

Western Anatolia



For many travellers the diverse highlights of western Anatolia roll past in a cinematic scroll as they traverse the region a little *too* quickly heading from Istanbul to Pamukkale, or further south to Antalya's Mediterranean vibe. From Cappadocia west to Ephesus it's a similar story, with just a stop to explore the distinct calcium-enriched landscapes of Pamukkale and the sprawling ruins of Hierapolis. But western Anatolia offers much more than that particular natural and historical combo.

The peaks and river canyons of Turkey's Lake District provide a rugged backdrop for walking, mountain biking and skiing, with the St Paul Trail a well-marked opportunity to follow in the footsteps of the Apostle. Expect an ever-changing backdrop of natural hues with shimmering poppy fields and gleaming lakes reflecting stark rocky landscapes. After all that exertion, retire to one of western Anatolia's thermal resorts to recharge in a relaxing mineral bath.

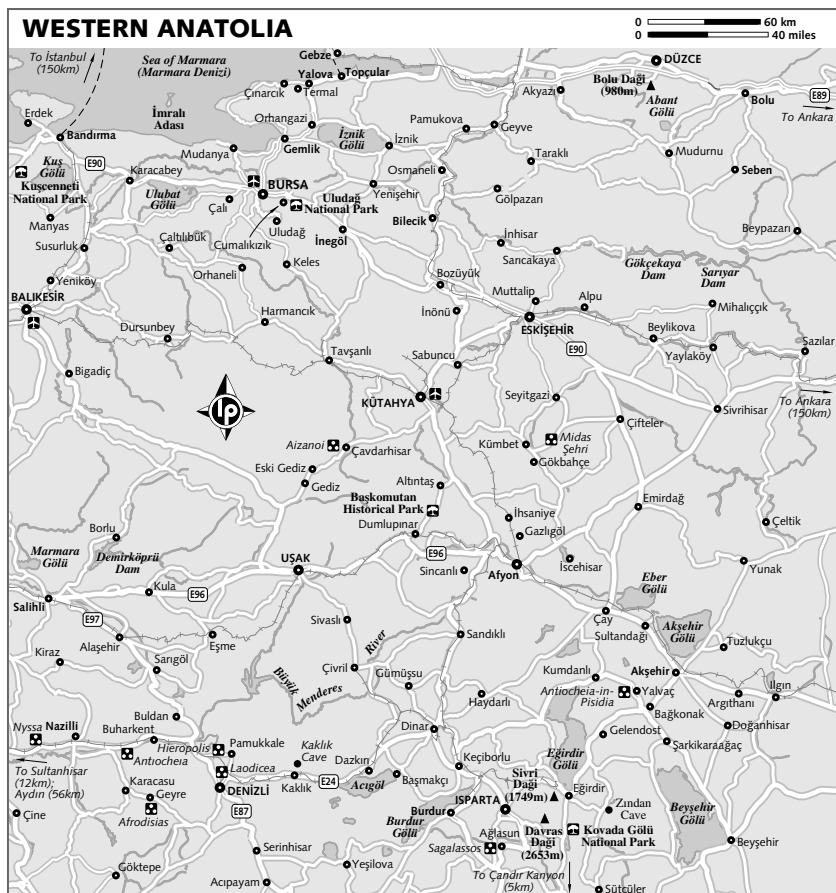
The architectural and design heritage of the Ottoman Empire is showcased in bustling Bursa and sleepy Iznik, and Bursa also offers a modern big city buzz. Earlier eras are brought to life at the ancient cities of Sagalassos and Afrodiasis, and if a dearth of other travellers makes you think you're a pioneer, the even older civilisation of the Phrygian Valley will remind you that people have occupied these lands since very early times.

While other parts of Turkey may seem more instantly memorable, in western Anatolia you'll discover an essentially Turkish heart and soul of this country.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Discover the proud architectural heritage of the Ottoman Empire in bustling **Bursa** (p289)
- Share a lakefront sunset with relaxed local families in sleepy **Iznik** (p285)
- Spend a night in a restored Ottoman mansion in up and coming **Mudurnu** (p284)
- Uncover the surprising influence of a little-known culture amid the rocky bluffs of the **Phrygian Valley** (p303)
- Negotiate Pamukkale's travertine pools to explore the expansive and poignant ruins of **Hierapolis** (p324)
- Come face to face with civilisation's shared history at the ancient cities of **Afrodiasis** (p328) and **Sagalassos** (p313)
- Kick back with dinner at a waterfront restaurant after getting active around **Eğirdir Gölü** (Lake Eğirdir; p315)





YALOVA

☎ 0226 / pop 87,400

Yalova is the primary terminal for the fast ferries traversing the Sea of Marmara, the quickest and easiest route between Bursa and İstanbul. Yalova was badly damaged in the earthquake of 1999, but this key transport hub now has a bustling and vibrant waterfront area.

Getting There & Away

BOAT

The dock for **İDO fast ferries** (☎ 444 4436; www.ido.com.tr) to İstanbul is near Yalova's main square. Ferries leave roughly every two hours between 7.30am and 11.30pm for Yenikapı docks (TL12, TL60 for a car and driver, TL10

for additional passengers, one hour). A second service runs every 1¼ hours for the port at Pendik (TL5, TL50 for a car and driver, TL4 for additional passengers, 45 minutes), south of Bostancı. This still leaves a 100km drive or three more pedestrian ferry hops into İstanbul itself.

BUS

At the time of writing Yalova was building a new otogar (bus station) 3km south of the ferry port. Arriving by ferry from İstanbul, frequent dolmuş (shuttle minibuses) will shuttle you to the otogar. From the otogar there are frequent buses or dolmuş to Termer (TL2, 30 minutes), Iznik (TL7.50, one hour) and Bursa (TL9, 1¼ hours).

TERMAL

☎ 0226 / pop 2200

About 12km southwest of Yalova, off the road to Çınarcık, Termal combines a lovely spa resort and a ho-hum village dotted with cheap pensions favoured by visitors from the Gulf States.

First exploited by the Romans but developed further by the Ottomans and finally by Atatürk, the baths harness hot, mineral-rich waters gushing from the earth. Set in a beautiful tree-lined valley, there is also an arboretum built by Atatürk, and pleasant walking trails to provide a balance of rigour and relaxation.

Sights & Activities

The main spa complex, the **Kurşunlu Banyo** (☎ 675 7400; 🕒 7am-10.30pm Mon-Wed & Fri & Sat, 7am-8pm Sun, 7am-noon Thu), features an open-air pool for TL12, an enclosed pool and sauna for TL10, and small private cubicles for TL10 to TL15. At the **Valide Banyo** (admission TL5) men and women bathe separately in indoor pools, while at the **Sultan Banyo** (1/2 people TL15/20) you can rent a private bath by the hour. The **Sıra Banyo** offers more spacious family pools.

Sleeping & Eating

The **Çınar and Çamlık hotels** (☎ 675 7400; www.yalova.termal.com; s/d from TL70/120) are run by the same company, Yalova Termal Kaplıca Tesisleri. Rooms at the Çamlık are more expensive but both are quiet and inviting, if slightly old-fashioned. Rates include use of the baths. The Çamlık's own marketing spiel – 'Who doesn't want to awaken in a green valley full of bird tweets?' – sums up nicely the low-key appeal of Termal. The Çınar has a tree-shaded

courtyard café while the Çamlık plumps for a proper restaurant.

Getting There & Away

There are frequent buses and dolmuş (TL2.50, 30 minutes) from Yalova. The İDO fast ferry (p283) makes it possible to visit Termal as a day trip from İstanbul.

MUDURNU

Another 25km southwest of Abant Gölü (see boxed text below) is the lovely small town of Mudurnu. It's not on the standard north-south route of western Anatolia, but east towards the Black Sea Coast, and definitely worth a detour for fans of Ottoman architecture.

The town used to be famous only for its 'Mupi' brand chicken, but it is now being lauded as an Ottoman revival town. It doesn't rival Safranbolu (p455) yet, but slowly and carefully the old houses are being restored and repurposed to attract visitors. And with a current profile only with domestic Turkish visitors, it's a sleepily authentic place without the touristy buzz of Safranbolu.

There's a lively bazaar area and the beautifully restored **Yıldırım Beyazıt hamamı** (Büyükcami Caddesi; 🕒 8am-7pm; Mon, Wed, Sat for women) is a real find, charging just TL3 if you forego the scrub and massage (not available to women anyway).

Around 500m southwest of Mudurnu's subdued main square, a canal-side walk begins at the **Kancini Sultan Sülemaniye Camii**, a rustic timber and stone mosque. Bookended by two wooden bridges, the path explores quiet neighbourhoods filled with wooden Ottoman houses in various states of repair

LAKEFRONT & MOUNTAINSIDE: DETOURS FROM THE HIGHWAY

For many travellers, western Anatolia is just the area they speed through from İstanbul to Ankara. Nestling in lush, green countryside, the lake district around **Bolu** is a handy detour midway between the two cities.

The town of Bolu itself is not especially exciting, but 30km southwest is **Abant Gölü**, a gorgeous spot for a picnic. It's a 5km walk round the shores of the lake which is dotted with a campsite and two five-star hotels. On weekends and public holidays the lakefront comes alive with families, and waterfront restaurants are essential afternoon distractions.

Even if you don't divert to Abant Gölü you should stop on the slopes of **Bolu Dağı** (Mt Bolu), with restaurants and panoramic views. Keen skiers should investigate the resort at **Kartalkaya**, which has good powder from December to March.

This area is definitely best explored with your own wheels, but on summer weekends you can usually find a direct dolmuş (TL5) from Bolu otogar to Abant Gölü. Regular buses link Bolu to İstanbul (TL25) and Ankara (TL17).

and disrepair. It ends near **Keyvanlar Konağı**, a restored family mansion now housing a hotel and restaurant.

Orientation & Information

Mudurnu occupies a narrow valley, with the compact otogar 400m east on the edge of town. The tourist information booth, 200m north of the main square, doubles as a craft shop. It's often locked, but assistance usually comes from the grocery stall across the road. A couple of internet cafés are near the main square.

Sleeping & Eating

Prices at Mudurnu hotels increase at weekends when advance booking is also recommended.

Hacı Abdullahlar Konağı (☎ 421 2284; Belediye Yarı 3; s/d TL40/80) Just off the main square, this hotel has gorgeous Ottoman-style rooms (some without bathroom) in a restored house. There's an inviting upstairs sitting area and a small garden.

Yarışkaşı Konağı (☎ 421 3604; www.yariskasi.com, in Turkish; s/d TL40/80) On the edge of town coming from Bolu, this hotel is in the old style but newly built, with mod cons including wi-fi. Rooms are comfortable if simple, and there are great forest views from private balconies.

Keyvanlar Konağı (☎ 421 3750; Kardelen Sokak 3; r TL80) This restored family home is crammed with poignant personal mementos from several centuries. The nine rooms are both comfortable and traditional, and excellent meals are served in the garden filled with well-established trees probably even older than the house. Follow the signs west across the canal from the town centre.

Değirmenyeri Konakları (☎ 421 2677; www.degirmenyeri.com.tr; Kılözü Köyü, Dağ Mevkii; TL100-140) On the Bolu road 8km northeast of Mudurnu, this cluster of five mountain cabins provides rustic and isolated splendour on the site of an old mill.

Mupi (mains TL6-10) Chicken every which way is on offer at the official 'Mupi' restaurant just off Mudurnu's main square. That means terrific kebabs and *güveç* (casserole). There are good vegetarian options too.

Tucked behind Mupi is a delightful tree-lined tea garden.

Getting There & Away

There are regular buses from Bolu to Mudurnu (TL5, 1½ hours). Bolu can be reached by bus from İstanbul (TL25) and Ankara (TL17).

İZNIK

☎ 0224 / pop 22,200

Given İznik's long history and its legacy of making the beautiful tiles incorporated into the finest of Ottoman architecture, the town's rural streetlife comes as a surprise. Farmers hanging out in teahouses and tractors waiting at traffic lights reinforce the town's focus on producing olives and stone fruit from the farms studding the hilly rustic surrounds. The whole place has a sleepy, laid-back atmosphere, especially in the restaurants and tea gardens along the sprawling lakefront.

Badly damaged in the War of Independence (1919-22), İznik's traditional farming economy is now being boosted as a favourite weekend retreat for İstanbul folk, and through the resurrection of the town's proud tile-making heritage.

History

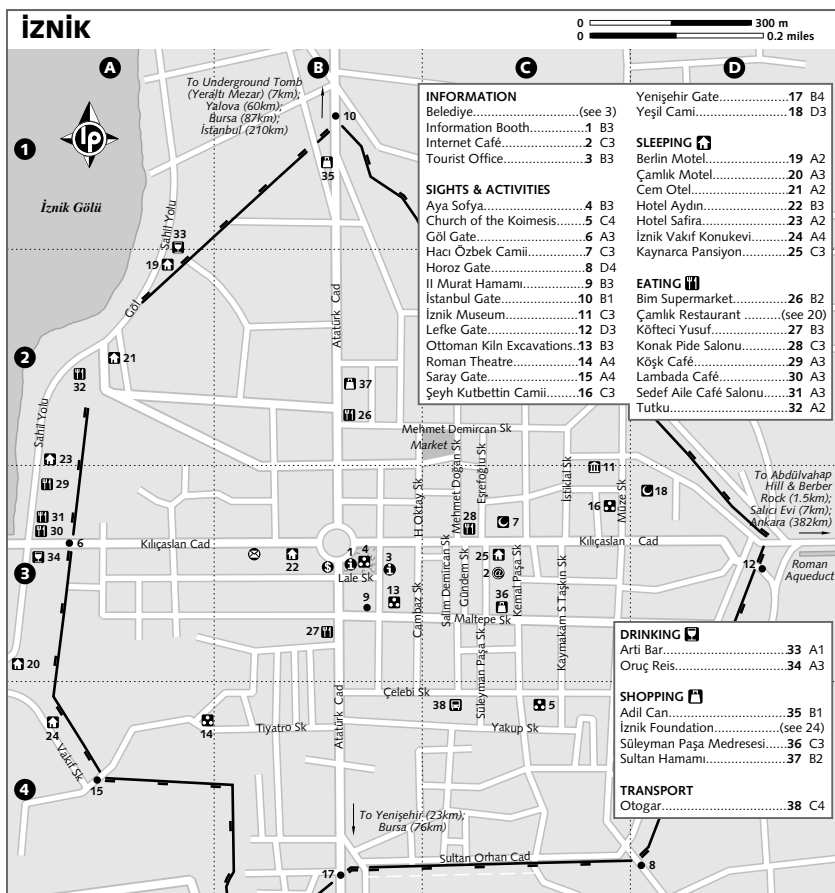
İznik was founded around 1000 BC, and grew in significance under one of Alexander the Great's generals in 316 BC. A rival general, Lysimachus, captured it in 301 BC and named it after his wife, Nikaea. Nicaea became the capital city of the province of Bithynia extending along the Sea of Marmara. By 74 BC the entire area was incorporated into the Roman Empire, but invasions by the Goths and the Persians ruined the flourishing city by AD 300.

Under Constantinople, Nicaea once again acquired importance. In 325 the first Ecumenical Council took place and produced the Nicene Creed, outlining the basic principles of Christianity. Four centuries later, the seventh Ecumenical Council was held in Nicaea's Aya Sofya (Hagia Sofia) church.

During the reign of Justinian I (527-65), Nicaea was refurbished with buildings and defences that provided security when the Arabs invaded. Like Constantinople, Nicaea never fell to its Arab besiegers, but did eventually fall to the Crusaders.

In 1331 Sultan Orhan conquered İznik and established the first Ottoman theological school. In 1514 Sultan Selim I captured the Persian city of Tabriz and despatched its artisans to İznik. The Persian craftsmen were skilled at making coloured tiles, and soon İznik's kilns were turning out faience (tinglazed earthenware) unequalled even today.

In a new century İznik tile making is undergoing a resurrection through the excellent



work done by the İznik Foundation (see boxed text, opposite).

Orientation & Information

Historic İznik is still enclosed within its crumbling city walls. With the exception of a few hotels and restaurants on the lake-facing side of town, everything you'll need is inside the walls. In the town centre, the ruins of the Aya Sofya stand at the intersection of the two main boulevards, Atatürk Caddesi and Kılıçsalan Caddesi. These two roads lead to the four principal *kapılar* (gates) in the city walls.

The otogar is a few blocks southeast of the Aya Sofya.

The **tourist office** (☎ 757 1454; www.iznik.bel.tr; 130 Kılıçsalan Caddesi; ☎ 9am-noon & 1-5pm Mon-Fri) is

in the *belediye* (town hall) building. There is also an infrequently-staffed **information booth** near the Aya Sofya.

There is an **internet café** (☎ 9am-11pm) beside the Kaynarca Pansiyon (p288) and wi-fi at Oruç Reis (p289) near the lakefront.

Sights & Activities

AYA SOFYA

What was once the **Aya Sofya** (Church of the Divine Wisdom; admission TL3; ☎ 9am-noon & 1-6pm Tue-Sun) is now a crumbling ruin slumbering in an attractively landscaped rose garden. The one building actually encompasses the ruins of three completely different structures. A mosaic floor and a mural of Jesus with Mary and John the Baptist survive from the original

RESURRECTING AN ESSENTIAL PAST

Crafted from the 15th to 17th centuries, İznik tiles were an artistic high point of the Ottoman Empire. Following the end of the Ottoman era, the demand for significant public works evaporated and the tile makers' skills were buried in the mists of history. In 1993 the İznik Foundation was founded to revive this lost art. The foundation's journey has involved scouring 15th-century manuscripts, working with university laboratories and training craftspeople from across Turkey.

Made from 85% quartz from the hills surrounding İznik, the tiles' unique thermal properties keep buildings warm in winter and cool in summer. Reflected sound waves create perfect acoustic qualities; all reasons why İznik tiles were so popular for decorating the interiors of mosques in Ottoman times.

In a sunny atelier above the foundation's kilns that fire the tiles to 900°C, a team of designers meticulously detail floral designs onto pristine white tiles. True to tradition, only cross-sections of flowers are painted and, in a modern twist, all the designers are women. Apparently 'only women have the patience' to spend up to 70 days on one of the foundation's larger works; examples of which now grace structures as diverse as İstanbul's metro system and the World Bank in Ankara.

church. Built during the reign of Justinian and destroyed by an earthquake in 1065, it was later rebuilt with the mosaics set into the walls. After the Ottoman conquest the church became a mosque, but a fire in the 16th century again destroyed everything. Reconstruction was supervised by the great architect Mimar Sinan, who added İznik tiles to the decoration. At the time of writing, significant restoration work was being undertaken with the church scheduled to re-open in 2009.

YEŞİL CAMII

Built between 1378 and 1387 under Sultan Murat I, the Yeşil Camii (Green Mosque) has Seljuk Turkish proportions influenced more by Iran (the Seljuk homeland) than by İstanbul. The green- and blue-glazed zigzag tiles of the minaret foreshadowed the famous industry that arose here a few decades later.

İZNIK MUSEUM

Opposite the Yeşil Camii is **İznik Museum** (İznik Müzesi; ☎ 757 1027; Müze Sokak; admission TL3; 🕒 8am-noon & 1-5pm Tue-Sun), housed in the old soup kitchen that Sultan Murat I had built for his mother, Nilüfer Hatun, in 1388. Born a Byzantine princess, Nilüfer married Sultan Orhan to cement a diplomatic alliance.

The museum's grounds are filled with marble statuary. Inside, the lofty whitewashed halls contain examples of original İznik tiles, with their milky bluish-white and rich 'İznik red' hues. Other displays include 8000-year-old finds from a nearby *tumulus* (burial mound) at Ilıpınar, believed to show links with Neolithic Balkan culture.

Across the road is the restored **Şeyh Kutbettin Camii** (1492).

CITY WALLS & GATES

With some imagination it's still possible to recreate İznik's imposing walls, which were first erected in Roman times, then rebuilt and strengthened under the Byzantines. Four main gates – İstanbul Kapısı, Yenişehir Kapısı, Lefke Kapısı and Göl Kapısı – still transect the walls, and the crumbling remains of another 12 minor gates and 114 towers are also evident. In places, the walls still rise to a height of 10m to 13m.

The **Lefke Gate** to the east actually comprises three gateways dating from Byzantine times. Climb to the top of the walls here for a good vantage point of the surrounding area.

