – İzmir can take some getting used to. Certainly nowhere else in the region can prepare you for the sheer size, sprawl and intensity of the place.

It may be Turkey's third-largest city in terms of population, but in the congestion

stakes İzmir has to be challenging for top honours. Great, choking highways flow around and through its confines – whichever your direction of approach, you'll be gobbled up by a hungry ribbon of tarmac and sucked past a seemingly endless succession of suburbs, before eventually being spat out somewhere near the seafront.

So far, so unpleasant, but at the water's edge İzmir really comes into its own. Here the relentless rule of the car has been beaten back; İzmir owes a huge debt to its late mayor Ahmet Piristina, who managed to overturn a remarkably ill-conceived plan to build yet another highway right along the water's edge. Snatched from development's claws, the seafront is now one of the city's main attractions, the wide, pleasant esplanade of Birinci Kordon providing countless eating, drinking and sunset-watching opportunities.

Inland, things are a little more hectic. Traffic flows ceaselessly through the streets, forming a great unbroken snake of honking urgency. It's a similarly crowded story on the pavements, where your progress will be by degrees as you stop, start and side-step your way around the hurrying hordes. Persevere, however, and you'll find a commendable selection of attractions to while away your days, including a buzzing, labyrinthine bazaar, plenty of interesting ruins and a newly restored Jewish quarter.

History

İzmir was once Smyrna, a city founded by colonists from Greece some time in the early part of the 1st millennium BC. Over the next 1000 years it would grow in importance as it came under the influence of successive regional powers: first Lydia, then Greece, and finally Rome. By the 2nd century AD it was, along with Ephesus and Pergamum, one of the three most important cities in the Roman province of Asia. Under Byzantine rule, however, its fortunes declined as the focus of government turned north to Constantinople. Things only began to look up again when the Ottomans took control in 1415, after which Smyrna rapidly became Turkey's most sophisticated commercial city.

After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire at the end of WWI, the Greeks invaded, but were eventually expelled following fierce fighting, which, along with a subsequent fire, destroyed most of the old city. The day that

İZMİR

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0 0.3 miles

A

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Internet Café.....	2	C5
Internet House.....	3	C4
İzmir Döviz.....	4	C5
Post Office.....	5	B4
Post Office.....	6	C5
Remzi Kitabevi.....	7	A5
Tourist Office.....	8	B4

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Kadifekale (Castle).....	13	D6
Kızlarbaşı Han.....	14	B5
Konak Camii.....	15	A5
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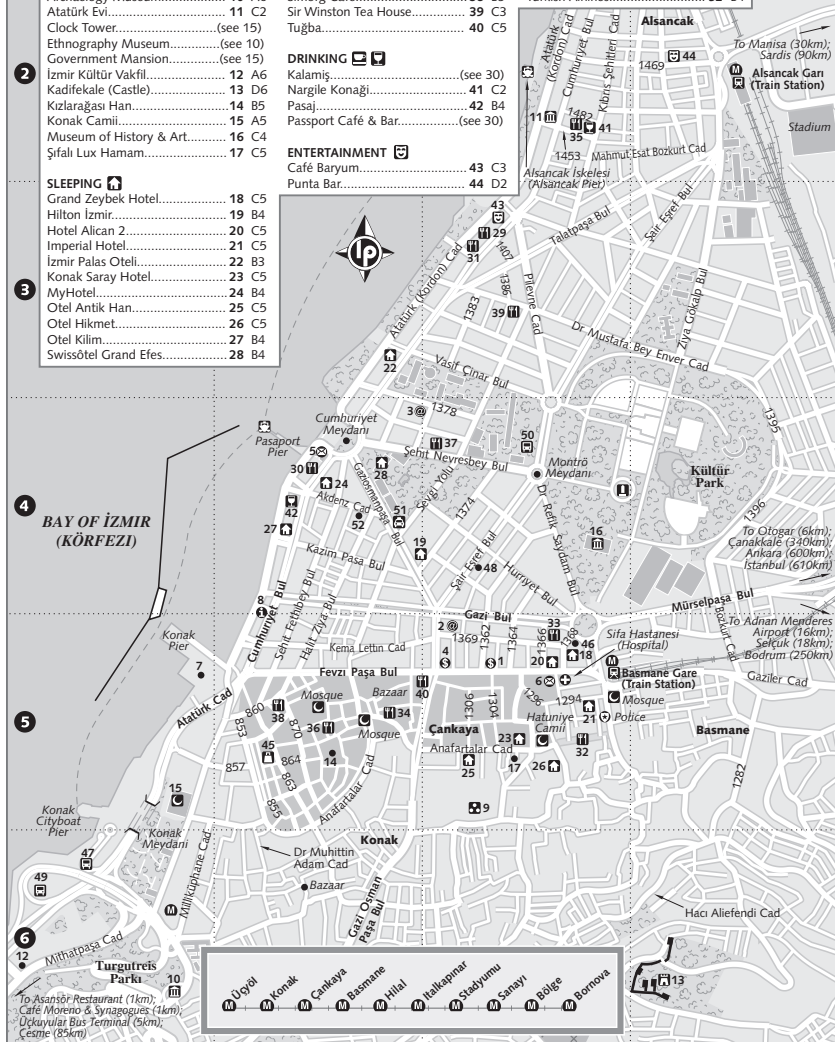
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6

BAY OF İZMİR
(KÖRFEZİ)Alsancak
(Pier)
Limani

Stadium

To Ofoğar (6km);
Çanakkale (340km);
Ankara (600km);
İstanbul (610km)To Adnan Menderes
Airport (16km);
Seliçuk (18km);
B. Bodrum (250km)

Hacı Ali efendi Cad

13

Üşüğü Konak Cankaya Basmane Hülaı İnkappınar Stradyonu Sanayi Bölge Bornova

Atatürk recaptured Smyrna (9 September 1922) marked the moment of victory in the Turkish War of Independence, and it is now the biggest local holiday. The events of 1922 are commemorated in the rather top-heavy monument gracing the waterfront.

Orientation

İzmir's two main avenues run parallel to the waterfront. The waterfront street is officially Atatürk Caddesi (Birinci Kordon or First Cordon), but locals just call it the Kordon. A block inland is Cumhuriyet Bulvarı, the İkinci Kordon (Second Cordon). The city's two main squares – Konak Meydanı (Government House Sq) to the south, and Cumhuriyet Meydanı – are along these two parallel avenues.

Konak opens onto the bazaar. The bazaar's main street, Anafartalar Caddesi, winds all the way to the train station, Basmane Garı, which is also linked to Konak by the metro. The Basmane/Çankaya area is home to dozens of small and midrange hotels, restaurants and bus ticket offices.

İzmir's shopping, restaurant and nightclub district of Alsancak is to the north, while the UFO-like otogar stands in splendid isolation, 6.5km northeast of the centre.

Information

There are branches of the PTT on Cumhuriyet Meydanı and on Fevzi Paşa Bulvarı. Banks with ATMs can be found on Fevzi Paşa Bulvarı in Basmane and around Cumhuriyet Meydanı.

Internet Café (1369 Sokak 9; per hr €0.83; ☎ 8am-1am) Friendly and helpful.

Internet House (☎ 464 1078; 1378 Sokak 26; per hr TL1.50; ☎ 9am-midnight) One of the fastest connections in town, and as a consequence usually packed full of gamers.

İzmir Döviz (☎ 441 8882; Fevzi Paşa Bulvarı 75, Çankaya; ☎ 7am-7pm Mon-Sat) Moneychanger where no commission is charged.

Remzi Kitabevi (☎ 489 5325; Konak Pier, Atatürk Caddesi) Large branch of the nationwide bookshop chain in the air-conditioned confines of the Konak mall. Large selection of English-language books, both for adults and children.

Tourist office (☎ 483 5117; fax 483 4270; Akdeniz Mahallesi 1344 Sokak 2) Inside the ornately stuccoed II Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü building just off Atatürk Caddesi. Has English-, German- and French-speaking staff.

Dangers & Annoyances

Like any big city, İzmir has its fair share of crime. However, the main tourist routes are

fairly safe, with the possible exceptions of the Kadifekale neighbourhood and the area around Basmane station, which is something of a red-light district – lone women should take special care. In the bazaar, be alert to pickpockets and thieves.