The **İstanbul Gate** is similarly imposing, with huge stone carvings of heads facing outwards. However, little remains of the **Göl (Lake) Gate**. To the southwest are the remains of the more minor **Saray (Palace) Gate** – Sultan Orhan (1326–61) had a palace near here in the 14th century. Inside the walls nearby are the ruins of a 15,000-seat **Roman theatre**.

The walls between the **Yenişehir Gate** and the Lefke Gate still stand at a considerable height. Follow the footpath beside them for the best indication of the scale.

Diverting back inside the walls from the ruins of the minor **Horoz (Rooster) Gate** are the sparse ruins of the **Church of the Koimesis** (c AD 800) on the western side of Kaymakam S Taşkın Sokak. Only some foundations remain, but the church was the burial place of the Byzantine emperor Theodore I (Lascaris).

When the Crusaders took Constantinople in 1204, Lascaris fled to Nicaea and established his court here. It was Lascaris who built Nicaea's outer walls, supported by over 100 towers and protected by a wide moat – no doubt he didn't trust the Crusaders, having already lost one city to them. In a bittersweet final twist, the church was dynamited after the War of Independence.

OTHER SIGHTS

Southeast of Aya Sofya, the brick-built **II Murat Hamamı** (☎ 757 1459; wash & massage from TL12; ♿ 6am-midnight for men, 1-5pm Mon, Thu & Sat for women) was constructed during the reign of Sultan Murat II in the first half of the 15th century.

Across the road are the overgrown remains of the 15th- to 17th-century **Ottoman kilns**. The finds are in the İznik Museum.

In the centre of town on Kılıçaslan Caddesi, **Hacı Özbek Camii**, dating from 1332, is one of İznik's oldest mosques.

Outside the Lefke Gate around **Abdülvahap Hill** are the remains of a Roman aqueduct, an Arab *namazgah* (open-air mosque), several tombs and a shady cemetery. Head out an hour before sunset to explore these features.

Climb the hill for great views of **Berber Rock**, a shattered monumental mausoleum carved from a single rock, and the tomb of Abdülvahap Sancaktarı, the Turkish-Arab flag bearer who gave his name to the hill after dying during an 8th-century siege.

Sleeping

Advance booking on busy summer weekends is recommended. Bursa has more hotels and restaurants, providing a good base for a day trip to İznik. Note you'll be heading back to Bursa just as the İznik lakefront is at its bustling best and is crowded with holidaying Turks and strolling locals.

BUDGET

Kaynarca Pansiyon (☎ 757 1753; www.kaynarca.s5.com; Kılıçaslan Caddesi, Gündem Sokak 1; dm TL20, s/d/tr TL30/50/75; ☒ ☑) Ali Bulmuş's cheerful and central pension is a budget traveller's dream. It's pathologically clean, BBC World is on the telly, and there's a spacious rooftop terrace for leisurely breakfasts (TL5). No advance reservations are taken, but if it's full, the effusive Ali will hunt down a nearby alternative.

Cem Otel (☎ 757 1687; www.cemotel.com; Göl Sahil Yolu 34; s/d TL30/70; ☒) Close to the lake and

the city walls the Cem Otel is great value, with TV and plenty of space, especially in the family-friendly suites. If you can't land a lakefront room, score a seat downstairs in the terrace restaurant.

Berlin Motel (☎ 757 3355; www.berlinmotel.com.tr; Göl Sahil Yolu 36; s/d/tr TL35/70/105; ☒) Turkish-owned but run with Teutonic efficiency, the Berlin's boxy four-storey lakefront facade conceals good value rooms, and the biggest big screen TV this side of the Sea of Marmara.

MIDRANGE

Hotel Aydın (☎ 757 7650; www.iznikhotelaydin.com; Kılıçaslan Caddesi 64; s/d/tr TL50/80/100) The Aydın is best known locally for its excellent on-site *pastanes* (patisserie/bakery), which also serves breakfasts on the front terrace. The smallish rooms come with TV, phone, balcony and overly chintzy bedspreads.

Çamlık Motel (☎ 757 1631; www.iznik-camlikmotel.com; Göl Sahil Yolu; s/d TL60/100; ☒) At the southern end of the lakefront, this modern Western-style motel has spacious rooms and a restaurant with water views. It's a favourite with tour groups so you might want to book ahead on summer weekends. Say hi to the friendly dogs playing in the garden.

Hotel Safira (☎ 757 1700; www.izniksafira.com; Göl Sahil Yolu; s/d TL60/100; ☒ ☑ ☒) This slightly characterless luxury spot is redeemed with very comfortable rooms with warm decor. Swim in the pool or across the road in the lake, and don't forget to make serious noises about a midweek discount.

İznik Vakıf Konukevi (☎ 757 6025; info@iznik.com; Vakıf Sokak 13; per person TL70) A charming guest-house set in a delightful rose and lavender trimmed garden just inland from the lake. The rooms are managed by the İznik Foundation (p287) and are as classy and downright cool as you might expect. Booking ahead is highly recommended as the nine rooms are sometimes booked by groups of artists or musicians.

Eating

İznik is known for its lake fish with tasty variations from deep-fried to kebaps. Grab a table at sunset and you're sorted.

Konak Pide Salonu (Kılıçaslan Caddesi; meals TL4-6) This busy main drag eatery does a brisk trade in pide (Turkish-style pizza) and *lahmacun* (Arabic-style meat pizza). It was spring cleaning when we dropped by, but the place was already spotless.

Köfteci Yusuf (☎ 757 3597; Atatürk Caddesi 75; mains from TL5) A favourite lunchtime spot for locals ordering juicy *köfte* (meatballs) and other grills with chunky bread and hot green peppers. Leave room for the gorgeously sweet desserts (even if you need a lie down afterwards).

Tutku (Göl Sahil Yolu; meals from TL8; ☎ 11am-11pm) This open-sided pavilion combines friendly service, a wide array of creamy mezes, smartly prepared fish, and the essential lure of big glasses of ice-cold draught Tuborg beer.

Çamlık Restaurant (☎ 757 1631; Göl Sahil Yolu; mains from TL8; ☎ 11am-11pm) Recommended by proud locals as İznik's best spot to enjoy fish, the Çamlık Restaurant is adjoined to the Çamlık Motel. That means a spacious garden and lakefront location to enjoy the sunset. Our recommendation is the winning combination of a fish kebab and a chilled Efes beer.

On the lakefront the Kösk Café, Sedef Aile Café Salonu and Lambada Café are all good for a (non-alcoholic) drink and simple snacks.

Self-catering central is the **Bim supermarket** (☎ 411 2216; Atatürk Caddesi; ☎ 8.30am-9.30pm Mon-Sat, 9am-9pm Sun).

Drinking

Arti Bar (Göl Sahil Yolu; ☎ noon-11pm) Shaded by weeping willows this simple garden bar is not particularly arty, but it's still a prime spot for a beer and sunset combo.

Oruç Reis (Göl Sahil Yolu; ☎ 2-11pm) Ostensibly an off-license selling cold beer and soft drinks, this lakefront spot with echoes of a Caribbean cabana has a few simple tables if you're looking to linger. Wi-fi is another reason to stick around if you're toting a laptop.

Shopping

The revival of tile making in İznik has seen many shops selling local tiles and ceramics. Some of the work is tourist tat (fridge magnets and key rings anyone?) but there are also more carefully-crafted examples on offer. Good places to start exploring are the small workshops along Salim Demircan Sokak, and the workshop belonging to the **İznik Foundation** (☎ 757 6025; www.iznik.com; Vakıf Sokak 13) – see boxed text, p287.

The **Süleyman Paşa Medresesi**, founded by Sultan Orhan shortly after he captured Nicaea, now houses half a dozen ceramic and craft workshops.

North of the roundabout on Atatürk Caddesi, the **Sultan Hamamı** is another re-

stored building filled with craft shops and an art gallery.

At **Adil Can** (☎ 757 6529; Atatürk Caddesi) browse a superb range of local ceramic tableware – medium-sized bowls cost around TL75 – and other ceramics from all over Anatolia.

Getting There & Away

There are hourly buses to Bursa (TL7.50, 1½ hours) until about 7pm or 8pm, plus frequent buses to Yalova (TL7.50, one hour).

BURSA

☎ 0224 / pop 1.8 million

Because of its proximity to İstanbul's metropolitan sprawl, Bursa is overlooked and bypassed by most travellers to Turkey. But those who do detour to this modern city beneath the slopes of Uludağ (Great Mountain) rarely leave disappointed. First glance reveals an energetic and cosmopolitan 21st-century city, but a closer look reveals the stately and beautiful architectural achievements that are reminders of Bursa's esteemed 14th-century history as the first capital of the Ottoman Empire.

If you've come from İstanbul, you'll love the big city buzz without the constant tourist tout interruptions, and if you've arrived from the wide open and often dusty spaces of Anatolia, the green parks of Bursa will be a welcome respite.

Just a short cable car ride away is the crisp mountain air of Uludağ. After walking on the mountain's tree-clad slopes retire to the old spa suburb of Çekirge and be rejuvenated in thermal baths that have provided restorative healing for visitors for centuries.

Bursa is also renowned in Turkey for the Bursa, or İskender, kebab. You'll find it all over Turkey, but here you can go direct to the source. Look forward to döner kebab on a bed of fresh pide bread, topped with tomato sauce, yoghurt and melted butter. Time for another mountain stroll perhaps?

History

Bursa dates back to at least 200 BC. According to legend, it was founded by Prusias, the King of Bithynia, but soon came under the sway of Eumenes II of Pergamum and thereafter under Roman rule.

Bursa first grew to importance in the early centuries of Christianity, when the thermal baths at Çekirge (p295) were developed.

However, it was Justinian I (r AD 527–65) who really put Bursa on the map.

With the decline of the Byzantine Empire, Bursa's location near Constantinople attracted the interest of would-be conquerors, including Arabs and Seljuk Turks. Having rolled through much of Anatolia by 1075, the Seljuks took Bursa (then Prusa) with ease. But 22 years later the First Crusade arrived, and the city entered a cycle of conquest and reconquest, changing hands periodically for the next 100 years.

With ongoing Turkish migrations into Anatolia during the 12th and 13th centuries, small principalities arose around individual Turkish warlords. The warlord Ertuğrul Gazi formed a small state near Bursa, and in 1317 the city was first besieged by his son Osman, who established the Ottoman line. He finally starved Bursa into submission in 1326 and made it his capital. Osman was succeeded by Orhan Gazi (r 1326–59), who expanded the fledgling Ottoman Empire to encircle the Byzantine capital at Constantinople (see p34).

Orhan took the title of sultan, struck the first Ottoman coinage and, near the end of his reign, was able to dictate to the Byzantine emperors, one of whom, John VI Cantacuzene, became his close ally and father-in-law.

Although the Ottoman capital moved to Edirne in 1402, Bursa remained an important city. Both Osman and Orhan were buried there; their tombs are still important monuments (p293).

With the founding of the Turkish Republic, Bursa developed as an industrial centre. In the 1960s and '70s boom times arrived as Fiat (Tofaş) and Renault established factories here, and today it's still a major commercial centre. The upcoming opportunity is Bursa's campaign to hold the 2018 Winter Olympics at nearby Uludağ (p300).

Orientation

Bursa's main square is Cumhuriyet Alanı (Republic Sq), known as Heykel (Statue) because of its large Atatürk monument. Atatürk Caddesi runs west from Heykel through the commercial centre to the Ulu Cami (Great Mosque). Further west stands the striking blue-glass pyramid of the Zafer Plaza shopping centre, a handy landmark as you approach the city centre.

Heading northwest, Atatürk Caddesi becomes Cemal Nadir Caddesi, then Altıparmak

Caddesi, and finally Çekirge Caddesi, which leads to the spa suburb of Çekirge, a 10-minute bus ride away. Çekirge is where the spa hotels are located.

East of Heykel, at Setbaşı, Namazgah Caddesi crosses the Gök Deresi (Gök Stream), which tumbles through a dramatic gorge. Just after the stream, Yeşil Caddesi veers left to the Yeşil Camii and Yeşil Türbe, after which it changes names to become Emir Sultan Caddesi.

From Heykel, Setbaşı and Atatürk Caddesi you can catch dolmuşes and buses to all parts of the city.

Information

There's a post office and numerous ATMs on Atatürk Caddesi (Map pp294–5), and plenty of exchange offices in the Kapalı Çarşı (Covered Market; Map pp294–5).

Discover Internet Centre (Map pp294–5; Taşkapı Caddesi; per hr TL1.25; ☎ 9am-midnight)

FiMa Bookshop (Map pp294–5; Atatürk Caddesi) Sells European newspapers.

Met Internet (Map p290; Yılmazsoy İşhanı 6, Hocaali-zade Caddesi; per hr TL1.25; ☎ 9am-midnight)

Tourist Office (Map pp294–5; ☎ 220 1848; ☎ 8am–12.30pm & 1.30–5.30pm Mon–Fri, 9am–12.30pm & 1.30–6pm Sat & Sun) Beneath Atatürk Caddesi, in the row of shops at the north entrance to Orhan Gazi Alt Geçidi. Expect a friendly welcome.

Dangers & Annoyances

Heavy traffic makes it almost impossible to cross Atatürk Caddesi, so use the *alt geçidi* (pedestrian underpasses). The Atatürk Alt Geçidi (the one nearest to Heykel) has a lift for disabled people; the nearby florist has the key to operate it.

Sights & Activities

EMİR SULTAN CAMII

Rebuilt by Selim III in 1805 and restored in the early 1990s, the Emir Sultan Camii (Map p290) echoes the romantic decadence of Ottoman rococo style, rich in wood, curves and painted arches on the outside. The interior is surprisingly plain, but the setting, next to a tree-filled hillside cemetery overlooking the city and valley, is very pleasant.

Take a dolmuş heading for Emirsultan or any bus with 'Emirsultan' in its name. Walking from Yeşil Camii and Yeşil Türbe, you'll pass a cemetery containing the **grave of Iskender Usta**, the kebab maestro himself.

YEŞİL CAMII & YEŞİL TÜRBE

A few minutes' walk uphill from Setbaşı, the **Yeşil Camii** (Green Mosque; Map p290), built for Mehmet I between 1419 and 1424, is a beautiful building representing a turning point in Turkish architectural style. Before this, Turkish mosques echoed the Persian style of the Seljuks, but in the Yeşil Camii a purely Turkish style emerged, and its influence is visible in Ottoman architecture across the country. Note the harmonious facade and the beautiful carved marble work around the central doorway. Look closely and you'll see the calligraphy around the niches framing the main door is all different and in some cases unfinished, the legacy of construction petering out three years after the death of Mehmet I in 1421.

As you enter, you pass beneath the sultan's private apartments into a domed central hall with a 15m-high *mihrab* (niche indicating the direction of Mecca). The greenish-blue tiles on the interior walls gave the mosque its name, and there are also fragments of a few original frescoes.

Inside the main entrance a narrow staircase leads to the sumptuously tiled *hünkar mahfili* (sultan's private box) above the main door. This was the sultan's living quarters when he chose to stay here, with his harem and household staff in less plush digs on either side.

In a small cypress-trimmed park surrounding the mosque is the **Yeşil Türbe** (Green Tomb; Map p290; admission free; ☎ 8am-noon & 1-5pm). The mosque is not actually green, with the blue exterior tiles from Kütahya (p305) added following the Bursa earthquake of 1855. However, this relatively recent makeover doesn't distract from the sublime, simple beauty of the structure, and the original interior tiles still provide an authentic and poignant touch.

Walk round the outside to see the tiled calligraphy above several windows. Inside, the most prominent tomb is that of the Yeşil Camii's founder, Mehmet I (Çelebi), surrounded by those of his children. There's also an impressive tiled *mihrab*.

At the time of writing the Yeşil Türbe was closed for restoration, but was scheduled to re-open in 2009.

Nearby the Yeşil Camii is its *medrese* (seminary), which now houses the **Turkish & Islamic Arts Museum** (Map p290; admission TL3; ☎ 8am-noon & 1-5pm). The collection includes pre-Ottoman İznik ceramics, the original

door and *mihrab* curtains from the Yeşil Camii, jewellery, embroidery, calligraphy and dervish artefacts.

YILDIRIM BEYAZIT CAMII

Across the valley from the Emir Sultan Camii are the twin domes of the Yıldırım Beyazıt Camii (Mosque of Beyazıt the Thunderbolt, 1391; Map p290), which was built earlier than the Yeşil Camii but forms part of the same architectural evolution.

Next to the mosque is its *medrese*, once a theological seminary, now a public health centre. Here are the tombs of the mosque's founder, Sultan Beyazıt I, and his son İsa.

IRGANDI SANAT KÖPRÜSÜ

Crossing the river north of the Setbaşı road bridge, the Irgandı Sanat Köprüsü (Irgandı Bridge; Map p290) has been restored in Ottoman style as a charming arcade of tiny shops. Relaxed cafés and an array of artisans' workshops – with a definite emphasis on 'shops' – make it an interesting, if slightly touristy, spot to while away a lazy Bursa afternoon.

TOFAŞ MUSEUM OF ANATOLIAN CARRIAGES

A short uphill walk south from Setbaşı, along Sakaldöken Caddesi, brings you to a small **museum** (☎ 329 3941; Kapıcı Caddesi, Yıldırım; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun) exhibiting old cars and even older horse-drawn carts. If the kids are all mosqued-out, bring along a few picnic goodies to throw together in the lovely Ottoman gardens. The museum used to be a silk factory.

BURSA CITY MUSEUM

Bursa's modern **City Museum** (Bursa Kent Müzesi; Map pp294-5; ☎ 220 2486; www.bursakentmuzesi.gov.tr; admission TL1.50; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm) is housed in the city's former courthouse. Ground-floor exhibits zip through the history of the city, with information on the various ruling sultans. Especially interesting is the display on the War of Independence. Most labelling is in Turkish, so ask for the handy booklet with English translations. Upstairs the cultural and ethnographical collections need little explanation, and down in the basement are reconstructions of old shops with films showing old-fashioned artisans at work. Don't miss the multimedia touch screens that allow visitors to explore the gloriously retro musical and acting careers of a few of Bursa's luminaries from last century.

MARKETS

Behind the Ulu Cami, Bursa's sprawling **Kapalı Çarşı** (Covered Market; Map pp294–5) is proudly local, especially if you find İstanbul's Grand Bazaar too touristy. At its centre the *bedesten* (vaulted, fireproof enclosure for valuable goods) was built in the late 14th century by Yıldırım Beyazıt, although it was reconstructed after an earthquake in 1855.

As you wander around, look for the **Eski Aynalı Çarşı** (Old Mirrored Market), which was originally the Orhangazi Hamam (1335) – the bath house of the Orhan Camii Külliyesi – as indicated by the domed ceiling with its skylights. This is a good place to shop for Karagöz shadow puppets and other traditional items.

The Kapalı Çarşı tumbles out into the surrounding streets, but at some point you'll find the gateway into the **Koza Han** (Cocoon Caravanserai), built in 1490. Unsurprisingly, the building is full of expensive *ipek* (silk) shops. In the courtyard is a small mosque constructed for Yıldırım Beyazıt in 1491.

Beside the Ulu Cami is the **Emir Han**, used by many of Bursa's silk brokers. Camels from the silk caravans were corralled here and goods stored in the ground-floor rooms. Drovers and merchants slept and conducted business in the rooms above. It has a lovely fountain in its courtyard tea garden.

ULU CAMI

Prominently positioned on Atatürk Caddesi is the huge Ulu Cami (Map pp294–5), which is completely Seljuk in style and easily the most imposing of Bursa's mosques. Yıldırım Beyazıt funded the monumental building in 1396. His original pledge following victory over the Crusaders in the Battle of Nicopolis was to build 20 new mosques. His grandiose plans eventually got watered down to one mosque with 20 small domes, but despite the design trade off, Ulu Cami is still a bold architectural statement. A minaret of daunting girth augments the 20 domes of the exterior, while inside the 'bigger is better' theme continues with immense portals and a forest of square pillars. Notice the fine wooden carvings on the *mimber* (pulpit) and the preacher's chair, as well as the calligraphy on the walls. The *mimber* and the central fountain – originally open to the vagaries of Bursa's weather – were both being restored at the time of writing. According to legend, the tradition of Karagöz

shadow puppet theatre (see p296) began when the Ulu Cami was constructed.

TOMBS OF SULTANS OSMAN & ORHAN

A steep cliff riddled with archaeological workings overlooks Cemal Nadir Caddesi. This oldest section of Bursa was once enclosed by stone ramparts and walls, parts of which still survive. From the Ulu Cami, walk west and up Orhan Gazi (Yiğitler) Caddesi, a ramplike street that leads to the section known as Hisar (Fortress) or Tophane.