Sights & Activities

KORDON & ALSANCAK

Very much the symbol of the new İzmir, this long boulevard has over the past decade been transformed into as fine a waterfront area as you'll find on this coast. The Kordon's (largely) pedestrianised confines are now home to a great selection of bars and restaurants that attract droves of people at the end of the day to watch the picture-perfect sunsets. Reminders of what might have been, however, lie to the north, by the Alsancak docks, where huge concrete struts mark the foundations of a waterfront motorway that was, thankfully, never built. Inland, the Alsancak district has also undergone much restoration in recent years and is now the focus of the city's nightlife scene.

During İzmir's 19th-century heyday the Kordon was lined with stately offices and the fine houses of the wealthy. Most of these have long since vanished, although in Alsancak the preserved wooden **Atatürk Evi** (admission free; ☎ 8.30am-noon & 1-5pm) gives an idea of what the homes of the wealthy would have looked like. Atatürk stayed here between 1930 and 1934 whenever he visited the city.

KONAK MEYDANI

On a pedestrianised stretch of İkinci Kordon (Cumhuriyet Bulvarı), this wide plaza, named after the Ottoman **government mansion** (*hükümet konağı*), pretty much marks the heart of the city – signs pointing to the centre simply say 'Konak' – and is now linked to the waterfront by two wooden bridges spanning Atatürk Caddesi, one to the south opposite the Konak Cityboat Pier, and the other to the north in front of Konak Pier. It's the site of a late Ottoman **clock tower** (*saat kulesi*) given to the city in 1901 by Sultan Abdül Hamit II. Its ornate Orientalist style may have been meant to atone for 'infidel Smyrna's' European ambience. Beside it the pretty **Konak Camii**, dating from 1748, is covered in Kütahya tiles.

At its southern end, the traffic returns with a vengeance in the form of the wide multilane Halil Rifat Paşa Caddesi, across from which

is Turgetreis Parkı and, on the hill above (but not signposted), İzmir's archaeology and ethnography museums.

The **Archaeology Museum** (Arkeoloji Müzesi; ☎ 489 0796; Arkeoloji Müzesi Caddesi; admission TL5; 🕒 8am-5pm Tue-Sun) is a little dry in places, but contains a fine collection of remnants from the city's various pasts: Bronze Age pottery, Greek statuary, Roman mosaics. Look out in particular for the beautifully decorated sarcophagi and the impressive frieze depicting the funeral games from the mausoleum at Belevi (250 BC).

More interesting is the **Ethnography Museum** (Etnografya Müzesi; ☎ 489 0796; admission TL2; 🕒 8am-5pm Tue-Sun), next door. Originally built in 1831 as the St Roche Hospital, this lovely old four-storey stone building houses colourful displays (including dioramas, photos and information panels) demonstrating local arts, crafts and customs. You'll learn about everything from camel wrestling, pottery and tin-plating to felt-making, embroidery and the art of making those curious little blue-and-white 'evil eye' beads (see also boxed text, p228). Other displays include weaponry, jewellery and beautiful illustrated manuscripts.

AGORA

The ancient **Agora** (Agora Caddesi; admission TL2; 🕒 8am-5pm), built for Alexander the Great, was ruined in an earthquake in AD 178, but rebuilt soon after by the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius. Colonnades of reconstructed Corinthian columns, vaulted chambers and arches give you a good idea of what a Roman bazaar must have looked like. Later, a Muslim cemetery was built on the site and many of the old tombstones can be seen around the perimeter of the Agora. Ask for the free brochure, which gives a good introduction. The entrance to the site is just off Gazi Osman Paşa Bulvarı, just southeast of the main bazaar area.

If bathing facilities at your hotel are rudimentary, you can patronise the **Şifalı Lux Hamam** (bath & massage full works €20; 🕒 7am-11pm for men, 8am-6pm for women), just to the north on Anafartalar Caddesi. It's clean, with a lovely domed and marble interior.

KEMERALTI BAZAAR

İzmir's version of a Turkish **bazaar** (🕒 9.30am-9pm Mon-Sat high season, to 5pm low season) may be disappointingly unexotic if you've never visited one before. Much of what goes on sale here is aimed squarely at the domestic

audience – pots and pans, socks, wedding dresses, clocks etc, albeit enlivened here and there with more-intriguing items, such as water pipes, beads and plenty of leather goods (a speciality of the city). The architecture is no great shakes either, with the exception of the restored **Kızlarağası Han** (🕒 9.30am-9pm Mon-Sat high season, to 5pm low season), a covered market built in 1744 and rather like a (much) smaller, calmer version of İstanbul's famous Covered Bazaar.

What the bazaar most certainly does have, however, is atmosphere. It can, to put it mildly, get rather busy. The streets are narrow and the people are many. It's a great place to lose yourself for a couple of hours – and with alleys intertwining here, there and everywhere, that is pretty much a guarantee. When it all gets too much, revive yourself with a shot of coffee at one of the numerous cafés. To help find your bearings, try to enter along Anafartalar Caddesi, which rings the main bazaar area and is its principal thoroughfare.

KÜLTÜR PARK

Much of the inland centre of town, between Alsancak and Basmane, an area that was heavily damaged in the 1922 fire, is taken up by the Kültür Park, a rather bland attempt to inject a little greenery into the city's concrete and tarmac expanses. Still, it's popular enough, attracting strolling couples and joggers – who have their own dedicated track. Specific attractions include a 50m parachute tower, an open-air theatre, exhibition halls for the yearly İzmir festival (see opposite) and, pick of the bunch, the city's **Museum of History & Art** (Tarih ve Sanat Müzesi; ☎ 489 7586; admission €2.75; 🕒 8am-5pm Tue-Sun). Containing three separate departments (Sculpture, Ceramics, and Precious Artefacts), it gives a good overview of the region's artistic heritage. Look out in particular for the 2nd-century-AD high relief of Poseidon and Demeter and the large hunting mosaic from Kadifekale. It also has a small but quite well-stocked bookshop with publications on Turkish art, cooking and culture.

KADİFEKALE

Following its sacking by Lydia in the 6th century BC, Smyrna would have to wait another couple of centuries before being refounded, by Alexander the Great. He chose a secure site on Kadifekale (Mt Pagus) in the centre of the modern city, erecting the fortifications

İZMİR'S SYNAGOGUES

İzmir still has a sizeable Jewish population – although not nearly as large as it was in Ottoman times – and it is possible to take a tour of some of the city's beautiful old **synagogues** (guided tours €25-35). The tours usually take in some of the restored synagogues of the Old Jewish Quarter, including the **Bet Israel**, which has a museum on its upper floor, and lies next to the **Asansör**, a 19th-century elevator (TL0.25) that links the Karataş and Halil Rifat Paşa areas of town – the alternative is 155 steps. Other highlights include the three Ottoman-style synagogues on Havra Sokak in the bazaar, the remainder of nine that used to stand here. To arrange a tour, call the tourist office (p223).

that still crown the hill. It's well worth taking a bus up to the 'Velvet Fortress' to see the view, especially just before sunset. During the day you can watch women migrants from Mardin in southeastern Anatolia hard at work on horizontal carpet looms, though this is an increasingly rare sight.

Bus 33 from Konak will carry you up the hill and you can easily walk some of the way back down again. However, the surrounding neighbourhood is pretty rough – don't walk back alone after dark.

Festivals & Events

From mid-June to mid-July the annual **International İzmir Festival** offers performances of music and dance in Çeşme and Ephesus as well as İzmir (in the Kültür Park). Call the **İzmir Kültür Vakfı** (İzmir Culture Foundation; ☎ 463 0300; www.izmirfair.com.tr; Mithatpaşa Caddesi 50/4) south of town to find out what's on where.

Sleeping

İzmir's waterfront is dominated by large high-end business hotels, which fill up quickly during the summer trade shows, while inland are plenty of budget and midrange places, particularly in the area close to the Basmane train station. 1294 Sokak and 1296 Sokak, just southwest of the station, boast a number of hotels occupying restored Ottoman houses; be aware that, although the facades are often very pretty, the interiors can be rather grungy and uninviting. Here and there, you'll also find a few 'boutique' (or *butik*) offerings, this modern trend having reached İzmir in the past few years.

BUDGET

Otel Hikmet (☎ 484 2672; 945 Sokak 26; s with/without shower TL20/15, d TL45/35) The sign outside says 'Hotel very good' and it's not wrong. Tucked away on cobbled streets off a nargileh (water

pipe)-café-lined square, this simple, family-run three-storey house is chock-full of character. Though longing for a lick of paint, the rooms are spotless.

Imperial Hotel (☎ 425 6883; fax 489 4688; 1294 Sokak 54; s/d TL20/45; 🏠) One of the best among a glut of similar offerings. The grandiose entrance columns, marble floors and carpets promise great things, but the rooms are much more modest. But they're still a decent size, spotless and terrific value.

MIDRANGE & TOP END

Hotel Alican 2 (☎ 425 2912; alicanotel@hotmail.com; 1367 Sokak; s/d incl breakfast €19/35; 🏠) One of the safer choices in the station area (there's a 24-hour reception), this has 13 decent-sized, well-maintained rooms with good, modern bathrooms.

Grand Zeybek Hotel (☎ 441 9590; www.grandzeybekhotels.com; Fevzi Paşa Bulvarı 1368 Sokak 5-7, Basmane; s/d €30/50; 🏠) Despite the name, this isn't grand at all, but a perfectly acceptable two-star – the trouble is, it's billed as a three-star. Still, the owners operate another three properties, so it's a good option if other places are full.

ourpick Konak Saray Hotel (☎ 483 7755; www.konaksarayhotel.com; Anafartalar Caddesi 635; s/d €35/50; 🏠 📺) One of the nicest and best-value options in town, the Konak Saray occupies a beautifully restored old Ottoman house that's been transformed into a superior boutique hotel. Rooms are stylish and modern – lots of wood and marble – if a touch small, and soundproofed to keep the bazaar noise out. There's also a great top-floor restaurant and free wi-fi.

Otel Kilim (☎ 484 5340; www.kilimotel.com.tr, in Turkish; Atatürk Caddesi, Çankaya; s/d €45/60; 🏠 📺) There are better options along the seafront, but they tend to cost more. If you want views without the price, this is a pretty good choice, with a decent fish restaurant. The

rooms were decorated a few years ago and are blandly comfortable, but only 12 have sea views so book at least one week in advance to avoid disappointment.

Otel Antik Han (☎ 489 2750; www.otelantikhan.com; Anafartalar Caddesi 600; s/d €45/65; 📺) Once belonging to Atatürk's father, this is one of İzmir's very few historic hotels, with pleasant (if in places a little threadbare) rooms set around a tranquil courtyard, a world away from the hustle and bustle of the bazaar outside. The hotel also has six charming little 'flats' (in fact rooms with a mezzanine floor) that cost the same price as rooms.

İzmir Palas Oteli (☎ 465 0030; www.izmirpalas.com.tr; Atatürk Caddesi 2, Çankaya; s/d €65/85; 📺 📺) Established in 1927, the Palas is İzmir's oldest hotel, although, as it was rebuilt in 1972, don't expect any architectural wonders. It's rather boxy on the outside, and businesslike and bland within, but very comfortable with all the conveniences you'd expect for the price, and a reasonable restaurant. Its biggest boon is the location; most of its 138 rooms have balconies overlooking the bay.

MyHotel (☎ 445 3837; www.myhotel.com.tr; Cumhuriyet Bulvarı 132; s/d incl breakfast €65/90; 📺 📺) A sort of business/boutique affair, MyHotel is new and very stylish with glass floors, 30 clean minimalist (if a touch dark) rooms and plenty of designer furniture. It's near the seafont but doesn't have sea views.

Hilton İzmir (☎ 497 6060; www.hilton.com; Gaziosmanpaşa Bulvarı 7; s/d €95/130; 📺 📺 📺 📺) Reputedly the tallest building on Turkey's Aegean coast, the Hilton literally stands above the competition. The public rooms luxuriate in grey marble, and there are fabulous views from its well-appointed bedrooms, restaurants and bars, as well good facilities, including health club, pool, tennis and squash courts.

Swissôtel Grand Efes (☎ 414 0000; www.swissotel.com.tr; Gaziosmanpaşa Bulvarı 1; r €135-360; 📺 📺 📺 📺) The new five-star luxury-business Grand Efes is perhaps the biggest player in town right now, occupying a prime location in the centre of Cumhuriyet Meydanı overlooking the water. The rooms are as generically luxurious as you'd expect, with flat-screen TVs, large beds and elegant leather and steel furniture, although you might have to look out of the window (or take a trip up to the Sky Bar) to remind yourself which city you're in. Also boasts an excellent restaurant and spa.

Eating

For fresh fruit, veg or freshly baked bread and delicious savoury pastries (€0.13), head for the canopied market, just off Anafartalar Caddesi.

RESTAURANTS

The place to be seen on a romantic summer's evening is the sea-facing Kordon. Though you pay for the location – most restaurants have street-side tables with views of the bay – some serve excellent food as well. In Alsancak, you lose the sunset views but gain on atmosphere. Try in particular 1453 Sokak (Gazi Kadınlar Sokağı).

Sakız (☎ 484 1103; Şehit Nevresbey Bulvarı 9a; mains TL8-12; 📺 11am-midnight) It must have been a bold move opening a vegetarian café in the mainly carnivorous confines of İzmir, but it seems to have paid off. The food is traditional Turkish, just removed of its meat and fish elements, made with fresh local ingredients. Good wine list.

Kefi (☎ 422 6045; 1453 Sokak 17; mezes TL5, mains TL14; 📺 11am-midnight) Alsancak's restaurant scene is booming but volatile, with new places opening and closing all the time. Kefi, however, seems to have stood the test of time with its superb cooking and elegant dining room set in a restored Ottoman house. Fish and seafood take up most of the menu but it also does some mean meat dishes – try the lamb with fennel.

Balık Pişircisi (☎ 464 2705; Atatürk Caddesi 212a; mains TL10-16; 📺 noon-11.30pm) The queues of diners on the street and waiters galloping from table to table tell much about this fish restaurant. Though simple and modern, it has a reputation for good seafood at reasonable prices. Try the speciality, *dil şiş* (grilled sole).

Asansör (☎ 261 2626; Dario Moreno Sokağı; mains TL10-18; 📺 8am-midnight) Housed at the top of a 40m 19th-century elevator, the location is İzmir's best. In addition to the stunning panoramic views, it makes a cool refuge in summer, well away from the main tourist trail. If you can't afford to eat at the main restaurant, try the smaller Café Moreno opposite (mains TL8 to TL14, open same hours) or come for a beer (from €3). It's about 2km from the town centre.

Café Melanie (☎ 482 4158; Atatürk Caddesi 206a; mains TL10-20; 📺 11am-2am) Unashamedly glam and aimed squarely at the smart set who like to be seen, Melanie offers pretty much the archetypal Kordon experience, with a cool dining room and smart, seafont seating. The menu is European and very good (particularly

the shrimp casserole) and there's regular live music. Not as expensive as you might think.

ourpick Deniz Restaurant (☎ 464 4499; Atatürk Caddesi 188b; mains TL10-22; 🕒 11am-11pm) Founded by a father and run by his three sons, the family has firmly held onto Deniz' ranking as İzmir's premier fish restaurant. Try the house speciality, *tuzda balık* (fish baked in a block of salt that's dramatically broken at your table) or the sumptuous seafood. Expect your fellow diners to be in their best party frocks.

QUICK EATS

Tuğba (☎ 441 9622; Gazi Osman Paşa Bulvarı 56, Çankaya; 🕒 8.30am-11pm) For dried fruit, nuts, baklava, Turkish delight and all things nice.

Gül Kebab (☎ 425 0126; Anafartalar Caddesi 415, Kemeraltı; meals TL3-5; 🕒 6.30am-5pm Mon-Sat) For a fuel stop in the bazaar, head for this perennially popular place, feeding the good people of İzmir since 1949.

Neşe Köfte (☎ 445 3868; 906 Sokak 28; meals TL6; 🕒 11am-6pm Mon-Sat) At the other end of the bazaar, this place claims İzmir's 'best-*köfte*-in-town' crown. Try also the *piyas* (white beans and onion in olive oil and lemon juice), an Aegean speciality. Later, have a coffee at one of the pretty cafés nearby.

Kırçıgeği (☎ 464 3090; Kibrıs Şehitleri Caddesi 83; kebaps TL8-10; 🕒 24hr) Simple but spotless and with exemplary service. This is the place in Alsancak to come for good Turkish food at great prices. The pick-and-point menu may help new arrivals or those keen to try out other dishes.