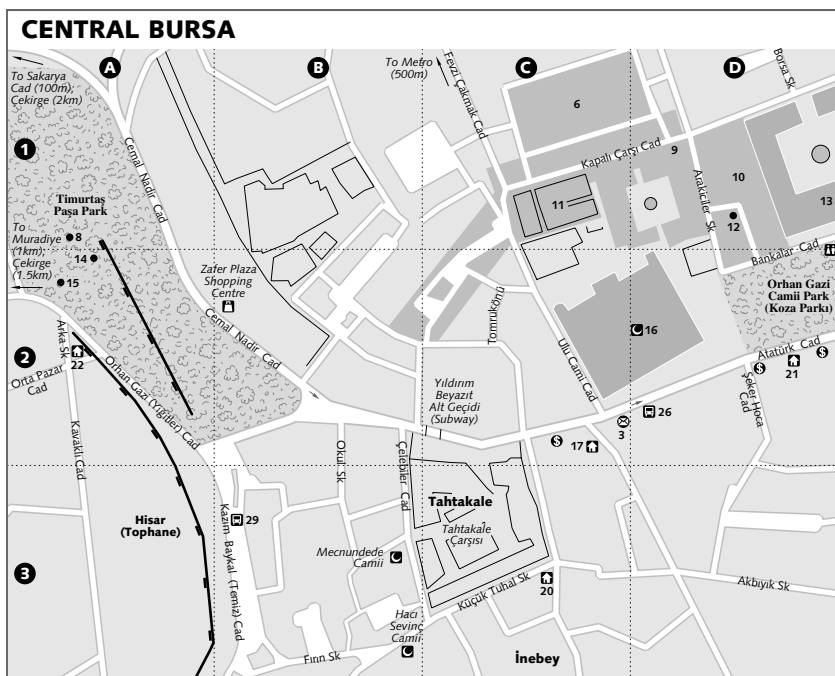
In a park on the summit are the **Tombs of Sultans Osman and Orhan** (Osman Gazi ve Orhan Gazi Türbeleri; Map pp294–5; admission by donation), founders of the Ottoman Empire. The original structures were destroyed in the earthquake of 1855 and rebuilt in Ottoman baroque style by Sultan Abdül Aziz in 1868. Osman Gazi's tomb is the more richly decorated of the two. Remove your shoes before entering either tomb.

A six-storey **clock tower** is the last of four that originally doubled as fire alarms. Beside the clock tower is a delightful **tea garden** with fine views over the valley. Look for the bloke renting binoculars to give you a close-up view of the Bursa vista before you and the peak of Uludağ behind you. You won't need ocular assistance to spy the twin cooling towers on the horizon that have caused local *Simpsons* fans to dub Bursa 'Springfield'.

MURADIYE COMPLEX

Combining a shady park and a quiet cemetery, the **Sultan II Murat (Muradiye) Camii** (Map p290) is a peaceful oasis in busy Bursa. The mosque dates from 1426 and imitates the style of the Yeşil Cami, with painted decorations and a very intricate *mihrab*. Around the mosque the Ottoman houses lining the quiet backstreets of Muradiye are slowly being restored.

Beside the mosque are 12 **tombs** (☞ 8.30am–noon & 1–5pm) that date from the 15th and 16th centuries, including that of Sultan Murat II (r 1421–51) himself. Like other Islamic dynasties, the Ottoman one was not based on primogeniture, so any son of a sultan could claim the throne upon his father's death. As a result the designated heir (or strongest son) would often have his brothers put to death rather than risk civil war. Many of the occupants of the Muradiye tombs, including all the *şehzades* (imperial sons), were killed by close relatives.



The tombs are opened on a rotational basis and many are trimmed with beautiful İznik tiles. Other tombs are simple and stark with the final resting place of the ascetic, part-time dervish Murat II being unadorned and austere.

Across the park from the mosque is the **Ottoman House Museum** (Osmanlı Evi Müzesi; Map p290; admission TL2; ☎ 10am-noon & 1-5pm Tue-Sun), though you'll be lucky if anyone is around to open the doors. On the western side of the tombs is the 15th-century **Muradiye Medresesi**, a theological seminary restored in 1951 as a tuberculosis clinic.

Also nearby is the **Ulumay Museum of Ottoman Folk Costumes & Jewellery** (Osmanlı Halk Kıyafetleri ve Takıları Müzesi; Map p290; İnkincimurat Caddesi; admission TL6; ☎ 9am-7pm), an impressive private collection opened in the restored 1475 Sair Ahmet Paşa medrese in 2004. The heritage building now houses around 70 costumes and more than 350 different pieces of jewellery.

On a short walk uphill behind the Sultan Murat II Hamam (Map p290), follow the signs to the Ottoman **Hüsni Züher Evi** (Map p290; Uzunyol Sokak 3; admission TL3; ☎ 10am-noon & 1-5pm

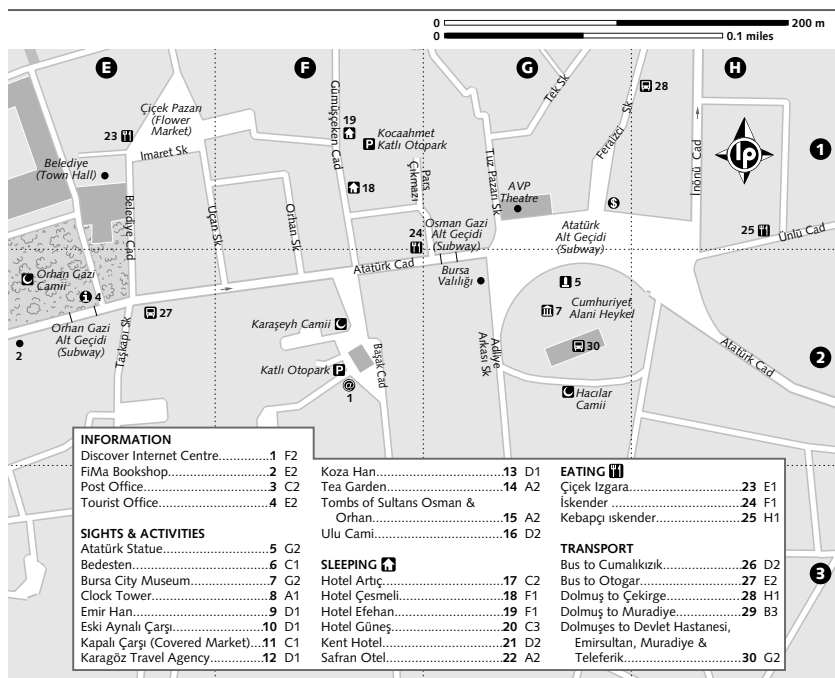
Tue-Sun). Like the Ottoman House it's sporadically staffed, but worth a knock on the door if you're in the area. Nearby, winding alleys, local shops and crumbling Ottoman houses definitely reward map-free exploration.

Catch a Heykel bus or dolmuş to Muradiye. Some buses from Çekirge to Heykel also pass this way.

KÜLTÜR PARKI

The Culture Park (Map p290) lies north of the Muradiye complex but some way down the hill. The whole park was relandscaped in 2006, and the lawns, trees and shrubs are now doing very well, thank you. If you've arrived in Bursa from dusty Anatolia, the grassy expanses will be a welcome change. Visit at dusk to share the twilight with scores of local families. As well as tea gardens, playgrounds and a couple of licensed restaurants, the park also houses the **Archaeology Museum** (Arkeoloji Müzesi; Map p290; admission TL5; ☎ 8.30am-12.30pm & 1.30-5pm Tue-Sun), a predominantly classical collection of finds from local sites with a frustrating lack of English signage.

A few hundred metres west and across the busy road to Çekirge, **Atatürk House** (Atatürk Evi;



Map p290; admission free; ☎ 8.30am-12.30pm & 1.30-5pm Tue-Sun) is a swish 1895 chalet in a pretty garden framed by statuesque pine trees. The restored rooms are set up as they would have been during the Father of Turkey's occasional visits. We're not sure how authentic the stuffed dog is.

Reach the Kültür Parkı and Atatürk House from Heykel by any bus or dolmuş going to Altıparmak, Sigorta or Çekirge.

ÇEKİRGE

An old suburb west of the city centre, Çekirge is Bursa's spa centre. The warm mineral-rich waters that spring from the slopes of Uludağ have been famous for their curative powers since ancient times, and even today the ailing and infirm stay for several weeks to soak and recuperate. Most people stay in hotels with their own mineral baths, and there are also several independent *kaplıcalar* (thermal baths).

The **Yeni Kaplıca** (☎ 236 6955; Mudanya Caddesi 10; ☎ 6am-11pm), on the northwestern side of the Kültür Parkı, was renovated in 1522 by Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent's grand vizier, Rüstem Paşa, on the site of a much

older bath built by Justinian. Besides the Yeni (New) bath itself, you'll also find the Kaynarca (Boiling) baths, limited to women; and the Karamustafa baths, with facilities for family bathing. Last admission is at 10pm; the full massage costs TL25 per half-hour.

Perhaps the most attractive bath is the beautifully restored **Eski Kaplıca** (☎ 233 9300; admission men/women TL55/50; ☎ 7am-10.30pm) on Çekirge's eastern outskirts, managed by the Kervansaray Termal Hotel next door. The bath

THE SILK TRADE

Silkworm-raising is a local cottage industry, with a history almost as long as the city itself. Each April villagers buy silkworms from the cooperatives, take them home and feed them on mulberry leaves. Once the worms have spun their cocoons they are brought to the Koza Han to be sold. If you visit in June or September, you may see some of the 14,000 villagers who engage in the trade haggling over huge sacks of precious white cocoons.

KARAGÖZ & HACİVAT

Bursa is regarded as the birthplace of the Turkish Karagöz shadow puppet theatre, a Central Asian tradition brought to Bursa, from where it spread throughout the Ottoman lands. The puppets – cut from camel hide and treated with oil to make them translucent, then brought to life with coloured paint – are manipulated behind a white cloth onto which their images are cast by back-lighting.

Legend has it that one of the foremen working on Bursa's Ulu Camii was a hunchback called Karagöz. He and his straight man Hacivat indulged in such humorous antics that the other workers abandoned their tasks to watch. This infuriated the sultan, who had the two miscreants put to death. Their comic routines were immortalised, however, in the Karagöz shadow puppet shows. In 2006 the pair was brought to further prominence in Ezel Akay's film comedy *Hacivat & Karagöz* (released as *Killing the Shadows* in English), starring Haluk Bilginer and Beyazıt Öztürk.

In Bursa, Şinasi Çelikkol has worked hard to keep the tradition of Karagöz puppetry alive and was instrumental in the establishment of the **Karagöz Museum** (Karagöz Müzesi; ☎ 232 3360; www.karagozmuzesi.com; Çekirge Caddesi 59; admission free), opposite the Karagöz monument. It houses a small museum of puppetry with some magnificent examples from Uzbekistan. English-speaking apprentice puppeteers are often on hand to show visitors through the museum and provide introductions to Karagöz's quirky cast of characters. Catch a live Karagöz show on Wednesday afternoons (TL4; 🕒 11am) or Saturday mornings (TL1.50; 🕒 2pm).

Şinasi Çelikkol's ethnographical collection is also on display here. If you would like to see the collection privately call into his shop – called, inevitably, Karagöz – in the Eski Aynalı Çarşı for an appointment.

is done out in creamy marble and the hot rooms have plunge pools. The cost includes soap, shampoo, sauna and massage.

For the low-down on hamam etiquette, see p46.

Çekirge's other main feature is the unusual **I Murat (Hüdavendigâr) Camii**, behind the Ada Palas Oteli. Its basic design is the early-Ottoman inverted 'T' plan, which first appeared in the Nilüfer Hatun *imareti* (soup kitchen) in İznik (p287). Here, however, the 'T' wings are barrel-vaulted rather than domed. On the ground floor at the front are the rooms of a *zaviye* (dervish hostel). The 2nd-floor gallery on the facade, built as a *medrese*, is not evident from within except for the sultan's loge (box) in the middle at the back of the mosque. From the outside it almost looks like a Christian edifice.

The huge **sarcophagus of Sultan Murat I** (r 1359–89), who died at Kosovo quelling a rebellion by his Albanian, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Hungarian and Serbian subjects, can be viewed in the tomb across the street. Nearby is a tea garden with great city views that is popular with local families at the end of the day.

Çekirge's main street is I Murat Caddesi (Birinci Murat Caddesi). To get here, take a bus or dolmuş (both TL1.50) from Heykel or Atatürk Caddesi to Çekirge or SSK

Hastanesi. Bus 96 goes direct from the otogar to Çekirge.

Festivals & Events

The **Uluslararası Bursa Festival** (www.bursafestivali.org), Bursa's long-standing music and dance festival, runs for three weeks in June and July. Expect a diverse program featuring gems like Roma bands from Eastern Europe, *fado* music from Portugal, and the occasional dubious pleasure like Julio Iglesias. It's very affordable and tickets for the top acts are only around TL20. In July the **Golden Karagöz Dance Festival** draws international groups.

Every November the **Karagöz Festival** attracts Karagöz shadow puppeteers (above), Western puppeteers and marionette performers for five days of festivities and performances.

Tours

Karagöz Travel Agency (Map pp294-5; ☎ 221 8727; www.karagoztravel.com; Kapalıçarşı, Eski Aynalı Çarşı 4) offers interesting local tours, including city excursions and trips to Cumalıkızık (p301).

Sleeping

Though slightly more expensive, the hillside suburb of Çekirge (3km west of Central Bursa) offers the most attractive sleeping options in Bursa. Most hotels have their own

bathing facilities, often with private or public bathing rooms in the basement. Baths are usually included in the room price. Eating options are limited in Çekirge, but it's just a short hop down the hill by dolmuş to central Bursa.

ÇEKİRGE & SOĞANLI

Mutlu Hotel (☎ 233 2829; mutluhotel@mynet.com; Murat Caddesi 19; s/d/tr TL50/78/90; 🏠) A reliable and friendly choice, the Mutlu combines a rustic wooden exterior with spacious thermal baths decked out in marble. The decor of the rooms struggles to get past 1973, but the ambience in the relaxed café outside is slightly more modern.

Hotel Ada Palas (☎ 233 3990; www.adapalas.com; Murat Caddesi 21; s/d/tr TL55/90/130; 🏠) The flash reception isn't matched by some slightly tatty rooms in need of a paint job, but the accommodation is spacious, albeit with poky bathrooms. Breakfast is a diverse spread, adding further to the good value equation at the Ada Palas. Every floor has a thermal bath.

Terminal Hotel Gold 2 (☎ 235 6030; www.hotelgold.com.tr; I Murat Cami Aralığı; s/d TL60/90; 🏠) This restored 1878 house next to the I Murat Camii is a great choice in a quiet location, decked out in full wooden interiors, 'period' furniture and deep red drapery. Baths and parking are included and the roof terrace is a bonus.

Atlas Termal Hotel (☎ 234 4100; www.atlasotel.com.tr; Hamamlar Caddesi 29; s/d/tr TL80/130/150; 🏠) Another restored building blending modern and traditional style, with pine fittings, a sunny internal courtyard and a rooftop terrace with views of Bursa. Prices include use of the private thermal baths.

Huzur Termal Otel (☎ 234 5250; www.huzurotel.com.tr; Murat Caddesi 31; s/d/tr TL100/150/180; 🏠) In a town where chintzy is respected as a legitimate decorating style, the Huzur has comfortable rooms just like your favourite auntie's place. Satellite TV, minibars and a billiard room provide a more masculine balance, and thermal baths and an external garden come as standard. It's overpriced so ask for a discount.

Otantik Club Hotel (☎ 211 3280; www.otantikclubhotel.com; Soğanlı; d TL200, ste TL300; 🏠) One of Bursa's best hotels, tucked away in a botanic garden in the suburb of Soğanlı, north of the centre. All the rooms are gorgeous, but the suites, with the sun streaming through their stained-glass windows onto Ottoman-

style fabrics, are exquisite. Two great restaurants and a cosy bar provide the essential finishing touches.

our pick Hotel Gönülferah (☎ 233 9210; www.gonulferah.com; Murat Caddesi 22; s/d €105/150; 🏠) This is more like it. Dating from 1890, the hilltop Gönülferah is a perfect blend of heritage charm and modern convenience. Rooms are swathed in delicate silk and feature beautifully restored wooden floors. The in-house spa treatments get two very relaxed ticks. Ask about a discount and you're getting a splurge-worthy bargain.

CENTRAL BURSA

Hotel Güneş (Map pp294-5; ☎ 222 1404; İnebey Caddesi 75; s/d/tr/q without bathroom TL26/46/54/68) In a restored Ottoman house, the friendly family-run Güneş is Bursa's best budget pension. The small, neat rooms have Ezy-Kleen laminate floors and the walls are trimmed with inspirational tourist-board photos of Turkey. In season look forward to a welcome bowl of cherries or watermelon.

Hotel Artıç (Map pp294-5; ☎ 224 5505; www.artichel.com; Ulu Camii Karşısı 95; s/d/tr TL60/90/100; 🏠) A decent option towards the western end of Atatürk Caddesi. Rooms are light and fairly spacious with wi-fi and a minibar. From the breakfast salon there are good views of Ulu Camii. Posted rates are overpriced so ask for a discount.

Hotel Çeşmeli (Map pp294-5; ☎ 224 1511; Gümüşşekken Caddesi 6; s/d/tr TL65/100/130) In close proximity to Bursa's bustling market, the Çeşmeli is friendly, clean, and features an all-female staff, making it an excellent choice for women travellers. The buffet breakfast is excellent with the old school decor complemented by gracious old school service at reception.

Safran Otel (Map pp294-5; ☎ 224 7216; safran_otel@yahoo.com; Arka Sokak 4, Tophane; s/d TL70/130; 🏠) Opposite the Osman and Orhan tombs, the Safran is housed in a characterful restored house in a historic neighbourhood high above the city. The Ottoman trappings don't extend to the rooms, but it's an inviting place with a good restaurant next door.

Hotel Efehan (Map pp294-5; ☎ 225 2260; www.efehan.com.tr; Gümüşşekken Caddesi 34; s/d/tr TL85/130/170; 🏠) Revelling in a veneer of modern style trimmed with plenty of marble, the Efehan is solid three-star value with a central location. Wi-fi and friendly, (usually) English-speaking staff at reception come as standard, and it's

definitely worth asking for a discount. What's with the model ships in reception though?

Kent Hotel (Map pp294-5; ☎ 223 5420; www.kentotel.com.tr; Atatürk Caddesi 69; s/d/tr €70/90/120; 🚗 📺) Solid and central business-oriented option with a good location opposite the Ulu Camii. A relatively recent modern makeover is balanced with interesting black-and-white pics of Ye Olde Bursa in the lobby.

Eating

As well as the legendary İskender kebab, Bursa is well known for İnegöl *köftesi*, a rich grilled meatball named after nearby İnegöl. Other culinary specialities include fresh fruit (especially *şeftali* – peaches – in season) and *kestane şekeri* (candied chestnuts).

RESTAURANTS

Expect to pay more for İskender kebab in Bursa compared to the rest of Turkey. The buttery yoghurt sauce is incredibly rich and tasty in this town, so the premium is largely justified. Prices start around TL12 for *bir porsyon* (one serving) or TL18 if you dive in and order *bir buçuk porsyon* (1½ portions). Note that for legal reasons most places advertise İskender kebab as Bursa kebab.

Çiçek Izgara (Map pp294-5; ☎ 221 6526; Belediye Caddesi 15; mains TL9-12; 🕒 11am-9.30pm) One block from Koza Parkı behind the half-timbered *belediye*, the Çiçek grill house is bright and modern (good for solo women travellers), with a 1st-floor salon to catch the flower-market action below.

ourpick Yusuf (Map p290; Kültür Parkı; mezes TL4-10; 🕒 11am-11pm) 'Joe's Place' features a meze- and grill-laden terrace set among established trees providing shade. The service is so good it's the only time we've seen middle-aged waiters actually break out into a brisk trot. We can also personally recommend Yusuf for celebrating a birthday a long way from home. Just be warned it's the kind of place you'll want to fly your friends and family in for a big night. Come along at dusk and share the moment instead with scores of loyal locals over a beer or glass of rakı (aniseed brandy). You'll find Yusuf around 300m from the stadium and around 150m from Çekirge Caddesi.