Dört Mevsim Et Lokantası (☎ 489 8991; 1369 Sokak 51a; meals TL10-16; 🕒 9.30am-midnight) Famous as far afield as Ankara and İstanbul, this award-winning *lokanta* (eatery serving ready-made food) dishes up excellent food at reasonable prices. From the open *ocakbaşı* (grill), try the delicious chargrilled-melted cheese, stuffed aubergine kebab, or *köfte* with chilli (the house specialities).

CAFÉS & PATISSERIES

Sir Winston Tea House (☎ 421 8861; Dr Mustafa Bey Enver Caddesi 20c; tea TL0.75-2; 🕒 8am-8pm Mon-Sat) On a street known for its quality tea- and coffee-houses this is one of the best, serving over 60 types of tea (green, herbal, fruit etc) and good pastries. There's shady seating outside.

Café de Bugün (☎ 425 8118; Atatürk Caddesi 162 1-2; sandwiches TL6, coffee TL4; 🕒 8am-11pm) Along the seafront and in complete contrast to the little cafés and patisseries in the bazaar is the

posh Café de Bugün, which rather resembles a French Regency salon.

Simorg Café (☎ 445 7449; 895 Sokak 2a; meals TL4-5, tea TL0.20; 🕒 8am-9.30pm Mon-Sat) With its Orientalist interior (complete with carpets, old maps and portraits of sultans and their harems), this café makes a great place to recline and rest after a run around the bazaar. The 'coffee made in cup' is a speciality of the area. There's live Turkish music on Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 7pm to 9.30pm.

Drinking

Nargile Konağı (☎ 463 4050; 1482 Sokak 12; 🕒 8am-1am) Enjoy one of the city's most traditional pleasures, toting on a nargileh (€2), in its liveliest and most fashionable district. Surrounded by other bars and cafés, this is small and cosy with little tables on the street.

Kalamış (☎ 425 3901; Atatürk Caddesi 144, Konak; nargilehs €3; 🕒 24hr) For a nargileh over a game of backgammon or *okey* (a kind of Turkish dominoes) head for this atmospheric institution. Old men line the yellowed interior, but students (of both sexes) occupy the 1st floor.

Passport Café & Bar (☎ 489 9299; Atatürk Caddesi 140; beer €1.65; 🕒 8am-2am) More modern and more central is this new and funky place with tables on the seafront.

Pasaj (☎ 425 9445; Atatürk Caddesi 132; beer TL5; 🕒 10am-2am) Unlike many of the other sunset bars along this strip, where the focus is primarily on the waterfront seating, this also has a nice, high-ceilinged wooden interior where you can while away the evening once the sun has dropped over the horizon. Popular and lively.

Entertainment

The locals start their evening's entertainment with a stroll along the Kordon, which is also good for a sundowner on the seafront. Things get steadily trendier and livelier the further north you go. The row of bars around the Balık Pişiricisi Restaurant is particularly popular. Alsancak plays host to the city's hottest nightlife, particularly in the clubs and bars of Sokaks 1452, 1453 and 1487.

Punta Bar (☎ 463 1504; 1469 Sokak 26; admission free; beer TL3-5; 🕒 9pm-4am Wed-Sat) One of the most popular Alsancak venues, this stages regular live music (mostly rock, but then most live music in Alsancak is) and attracts intense, happy crowds.

THE EVIL ALL-SEEING EYE

However short your trip to Turkey, you can't fail to notice the famous 'evil eye' watching you wherever you go. This age-old superstition is still remarkably persistent throughout Turkey today, and the beads, pendants and other artefacts emblazoned with the eye are made just as much for the local market as they are for the tourists.

In a nutshell, certain people are thought to carry within them a malevolent force that can be transmitted to others via their eyes. Charms, resembling eyes, known as *nazar boncuk*, are used to reflect the evil look back to the originator.

The majority of the evil-eye production takes place in the Aegean region, and İzmir is a great place to buy them (see below).

Café Baryum (☎ 463 4902; Atatürk Caddesi 230a; beer inside/outside €2.25/2.75; ☎ 8am-2am) The lively and popular Baryum plays live music from 9pm to 2am nightly.

Shopping

These days İzmir's shopping scene spans all sections of the market. On the one hand, there's the bazaar with its crowded intensity, its haggling and its old-world commercial exuberance, and on the other there's the Konak Pier shopping centre, a bright, shiny, modern mall jutting out over the water and filled with big-name chains – Tommy Hilfifer, Lacoste etc. The former offers atmosphere and plenty of (sometimes unwanted) human interaction, the latter air-conditioned sterility and hands-off deference – take your pick.

İlhan Nargile (☎ 441 7404; Kızlarağası Han; ☎ 8am-6pm) The city's oldest manufacturers of water pipes operate two shops and a factory in the heart of the bazaar and stock all manner of colourful, convoluted contraptions.

Alp (☎ 445 9017; 856 Sokak 51, Kemeraltı; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Sat) This amazing shop specialises in the famous evil-eye beads (see boxed text, above) in all shapes, sizes and settings – pendants, jewellery, pictures etc.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Since the opening of the new international terminal at İzmir's **Adnan Menderes Airport** (☎ 455 0000; www.adnanmenderesairport.com) in late

2006, flights to the city from European destinations have greatly increased. See p684 for more details.

Turkish Airlines (☎ 484 1220; www.thy.com; Halit Ziya Bulvarı 65, Çankaya) offers nonstop flights to İstanbul (from TL109, 50 minutes) and Ankara (from TL59, one hour and 15 minutes) with connections to other destinations. Other airlines flying to İzmir:

Atlasjet (www.atlasjet.com)

Fly Air (www.flyair.com.tr)

Izair (www.izair.com.tr)

Onur Air (www.onurair.com.tr)

Sun Express Airlines (www.sunexpress.com.tr)

BUS

İzmir's mammoth otogar lies 6.5km northeast of the city centre. For travel to coastal towns on Friday or Saturday, buy your ticket a day in advance; in the high season, two days in advance. Tickets can also be bought from the bus company offices in the city centre.

Long-distance buses and their ticket offices are found on the lower level; regional buses (Selçuk, Bergama, Manisa, Sardis etc) and their ticket offices are on the upper level. City buses and dolmuş leave from a courtyard in front of the lower level.

From İzmir there are frequent local buses to Bergama (TL10, two hours, 110km), Çeşme (TL10, 1½ hours, 116km), Foça (TL5.50, 1½ hours, 86km), Kuşadası (TL10.50, 1½ hours, 95km), Manisa (TL5, 50 minutes, 45km), Salihli (for Sardis; TL7.50, 1½ hours, 80km) and Selçuk (TL6, one hour, 80km).

Short-distance buses (eg to the Çeşme Peninsula) leave from a smaller local bus terminal in Üçkuyular, 6.5km southwest of Konak. Recently short-distance buses started picking up and dropping off at the otogar also.

Details of daily long-distance bus services to important destinations are listed in the table, opposite.

TRAIN

Though İzmir has two train stations, **Alsancak Garı** (☎ 464 7795) and **Basmane Garı** (☎ information 484 8638, reservations 484 5353), most intercity trains as well as the airport train arrive at the latter.

The *Alti Eylül Ekspresi* train to Bandırma (TL16, 6½ hours) departs year-round from İzmir Basmane at 9am and arrives in Bandırma Gar (main station) at 2.50pm. Between April and October, a second service,

SERVICES FROM İZMİR'S OTOGAR

Destination	Fare (TL)	Duration (hr)	Distance (km)	Frequency (per day)
Ankara	48	8	550	every hour
Antalya	40	7	450	at least hourly
Bodrum	25	3¼	286	every 30min in high season
Bursa	24	5	300	every hour
Çanakkale	38	6	340	at least hourly
Denizli	18	3¼	250	every 30min
İstanbul	50	9	575	at least every hour
Konya	40	8	575	every 1 to 2 hours
Marmaris	35	4	320	hourly

the *Onyedi Eylül Ekspresi*, leaves at 2.15pm, arriving at 8.10pm. From Bandırma, you can catch a ferry (p197) across the Sea of Marmara to İstanbul.

Express trains also run to Ankara (sleeper TL26.50, 13 to 15 hours) daily at 5.30pm, 6.15pm and 7.30pm via Manisa (TL3, 1¼ hours), Kütahya (TL15, eight hours) and Eskişehir (sleeper TL17.25, 11½ to 13½ hours). For İstanbul, change at Eskişehir.

Further express services are available to Denizli (for Pamukkale; TL11, five hours) three times daily at 9am, 3.15pm and 6.30pm; Selçuk (TL3.50, 1½ hours) at 9am, noon, 3.15pm, 6.30pm and 9.30pm; Nazilli (for Afrodiasias; TL7.25, four hours) at 9am, noon, 3.15pm, 6.30pm and 9.30pm; Isparta (TL17, 10 hours) at 9.30pm; and Burdur (TL14, nine hours) at 9.30pm; Kutahya trains are at 5.30pm, 6.15pm and 7.30pm and cost TL15 to TL18.

For trains to northern or eastern Turkey, change at Ankara.

Getting Around

TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

The airport is 18km south of the city near Cumaovası on the road to Ephesus and Kuşadası. Frequent Havaş airport buses (TL10, 30 minutes) leave from Gaziosmanpaşa Bulvarı, north of the Hilton, and from the airport (where they meet flights).

More-or-less hourly suburban trains (TL2.50, 30 minutes) connect the airport with Basmane Garı (TL2.50), but a taxi (€20 to €30, 30 minutes) is likely to be faster and more dependable.

TO/FROM THE BUS STATIONS

If you've arrived at the main otogar on an intercity bus operated by one of the larger bus companies, a free shuttle *servis* is provided to

Dokuz Eylül Meydanı in Basmane. If you arrive on a local bus, you can catch a dolmuş (TL1.75, 25 minutes) that runs every 15 minutes between the otogar and both Konak and Basmane Garı, or you can take buses 54 and 191 (every 20 minutes), bus 64 (every hour) to Basmane (TL2) or bus 505 to Bornova (TL2). Tickets can be bought either on board the bus or at the white booth beside the bus stop.

To get to the otogar, the easiest way is to buy a ticket on an intercity bus at Dokuz Eylül Meydanı and then take the bus company's *servis*. However, if you need to take a local bus from the otogar (eg to Salihli), you'll need to take a dolmuş or bus from Basmane or Bornova.

To get to the bus station at Üçkuyular, catch bus 11 (TL2) from the Konak bus terminal. Soon, you will also be able to take the metro (see p230).

BOAT

The nicest way to get about İzmir is by **ferry** (☎ 6.30am-1am). Frequent timetabled services link the piers at Konak, Pasaport, Alsancak and Karşıyaka. *Jetons* (transport tokens) cost TL4 each.

BUS

City buses lumber along the major thoroughfares, but the one-way system and lack of numbering on the bus stops makes them hard for outsiders to use. Two major terminal or transfer points are Montrö Meydanı, by the Kültür Park, and Konak, beside the Atatürk Evi. You can buy a ticket (TL2) from a white kiosk in advance or on board from the driver.

CAR

The large international car-hire franchises and many smaller companies all have desks

(open 24 hours) at the airport, and many have a desk in town.

Avis (☎ 274 1790; www.avis.com.tr)

Europcar (☎ 274 2163; www.europcar.com.tr)

Green Car (☎ 446 9131; www.greenautorent.com; Şair Eşref Bulvarı 18a, Çankaya) A good local company and the largest in the Aegean region.

METRO

İzmir's **metro** (🚇 6.30am–11.30pm; jeton TL1) is clean and quick. There are currently 10 stations running from Üçyöğl to Bornova via Konak (you're most likely to travel from Basmane station to Konak or Bornova), although there are plans to expand the system throughout much of the city, extending the current line and adding another two.

TAXI

You can either hail a taxi or pick one up from a taxi stand or from outside one of the big hotels. Fares start at TL1.50 and depend on distance; prices are 50% more at night. Make sure the meter is switched on.

AROUND İZMİR

If you are staying in İzmir for a few days, a number of destinations make good day or half-day excursions. Local buses leave from the upper level of İzmir otogar.

Manisa

☎ 0236 / pop 281,890

Backed by mountains, the modern town of Manisa was once the ancient town of Magnesia ad Sipylus. The early Ottoman sultans left Manisa many fine mosques, but retreating Greek soldiers wreaked terrible destruction during the War of Independence. The main reasons to visit are to inspect the mosques and the finds from Sardis in the museum or to take in the Mesir Şenlikleri festival.

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Of Manisa's many old mosques, the **Muradiye Camii** (1585), the last work of the famous architect Sinan, has the most impressive tile work. The adjoining building, originally constructed as a soup kitchen, is now **Manisa Museum** (admission TL2; 🕒 9am–noon & 1–5pm Tue–Sun), which houses some fine mosaics from Sardis (right).

More or less facing the Muradiye, the **Sultan Camii** (1522) features some gaudy paintings. The **hamam** (admission TL15; 🕒 10am–9pm) next door has separate entrances for men and women.

Perched on the hillside above the town centre is the **Ulu Cami** (1366), ravaged by the ages and not as impressive as the view from the teahouse next to it.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Should you be able to visit during the four days around the spring equinox, you would catch the **Mesir Şenlikleri**, a festival in celebration of *mesir macunu* (power gum).

According to legend, over 450 years ago a local pharmacist named Müslühiddin Celebi Merkez Efendi concocted a potion to cure Hafza Sultan, mother of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent, of a mysterious ailment. Delighted with her swift recovery, the queen mother paid for the amazing elixir to be distributed to the local people.

These days townsfolk in period costumes re-enact the mixing of the potion from sugar and 40 spices and other ingredients, then toss it from the dome of the Sultan Camii. Locals credit *mesir* with calming the nerves, stimulating the hormones and immunising against poisonous stings.

GETTING THERE & AROUND

It's easiest to get to Manisa by hourly bus from İzmir (TL5, 45 minutes, 30km). You can continue direct from Manisa to Salihli (TL3.50, 1½ hours) to see the ruins at Sardis.

To get to Manisa's historic mosques, take dolmuş 5 from in front of the otogar (TL0.75) and hop off at Ulu Parkı.

Sardis (Sart)

Sardis was once the capital of the wealthy Lydian kingdom that dominated much of the Aegean before the Persians came along. Its ruins, 90km east of İzmir, make a particularly worthwhile excursion destination.

Sardis was near the Pactolus River, which carried specks of gold that the Lydians collected with fleece sieves. Croesus (560–546 BC) was a king of Lydia, and the Greeks presumably thought him abnormally rich because he could store so much wealth in his seemingly bottomless pockets rather than in the form of vast estates and livestock. Coinage seems to have been invented here, hence the phrase 'rich as Croesus'. Sardis became a great trading centre partly because its coinage facilitated commerce.

The then Persian town was sacked during a revolt in 499 BC. After the Persians,

Alexander the Great took the city in 334 BC and embellished it even more. An earthquake brought down its fine buildings in AD 17, but it was rebuilt by Tiberius and developed into a thriving Roman town. The end for Sardis happened soon after Tamerlane visited in 1401 in his usual belligerent mood.

The ruins of Sardis are scattered around the village of Sart (Sartmustafa) in a valley overshadowed by a strikingly craggy mountain range.

SIGHTS

The most extensive **ruins** (admission TL2; ☎ 8am–5pm, to 7pm high season) lie at the eastern end of Sart village, immediately north of the road. Information panels dot the site.

You enter the site along a **Roman road**, past a well-preserved **Byzantine latrine** and rows of **Byzantine shops** backing onto a synagogue, which belonged to Jewish merchants and artisans. Some of the buildings have been identified from inscriptions and include a restaurant, Jacob's Paint Shop, an office, a hardware shop, and shops belonging to Sabbatios and Jacob, an elder of the synagogue.

Turn left from the Roman road to enter the **havra** (synagogue), impressive because of its size and beautiful decoration: fine geometric mosaic paving and coloured stone on the walls.

Beside the synagogue is the grassy expanse of what was once the hamam and gymnasium. This complex was probably built in the 2nd century AD and abandoned after a Sassanian invasion in 616.

Right at the end is a striking two-storey building called the **Marble Court of the Hall of the Imperial Cult**, which, though heavily restored (and somewhat hideous), gives an idea of the former grandeur of the building. Behind it you'll find an ancient **swimming pool** and rest area. Look out also for the Roman altar with two Roman eagles on either side and lions back-to-back.