Bursa Hakimevi (Map p290; ☎ 233 4900; Çekirge Caddesi 10; mains TL8-15; 🕒 noon-10pm) This restored Ottoman house on the edge of the Kültür Parkı is now a tastefully low-key restau-

rant doing a fine line in mezes. Friday and Saturday nights are very popular so make a booking to ensure a spot on the verdant outdoor terrace.

Kebapçı İskender (Map pp294-5; ☎ 221 4615; Ünlü Caddesi 7; mains TL15-22.50; 🕒 10am-10pm) This legendary kebab shop dates back to 1867 and its owners claim to be descendants of İskender Usta himself. However, at TL15 a portion you're paying a *lot* for a taste of history. Pictures of good old Izzy himself line the walls of the faux-heritage building. (Think KFC's Colonel Sanders without the goatee...)

İskender (Map pp294-5; Atatürk Caddesi 60; mains TL14.75; 🕒 10am-10pm) Same, same but different at this central spot which also makes a competing claim to be the original home of the İskender kebab. Leave the legal machinations to the lawyers and tuck into the slightly cheaper, but equally tasty, kebabs at this main drag spot housed in a cosy wooden abode.

Yüce Hünkâr (Map p290; ☎ 327 8910; Yeşil Cami Yanı 17-19; meals TL15-25; 🕒 11am-10pm) The Hünkâr has a wonderful location overlooking the valley in front of the Yeşil Cami, which (almost) offsets the tourist-trap prices. Maybe just have a slice of baklava (dessert) and coffee and save your dosh for the seafood restaurants of Sakarya Caddesi.

Formerly part of Bursa's Jewish quarter, **Sakarya Caddesi** (Map pp294-5) acquired new fame from one Arap Şükrü, who returned home after the War of Independence and opened a seafood restaurant. It was so successful that his descendants followed him into the business and the street now has several restaurants of the same name. The whole upper end of the narrow lane is crammed with tables, so wander along and check the buzz before making your choice. Fish and seafood are the speciality, starting around TL12 per portion, but meat and mezes are also available.

Arap Şükrü Abant (Map p290; ☎ 221 1453; Sakarya Caddesi 27; mezes TL4-12; 🕒 11am-11pm) is run by his sons and does a great *karides güveç* (shrimp casserole) and excellent octopus in olive oil. Sakarya Caddesi is also a good spot for a quiet beer or rakı.

Sakarya Caddesi is on the northern side of the Hisar district, just south of Altıparmak Caddesi. It's about 10 minutes' walk from the Ulu Cami, or you can take a Çekirge-bound bus or dolmuş (TL1.25) from Heykel to the Çatal Fırın stop, opposite the Sabahettin Paşa Camii.

CAFÉS & QUICK EATS

Café Demlik (Map p290; ☎ 326 4483; Yeşil Caddesi 25; dishes from TL3; ☎ 11am-9pm) This charming old house has been converted into an Ottoman-style eatery where you can sit on floor cushions and get stuck into *gözleme* (savoury pancakes).

Set Café (Map p290; ☎ 225 1162; Köprü Üstü; dishes from TL3) Across the stream from the Mahfel Mado, this multi-terraced venue has live music and an entertainingly confusing layout. Entry is to the left of the ice-cream spot that hovers above.

our pick Saklı Bahçe (Çekirge Caddesi 2; mains TL4-8; ☎ 11am-11pm) The perfect place to watch the sunset if you're staying in Çekirge, this chilled-out hilltop tea garden features low slung tables, scatter cushions and complimentary fleece wraps for when the sun goes down. It's the preferred meeting place for Bursa's bright young things, lured by excellent pizza and kebabs, and wi-fi access with a view.

Mahfel Mado (Map p290; ☎ 326 8888; Namazgah Caddesi 2; mains TL5-10; ☎ 8am-11pm) Bursa's oldest café is open from breakfast to dessert. It also has live music on its riverside terrace and an art gallery in the basement. What more do you really need?

SELF-CATERING

Self-caterers should visit **Tahtakale Çarşısı** (Tahtakale Market; Map pp294-5) near Hotel Güneş, for fresh fruit, vegetables and cheeses.

Drinking & Entertainment

After eating in Sakarya Caddesi you'll find a few places nearby to kick on. Alternatively Yusuf restaurant (opposite) in Kültür Parkı is a good place for a few beers and mezes.

Barantico (Map p290; ☎ 222 4049; Sakarya Caddesi 55; drinks from TL3; ☎ 11am-10pm) Tucked away in a courtyard, this place features a vaguely New Age vibe with the added attraction of occasional live music.

Müsadenzile (Map p290; ☎ 220 9428; Altıparmak Caddesi 9/D) Funky chocolate brown and orange decor and classic tunes (think Bob Marley and the Rolling Stones) make this Bursa's best approximation of what you're probably used to in a bar. Jugs of beer and a good cocktail list keeps everyone happy. Just be warned: it charges like a wounded bull for bowls of peanuts – we found out the hard way.

Gedikli Meyhane (Map p290; ☎ 224 4313; Sakarya Caddesi 47) Trimmed with maritime memo-

abilia, the Gedikli is as much restaurant as bar. With a good selection of beers and excellent mezes and bar snacks, it's the perfect spot to while away a few increasingly pleasant hours.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Turkish Airlines (☎ 444 0849; www.thy.com) flies twice a week to Diyarbakır, Erzurum and Trabzon. During summer months **SunExpress** (☎ 444 0797; www.sunexpress.com.tr) flies from Bursa to Antalya, Trabzon, İzmir, Diyarbakır and Erzurum.

BUS

Bursa's otogar is 10km north of the centre on the Yalova road. See below for information on getting from the otogar to the city centre and Çekirge. Information on some major bus routes and fares is provided in the table, p300.

The fastest way to İstanbul (TL20, 2½ to three hours) is to take a bus to Yalova, then the **İDO fast ferry** (☎ 444 4436; www.ido.com.tr) to İstanbul's Yenikapı docks. Get a bus that departs Bursa's bus terminal at least 90 minutes before the scheduled boat departure.

Karayolu ile (by road) buses to İstanbul drag you all around the Bay of İzmit and take four to five hours. Those designated *feribot ile* (by ferry) take you to Topçular, east of Yalova, and then by ferry to Eskişehir, a much quicker and more pleasant way to go.

The table (p300) lists daily services on selected routes from Bursa.

Getting Around

TO/FROM THE BUS STATION

City bus 38 crawls the 10km between the otogar and the city centre (TL1.50, 45 minutes). Returning to the otogar, it leaves from stop 4 on Atatürk Caddesi. Bus 96 from the otogar goes direct to Çekirge (TL1.50, 40 minutes).

A taxi from the otogar to the city centre costs around TL20, to Çekirge about TL22.

BUS

Bursa's city buses (BOİ; TL1.50) have their destinations and stops marked on the front and kerb side. A major set of yellow bus stops is lined up opposite Koza Parkı on Atatürk Caddesi. Catch a bus from stop 1 for Emirsultan and Teleferik (Uludağ cable car); from stop 2 for Muradiye; and from stop 4 for

SERVICES FROM BURSA'S OTOGAR

Destination	Fare (TL)	Duration (hr)	Distance (km)	Frequency (per day)
Afyon	27	5	290	8
Ankara	30	6	400	hourly
Bandırma	14	2	115	12
Çanakkale	30	5	310	12
Denizli	40	9	532	several
Eskişehir	15	2½	155	hourly
İstanbul	20	3	230	frequent
İzmir	25	5½	375	hourly
İzmit	10	1½	82	hourly
Kütahya	17	3	190	several
Yalova	9	1¼	76	every 30 min

Altıparmak and the Kültür Parkı. You can also pick up buses to the Botanik Parkı (15) and Cumalıkızık (22) from here.

These days, all city buses run on a pre-pay system; you can buy tickets from kiosks or shops near most bus stops (keep an eye out for the BuKART sign). If you're staying for a few days there are various multitrip options available.

DOLMUŞ

In Bursa, cars and minibuses operate as dolmuşes. The destination is indicated by an illuminated sign on the roof. The minimum fare is TL1.25. Dolmuşes are usually as cheap as buses and definitely faster and more frequent, especially linking central Bursa with Çekirge.

Dolmuşes go to Çekirge via the Kültür Parkı, Eski Kaplıca and I Murat Camii from a major dolmuş terminal immediately south of Heykel. Other dolmuşes wait in front of Koza Parkı.

METRO

Bursa has a modern metro system, but as it serves only the outskirts of town it is seldom used by visitors.

TAXI

A ride from Heykel to Muradiye costs about TL5, to Çekirge about TL10.

AROUND BURSA**Uludağ**

☎ 0224

With its proximity to İstanbul, Bursa and Ankara, Uludağ (Great Mountain; 2543m), on the outskirts of Bursa, is Turkey's most

popular ski resort. A *teleferik* (cable car) runs up to Sarialan, 7km from the town of Uludağ and the main hotel area (called 'Oteller' naturally). The cluster of accommodation and ski hire joints springs to life during the ski season from December to early April, and slumbers quietly in the off-season. Even if you don't plan to go skiing or do the three-hour hike to the summit, it's still a worthwhile trip year-round to take advantage of the view and the cool, clear air of Uludağ National Park. With pine forests and the occasional snowy peak, the scenery is slightly reminiscent of New Zealand's South Island or western North America.

At the cable-car terminus at Sarialan there are a few snack and refreshment stands and a basic national park camp site that's usually full. You're best to treat the 'Great Mountain' as a day trip in summer, or check out www.uludaghotels.com for accommodation options during the ski season.

GETTING THERE & AWAY**Cable Car**

Take a Bursa city bus from stop 1 or a dolmuş marked 'Teleferik' (TL1.50) from behind the city museum to the lower terminus of the cable car, a 15-minute ride from Heykel. The cable cars (TL8 return, 30 minutes) depart every 40 minutes between 8am and 10pm in summer and between 10am and 5pm in winter, wind and weather permitting. At busy times they'll leave whenever there are 30 people on board.

The cable car stops first at Kadiyayla, then continues upwards to the terminus at Sarialan (1635m). Stand at the rear of the car for the best views of Bursa as you go up.

Dolmuş

Dolmuşes from central Bursa to Uludağ (TL7) and Sarıalan (TL10) run several times daily in summer and more frequently in winter.

At the 11km marker you must stop and pay an admission fee for the **national park** (per car TL5). The hotel zone is 11km up from the entrance.

The return ride can be difficult in summer, with little public transport on offer. In winter dolmuşes and taxis are usually eager to get at least some money for the trip downhill, so bargain hard.

Cumalıkızık

☎ 0224 / pop 700

This unique slice of Turkeyana on the slopes of Uludağ, about 16km east of Bursa, was settled 700 years ago by the Turcoman Kızıks and is full of wonderfully preserved early Ottoman rural architecture. Wander around to enjoy the peaceful atmosphere, with brightly painted traditional houses sitting proudly adjacent to crumbling unrestored structures.

Across recent years TV tourism has dulled some of Cumalıkızık's bucolic hush. From 2000 to 2005 the village was the location for the popular series *Kıvalı Kar* (*Henna in the Snow*), and souvenir shops sprung up to lure star-struck visitors. A few years on the village's star status is receding and the biggest game in town is the regular Sunday morning market. Cumalıkızık is a preferred destination of Bursa folk for a leisurely weekend brunch in an array of rustic garden restaurants, or as a convenient spot to pick up fresh fruit, local honey and village handicrafts. Come during the week though, and it could be just you and a few relaxed locals in the narrow uphill lanes that do their utmost to redefine the words 'quaint' and 'heritage'.

SLEEPING & EATING

There are only two accommodation options in the village, both of which serve food. Other small cafés and informal *gözleme* joints provide alternative eating.

Konak Pansiyon (☎ 372 4869; d TL70) Take the right fork up into the village to reach this beautifully restored guest house, which has just eight rooms ranging from Ottoman-style floor mattresses to some *huge* double beds. The restaurant opposite offers standard kebabs, salads, mezes, and *gözleme* for lunch.

Mavi Boncuk (☎ 373 0955; www.cumalikizik-mavi-boncuk.com; Saldede Sokak; d TL70) Veering left instead

of right, signs lead to another old house, also well restored and swamped in appealing gardens. The six rooms are simple but inviting, with plenty of places to relax inside and out. The food is superb with a steady stream of Bursa locals enjoying brunches of *menemen* (Turkish scrambled eggs) and Turkish bread toasted on an open fire. It's the kind of relaxed eatery you wish your own hometown had.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

From Bursa take bus 22 (TL3, 50 minutes) from stop 3 on Atatürk Caddesi. Buses leave roughly every 90 minutes between 7.30am and 9pm. The last bus back to Bursa usually leaves at 8.30pm. More frequent dolmuşes (TL2.50) also run to and from the Sentral Garaj, which is connected to Atatürk Caddesi by other dolmuşes and buses.

ESKİŞEHİR

☎ 0222 / pop 517,000

Ironically, Eskişehir (Old City) is a thoroughly modern town, built over the scant remnants of the Greco-Roman city of Dorylaeum. A small Ottoman district still survives, but most of the city is newly built and has a bustling student-enlivened atmosphere.

The area is rich in mineral springs, there are many hamams, and several hotels offering thermal water in their bathrooms.

Orientation & Information

Pedestrianised Hamamyolu Caddesi runs north-south between Yunus Emre and İki Eylül Caddesi. Odunpazarı, the Ottoman old-town district, is just beyond the southern end of the street.

Eskişehir's **tourist office** (☎ 230 1752) is in the Valiliği (regional government) building on the southwest side of İki Eylül Caddesi. It's a handy spot to pick up information on the Phrygian Valley (p303).

The train station is northwest of the centre, the otogar 3km east of the centre. Trams and buses run from the otogar to Köprübaşı, the central district just north of Hamamyolu Caddesi.

Internet cafés and ATMs are at the southern end of Hamamyolu Caddesi.

Sights & Activities

Eskişehir is famous for its 'white gold': **meerschau** (*luletaşı*), a light, porous white stone, which is mined in local villages and then

shaped into pipes and other artefacts. Visit the Yunus Emre Kültür Sarayı, next to the post office, which contains the **Lületaşı Museum** (İki Eylül Caddesi). This informal collection includes fine old and new meerschaum pipes and photos of the mining process.

Head south past the imposing yellow **Anadolu Üniversitesi Cumhuriyet Müzesi** (admission free; ☎ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat), a sepia-heavy collection of Atatürk memorabilia, to find *eski* Eskişehir, the old Ottoman quarter. At its centre, the large **Kurşunlu Camii** (1525) retains most of its *külliye* (mosque complex), including an *aşevi* (cookhouse) bristling with chimneys and an *okuma odası* (reading room) with pillars that incorporate capitals from ancient Dorylaeum.

The surrounding streets are lined with old Ottoman houses, many being restored in an ongoing rejuvenation project. The **Beylerbeyi Konağı** (Kurşunlu Camii Sokak 28; ☎ 10am-noon) is supposedly open to the public, although you'll be lucky to find it unlocked. The infrequently staffed **İsmail Alkiliçgil Fotograf Evi** (Belediye Caddesi 16; admission free; ☎ 10am-4pm) has a worthwhile collection of sepia-tinged prints of old Eskişehir.

Further west, the **Archaeological Museum** (Arkeoloji Müzesi; Hasan Polatkan Bulvarı 86; admission TL3; ☎ 8.30am-noon & 1.30-5pm Mon-Fri) contains finds from Dorylaeum, including several crude mosaic floors and Roman statuettes of Cybele, Hecate and Mithras.

Take a dip in the thermal baths around the north end of Hamamyolu Caddesi. Most of them are men-only, but the **Kadınlar Kaplıca** (admission TL8; ☎ 5.30am-10pm), near the Has Termal Hotel, is open to women.

Sleeping

The best places to stay are the hotels with thermal baths around Hamamyolu Caddesi.

Termal Otel Sultan (☎ 231 8371; Hamamyolu Caddesi 1; s/d/tr TL45/65/80) The Sultan may be a little worn around the edges, but the bathrooms are clean and it is comfortable enough. Wi-fi access is a welcome concession to the 21st century.

Uysal Otel (☎ 221 4353; www.uysalotel.com; Asarcıklı Caddesi 7; s/d TL80/140) Caution: must like red. The designers have had a field day in the reception at this uber-chintzy spot just off Hamamyolu Caddesi. Upstairs the rooms are slightly simpler in crimson and scarlet, but relatively spacious and come with mod

cons like wi-fi access. Thankfully the attached thermal baths are clean and classic in neutral marble tones.

Eating

Eskişehir has a wealth of good value kebab and grill places, and a couple of other well-frequented spots for lunch or dinner. The pedestrianised part of Hamamyolu Caddesi features cafés and tea gardens.

Şomine Et Lokantası (☎ 220 8585; Köprübaşı Caddesi 18; mains TL4-12; ☎ 9am-10pm) With an open-sided 1st-floor salon, this is the pick of Eskişehir's cafeteria restaurants. A diverse crowd from students to business folk crowds in for a gargantuan menu of Turkish dishes. Check out the trays downstairs – it's all good.

Osmanlı Evi (☎ 221 5460; Yeşil Efendi Sokak 22; mains TL6-20; ☎ 11.30am-9pm) The Ottoman House was one of the first in Odunpazarı to be restored, and now functions as a fine café-restaurant. It's up a side street behind the Kurşunlu Camii.

At the time of writing a couple of characterful teahouses and cafés were opening in the nearby streets of the old Ottoman quarter. Good luck exploring.

Shopping

Eskişehir is the place to buy meerschaum pipes, cigarette-holders, prayer beads and other items made out of *luletaşı*. Some hotels sell meerschaum but the shopping is better in local shops.

Eskişehir also has many sweet shops. Go local with rolls of *med helvası* or chunks of *nuga helvası* (two types of nougat).

Getting There & Away

All official city transport runs on a prepay system – buy tickets (TL1.50) from a booth or kiosk. Trams, city buses and dolmuşes serve the vast otogar; look for signs saying 'Terminal' or 'Yeni Otogar'. A taxi from Köprübaşı costs around TL8.

From the otogar there are regular buses to Afyon (TL13, three hours), Ankara (TL15, 3¼ hours), Bursa (TL15, 2½ hours), İstanbul (TL25, six hours), İzmit (TL18, three hours) and Kütahya (TL8, 1½ hours).

Eskişehir **train station** (☎ 255 5555) is an important railway terminus, and there are various services from İstanbul (four to six hours) and Ankara (2½ to four hours) day and night.

AROUND ESKİŞEHİR

Seyitgazi

☎ 0222 / pop 3200

This small town 43km southeast of Eskişehir is dominated by the hilltop 13th-century **Battalgazi mosque complex** (admission TL5). Combining Seljuk and Ottoman architecture, the complex also contains pieces of marble presumably taken from the ruins of the Romano-Byzantine town of Nacolea. The mosque commemorates Seyit/Seyyid Battal Gazi, a warrior who fought for the Arabs against the Byzantines and was killed in 740. His wildly elongated tomb sits in a side chamber off the main mosque.

Features of the *külliyeye* include an *aşevi* (kitchen) with eight skyline-piercing chimneys, a *semahane* (dance hall) where dervishes would have gathered, and a *medrese* containing several grim *çilehanes*, or 'places of suffering' – cells in which the devout lived (and died) like hermits with only their Qurans for company. Numerous calligraphic inscriptions singing the praises of Battal Gazi dot the walls. At the time of writing the complex was part building site and part bomb site. Once restoration is complete in 2009, it's worth a detour.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Seyitgazi Belediyesi buses run from Eskişehir to Seyitgazi (TL5, 45 minutes). Some buses from Eskişehir to Afyon also pass through.

PHRYGIAN VALLEY

The rock-hewn monuments in the so-called Phrygian Valley (Frig Vadisi) between Eskişehir and Afyon are the most impressive relics to

survive from Phrygian times. You really need a car to explore the area fully. Hitching is not recommended because traffic is very light.

Even if you're not interested in the Phrygians, the valley is a beautiful part of Turkey, virtually untouched by tourism. Craggy escarpments dotted with fir trees conceal the forgotten ruins of the Phrygian culture and the spectacular scenery is almost more diverse than Cappadocia. Visit in early June, when delicate opium poppies bloom in white and purple patches amid a rugged green-grey-brown backdrop.

Orientation

The Phrygian Valley separates neatly into two sections, the northern area near Eskişehir and Seyitgazi, and the southern sector around Afyon.

Most sites are along dirt tracks and some can be hard to find, even when you're right beside them. Navigation is slowly getting better in the southern Afyon section, where local authorities have designated a 'Turizm Kuşağı Yolu' (Tourism Zone Route) and embarked on a program of road improvements along its 170km length. Despite this, expect to get pleasantly lost a few times and just keep exploring.