Across the road from the enclosed site continuing excavations have uncovered a stretch of the **Lydian city wall** and a **Roman house** with painted walls right on top of an earlier Lydian residence.

Temple of Artemis

A sign points south down the road beside the teahouses to the **Temple of Artemis** (admission TL3; ☎ 8am–5pm), just over 1km away. Today,

only a few columns of a once-magnificent but never completed building still stand. Nevertheless, the temple's plan is clearly visible and very impressive. Next to it is an **altar** used since ancient times, refurbished by Alexander the Great and later by the Romans. Clinging to the southeastern corner of the temple is a small brick **Byzantine church**.

As you head back to İzmir, look to the north of the highway and you'll see a series of softly rounded **tumuli**, the burial mounds of the Lydian kings.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Buses for Salihli (TL6.75, 1½ hours, 90km) leave from İzmir otogar at least every 30 minutes. You must then take an onward dolmuş to Sart (TL0.75, 15 minutes, 9km) from the back of Salihli otogar.

Buses also run between Salihli and Manisa (TL3.50, 1½ hours), making it possible to visit both places in the same day.

ÇEŞME PENINSULA

The Çeşme Peninsula is İzmir's summer playground, which means that it can get very busy with Turkish tourists at weekends and during the school holidays. The main places to visit are Çeşme itself, a family-oriented resort and transit point for getting to the Greek island of Chios, and Alaçatı, a much more upmarket affair whose central core of old Greek stone houses now holds a multitude of boutique hotels and high-end restaurants, the majority opened in the past five years. The nearby beach has become a windsurfing mecca in recent years.

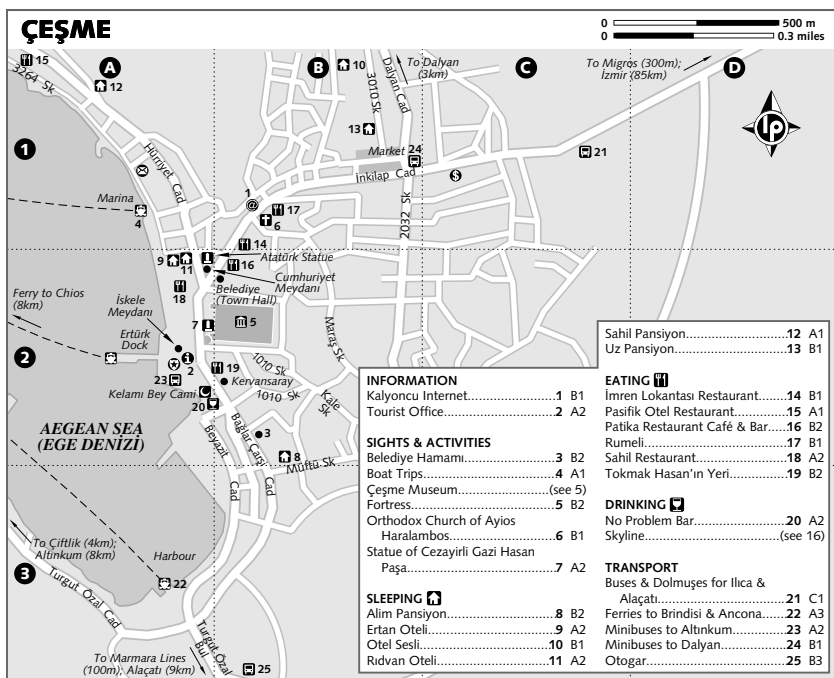
ÇEŞME

☎ 0232 / pop 21,300

Çeşme, 85km due west of İzmir, has perked up considerably in recent years and now makes a good base for a few days' holiday, especially when travelling to and from Chios, 8km away across the water. Inevitably, it's popular with weekenders from İzmir and can get busy during the school holidays, when prices rise accordingly.

Orientation & Information

To the north of the main square is the waterfront esplanade, which is largely pedestrianised and lined with fish restaurants and excursion boats. At its far northern end is



a small, sandy beach. The otogar is almost 1km south of Cumhuriyet Meydanı, although you can just as easily pick up transport to İzmir, Ilıca or Alaçatı from the western end of İnkilap Caddesi.

The **tourist office** (☎ /fax 712 6653; İskele Meydanı 6; ☎ 8.30am-noon & 1-5.30pm Mon-Fri), ferry and bus ticket offices, banks with ATMs, restaurants and hotels are all within two blocks of Cumhuriyet Meydanı, the main square near the waterfront with the inevitable statue of Atatürk.

The main shopping drag, İnkilap Caddesi, curves gently uphill to the northeast. Around 200m on the left is **Kalyoncu Internet** (3042 Sokak 18a; per hr TL3; ☎ 10am-1am).

Sights

The Genoese **fortress**, whose dramatic walls dominate the town centre, was built in the 16th century and repaired by Sultan Beyazıt, son of Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror (Mehmet Fatih), to defend the coast from attack by pirates. Later the Knights of St John of Jerusalem based on Rhodes also made use of it. The battlements offer excellent views of Çeşme but otherwise the interior is dis-

appointingly empty. The one exception is the north tower, which houses the **Çeşme Museum** (Çeşme Müzesi; admission TL2; ☎ 8am-5pm), displaying some archaeological finds from nearby Erythrae.

Facing İskele Meydanı, with its back to the fortress, is a **statue of Cezayirli Gazi Hasan Paşa** (1714-90), who was sold into slavery but became a grand vizier. He is shown accompanied by a lion.

To the north, the imposing but redundant 19th-century **Orthodox Church of Ayios Haralambos** (İnkilap Caddesi) is used for temporary exhibitions of arts and crafts during the summer months.

Past the Çeşme Kervansaray Hotel on Bağlar Çarşısı Caddesi is Çeşme's restored 18th-century **Belediye hamamı** (☎ 712 5386; wash & massage TL43; ☎ 8am-11pm). With its dome and marble interior, it's an attractive place. Bathing is mixed (though *peştemals* – hamam bath towels – are used).

Activities

From June to September, *gülets* (traditional Turkish wooden yachts) offer one-day **boat**

trips (incl lunch TL25) to the nearby islands of Wind Bay, Black Island and Donkey Island, where you can swim and snorkel. Browse the waterfront to compare prices and negotiate. Boats usually leave around 10am and return around 5pm.

Sleeping

BUDGET

Alim Pansiyon (☎ 712 6971; tamerakpinar@hotmail.com; 1021 Sokak 3; s/d TL30/40) The friendly and quiet Alim lies south of the centre and has simple, cheerily decorated rooms, all with TVs (some with balconies).

Uz Pansiyon (☎ 712 6579; uzpansiyon@gmail.com; 3010 Sokak 7; s/d TL35/55; 🚺) Close to the bus station and 450m from the centre, this is one of Çeşme's cheapest. It's spotless and terrific value, with a communal kitchen and free wi-fi available.

Otel Sesli (☎ 712 8845; www.otelsesli.com; 3025 Sokak 35; s/d €20/40; 🚺 🚻) Set on a hill well above the seafront, and recently renovated, this place offers 20 rather bare rooms arranged around a pleasant central pool area adorned with potted plants. It's a 10-minute walk to the centre.

Sahil Pansiyon (☎ 712 6934; www.cesmesahilpansiyon.com; 3265 Sokak 3; d from €40; 🚺) Up the stairs near the northern waterfront, this is a peaceful place set in a rambling house and garden. The immaculate rooms have small balconies, some with sea views (ask for room 9). The family's very accommodating and keen to please.

MIDRANGE

Ertan Oteli (☎ 712 6795; www.ertanotel.com.tr; Hüriyet Caddesi 12; d €55; 🚺) In the same block as the Rıdvan, the Ertan enjoys the better location, right on the seafront. Though by no means a good-looking hotel, the staff are helpful, the restaurant reasonable and the rooms are a decent size and have balconies – a choice of sea or square views.

Rıdvan Oteli (☎ 712 6336; www.ridvanotel.com; Cumhuriyet Meydanı 11; s/d €40/55; 🚺) Slightly more well-to-do than its neighbour, this boasts 36 balconied rooms, some with castle views, some with side views of the sea. There's a branch of Özü on the ground floor with seating on the square.

Eating

The most touristy restaurants are all along the waterfront and specialise mainly in fish and seafood – and have their menus

printed in a wide variety of languages. For cheaper, more locally oriented places, head to İnkilap Caddesi.

Rumeli (☎ 712 6759; İnkilap Caddesi; ☎ 8am-8pm) Great ice cream (TL0.75 per scoop) served from the side window of this *pastane* (patisserie), which specialises in all manner of jams, pickles and preserves.

Tokmak Hasan'ın Yeri (☎ 712 0519; Çarşı Caddesi 11; mains TL4-8; ☎ 7am-8pm Mon-Sat) Rather hidden away, this simple place serves terrific home cooking at low prices. There's a cool, quiet garden at the back.

İmren Lokantası Restaurant (☎ 712 7620; İnkilap Caddesi; mezes TL4.50, mains TL9-17.50; ☎ noon-9pm) Çeşme's first restaurant opened way back in 1960 and is set in a bamboo-roofed atrium with fountain and plants. It's famous locally for its traditional, high-quality Turkish food, including excellent stews (TL7).

Patika Restaurant Café & Bar (☎ 712 6357; Cumhuriyet Meydanı; mains TL10-16; ☎ 3pm-midnight) Set above a souvenir shop on the main square, this is the place for fish at affordable prices. Alcohol is not served. Between 9pm and 1am daily there's live Turkish music and sometimes belly dancing.

Pasifik Otel Restaurant (☎ 712 7465; 3264 Sokak; mains TL10-16; ☎ noon-9pm) If you fancy a walk and some fish, head here, to the far northern end of the seafront, where you can enjoy a great fish casserole (TL14) on seating overlooking the beach.

Sahil Restaurant (☎ 712 8294; Cumhuriyet Meydanı 12; soup TL4, mains TL12-18; ☎ 8am-midnight) Right on the waterfront, this Mediterranean-style place is known for its fish, though its meat dishes are also good. But make sure you ask the fish prices in advance; for some travellers, the bill's been a nasty surprise. *Barbun* (red mullet; €20) is the house speciality.

Drinking & Entertainment

Skyline (☎ 712 7567; Cumhuriyet Meydanı; beer €2.75; ☎ 10am-3am, later in high season) It may call itself a 'dance-bar', but this tiny rooftop place (above the Patika Restaurant Café & Bar) is perhaps better described as Çeşme's best wind-down bar, offering good views and enjoying cooling breezes.

No Problem Bar (☎ 712 9411; Çarşı Caddesi 14; beer TL5; ☎ 7.30am-3am high season only) This unashamedly traveller-trapping place opposite the old Kervansaray offers beer at competitive prices and bacon butties (TL7) to boot!

Getting There & Away

BUS

You have to transit İzmir to get to Çeşme (and from Çeşme to most other places) as there's no longer any onward public transport from Urla to Çeşme.

Buses from Çeşme's otogar run at least every 45 minutes to İzmir's main otogar (TL8, two hours) and its smaller, western Üçkuyular terminal (TL7.50, 1¼ hours, 85km).

There are daily direct buses to İstanbul (TL55, nine hours) and to Ankara (€45, seven hours).

Dolmuş for Ilca and Alaçatı leave from a spot 200m northeast of the town centre, and minibuses to Dalyan from near the Hükümet Konağı (Government Building) on Dalyan Caddesi. Minibuses to Altınkum leave from near the tourist office.

FERRY

Many travellers visit Çeşme on their way to or from the nearby Greek island of Chios. Ferries sail between Çeşme and Chios (one way €40, return €65, car €140 to €180 return, 1½ hours) at least five times weekly in high season and twice a week in low season (usually Tuesday and Saturday), generally leaving Çeşme at 9am and returning from Chios at 4pm. You don't need to buy your ticket in advance unless you have a car.

During the summer (and sporadically throughout the rest of the year) ferries also leave at least once a week to the Italian ports of Ancona and Brindisi (low season from €50, high season from €70, car from €150, 36 to 40 hours). As times (and destinations) change every year, check the current timetables. Note that the ferries to Italy do not currently stop off in Greece.

Ferry tickets can be bought direct from **Marmara Lines** (☎ 712 2223; www.marmaralines.com; Turgut Özal Bulvanı).

AROUND ÇEŞME

Altınkum

Southwest of Çeşme, the increasingly built-up resort of Altınkum boasts a series of delightful sandy coves easily reachable by regular dolmuşes that leave from behind Çeşme tourist office (TL2.50, 15 minutes, 9km).

A few places offer rental equipment for water sports, especially windsurfing (boards from €40/140 per day/week). **Tursite** (☎ 722 1221; per tent/caravan €10/15), 8.5km from Çeşme and

500m before Altınkum, is pleasant and clean, with a nice beach and camping ground.

Alaçatı

☎ 0232

A few kilometres southeast of Çeşme, on the other side of the peninsula, lies Alaçatı, which, until the early part of this century, was a largely forgotten backwater of old, tumbledown Greek stone houses. In 2001, however, someone had the bright idea of restoring one of these houses and turning it into an upmarket boutique hotel. It was a huge success, soon spawning a host of imitators (now up to 36 and counting). Over the past few years Alaçatı has become a veritable restoration bubble, with something like a thousand new holiday homes having been constructed on its outskirts, and seemingly every house in its historic centre now taken up by a hotel, a high-end restaurant or an art gallery. Whether development can continue at such a pace without having an adverse effect on the character of the place remains to be seen. All eyes are currently on the town's beach, 4km away, which seems to be on the cusp of a similarly dramatic expansion (see boxed text, opposite).

Well-heeled İstanbullular and İzmiris pour into town in summer (and fill the motorway back to İzmir come nightfall), giving its main street, Kemalpaşa Caddesi, a lively, buzzing feel. It's a great place to wander, even if there are no sights as such, just a general feeling of contented well-to-do-ness.

SLEEPING

Most hotels (and restaurants) open only from mid-May to mid-October and for Christmas and New Year. Some restaurants open at weekends in low season. Reservations are essential in the high season.

our pick **Alaçatı Taş Otel** (☎ 716 7772; www.tasotel.com; Kemalpaşa Caddesi 132; s/d from TL180/240; 🚗 🚶) The acorn from which the mighty oak has grown, the Taş, at the far eastern end of town, was the city's first boutique hotel. Under the dynamic direction of its owner, Zeynep Ozis, it's still setting the standard with gorgeous rooms overlooking a lovely walled garden with a large swimming pool. Lavish breakfasts of local produce (the hotel has its own olive grove) are served on a peaceful shaded terrace. Open year-round.

Sailors Medan Otel (☎ 716 8765; www.sailorsotel.com; Kemalpaşa Caddesi 66; r TL190-260; 🚗 🚶) There

WINDSURFING & HIGH LIFE IN ALAÇATI

Alaçatı beach, which occupies a small bay 4km from the town, is being pulled in two different directions. Until recently a fairly deserted place, what appeal it had lay not so much in its small beach and rather bleak landscape, but in its flat waters and, more importantly, its strong, consistent northerly winds – blowing at a steady 16 to 17 knots – which have made it a big hit with the windsurfing community. It is now generally recognised as one of the prime destinations outside Europe for the sport.

However, the beach's proximity to Alaçatı town, which, from a standing start has over the past decade turned itself into one of the region's most exclusive bolt holes, has the developers circling. A large waterside complex, the Alaçatı Beach Resort, comprising a hotel, several restaurants and a beach club, recently opened, and a new development, 'Port Alaçatı', is under construction. When finished, it will comprise a 250-berth marina, several hotels, waterfront housing and an 18-hole golf course. So far just one hotel, the Port Hotel Alaçatı, is open.

Some locals have expressed reservations about the projects. Zeynep Ozis, owner of the town's first boutique hotel, is concerned 'not just because of the possible negative effect they could have on windsurfing – houses blocking the wind, pollution of the water, motorboats hurtling through surfers – but because of the damage that may be done to the ecology of the coastline', something for which there has been no proper scientific evaluation. To raise awareness of the issues, she has founded a campaign group, the Alaçatı Preservation Society, whose remit is to 'set the standards for the town' and to prevent the increase of 'self-destructing development' that has blighted so much of Turkey's coast. For their part, the people behind their developments maintain that the projects are being done in an environmentally sensitive way and will have no impact on windsurfing, which they see as one of the primary draws for the developments.