The following outlines the sights of the Phrygian Valley, starting from Eskişehir and Seyitgazi and ending nearer Afyon.

Sights

YAZILIKAYA VALLEY

Heading from Seyitgazi to Afyon, after around 3km turn south (left) into a road

THE PHRYGIANS

Emigrants from Thrace to central Anatolia around 2000 BC, the Phrygians spoke an Indo-European language, used an alphabet similar to Greek, and established a kingdom with its capital at Gordion (p454), 106km west of Ankara. The empire flourished under its most famous king, Midas (c 725–675 BC), one of many Phrygian monarchs to have that name, until it was overrun by the Cimmerians (676–585 BC).

Considering they lived in rock dwellings, the Phrygians were a sophisticated people with a dedication to the arts. Phrygian culture was based on Greek culture, but with strong Neo-Hittite and Urartian influences. They're credited with inventing the frieze, embroidery and numerous musical instruments, including cymbals, double clarinet, flute, lyre, syrinx (Pan pipes) and triangle. Not bad for cave dwellers and just maybe the original rock music.

Phrygian civilisation was at its most vigorous around 585 to 550 BC, when the rock-cut monuments at Midas Şehri – the most impressive Phrygian stonework still in existence – were carved. Phrygian relics can be seen in many Anatolian museums, providing fascinating insights into a culture that bridged the gap between 'primitive' and 'advanced' amid the scrub and rocks of central Turkey.

marked with a brown sign pointing to Midas Şehri. Further along this rough road a sign leads right 2km to the **Doğankale** (Falcon Castle) and **Deveboyukale** (Camel-Height Castle), both of them plugs of rock riddled with formerly inhabited caves.

Further south another rough track to the right leads 1km to the **Mezar Anıtı** (Monumental Tomb), where a restored tomb is cut into the rock.

Continuing south is another temple-like tomb, called the **Küçük Yazılıkaya** (Little Inscribed Stone).

MIDAS ŞEHRI

A few kilometres on from Küçük Yazılıkaya is what archaeologists call Midas Şehri (Midas City). It is actually the village of **Yazılıkaya** (Inscribed Rock), 32km south of Seyitgazi.

The sights at Yazılıkaya are clustered around a huge rock. Tickets (TL3) are sold at the library in front of the steps leading up to the site. The friendly local custodian will meet you and give you the excellent 'Highlands of Phrygia' brochure (he usually keeps them in the back of his car). A second 'Eskişehir' brochure has good maps of the entire Phrygian Valley, and an essential guide to exploring Yazılıkaya.

Carved into the soft tufa, the so-called **Midas Tomb** is a 17m-high relief covered in geometric patterns and resembling the facade of a temple. At the bottom is a niche where an effigy of Cybele would be displayed during festivals. Inscriptions in the Phrygian alphabet – one bearing Midas' name – circle the tomb.

Opposite the inscribed rock is another huge rock riddled with caves that once contained a **monastery**.

Behind the Midas Tomb a path leads down to a tunnel, then passes a second **smaller tomb**, unfinished and high up in the rock. The path continues upwards to the top of the rock, which was an **acropolis**. Here you will find a stepped stone, labelled an **altar**, which may have been used for sacrifices, and traces of walls and roads. Even with a map following the paths can be confusing, but the main features are easy to spot. Heading down from the acropolis notice a portion of the **ancient road**, identifiable from the wagon-wheel ruts worn into the rock.

Note there are several ancient water cisterns on the backside of the rock – some unmarked – so take care when walking.

KÜMBET

Heading 15km west from Midas Şehri is the village of Kümbet, which boasts a Seljuk *kümbet* (tomb) with old Byzantine marble carvings reused around its doorway. Near the *kümbet* is a rocky outcrop with several magnificent **rock fireplaces**. Also nearby is the **Arslanlı Mezarı** (Lion Tomb), another rock-cut Phrygian tomb with lions carved into its pedimental facade.

OTHER SITES

The following sites are to the southwest of Kümbet.

The small village of Doğer boasts a *han* (caravanserai) dating back to 1434. Unfortunately it's usually locked. From here, dirt tracks go to lily-covered **Emre Gölü** (Lake Emre), a perfect picnic place overlooked by a small stone building once used by dervishes; and a rock formation with a rough staircase called the **Kirkmerdiven Kayalıkı** (Rocky Place with 40 Stairs). The dirt track then runs on to **Bayramaliler** and **Üçlerkaya** with rock formations called *peribacalar* (fairy chimneys), just like Cappadocia.

After Bayramaliler is **Göynüş Vadisi** (Göynüş Valley), with fine Phrygian rock tombs decorated with lions (*aslantaş*) and snakes (*yılantaş*). This valley is a 2km walk from the main Eskişehir to Afyon road.

At **Ayazini** village there was once a rock settlement called Metropolis. Look out for a huge church with its apse and dome cut clear out of the rock face, and a series of rock-cut tombs with carvings of lions, suns and moons.

Around the village of Alanyurt are more caves at **Selimiye** and fairy chimneys at **Kurtyurdu**. Another concentration is around Karakaya, Seydiler and İncehisar, including the bunker-like rock **Seydiler Castle** (Seydiler Kalesi).

Getting There & Around

You need a car to explore this area properly. The usual starting points are Afyon and Eskişehir, or you can head east from Kütahya. Brown signs indicate many sites but they're not always clear so expect to get occasionally lost.

You could also hire a taxi from any fair-sized town in the region; Seyitgazi and İhsaniye are good bets and conveniently located. Rates start around TL60 for a short tour, but are entirely negotiable depending on your plans.

KÜTAHYA

☎ 0274 / pop 211,000

Like İznik, Kütahya upholds the Turkish tradition of coloured tiles (*çini*) and pottery. And while İznik resurrects its pedigree in the handmade and high-end sector, Kütahya's factories take pride in the prosaic with local tiles decorating everywhere from fountains to bus stations.

Kütahya is a university town with trendy cafés and bars lining the straight-as-an-arrow tree-lined avenues. But venture a few hundred metres from Kütahya's boulevards to discover the bustling ambience of the labyrinthine market area. Carry on exploring into winding lanes dotted with crumbling Ottoman-era mansions.

Standing sentinel above Kütahya's energetic melding of old and new is an imposing fortress, and huddled at the base of the citadel, excellent museums showcase Kütahya's kiln-fired past. Visit in July to see the city's creative future on display at the annual Dumlupınar Fair (Fuarı), Turkey's pre-eminent handicrafts fair.

History

Kütahya's earliest known inhabitants were Phrygians. In 546 BC it was captured by the Persians, and then had a succession of rulers including Alexander the Great, the kings of Bithynia, and the emperors of Rome and Byzantium, who called the town Cotiaëum.

The first Turks to arrive were the Seljuks in 1182. Ousted by the Crusaders, they returned to found the Emirate of Germiyan (1302–1428), with Kütahya as its capital. The emirs cooperated with the Ottomans in nearby Bursa, and when the last emir died his lands were incorporated in the growing Ottoman Empire. Tamerlane swept in at the beginning of the 15th century, made Kütahya his temporary headquarters and then returned to Central Asia.

After Selim I took Tabriz in 1514, he brought all of its ceramic artisans to Kütahya and İznik. Since then the two towns have rivalled one another in the quality of their tilework.

Orientation

A huge vase-shaped fountain marks Zafer (Belediye) Meydanı, the town's main square, which is overlooked by the *vilayet* (provincial government building) and *belediye*. The otogar, Kütahya Çinigar (Tile Station

– you'll see why), is 1km northeast of Zafer Meydanı, along Atatürk Bulvarı. Hotels, restaurants, ATMs and tile shops cluster around the square.

The town's main commercial street is Cumhuriyet Caddesi, running southwest from the *vilayet*, past the PTT and on to the Ulu Cami. Check out the use of local tiles on everything from shopfronts to street furniture.

Information

Anatolia Internet Café (Belediye Caddesi 9; per hr TL1; ☎ 9am-midnight)

Hayalet Internet (Atatürk Bulvarı; per hr TL1; ☎ 9am-midnight)

Tourist information kiosk (☎ 223 6213; Zafer Meydanı; ☎ 9am-1pm & 2-6pm) Little English spoken but good maps.

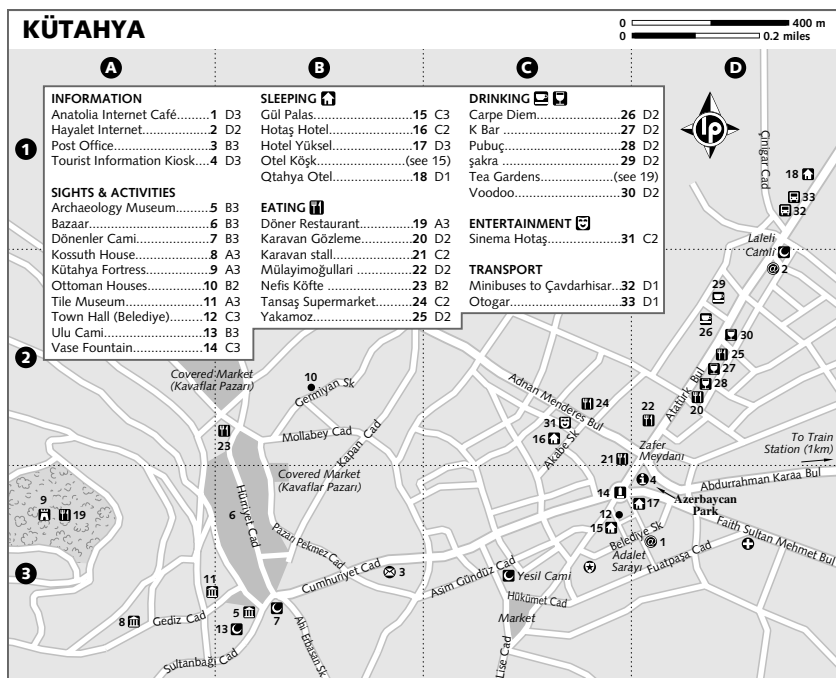
Sights & Activities

The turreted **Ulu Cami**, at the far end of Cumhuriyet Caddesi, has been restored several times since construction in 1410. Fine marble panels are incorporated into its ablutions fountain and there is lovely sunburst woodwork above the side door.

The **Archaeology Museum** (Arkeoloji Müzesi; ☎ 224 0785; admission TL3; ☎ 9am-1pm & 2-5.45pm Tue-Sun) is next door to the Ulu Cami in the Vacidiye Medresesi, which was built by Umur bin Sıvacı of the Germiyan family in 1314. The centrepiece of the collection is a Roman sarcophagus from Aizanoi's Temple of Zeus (p308), carved with scenes of battling Amazons. There are also finds from the Phrygian Valley and interesting Roman votive stellas.

The **Tile Museum** (Çini Müzesi; ☎ 223 6990; admission TL3; ☎ 9am-1pm & 2-5.45pm Tue-Sun) is housed in the İmaret Camii on the opposite side of the Ulu Cami, beneath a magnificent dome. Most of the collection is Kütahya pottery, including work by the master craftsman Hacı Hafız Mehmet Emin Efendi, who worked on İstanbul's Haydarpaşa station. In deference to the town's main rival, there are also some wonderful İznik tiles and a lot of beautiful embroidery. To one side is the 14th-century, blue-tiled tomb of one Yakup Bey.

Nearby is the **Dönenler Cami**, which was built in the 14th century and later served as a *mevlevihane*, or home to a group of Mevlevi dervishes. Inside it has a wonderful, galleried *semahane* with paintings of tall Mevlevi hats on the columns.



Northeast of the Ulu Cami is a sprawling **bazaar** area and, tucked away nearby, Germiyan Sokak, where restored **Ottoman houses** rub shoulders with their crumbling neighbours. To find the bazaar head north up Hürriyet Caddesi.

Follow the signs behind the Ulu Cami to **Kossuth House** (Kossuth Evi; ☎ 223 6214; admission TL3; 🕒 9am-1pm & 2-5.45pm Tue-Sun), also called Macar Evi (Hungarian House). It's roughly 250m straight on up the hill; look for the wood-and-stone house on the left, marked by plaques in Turkish and Hungarian.

Lajos Kossuth (1802-94) was a prominent member of the Hungarian parliament. In 1848, chafing at Hapsburg rule from Vienna, he and others rose in revolt, declaring Hungary an independent republic in 1849. When Russian troops intervened on behalf of the Austrians he was forced to flee. The Ottomans offered him a refuge and he lived in Kütahya from 1850 to 1851.

A stately whitewashed exterior conceals various rooms that provide poignant insights into the life of upper-class Kütahyans in the mid-19th century. The 1st-floor veranda,

overlooking a rose garden with a statue of Kossuth, offers lovely views of the encircling hills. A large map details Kossuth's international travels from 1849 to 1861. He certainly got around.

Looming above the town, **Kütahya fortress** was built in two stages by the Byzantines, then restored and used by the Seljuks, the Germiyan emirs and the Ottomans. The latest building work seems to have taken place in the 15th century, the most recent restoration in the 1990s. One look at the remains of dozens of round towers makes it clear what a formidable obstacle this would have been to any army. It's a long walk up to the fortress so you might want to take a taxi (around TL8). Afterwards you can descend along a steep, scree-covered path that ends near the Ulu Cami.

Sleeping

Kütahya isn't overrun with accommodation options, but there are some OK places to stay.

Hotel Yüksel (☎ 212 0111; Afyon Caddesi 2; s/d/tr TL20/30/40) Neat rooms and bright linen dis-

tinguish this fairly friendly hotel opposite the clock tower. Breakfast isn't included, but prices are flexible and there's a bakery next door or the Karavan *gözleme* booth just across the road.

Otel Köşk (☎ 216 2024; Lise Caddesi 1; s/d/tr TL30/40/50) Despite the tiled reception and spacious rooms, the Köşk suffers the triple whammy of slightly dodgy showers, plywood beds and pink walls. Breakfast is included, but the dining room is so dim you'll probably want to pop around to the bakery near the Yüksel.

Hotaş Hotel (☎ 224 8990; Menderes Caddesi 5; s/d/tr TL37/56/69) Finally the promise of a flash lobby is fulfilled with comfortable (if exceedingly floral) rooms, satellite TV and wi-fi access. Once you've got your money's worth from the rooms there's a souvenir shop and Turkish bath to explore. Ask at reception about the six-room Ottoman-style Şeker Konağı ('Sugar House') with rooms in nearby Germyian Sokak.

Qtahya Otel (☎ 226 2010; www.q-tahya.com; Atatürk Bulvarı 56; s/d/tr TL50/80/110) Flat screen TVs and leather couches feature in reception, and the rooms above are equally comfortable and modern in this convenient spot opposite the otogar. Wi-fi access and a good rooftop restaurant top things off nicely.

Gül Palas (☎ 216 2325; www.gulpalas.com; Zafer Meydanı; s/d/tr TL55/85/110) The tiled facade can't compete with the *belediye* opposite, but the Gül Palas definitely takes old school design honours over any hotel in town. Who couldn't love a tile-trimmed lobby with chandeliers and a rock garden? The rooms and facilities are equally high quality and also feature wi-fi access.

Eating

Kütahya's a university town so there's lots of cheap eats. A basic kebab can start at TL1.25, with a set meal with drink, salad, side order and dessert around TL5. Happy döner discovery along Atatürk Bulvarı.

RESTAURANTS

Karavan Gözleme (☎ 226 4045; Atatürk Bulvarı 12/A; meals TL2-8) It may serve 15 types of *gözleme*, from *haşhaşlı* (poppy-seed) to chocolate, but the Karavan is more than just a pancake place, and also does great pide and *lahmacun*. Pop upstairs to find a small terrace with a mini-jungle and an inviting nargileh lounge with

wi-fi internet. There's another handy Karavan stall nearby for *gözleme* on the go.

Nefis Köfte (☎ 223 0926; Hurriyet Caddesi 43; mains TL4-5; ☎ 11am-11pm) This crazily popular *köfte* joint at the edge of the covered market has been dishing up great Turkish meatballs since 1942. Leave room for dessert from the adjoining baklava bar.

Mülayimoğlları (☎ 224 9203; Atatürk Bulvarı 11; mains TL4-8) The restaurant with the longest name in town has an even longer menu of all your Anatolian favourites, with kebabs, *köfte* and pide served up in flash surroundings trimmed with the best of local Kütahya ceramics.

Yakamoz (☎ 223 0926; Atatürk Bulvarı; mains from TL5; ☎ 11am-11pm) This vast café-restaurant, with indoor and outdoor tables, is extremely popular with young Kütahyalis. Its extensive menu covers everything from pizzas to Turkish puddings.

Döner Restaurant (☎ 226 2176; mains TL6-12; ☎ 11am-9pm) Inside the ruins of the fortress, the Döner used to be a revolving nightclub (no, really), but is now a hilltop restaurant-meets-tea garden. Run by the Karavan chain, the food is decent if a little expensive. The addition of a children's playground – sorry kids – has dulled a previous bohemian vibe, but it's still worth the trek by foot or taxi. After dark, candles produce a softly romantic ambience.

SELF-CATERING

For fresh fruit and vegetables, browse the open-air market up the hill on Lise Caddesi. It's at its liveliest on Saturday. Alternatively, there's a **Tansaş supermarket** (Adnan Menderes Bulvarı; ☎ 9am-10pm).

Drinking & Entertainment

Atatürk Bulvarı is Kütahya's main drinking strip, with venues crammed around Yakamoz. On busy nights it stays open until after midnight.

Voodoo (☎ 226 4146; Atatürk Bulvarı 26) The most pub-like of the bars, complete with wooden beams, a relaxed student vibe, and 0.7L beers to dull the dustiest of bus and dolmuş combos. The music's usually pretty good too. How does Nick Cave and Johnny Cash sound?

K Bar (Atatürk Bulvarı) A cosmopolitan spot with outdoor tables and a cool and compact private bar tucked away in the corner. Blur your eyes a little (actually maybe a little more...),

and you could almost be in Melbourne or Manhattan.

Pubuç (Atatürk Bulvarı) Kütahya's prime spot for 'public drink and dance' (their words, not ours), also advertises itself as 'Exclusive Pub and Club'. Don't worry, it's not that flash. You should be fine in your cleanest dirty shirt.

Carpe Diem (Kambur Sokak; ☎ 11am-11pm) Cool music (vintage reggae when we visited), coffee and tea are combined with mismatched furniture from your first student flat at this laid-back spot. Wi-fi, scrabble and backgammon all come as standard.

Across the lane **şakra** (Kambur Sokak; ☎ 11am-11pm) is same, same but different with a minimalist and arty vibe.

There are good **tea gardens** around Zafer Meydanı and Azerbaycan Parkı, and good views from the outdoor cafés inside Kütahya fortress.

Sinema Hotaş (☎ 216 6767; admission TL9) is opposite the Hotaş Hotel.

Shopping

You can find Kütahya pottery in most Turkish souvenir shops, but it's also good to browse the small stores around Zafer Meydanı. Shops have fine, midrange pieces in a variety of designs, and often a few masterworks for connoisseurs.

Getting There & Away

Kütahya is a provincial capital with regular services to Afyon (TL9, 1½ hours), Ankara (TL20, five hours), Bursa (TL17, three hours), Denizli (TL25, five hours), Eskişehir (TL8, 1½ hours), İstanbul (TL30, six hours) and İzmir (TL25, six hours).

Minibuses to Çavdarhisar, for Aizanoi (TL6, one hour), leave from the local bus stand next to the otogar.

AIZANOI (ÇAVDARHİSAR)

☎ 0274 / pop 2400

The subdued farming village of Çavdarhisar, about 60km southwest of Kütahya, is home to Aizanoi, one of Anatolia's best-preserved Roman temples. Long after the Romans had vanished, a group of Çavdar Tartars used the site as a citadel, giving the village its present name: 'Castle of the Çavdars'.

A couple of hours is enough to see all the ruins, and there's a basic restaurant opposite the entrance.

Sights

TEMPLE OF ZEUS

The great **Temple of Zeus** (admission TL3; ☎ 8am-5.30pm) dates from the reign of Hadrian (r AD 117-138), and was dedicated to the worship of Zeus (Jupiter) and the Anatolian fertility goddess Cybele.

The temple stands deserted but proud in a quiet meadow, founded on a broad terrace created to serve as its precinct. Like the abandoned set of a Hollywood epic, the north and west faces of the temple have their double rows of Ionic and Corinthian columns intact, but the south and east rows have fallen into a picturesque jumble. The three columns at the northeastern corner were toppled by the disastrous Gediz earthquake of 1970, but have since been re-erected. The cella (inner room) walls are intact enough to give a good impression of the imposing whole. An enclosure beside the ticket office holds some of the best pieces of sculpture found here, and dotted around the site are good explanations in Turkish, English and German.

If the ticket office is empty, the custodian will find you to sell you a ticket. Ask him to show you the cryptlike sanctuary of Cybele beneath the temple. Most days the site is deserted, and it will just be you alone with a team of darting lizards, delicate birdsong and the rumble of passing tractors.

OTHER RUINS

After the temple, turn left then right along a path into the fields opposite the temple. Here are the remnants of a 2nd-century AD **Roman bath** and the more substantial ruins of a **theatre** and **stadium**. The stones have crumbled badly and now provide a home for birds and a posse of skittish cats. Approaching the stadium, on the right is an ancient sporting Hall of Fame, with an isolated stretch of wall inscribed with medallions featuring the names of Olympic victors.

Çavdarhisar village is also dotted with chunks of fallen Roman masonry. Black-on-yellow signs also lead to a **Roman bridge** over a small stream (much of the stonework dates back to Hadrian's reign). Follow the signs into the village and the remains of a 2nd-century AD **bath complex**. The shed contains a fine mosaic pavement, mostly covered with geometric patterns but also with a picture of a satyr and maenad. It's kept locked so ask around to find the temple custodian. He'll

throw some water on the mosaic to bring out the colours, an activity which should not be encouraged.

Another sign points to what's called a colonnaded street, but is probably the remains of the Roman **forum**, or marketplace, with fine columns and a marble pavement. Nearby is a **circular market building** with a little turret reconstructed beside it, which dates back to 301 AD, during the reign of Diocletian. On the walls you'll see fixed prices for market goods inscribed in Roman numerals, an attempt to combat inflation. One of these prices reads 'two horses for a strong slave, three slaves for a horse, both equalling 30,000 dinars'. This is one of the earliest known buildings of its type, and nearly two millennia later it's easy to conjure up the hustle and bustle of daily commerce in the Roman era.

Getting There & Away

Çavdarhisar is on the Kütahya–Gediz road. There are minibuses to Çavdarhisar from Kütahya otogar (TL6, one hour) or you can take a Gediz or Emet bus, which passes through Çavdarhisar. Tell the driver you're going to Aizanoi and they'll usually drop you right at the site.

UŞAK

☎ 0276 / pop 173,000

Few visitors stop in Uşak, but there are two treats best appreciated on an overnight stay.

Lydian art, gold and silver treasures feature in the **Archaeology Museum** (Doğan Sokak; admission TL2; ☎ 8.30am–1pm & 2–5.45pm Tue–Sun), just off the main square. The beautiful silver bowls, incense burners, jugs and vases were discovered in *tumuli* around the Gediz river valley and date back to the second half of the 6th century BC. Even more evocative are the eerily Egyptian-style wall paintings from the tombs. Thefts from the museum made world headlines in 2006 and 2007 (see boxed text below).

At the far end of the town centre, past the 1406 Ulu Camii, is the **Otel Dülgeroğlu** (☎ 227 3773; www.dulgeroglu.com.tr; Cumhuriyet Meydanı 1; s/d TL90/135, ste TL170; ☎ ☑). Housed in a *han* designed by a 19th-century French architect, the hotel has very comfortable rooms overlooking a light-filled atrium courtyard with a cosy adjoining bar. Rooms fill up with business travellers midweek, but are empty and discount-friendly on weekends. Highly recommended.

Getting There & Away

Frequent minibuses connect Uşak with Afyon (TL10, 1½ hours), and there are periodic buses from İzmir (TL20, 2½ hours). If you get dropped on the highway (Dörtyöl) follow the signs for the *şehir merkezi* (city centre); it's about 1.5km to the Otel Dülgeroğlu. From the otogar, a taxi should cost around TL8.

UŞAK MUSEUM THEFTS

In 2006 Turkey's cultural establishment was shaken when an inspection of the Uşak museum's Lydian Hoard collection revealed that certain priceless items had been removed and replaced with copies. Nine people (including the director of the museum) were arrested in connection with the theft that included easily concealed items like a tiny winged seahorse. Uşak wasn't the only place to suffer, and subsequent checks revealed similar occurrences at Topkapı Palace in Istanbul, and the Erzurum and Kahramanmaraş museums. Another check of the Uşak museum in June 2007 revealed that a further 38 gold items were missing, but investigators were unsure if this was a result of the 2006 heist.

The Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism has since embarked on a dual strategy of installing sophisticated security systems, and the massive project of checking the authenticity and inventories of all items in Turkish museums. At the time of writing in 2008, the court case against the 'Uşak Nine' was ongoing, but none of the items discovered to be missing in 2006 had been recovered. Prosecutors were still pressing for 25-year jail sentences.

Ironically this isn't the first time these objects were 'stolen'. The original 1960s American excavators removed them from *tumuli* in the valley of the Gediz River and promptly spirited them back to the United States. In 1993 a landmark court ruling decreed they should be returned to their country of origin. It's ironic that Turkey should put so much effort into retrieving its lost treasures, only to lose them from its own museums.

AFYON

☎ 0272 / pop 129,000

Modern Afyon is a provincial capital lounging in the shadow of its ancient and supremely spectacular castle. Once your gaze was tired of this mighty citadel – warning: this might take a while – Afyon has a fine museum, magnificent mosques, and some gloriously ramshackle Ottoman houses.

History

Afyon's history started around 3000 years ago. After occupation by the Hittites, Phrygians, Lydians and Persians, it was settled by the Romans and the Byzantines. Following the Seljuk victory at Manzikert in 1071, Afyon was governed by the Seljuk Turks. The important Seljuk vizier Sahip Ata took direct control of the town and it was called Karahisar-i Sahip through Ottoman times (1428–1923).

During the War of Independence, Greek forces occupied the town on their push towards Ankara. During the Battle of Sakarya, in late August 1921, the republican armies under Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) stopped the invading force within earshot of Ankara in one of history's longest pitched battles. The Greek forces retreated and dug in for the winter near Eskışehir and Afyon.

On 26 August 1922 the Turks began their counteroffensive along an 80km front, advancing rapidly on the Greek army. Within days Atatürk had set up his headquarters in Afyon's *belediye* building and had half the Greek army surrounded at Dumlupınar, 40km to the west. This decisive battle destroyed the Greek army as a fighting force and sent its

survivors fleeing towards İzmir. Like Gallipoli, the battlefields are now protected, forming the Başkomutan National Historical Park.

In 2004 the official name of the town was amended from Afyon ('Opium') to Afyonkarahisar ('Black Fortress of Opium'), a reference to the region's historical role as an opium growing region and the imposing citadel hovering above the town (see boxed text below).

Orientation

The main square, called Hükümet Meydanı and marked by an imposing statue commemorating the Turkish victory over the Greek army in 1922, is northeast of the citadel, at the intersection of Ordu Bulvarı and Milli Egemenlik (Bankalar) Caddesi. About 250m to the southeast another traffic roundabout marks the starting point for Kadınana Caddesi, which runs 2km northeast to the old otogar.

The PTT, ATMs, and hotels and restaurants all lie between the two traffic roundabouts.

The train station is 2km from the centre, at the northeastern end of Ordu Bulvarı. At the time of writing a new otogar was under construction around 3km northwest of the centre on the road to Kütahya.

Information

AVM Kadınana Internet (Bankalar Caddesi 19; per hr TL1; ☎ 9.30am–11pm) On the 4th floor of Afyon's central department store.

Tourist office (☎ 213 5447; Hükümet Meydanı; ☎ 8am–noon & 1.30–5.30pm Mon–Fri) Of debatable value to English-speaking travellers, but at least it offers an ex-

OPIATE OF THE PEOPLE

Afyon's proper name, Afyonkarahisar, actually means Black Fortress of Opium, a tag that not only characterises the castle's appearance but also reflects the area's main cash crop. The peaceful countryside around Afyon produces more than a third of the world's legally grown pharmacy-grade opium, and for two weeks in mid-June the fields shimmer with white and mauve *haşhaşlı çiçekleri* (hash or opium poppies).

The trade is strictly regulated and Afyon is one of only 12 provinces permitted to cultivate the poppies. Most growers are small-scale farmers who use the flowers as a convenient spring crop to bridge the gap between autumn grain harvests. It's not easy money though and it takes a labourer 72 hours to pick and process enough poppies to produce 1kg of opium. The end product is then bought by the government to manufacture morphine.

Afyon is also renowned for its *kaymak* (thick cream). Reputedly it's so good because the local cows graze on the magic poppies.

So if you find yourself standing in uptown Afyon waiting for your man to deal you some primo dairy produce, now you know why...

cellent map. For information on the Phrygian Valley (p303) you're better off seeking information in Eskişehir (p301).

Sights & Activities

CITADEL

Soaring from the plains, the craggy rock with the *kale* or *hisar* (citadel) hovers imposingly above the town. For a closer look find the lane across the street from the Ulu Cami, and follow the green and brown signs. Around 700 steps lead to the summit, passing through a series of guard towers. It's a good workout and unfortunately there is no easier way up. Around the halfway mark, don't be surprised if you start questioning the wisdom of the people that managed, voluntarily, to build such a large fortress somewhere so inaccessible.

Blame the Hittite king Mursilis II for building the first castle around 1350 BC. Every subsequent conqueror since has added their own features. Despite its eventful history there's little to see inside, and contemporary restorations broke clumsily with the original *kara hisar* (black citadel) look by using white stones.

The views from the summit (226m) are spectacular, and it's worth coming up at prayer time for the surround sound of the muezzins from Afyon's many mosques. Note that the castle isn't lit at night which can make it tricky coming down after dusk.

For the best photos of the castle from below, head to the **Kültür ve Semt Evi** (Zaviye Türbe Caddesi), a restored hamam with unobstructed views from its raised terrace.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

Take a dolmuş along Kurtuluş Caddesi, the continuation of Bankalar Caddesi, to Afyon's **Archaeological Museum** (Arkeoloji Müzesi; admission TL3; ☎ 9am-1pm & 2-5.45pm), near the intersection with İsmet İnönü Caddesi. Externally there's not much to distinguish this museum from other local collections, but inside the collection features interesting Hittite, Phrygian, Lydian and Roman discoveries. There are lots of marble statues, reflecting that the nearby quarries at Dokimeon (now İncehisar) were (and still are) an important source of the lustrous rock.

OTHER SIGHTS

The **İmaret Camii**, Afyon's major mosque, is just south of the traffic roundabout at the southern end of Bankalar Caddesi. Built for Gedik Ahmet Paşa in 1472, its design

shows the transition from the Seljuk to the Ottoman style, with the spiral-fluted minaret decorated, Seljuk-style, with blue tiles. The entrance on the eastern side is like an *evyan* (vaulted hall) and leads to a main sanctuary topped by two domes, front and back, a design also seen in the early Ottoman capitals of Bursa and Edirne. The shady park beside it provides a peaceful refuge from bustling Bankalar Caddesi.

Next door, the **İmaret hamamı** (☎ 5am-midnight for men, 8am-8pm for women), housed in a former church, is still well patronised and retains some of the precious old stone basins.

The **Mevlevihane Camii** was once a dervish meeting place and dates back to Seljuk times (13th century), when Sultan Veled, son of dervish founder Celaleddin Rumi, established Afyon as the empire's second-most important Mevlevi centre after Konya. The present mosque, with twin domes and twin pyramidal roofs above its courtyard, dates from only 1908, when it was built for Sultan Abdül Hamit II.

Afyon's **Ulu Cami** (1273) is one of the most important surviving Seljuk mosques, so it's a shame that it's usually locked outside prayer times. If you do manage to get inside you'll find 40 soaring wooden columns with stalactite capitals and a flat-beamed roof. Note the green tiles on the minaret.

The area around the Ulu Cami has many old **Ottoman wooden houses**. Safranbolu (p455) may be in better repair, but Afyon showcases an interesting variety of styles, and still teems with everyday life.

Just along from the tourist office, the **Zafer Müzesi** (Victory Museum; Hükümet Meydanı; admission TL1; ☎ 9am-1pm & 2-5.45pm Tue-Sun) was the first building Atatürk stayed in after liberating Afyon in 1922, and has photos, battle plans and military relics from the battlefields.

Sleeping

Otel Hocaoglu (☎ 213 8182; Kadinana Caddesi, Ambaryolu 12; s/d/tr TL30/45/55) Five storeys of surprisingly bright accommodation near the İmaret Camii. English is (usually) spoken at this spot, just off the main drag, with a tiny lift but a friendly attitude. Rates don't include breakfast.

Hotel Soydan (☎ 215 2323; Turan Emeksiz Caddesi 2; s/d/tr TL35/60/70) Behind the calming green facade this nominal two-star is good value with spacious rooms, wi-fi access, and just maybe Afyon's best fruit and veg shop downstairs.

Çakmak Marble Otel (☎ 214 3300; www.cakmak-marblehotel.com; Süleyman Goncer Caddesi 2; s/d/tr TL77/130/165, ste TL280; 🏠 📺 📺) One block east of Hükümet Meydanı, the Çakmak is the best in town with real deal four-star standards, spacious rooms and marble bathrooms. The carpet's a bit tatty, but excellent service, a swimming pool and Jacuzzi in the basement, and a great breakfast buffet provide positive balance. The Çakmak's 'American Bar' is more faux-Parisian than American, but is one of the only places in town to get a cold beer.

Eating & Drinking

Nazar Döner (cnr Bankalar Caddesi & Uzunçarşı Caddesi; mains TL2-4; 🕒 11am-11pm) A redoubtable and popular choice for good value kebaps, the Nazar dominates this street corner with a beautifully restored bronze antique sign.

AVM Kadinana (☎ 214 7900; Bankalar Caddesi 19; mains TL6-9; 🕒 9.30am-11pm; 📺) The top two floors of this department store cater for a multitude of whims, incorporating a restaurant, *pastanes*, big-screen TV lounge and rooftop café-nargileh terrace with live music. It's hugely popular, and not just for the great views.

İkbal Lokantası (☎ 215 1205; Uzunçarşı Caddesi 21; mains TL6-12; 🕒 9am-10pm) Southwest of Hükümet Meydanı, the İkbal first opened its art deco-tinged doors in 1922 and still holds its own against the competition. There's a good choice of kebaps, stews and desserts, but we just wish the formal waitstaff would lighten up a tad.

Hancıoğlu (Turan Emeksiz Caddesi) Underneath the Hotel Soydan is this superb fruit shop with fresher-than-fresh produce.

Scores of shops around town are draped with necklaces of locally made *sucuk* (sausage) and padded out with pillows of cheese. Grab a loaf of crisp Turkish bread and that's lunch sorted.

Don't forget to pop into one of the local *şekerleme* (sweet shops) for a taste of Afyon's famous *lokum* (Turkish delight).

There are pleasant *çay bahçesi* (tea gardens) in Anıt Parkı, overlooking Hükümet Meydanı. For something stronger head to the **American Bar** at the Çakmak Marble Hotel.

Getting There & Away

Afyon is on the inland routes connecting İstanbul with Antalya and Konya, and İzmir with Ankara and the east. There are regular buses to Ankara (TL20, four hours), Antalya (TL20, five hours), Denizli/Pamukkale (TL18, four hours), Eskişehir (TL13, three

hours), Isparta (TL13, three hours), İstanbul (TL35, eight hours), İzmir (TL20, 5½ hours), Konya (TL25, 3¾ hours) and Kütahya (TL10, 1½ hours).

The **train station** (☎ 213 7919) is 2km north of the town centre. Three or four express trains a day run to İstanbul Haydarpaşa (TL18.25, nine hours), mostly at night; a sleeping compartment costs from TL90. There are also daily services to Eskişehir (TL7, three hours) via Kütahya (TL5.50, two hours), Konya (TL11, five hours) and Denizli (for Pamukkale TL11, five hours).

To get to the centre from the new otogar look for dolmuşes marked 'Çarşı' (TL2); a taxi costs about TL8. To get to the otogar look for a dolmuş marked 'Yeni Otogar' in Gazlıgöl Caddesi, near the tourist information kiosk.

LAKE DISTRICT

Travelling in often dusty Anatolia, you don't need to head to Turkey's southern or western coasts for a few relaxing days beside the water. The Anatolian Lake District comprises three main lakes (*göller*) – Burdur, Eğirdir and Beyşehir – and is a handy substitute forgoing a long bus ride.

The town of Eğirdir is a popular lakeside holiday haven ringed with mountains. Good value pensions provide tours to nearby attractions and lakefront restaurants specialise in local fish. Further south, Beyşehir is worth a visit for its wonderful 13th-century lakeside mosque and old town.

Classics buffs should definitely detour to the ancient cities at Antiocheia-in-Pisidia and Sagalassos; while outdoor enthusiasts can trek or ski in the nearby mountains, visit Çandır Canyon in the Yazılı Nature Park or Lake Kovada National Park, and follow in the footsteps of an apostle along the St Paul Trail.

The best time to visit this lush and verdant region is spring. In April the apple trees blossom, and from mid-May to mid-June the annual rose harvest takes place. Around a month later, the lakes become the favourite summer escape for Turkish families drawn to this relaxing 'coastline' many kilometres inland from the Aegean, Mediterranean or Black Seas.

ISPARTA

☎ 0246 / pop 180,000

Famous for its attar of roses (see boxed text, opposite), Isparta is an important junction east to Eğirdir. Turkey's ninth president

ROSE TOURS

Every May and June the fields around Isparta come into flower. Rose petals plucked carefully at daybreak are made into attar of roses, a valuable oil used in making perfume. The petals are placed in copper vats with steam passed over them. This steam is drawn off and condensed, leaving a thin layer of oil on the surface of the water to be skimmed off and bottled. A hundred kilos of petals produces just 25g of attar of roses, leaving a vast amount of rosewater to be sold locally.

To see the process in action, the Lale Pension (p318) in Eğirdir organises factory tours for TL40 per person, or you may be able to arrange something direct with a manufacturer. **Gülbirlik** (☎ 218 1288; www.gulbirlik.com) is the world's biggest source of rose oil with four processing plants handling 320 tonnes of petals every day. Tours usually take place from mid-May to mid-June each year at the height of the rose season.

(1993–2000), Süleyman Demirel, was a local boy, and there's a quirky statue of him in the town centre.

The **Ulu Cami** (1417) and the **Firdevs Bey Camii** (1561) with its neighbouring **bedesten** (covered market) are both worth a look, with the latter two buildings attributed to the great Mimar Sinan (see boxed text, p111). Also wander into the huge **Hali Saray** (Carpet Palace; Mimar Sinan Caddesi). Four days a week, from 8am to 10am, fine Isparta carpets are auctioned to dealers.

Getting There & Away

The most frequent services to Eğirdir leave from the Çarşı terminal (also called the *köy garajı*) in the town centre, as do dolmuşes for Ağlasun (for Sagalassos). Coming north from Antalya you may find yourself dropped on the outskirts of Isparta and ferried to the otogar in a *servis* (minivan).

To get to Eğirdir (TL4, 30 minutes) from the otogar, take any Konya-bound bus. Direct minibuses from the Çarşı terminal run every 30 minutes (TL4).

There are regular services from Isparta otogar to Afyon (TL13, three hours), Antalya (TL11, two hours), Burdur (TL5, 45 minutes), Denizli (TL13, three hours), İzmir (TL27, six hours) and Konya (TL27, five hours).

To get to the Çarşı terminal catch a Çarşı city bus from in front of the otogar. Note that the hourly minibus service to Burdur leaves from the otogar, not from the Çarşı terminal.

SAGALASSOS

Dramatically sited on the terraced slopes of Ak Dağ (White Mountain), **Sagalassos** (admission TL5; ☎ 7.30am–6pm) is a ruined ancient city backed by sheer rock. Since 1990 Belgian archaeologists have been excavating the city,

one of the largest archaeological projects in the Mediterranean region. It's envisaged Sagalassos may one day rival Ephesus or Pergamum in splendour. The researchers are also reconstructing buildings, made possible because Sagalassos was never pillaged. Surrounded on three sides by mountains, the spectacular backdrop and valley views are unforgettable. Unfortunately the rugged terrain means some ruins are inaccessible to visitors.