For now, windsurfing continues largely unhindered, with the main season running from mid-May to the beginning of November. Around a dozen windsurfing clubs, plus a few hotels, now cater for the sport. Note that in high season, equipment and lessons should be booked at least one week in advance. Recommended:

Alaçatı Windsurf Okulu (☎ 0232-716 6161; www.alacatiwindsurf.com) Part of the mammoth Alaçatı Beach Resort, this offers two-hour windsurfing lessons for €90, six-hour lessons for €130 and 10-hour lessons for €180, plus board rental for €60 per day.

ASPC (Alaçatı Surf Paradise Club; ☎ 0232-716 6611; www.alacati.de; Liman Yolu; boards per day €30-60, wetsuits per day €10; 📅 15 Mar-Oct) The largest windsurfing club in Turkey, this German-run operation is professionally managed, offering good courses and high-quality equipment. A three-hour starter course is €75, a 10-hour one €130. Kite-surfing instruction is also offered for €162 for six hours.

are two Sailors Hotels: this one on the main square, which has a buzzing street-side café, is a slightly quieter, more expensive choice, a couple of minutes from the main road. It's decorated in a refined-rustic style. The friendly owners also operate Café Agrilia.

Değirmen Otel (☎ 716 6714; www.alacatidegirmen.com; Değirmen Sokak 3; d €120) Taking fancy to a whole new level, this boutique hotel occupies three converted windmills set on a small hill near the main entrance to town. Rustic in feel but beautifully decorated – right down to old telephones and original stone hearths – with a great open terrace restaurant. It's a gorgeous place.

O Ev Hotel (☎ 716 6150; www.o-ev.com, in Turkish; Kemalpaşa Caddesi; d TL310-340; 🍷) In a restored olive-oil warehouse, this beautiful boutique

hotel rather resembles a small Moorish palace. There's a small pool set in pretty walled gardens and the gourmet restaurant has an excellent reputation. Breakfast is an extra TL25.

EATING

There are few better places to eat in the whole north Aegean than Alaçatı, although you will have to pay for the privilege. Of the 30-plus restaurants to have opened in the past decade, the vast majority are gourmet affairs aimed at the smart set, with mains typically starting at around TL18. The style of service offered in Alaçatı's restaurants is also a change from the tourist norm. Far from being accosted by zealous waiters eager to grab your custom and sit you down, you're more likely to be met with a cold, appraising stare. In Alaçatı, the

restaurateurs expect their customers to beg for attention, not the other way round.

Rasim (☎ 716 8420; Kemalpaşa Caddesi 44; meals with salad TL8-12; ☎ 8am-11pm) Established in 1962, this simple but cheerful restaurant (the town's first) is still serving hearty Turkish fare at excellent prices. There's also a point-and-pick counter.

Yusuf Usta Ev Yemekleri (☎ 716 8823; Zeytinci Is Merkezi 1; mains from TL8; ☎ 11am-1am) With most of the town's restaurants specialising in 'modern Turkish' and various 'fusion' cuisines, it's nice to go somewhere where the cuisine (and prices) remain traditional. It serves excellent, cheap home-cooked fare – soups, kebabs, pide etc.

Cafe Agrilia (☎ 716 8594; Kemalpaşa Caddesi 75; mains TL16-30; ☎ 9am-midnight) One of the town's oldest 'new' restaurants (it's been open over a decade) and still considered one of the best, enjoying a lovely cool dining room, set in a former tobacco warehouse and serving a top-notch Italian-inspired menu.

Lavanta (☎ 716 6891; Kemalpaşa Caddesi 99; mains TL16-35; ☎ 9am-midnight) If you're tired of Turkish, this Mediterranean bistro-style place serves good Italian- and French-inspired dishes. There are also tables outside.

Kalamata (☎ 716 6357; Seydi Reis Sokak 4; mezés TL7-9, mains TL18-35) A very Alaçatı sort of affair: superb 'modern Turkish' food, a picturesque alley setting and jazz tinkling in the background. To find it look for the sign giving distances to various European capitals.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Frequent dolmuşes run from Çeşme to Alaçatı (TL2, 10 minutes, 9km), and from İzmir to Çeşme via Alaçatı (TL10, one hour, 75km).

SİĞACIK

☎ 0232

More remote and much less spoilt than many coastal towns, Sığacık is a pretty port village, tucked inside crumbling medieval walls. With no beach (which deters the crowds), there's not much to do here except stroll the picturesque waterfront, take a boat trip and watch the fishermen returning with their catch. Tranquil and peaceful, it's a lovely place to relax.

Sığacık is also famous for its fish, particularly *barbun*, and *kalamar*. If you haven't yet indulged in Turkey's wonderful fresh fish, now might be the time.

Sleeping & Eating

Sığacık's hotels are situated on the waterfront. To find them head towards the harbour then follow the waterfront promenade to the right beside the city walls.

With a nice family feel and well-maintained, attractive rooms, **Teos Pansiyon** (☎ 745 7463; www.teospansion.com; 126 Sokak 14; s/d TL30/60; ☎) is great value. Four rooms have sea views, six are like little suites. You can also buy fresh fish from the market and ask the obliging family to cook it for you.

Around 60m beyond the Teos at the far end of the bay, **Sahil Pansiyon** (☎ 745 7199; fax 745 7741; 127 Sokak 48; d small/large €22/28) has 10 simple but cheerful rooms, five with gorgeous Aegean views.

Dominating the harbour, the **Yeni Bur Restaurant** (☎ 745 7305; Liman Meydanı 17; ☎ 8am-1am) and **Liman** (☎ 745 7011; Liman Meydanı 19; ☎ 9am-11pm) are slightly soulless and touristy. They're not cheap (TL15 to TL25 for 500g of fish), but the fish is fresh and the seafront views are good.

For cheaper eats, cut inland behind the Burg Pansiyon to find **Çerkezağa** (☎ 745 7421; Sığacık Çarşı İçi 7; kebabs €3.35-3.80; ☎ 8.30am-midnight) next to the teahouse, with tables in a delightful courtyard around an old drinking fountain.

Getting There & Away

To get to Sığacık from İzmir you must first take a bus to Seferihisar from the Üçkuyular otogar (p228; TL4.50, 50 minutes); buses leave every 20 minutes. From Seferihisar there are regular dolmuşes and buses to Sığacık (TL1.25, 10 minutes, 5km).

Coming from Çeşme you will have to travel via İzmir; no dolmuşes run along the coast road from Çeşme to Urla.

AKKUM & TEOS

☎ 0232

Two kilometres over the hills from Sığacık is the turn-off west to **Akkum**. A protected cove, it used to attract windsurfers in their thousands in summer but has recently been rather eclipsed by Alaçatı (see boxed text, p235). Because of this, it's quieter and cheaper than Alaçatı and has larger waves.

Of its two smooth, sandy beaches, Büyük Akkum has the better facilities, but Küçük Akkum is likely to be quieter.

A few kilometres past Akkum are the scattered **ruins** at Teos, primarily a few pictur-

esque fluted columns re-erected amid grass and olive groves left over from a temple to Dionysus. Teos was once a vast Ionian city, and you can roam the fields in search of other remnants (including a theatre and an *odeon*, used for musical performances). It's a good place to come for a picnic.

To get here, follow the road from Sığacık, turn left off the main road where signposted, then keep left all the way to the bottom of the hill (around 5km from Sığacık).

Sleeping & Eating

Club Resort Atlantis (☎ 745 7455; www.clubresortatlantis.com; s/d from €68/90; 🍷) With two pools, a PADI dive centre, windsurfing school, mountain biking, water-sports facilities, fitness centre, beach volleyball, basketball and

tennis courts, the resort is a great place for an activity holiday. Windsurfing board hire is €20/50 per hour/day. Sailing, snorkelling and fishing trips are also available.

From Akkum, head up to the main road and turn right to the **Teos Orman İçi Dinlenme Yeri**, a pine-shaded forestry department picnic grove about 1km east of the turn-off. Here you can buy snacks and cold drinks to enjoy beneath shady pine trees overlooking the sea.

Getting There & Away

In summer, frequent dolmuşes and city buses run to Akkum from Seferihisar (TL2.50, 20 minutes) via Sığacık.

Taking a taxi to Teos (3km) shouldn't cost more than TL30 including waiting time (but negotiate).

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