Sagalassos dates back to at least 1200 BC, when it was founded by a warlike tribe of 'Peoples from the Sea'. Later it became an important Pisidian city, second only to Antiocheia-in-Pisidia near Yalvaç. The Pisidians built their cities high on easily defended mountains; Termessos (p401) is another example. Sagalassos's oldest ruins date from Hellenistic times, although most surviving structures are Roman. The Roman period was the city's most prosperous, but plague and earthquakes blighted its later history, and Sagalassos was largely abandoned after a massive 7th-century tremor.

The ticket office sells an informative map-guide (TL4). From the entrance a path leads to the **lower agora**, with massive reconstructed Roman **baths** dating from AD 180. A flight of steps lead down from the lower agora to a paved street and the **Temple of Antoninus Pius**, built to honour the cult of the Roman emperors. Heading back to the lower *agora*, climb a slope to the **upper agora**. Facing the *agora* is a huge **fountain complex**, while to the right lies the **bouleuterion** (council meeting-place), with some of its seating intact. The **heroön** (hero's shrine) used to be decorated with carvings of dancing girls. Copies are slowly being reinstated at the site while the originals are gradually being rehoused in Burdur Museum

(right). The *heroon* reputedly once housed a statue of Alexander the Great, who captured the city in 333 BC.

Sagalassos's biggest structure is the 9000-seat **Roman theatre**, one of the most complete in Turkey. Earthquakes have tumbled the rows of seats but otherwise it is intact. Scramble around the rear of the complex to see the tunnels where performers and contestants entered the arena.

Nearby is the late-Hellenistic **fountain house** and the Roman **Neon library** with a fine mosaic floor. Both have been rebuilt, and the fountain house is again functioning using the original water supply. It's an exceptional structure, providing cool and serene sanctuary from the unforgiving surroundings outside. The pavilion housing the Neon library is usually locked, but a good view of the beautiful mosaic floor is possible from the viewing platform.

The cliffs above Sagalassos are dotted with tombs. Except during the summer months when the archaeologists are at work, you're likely to share the site with only a few hardy birds and even hardier lizards. Striding uphill along the ancient trails, the exceptional defensive qualities of Sagalassos soon become apparent.

It's treeless and exposed, so aim for an early start to avoid the midday sun. The ticket office sells drinks. Walking the entire site via the 'scenic' route takes up to 3½ hours, or you can see the most significant structures near the ticket office in about an hour. Signage is excellent with detailed and colourful representations of how various structures looked in Sagalassos' halcyon days. A visit to Sagalassos should be teamed with a trip to Burdur's excellent museum (right).

Getting There & Away

Take a dolmuş south from Isparta's Çarşı terminal to Ağlasun (TL4, one hour, hourly from 6am to 5pm). The last dolmuş from Ağlasun to Isparta leaves at 8pm in summer.

From Ağlasun a signposted turn-off points 7km up the mountain. If you're fit, you could walk up, but it's probably easier to pay the dolmuş driver an extra TL20 to drive you there, wait for an hour and bring you back down again. To get the driver to wait longer you will probably have to agree on a higher fee.

The most straightforward alternative is to join an organised trip from Eğirdir for around TL40 (see p317).

BURDUR

☎ 0248 / pop 63,400

Despite its proximity to saltwater Burdur Gölü (Lake Burdur), Burdur is a modern town enlivened only by an excellent museum and two wonderfully preserved Ottoman houses. Buses from Isparta drop you on the eastern outskirts. From the otogar, turn right and walk along Gazi Caddesi for 15 minutes to the town centre, or catch a city bus from just outside.

To find the **Burdur Museum** (Burdur Müzesi; admission TL5; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Sun), turn right opposite the Hacı Mahmut Bey Camii in Gazi Caddesi. The most impressive exhibits are ceramics, and Hellenistic and Roman statues from Kremna and Sagalassos. But there are also Neolithic finds from the nearby Hacılar and Kuruçay mounds; a 2nd-century bronze torso of an athlete; and several exquisitely carved 'man and wife' sarcophagi. The terrace tea house in the front is great for a post-museum snack.

Burdur's dusty, modern 'burbs also conceal two of Anatolia's best preserved Ottoman houses. **Taş Konağı** (cnr Mehmet Akif Caddesi & Veyis Sokak; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun) houses the Tasoda Ethnographic Museum and dates from the 17th century. With a spacious private courtyard, the ground floor of the house was originally the stables for livestock. On the 1st floor is the *başoda* (main room), an ornate confection with a beautifully carved roof, trimmed with delicate gold and silver. This was where the owner of the house conducted business and received his guests. To find the Taş Konağı from the museum, head south across busy Gazi Caddesi and climb the hill to Ulu Camii. From the mosque head downhill southeast on Ozdemir Sokak. Veyis Sokak is the first street on your right, leading east to the river.

The second of Burdur's museum houses is **Bakibey Konağı** (Divan Baba Caddesi; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun). From Taş Konağı walk southwest up the river to the third bridge along. Cross the river to Divan Baba Caddesi, and Bakibey Konağı is located behind the local Tourism and Cultural Centre. The helpful team there will open the house up for you. The highlight of Bakibey Konağı is an exquisitely carved *eyvan* (balcony). Inside the shady *başoda* is lined with colourful red- and blue-painted wooden panels, some restored, but others with the gloriously faded patina of old age.

Hourly minibuses run to Burdur from the Isparta otogar (TL5, 45 minutes).

DAVRAZ DAĞI (MT DAVRAZ)

The skiing season on Mt Davraz (2635m) runs from mid-December to March. Both Nordic and downhill skiing are possible and there's one 1.2km-long chairlift. A day's skiing, with equipment hire and lift pass, costs around €40; summit treks and paragliding are also possible.

Accommodation is available at the main ski centre and the five-star Sirene Davraz Mountain Resort, but it's really as easy (and cheaper) to stay in Isparta or Eğirdir.

In season there are regular dolmuşes from Isparta (TL8, 40 minutes) and less frequent ones from Eğirdir (TL5, 30 minutes) on weekends. A taxi should cost around TL50.

EĞİRDİR

☎ 0246 / pop 20,400

Sitting peacefully at the southern tip of Eğirdir Gölü (Lake Eğirdir), Eğirdir (pronounced *eh-yeer-deer*) is a pretty spot to recharge during your travels. It's conveniently located on the road from Konya to Antalya and the Aegean, or if you're heading west from Cappadocia to Pamukkale and Ephesus. It's always been a popular stopover and in Lydian times it straddled the Royal Rd, the main route between Ephesus and Babylon.

Overlooked by Davraz Dağı (Mt Davraz; 2635m), Eğirdir is increasingly important as a trekking and climbing base for people exploring Sivri Dağı (Mt Sivri), negotiating Yazılı Kanyon, or trekking part of the St Paul Trail (see p359). Mountain biking, windsurfing and donkey trekking are alternative ways to work off too many meze and fish dinners. In winter it's a cosy base for skiing on Mt Davraz.

Fishing on Lake Eğirdir used to be big business, but at the end of 2008 a four-year ban on professional fishing was put in place to give the fish population a chance to grow.

History

Founded by the Hittites, Eğirdir was taken by the Phrygians (c 1200 BC) and then the Lydians, captured by the Persians and conquered by Alexander the Great. Alexander was followed by the Romans, who called the town Prostanna. Contemporary documents suggest that it was large and prosperous, but no excavations have been done at the site, which lies within a large military enclave.

In Byzantine times, as Akrotiri (Steep Mountain), it was the seat of a bishopric.

Later, it became a Seljuk city (c 1080–1280) and then the capital of a small principality ruled by the Hamidoğulları tribe (1280–1381). The Ottomans took control in 1417, but the population of Yeşilada remained mostly Greek Orthodox until the 1920s.

Under the Turks Akrotiri became Eğridir, meaning 'crooked' or 'bent'. In the 1980s, this was changed to Eğirdir, which means 'she is spinning' – the new name was intended to remove the negative connotations of the old one (and stop the constant jokes), but is also supposedly a reference to an old folk tale about a queen who sat at home spinning, unaware that her son had just died.

Orientation & Information

Eğirdir stretches for several kilometres along the shore of Eğirdir Gölü. Its centre is at the base of a promontory jutting into the lake, marked by an Atatürk statue and a small otogar.

A few hundred metres northeast of the centre, the castle walls rise up at the beginning of the causeway that leads to Canada, (*jahn-ah-da*, or 'Soul Island') and Yeşilada ('Green Island'). Most of the town's best pensions are on Yeşilada or around these walls. A taxi from the otogar to Yeşilada is around TL7 and a dolmuş makes the 1.5km journey (TL1) around 10 times daily.

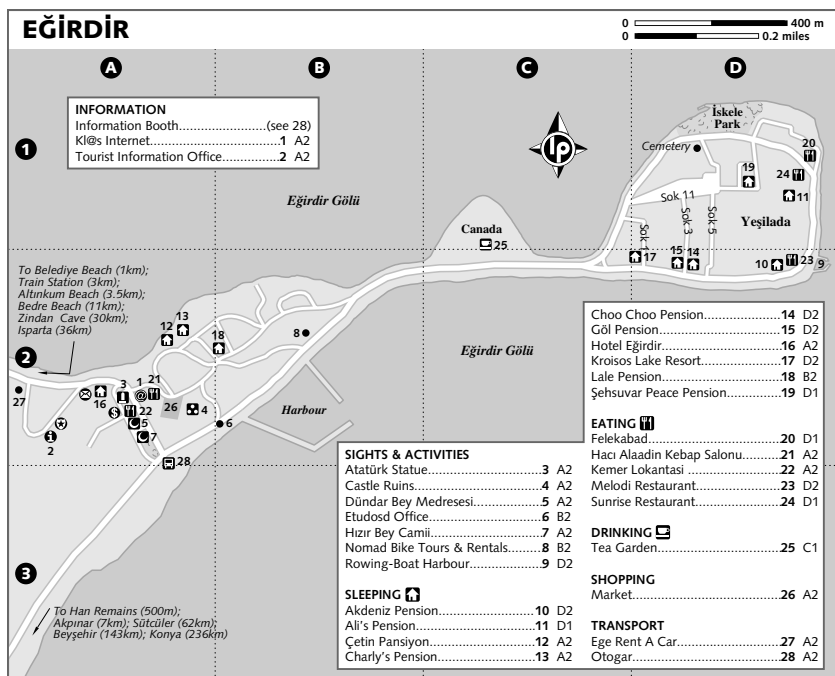
The **tourist information office** (☎ 311 4388; 2 Sahilyolu 13; ☎ 8am–noon, 1–5pm Mon–Fri) is on the main road coming into town. Right beside the otogar there is an infrequently staffed tourist information booth that hands out decent maps.

Head to **Kİ@Internet** (Belediye Caddesi; per hr TL1; ☎ 10am–10pm) to check your email. There is a huddle of ATMs near the Hotel Eğirdir.

Sights & Activities

Eğirdir's sights include the **Hızır Bey Camii**, built as a Seljuk warehouse in 1237, but turned into a mosque in 1308 by the Hamidoğulları emir Hızır Bey. The mosque is quite simple, with a clerestory (row of windows) above the central hall and new tiles around the *mihrab*. Note the finely carved wooden doors and the blue tile trim on the minaret.

Opposite the mosque, the **Dündar Bey Medresesi** was built as a caravanserai by the Seljuk sultan Alaeddin Keykubat in 1218 but converted into a *medrese* in 1285 for the Hamidoğulları emir, Felekeddin Dündar Bey. Now it's a bazaar filled with shops selling tacky



stuff you didn't know you needed. An unusual walk-through minaret with an arch in its base connects the complex to the mosque.

A few hundred metres towards Yeşilada stand the massive walls of the ruined **castle**. Its foundations were probably laid during the reign of Croesus, the 5th-century BC king of Lydia, but it was continually added to by subsequent conquerors.

Out of town towards Konya is a crumbling old **han**.

The local mountain club, **Etudosd** (☎ 311 6356), has its office on the road to Yeşilada and can advise on treks to Mt Davraz, the Barla massif and other good spots. Alternatively, discuss the possibilities and rent tents and sleeping bags from Ibrahim at Lale Pension (p318).

MARKETS

Eğirdir's normal weekly market takes place every Thursday, but for the 10 Sundays between August and October the Yörük people from the mountain villages come to Eğirdir to sell their apples, goats and yoghurt, and to buy winter supplies. It's an opportunity for people

from different villages to meet, and was traditionally the focus for inter-village dating.

On the Saturday before the last Sunday market, when trading was nearly completed, there used to be a market attended only by women. On that day, mothers with sons of marriageable age approached the mothers of acceptable potential daughters-in-law and offered them a handkerchief. If the handkerchief was accepted, introductions between the families and the prospective bride and groom could begin. If all went well, the marriage took place in the spring of the following year.

BEACHES

Yeşilada has no real beaches, although there's nothing to stop you swimming off the rocks around the island. The small cove opposite Ali's Pension is relatively sheltered and clean, but you might want to keep your flip-flops on to battle the awkwardly-shaped pebbles. To sunbathe you'll need to find a more isolated stretch of beach to the northwest of the island.

The following local beaches have changing cabins and food stands or restaurants.

The free, sandy **Belediye Beach** is at Yazla, less than 1km from the centre on the Isparta road.

Pebbly **Altinkum Beach** (admission TL2.50) is several kilometres further north. In summer, dolmuşes run here every 15 minutes (TL1) from in front of the otogar. A taxi is around TL10. With a good licensed restaurant, it's a fine place to take your foot off the travel accelerator for an afternoon.

Further north, 11km on the road to Barla, **Bedre Beach** has 1.5km of pristine sand. Cycle here or catch a taxi (around TL12 each way).

Tours

Most pensions offer **boat trips**, or you'll be offered one by the guys near the harbour. Some trips are free with accommodation, though usually you'll pay up to TL25 per person.

Other **day trips** are to Sagalassos, Lake Kovada National Park or Yazılı Canyon Nature Park. Expect to pay around TL30 to TL40 per person, although this can be higher for small groups. During the peak season there should be enough travellers around to score a good deal.

Nomad Bike Tours & Rentals (☎ 3116688; www.nomadbiketours.com; Ata Yolu Üzeri) can suggest itineraries and organise custom tours as well as hiring out mountain bikes at TL15/20 per half-day/full day. Fully guided trips including a day-long descent of Mt Davraz cost around US\$40. At the time of writing, Nomad's friendly owner Kadir Can was planning two- to five- day donkey treks and renting out kayaks and windsurfers. At the very least it's worth popping in for some of Eğirdir's best coffee.

For information on local rose tours see boxed text, p313.

Another option is to go exploring with a rental car. **Ege Rent A Car** (☎ 311 4583; Sahil Yolu 2; per day TL130) has a small fleet of Sagalassos-ready sedans.

Sleeping

Choose between staying on Yeşilada at the end of the promontory, or in the mainland part of town. Yellow signs point the way to most pensions.

If you arrive at the start or end of the season, remember that nights can be cold, so look for a pension with central heating. Most places have hot water, although you may need to ask your host to turn it on.

In high season (from mid-June to mid-September), Eğirdir pension owners, espe-

cially on Yeşilada, are sometimes reluctant to take single travellers. Even if you offer to pay the double rate, they may still turn you down because they won't be able to sell two meals.

YEŞİLADA

Yeşilada has a dozen or so family-run pensions and restaurants. Most of the pensions are fairly similar and none is in a particularly inspiring building, but the island is small enough to walk around in 15 minutes so it's easy to make a quick circuit before choosing. Remember it's a 1.5km walk back to town across the causeway, but there is enough variety with the eateries on Yeşilada for at least a couple of nights.

Şehsuvar Peace Pension (☎ 311 2433; www.peacepension.com; s/d TL35/50) Spacious rooms and a quiet, shaded terrace trimmed with grapevines feature in this low-key family-run pension that's a few hundred metres inland near the island's sleepy *meydan* (main square). Rowboats and bicycles are available for rent, and the restaurant does a fine line in fish and lobster.

Akdeniz Pension (☎ 311 2432; s/d TL35/50) This pension is run by an elderly couple who don't speak much English, but offer lots in the way of gentle homespun hospitality. It has four simple but spotless balcony rooms and a vine-shaded terrace.

Choo Choo Pension (☎ 319 4926; huseyinp01@hotmail.com; s/d/tr TL35/55/65) The mock-castle exterior is a bit odd, but inside the spacious rooms are well kept and clean, and there's the convenient bonus of the Halikarnas lakefront restaurant a few metres away.

ourpick Ali's Pension (☎ 311 2547; www.alispension.com; s/d/tr TL35/55/65; 📺) A flash new sunset-friendly balcony and rustic wooden floors feature at this nine-room pension on the far side of the island. Excellent English is spoken and hostess Birsen and her family redefine the boundaries of genuine hospitality. Yeşilada's best breakfasts regularly break the mould of the same old bread, cheese and cucumber combo, and we challenge you to find fresher and tastier *çigara börek* (deep-fried savoury pastries) anywhere in Turkey. Ali's is open year-round to cater to ski and snowboard types heading for Mt Davraz.

Göl Pension (☎ 311 2370; ahmetdavraz@hotmail.com; r TL60-70; 📺) Run by a trio of sisters, the welcome at Göl can be more stand-offish and business-like than the warm, family welcomes

at other pensions around town, but the rooms are spacious and well-maintained. Downstairs features shared bathrooms, while upstairs are two rooms with separate bathrooms and a private terrace. An OK backup.

Kroisos Lake Resort (☎ 311 5006; www.kroisoshotel.com; s/d/tr TL50/90/110) Caution: must like green. This conventional hotel, with some rooms resembling Kermit's abode, lacks the personal family atmosphere of the better pensions. On the plus side, facilities include ski and bike hire, a lounge with piano and occasional live music in the restaurant.

MAINLAND

Charly's Pension (☎ 311 4611; www.charlyspension.com; Kale Mahallesi; dm TL12, s/d/tr TL20/35/45) This new opening from the team at Lale Pension is in a heritage (1890) lakeside house with crazily sloping wooden floors and chill-out areas looking onto a private beach. Dorm rooms with shared bathrooms are simple, but with cool beats and wi-fi access don't be surprised if you stay longer than you'd originally planned. A couple of other rooms feature private bathrooms. Breakfast is TL6.

Çetin Pansiyon (☎ 311 2154; Kale Mahallesi; s/d/tr TL30/50/60) A friendly family run this welcoming spot with six airy and bright rooms on the quieter side of the castle. A shared upstairs lounge has excellent views across the lake to Mt Barla. Breakfast is an additional TL6.

Lale Pension (☎ 311 2406; www.lalehostel.com; Kale Mahallesi 5 Sokak 2; s/d/tr/q TL35/55/65/80; 🚰 📺) Up behind the castle, the Lale Pension has neat air-con rooms with private bathrooms and a quiet, family atmosphere. There are great lake views from a rooftop lounge that's also crammed with information on tours and treks. Bike hire is TL20 per day, boat tours and canyon trips TL40 per person, and breakfast TL6. In a separate building nearby, the Lale Hostel has rooms with shared bathroom (TL20 to TL45) as well as backpacker-friendly dorm beds (TL12). At the time of writing the go-ahead team at Lale were also planning to open a boutique hotel. Ask at Lale Pension for the latest.

Hotel Eğirdir (☎ 311 3961; www.hotelegirdir.com; 2 Sahil Yolu 2; s/d/tr TL45/70/90) The main port of call for tour groups, this big three-star block has an impressive lobby and modest but adequate rooms with appealing linen and small balconies overlooking the lake. The bar's a good place to celebrate another day on the road.

Eating

Virtually every pension and hotel has a restaurant attached; these often provide the best-value meals, but there are other dining options if you want a bit of variety. Local *istakoz* (crayfish) is in season in July–August, but before you order check if the restaurant is serving the local delicacy fully-grown and mature.

Hacı Alaadin Kebap Salonu (☎ 311 4154; Belediye Caddesi 17; mains TL2-7; 🕒 9am-10pm) Tucked amid shops in the town centre, this reliable spot gets the woodfires burning early in the day to provide excellent kebaps, pide and *lahmacun*. Try that strange Eğirdir speciality, *şekerli pide* (cheese pide sprinkled with sugar). It's only TL2 so where's the risk?

Kemer Lokantasi (☎ 311 4247; Sahil Yolu 20; mains TL6-8; 🕒 11am-10pm) Very popular value eatery with lots of veg options. If your inner carnivore demands attention, Eğirdir's best kebab stalls are lurking a few metres away in a pedestrian square with loads of outdoor tables.

Felekabad (☎ 311 5881; Yeşilada; mains TL6-10; 🕒 11am-10pm) A simple restaurant with a conservatory section and lakefront seating enjoying a faint garden ambience. It's alcohol free and has a playground, so it's popular with local families.

Sunrise Restaurant (☎ 311 5852; Yeşilada; mains TL6-12; 🕒 11am-10pm) Next to the Felekabad, the Sunrise is popular with Turkish visitors from the city. And yes, you can get a cold beer to go with your meze or fresh fish.

Melodi Restaurant (☎ 311 4816; Yeşilada; mains TL8-14; 🕒 11am-10pm) Excellent meze, caught-this-morning fish and an absolute lakefront location add up to the eatery widely regarded as the best in town. The food's certainly very good, but the occasional bout of inattentive service sometimes lets the side down.

The popular *çay bahçesi* on Canada makes a fine place to stop for a drink or a snack; it also has a children's playground.

Getting There & Away

If there's no bus leaving straightaway for your destination, hop on a minibus to Isparta (TL5, 30 minutes) and catch one from there (see p313).

TRAIN

At the time of writing train services to Eğirdir had been suspended. Even trains nominally to Isparta usually involve being offloaded at

BUS SERVICES FROM EĞİRDİR'S OTOGAR

Destination	Fare (TL)	Duration (hr)	Frequency (per day)
Ankara	29	7	3 morning & evening
Antalya	13	2½	3 morning & afternoon
Denizli	15	3	3 morning & evening
İstanbul	42	11	1 evening only
İzmir	27	7	3 morning & evening
Konya	25	4	3 morning & afternoon
Nevşehir	30	8	2 morning & evening
Sütçüler	10	1½	frequent
Yalvaç	8	1	frequent

the town of Dinar to complete the journey to Isparta by bus. Getting to and from Eğirdir is most straightforward by bus.

AROUND EĞİRDİR**Sivri Dağı (Mt Sivri) & Akpınar**

Sivri Dağı ('Sharp Mountain'; 1749m) dominates views southwest of Eğirdir. High up on its steep slopes, the tiny village of Akpınar clings with a winning combo of apple orchards and photogenic lake views. To get there, head 3km south of Eğirdir along the lakeshore road to the suburb of Yeni Mahalle, where a road winds 4km up the mountain to the village. It's a steep walk, which should take about two hours if you're in reasonable shape. A taxi there and back from Eğirdir costs around TL15.

The village has a ramshackle collection of mismatched chairs and tables masquerading as a teahouse. Expect zingy homemade *ayran* (yoghurt drink) and freshly made *gözleme*. The terrific views of Eğirdir reinforce how downright fragile the slim causeway to Yeşilada looks from this high.

Serious hikers can continue to the top of the mountain, but some of the rocks are unstable and there have been fatalities in the past – seek local advice before setting out and take great care. Don't try climbing from the commando base (north) side, as chances are the boys in green won't appreciate it.

Kovada Gölü National Park, Yazılı Canyon Nature Park & Çandır Kanyon

Noted for its flora and fauna, **Lake Kovada National Park** (Kovada Gölü Milli Parkı) surrounds a small lake connected to Lake Eğirdir by a channel. It's a pleasant place for a hike and a picnic. The St Paul Trail (see p359 for details) passes nearby. Close by is the **Kasnak**

Forest, visited by botanical enthusiasts for its rare orchids.

About 73km south of Eğirdir, the **Yazılı Canyon Nature Park** (Yazılı Kanyon Tabiat Parkı; admission TL1, car TL2) protects a forested gorge deep in the mountains separating the Lake District (ancient Pisidia) and the Antalya region (Pamphylia). After paying the admission fee at the car park, follow a path 1km upstream through the glorious **Çandır Kanyon** to some shady bathing spots; the water is icy cold even in late spring. In July and August the canyon heaves with sunbathing Turkish families, but at other times you could be all alone. The canyon is also part of the St Paul Trail with signs marking it's another eight extremely scenic hours walking to the hilltop town of Sütçüler.

The park takes its name from the inscriptions carved in the rocks lining the gorge (*yazılı* means 'written'); they are still clearly visible, although most have unfortunately been vandalised.

The **Yazılı Kanyon Restaurant and Kamping Alanı** (2-person tent TL25), in the car park at the entrance, offers meals of fresh trout, salad and a drink for TL8. We especially like the restaurant tables half-submerged in the crystalline waters of the babbling brook. Imagine that after walking eight hours on the St Paul Trail.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

The easiest way to get to Kovada Gölü and the Çandır Kanyon is to sign up with a tour from one of the pensions in Eğirdir (around TL25). Out-of-season taxi tours, including a three-hour wait, will cost around TL60 to the lake, or TL100 to the lake and the canyon. You could also try hitching on a summer Sunday when locals head out for picnics.

Zıندان Mağarası (Zıندان Cave)

Another possible excursion is to Zıندان Mağarası, which lies 30km southeast of Eğirdir and 1km north of the village of Aksu, across a fine Roman bridge. The kilometre-long cave has Byzantine ruins at its mouth, lots of stalactites and stalagmites, and a curious room dubbed the Hamam. There's a pleasant walk along the river if caves aren't really your thing.

Pensions organise tours to the cave in summer (around TL25), or taxis charge about TL60 per carload.

Sütçüler

☎ 0246 / pop 3700

The area around Eğirdir is increasingly popular with walkers, particularly now the well-waymarked St Paul Trail (see p359) passes through the area. Easily accessible from Eğirdir, Sütçüler is a fairly unremarkable small town spread out along a winding mountain road. The views effortlessly whet the appetite for a good trek though, and the location is a good base for a few days' walking.

As well as the walking possibilities, buses from Eğirdir pass within 1km of the romantically deserted ruins of the Roman town of **Adada**, where recognisable remnants include a dramatic Roman road entrance, a 1000-seat *agora* and the temple of Trajan.

Sütçüler only has one accommodation option, **Otel Karacan** (☎ 351 2411; www.karacanotel.com; Atatürk Caddesi 53; half-board TL40; 📺), which has 25 spacious rooms, some without bathroom. The garden terrace and the indoor restaurant (which has big windows) look out to the green vistas below; and a well-worn guitar and a row of nargilehs hint at fun nights after a long day's walking. Meals at this family hotel are prepared with organic produce and the owners are thoroughly helpful, with some English spoken. A short walk down the hill from the Karacan is Sütçüler's compact village square which has a good selection of outdoor cafés. During the peak walking season (in July and August) Otel Karacan is popular with groups and booking in advance is recommended.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Seven daily buses run between Isparta and Sütçüler (TL12, 1½ hours), passing through Eğirdir (TL10).

YALVAÇ & ANTIOCHEIA-İN-PİSIDİA

☎ 0246 / pop 28,900

You might want to pause in the market town of Yalvaç to visit the extensive ruins of Antiocheia-in-Pisidia, located on a stark mountainside to the northeast. The town is easily reached as a day trip from Eğirdir.

Antiocheia-in-Pisidia

About 2km from Yalvaç centre lies the site of **Antiocheia-in-Pisidia** (admission TL3; ☎ 9am-6pm), an ancient city that was abandoned in the 8th century after Arab attacks.

From the gate, a Roman road leads uphill past the foundations of a triumphal archway, then turns right to the **theatre**. Further uphill, on a flat area surrounded by a semicircular wall of rock, is the city's main **shrine**. This was originally dedicated to the Anatolian mother goddess Cybele, then later to the moon god Men, but in Roman times it featured an imperial cult temple dedicated to Augustus. A path heads left to the **nymphaeum**, once a permanent spring but now dry.

Several arches of the city's **aqueduct** are visible across the fields. Downhill from the nymphaeum are the ruins of the **Roman baths**. Several large chambers have been excavated and much of the original ceiling is intact. On the way back to the entrance you pass the foundations of **St Paul's Basilica**, built on the site of the synagogue. The itinerant tent-maker and apostle's preaching here provoked such a strong reaction that he and St Barnabas were expelled from the city.

After exploring the site drop into the excellent **Yalvaç Museum** (Yalvaç Müzesi; admission TL3; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm Tue-Sun). Housed in a wonderfully restored heritage building in the town centre, a plan of the ruins and a modest collection of finds from the site will complete your visit. The museum's ethnography section has a fine recreation of the Ottoman-era living room of a wealthy household.

Getting There & Away

Regular buses link Yalvaç with Eğirdir (TL10, one hour).

BEYŞEHİR

☎ 0332 / pop 41,700

The main town on this region's third major lake, fast-growing Beyşehir has preserved its Ottoman heart against the waves of modernity, and is home to one of Anatolia's best

medieval mosques. Founded around the 6th century BC, Beyşehir has changed hands innumerable times in the course of history (including 20 times between just 1374 and 1467!), but was most favoured under the 13th-century Seljuks, who considered it a second capital.

In 1296 Şeyheddin Süleyman Bey was responsible for creating the **Eşrefoğlu Camii**, which, with its 42 soaring wooden pillars, coloured mosaics and beautiful blue-tiled *mihrab*, is second only in architectural importance to Afyon's Ulu Cami. Originally it was open to the skies and used only on Friday; nowadays, however, the roof has been covered over. Süleyman Bey is buried beside the mosque. Other key old-town buildings are nearby, including the many-domed **Dokumaçılar Hanı bedesten** (Cloth Hall; storage chamber), the **Çifte Hamamı** and the **İsmail Ağa Medrese**.

The mosque is right on the lakeshore, reached from the town centre by crossing the impressive arched 1908 railway bridge and following the waterline. Evening boat tours are also on offer with **Eşrefoğlu Yat** (☎ 0542 841 8784; tour TL5), which lets you see the lake-facing side mosque while nibbling some cheap-as-chips *köfte* (TL3).

There are a couple of accommodation options in town if you need to stay over; the **Beyaz Park Motel** (☎ 512 4535; s TL22, d TL50-55), by the bridge, has a great terrace café-restaurant.

Getting There & Away

There are regular buses to Eğirdir (TL12, two hours) and Konya (TL10, one hour). City buses (TL1) serve the otogar twice hourly, passing near the mosque.

PAMUKKALE REGION

Pamukkale is the biggest tourist drawcard in western Anatolia, with one million visitors annually drawn by posters – quite possibly manipulated in PhotoShop – of happy travellers frolicking in gleaming white travertines.

Sadly, the hype was too effective in past decades, and the state of the pools spiralled into pollution and overuse. Since being granted World Heritage status in 1988, access to the travertines is carefully controlled; and a Unesco-authorised strategy (see boxed text, p324) is trying to undo the dam-

age and prevent any further degradation of this unique site. The poignant and extensive ruins of the Roman spa town of Hierapolis also make Pamukkale worth a visit. In summer just be prepared to share the vistas with scores of visitors deposited by tour buses.

NYSSA (NYSYA)

East of Aydın, you're in the fertile country of the Büyük Menderes River valley. Cotton fields fill the horizon, and during the late October harvest the highways are jammed with tractors hauling trailers laden with the white puffy stuff. Other important crops include pomegranates, pears, citrus fruits, apples, olives and tobacco.

About 31km east of Aydın stands the town of Sultanhisar. A 3km uphill walk to the north brings you to ancient **Nyssa** (admission TL3; ☎ during daylight), set on a hilltop amid olive groves. A custodian will show you around the **theatre**, and there's also a 115m-long **tunnel** beneath the road and parking area that was once the ancient city's main square. Walk another five minutes up the hill, along the road and through a field, and you'll come to the **boul-euterion**, with some attractive sculpture fragments. Other highlights include a **library** and a portico-lined **agora**. Compared to Ephesus, you'll need a greater sense of imagination to bring this ancient city to life, but you'll definitely be rewarded by the hilltop location that's usually devoid of other visitors.

Getting There & Away

İzmir–Denizli trains stop in town, and many east–west buses run along the highway. Dolmuşes run to Sultanhisar from Nazilli every 15 minutes (TL1.50).

DENİZLİ

☎ 0258 / pop 323,000

The prosperous town of Denizli is famous for its textiles, and lining the road to Pamukkale you'll see many outlet centres selling cheap but good quality towels and bed linen. For most travellers though, it's just a place to hop off a bus or train and onto a bus or dolmuş heading north to Pamukkale.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Turkish Airlines (www.thy.com) has daily flights to Denizli from İstanbul at 6.55am and 5.55pm. From the airport a Turkish Airlines shuttle

SERVICES FROM DENİZLİ'S OTOGAR

Destination	Fare (TL)	Duration (hr)	Distance (km)	Frequency (per day)
Afyon	18	4	240	8
Ankara	35	7	480	frequent
Antalya	25	5	300	several
Bodrum	25	4	290	several
Bursa	40	9	532	several
Fethiye	20	5	280	several
Isparta	13.50	3	175	several
İstanbul	45	12	665	frequent
İzmir	20	4	250	frequent
Konya	30	6	440	several
Marmaris	20	3	185	several
Neşehir	35	11	674	at least 1 nightly
Selçuk	18	3	195	several, or change at Aydın

bus (TL12) drops passengers at the Denizli otogar on request. A taxi from the airport to Denizli is around TL40 and around TL75 to Pamukkale.

On departure there is no public transport from Denizli to the airport. Catch a dolmuş to the otogar (TL2), a taxi to the Turkish Airlines office (TL10) and then the Turkish Airlines shuttle (TL12) to the airport. The shuttle bus leaves the Turkish Airlines office around two hours before flight time. For Turkish Airlines' 8.40am departure to İstanbul you'll need to catch a taxi direct to the Turkish Airlines office as dolmuşes do not run early enough.

BUS

There are frequent buses between İzmir and Denizli via Aydın and Nazilli. The Denizli otogar has an *emanetçi* (left-luggage office) next to the PTT.

Denizli is a key transport hub for all of Turkey. Some daily services are listed in the table above.

The local bus service to Pamukkale leaves from inside the otogar and runs every 15 minutes, with no waiting about for it to fill up. Touts taking commissions from hotels may try to get you to take the dolmuşes that wait beside the otogar instead of the bus. In summer these fill up quickly, but at other times you could be waiting around. Buses and dolmuşes to Pamukkale cost exactly the same (TL2).

TRAIN

The train station is on the main highway, across the road from the otogar and a short distance from the Üçgen roundabout.

On arrival at the train station, walk out of the front door, cross the highway, turn left and walk one block to the otogar to catch a dolmuş or bus to Pamukkale.

The nightly *Pamukkale Ekspresi* (seat TL25, couchette TL34, sleeper TL64 to TL104, 15½ hours) travels between Denizli and İstanbul via Afyon (TL20, six hours). It leaves from İstanbul (Haydarpaşa) at 5.30pm and from Denizli at 5pm. At the time of writing track work was making the journey longer than normal, but this was scheduled to be completed in late 2008.

Many people enjoy the relatively short run from Denizli to Selçuk (TL10, two hours), which passes through attractive countryside and leaves/arrives during sensible daylight hours.

At the time of writing the Denizli to İzmir train (TL12, 4½ to 5½ hours) via Afyon was suspended for track work.

PAMUKKALE

☎ 0258 / pop 2500

The restorative qualities of the calcium-rich waters of the town of Pamukkale ('Cotton Castle') have a centuries-old reputation. The unique travertine (calcium carbonate) shelves and pools above the town were created when warm mineral water cooled and deposited calcium as it cascaded over the cliff edge. The Romans built a large spa city, Hierapolis, to take advantage of the water's curative powers.

Centuries later the visitors are still coming, many now staying only a few hours, before being whisked to Ephesus or for a night in tawdry Karahayıt a few kilometres west of Pamukkale.

Pamukkale village has some excellent and good-value hotels and pensions, and if you steer clear of the touristy ambience of the main road beneath the travertines, the settlement's sleepy village charm is still largely intact. Several other attractions are within easy reach, including Afrosdisias (p328), one of Turkey's most absorbing archaeological sites, and Laodicea (p328), one of the Biblical 'Seven Churches of Asia'.

Orientation & Information

Pamukkale and Hierapolis form a national park, with main entrances to the north and south. Cars can reach the southern entrance (*güney girişi*) via Pamukkale village (1km), or the northern entrance (*kuzey girişi*) via Karahayıt. It's a 500m walk from the southern entrance to the centre of the site, and 2.5km from the northern entrance. These two entrances are mainly used by tour buses.

Independent travellers usually use a third entry point via a ticket kiosk opposite Pamukkale's main road, Mehmet Akif Ersoy Bulvarı. From there it is a 250m walk uphill through the travertines to the plateau where Hierapolis is located.

Pamukkale **tourist office** (☎ 272-2077; www.pamukkale.gov.tr; ☎ 8am-noon & 1-5.30pm Mon-Sat) is on the plateau above the travertines, along with a PTT, ATM, and first-aid post. There is another ATM and police post at the base of the travertines near the ticket kiosk; and a third ATM, another PTT and internet cafés are located in Pamukkale village. Most pensions also provide internet access. The nearest banks are in Denizli.

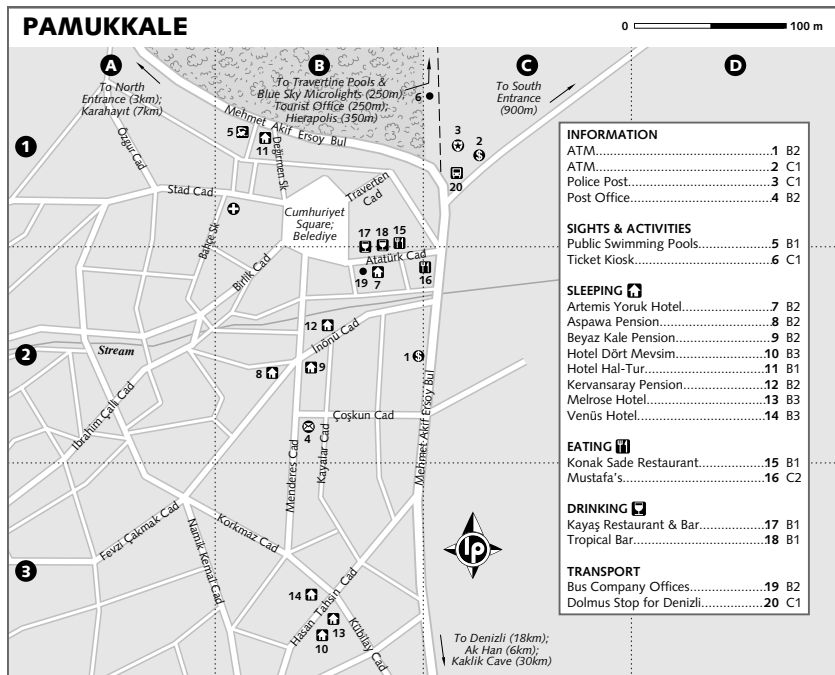
Pamukkale now receives over one million visitors per year, and the recent increase in entrance fee is funding the landscaping of the area below the travertines and improved facilities on the plateau.

For a sky high view of Hierapolis and the travertines try **Blue Sky Microlights** (☎ 461 2432; www.fly-blue-sky.com; 12-min flight US\$70, 17-min flight US\$95; ☎ daylight only). You'll find it at the northern entrance of the travertines.

Sights

TRAVERTINES

Most people come to Pamukkale to see its famous **travertines** (admission TL20; ☎ during daylight). Walking around them – you'll need to take



ENSURING A FUTURE FOR PAMUKKALE

You may be disappointed by the state of the travertines, especially if you've seen older photographs of Pamukkale in tourist offices around Turkey. But since Unesco World Heritage protection was granted in 1988, significant steps have been taken to ensure the future of the site. Hotels on the plateau were demolished and a road that went through the heart of the travertines removed.

And despite the hearsay, it's not the swimming pools of the pensions in the village below causing the pools to be bereft of water. A managed process authorised by Unesco actually drains and fills the pools of water on a rotating basis. The aim is to reduce pollution and algae in the pools and to allow the sun to bleach the pools a glistening white, only possible when the pools are empty of water.

With over a million visitors each year, Pamukkale continues to be under significant environmental pressure, but unlike 30 years ago the future of the site is now under more careful and considered protection.

your shoes off – is enjoyable, but there are only certain areas with unrestricted access. If you're whistled at by a strident uniformed security guard, don't be too surprised. You'll also notice an influx of day trippers – mainly Russians – who regard it as appropriate to wander around the travertines and the ancient wonders of Hierapolis wearing skimpy bathing attire. Personally we'd like to see Pamukkale's whistling security personnel also adopt a wider brief as fashion police. Note that the TL20 admission fee is only applicable for one day, and we've also heard reports of travellers being refused re-entry when they returned for a second visit later in the day. It's best to treat your entry on a once-only basis.

From the ticket kiosk it's a 250m barefoot walk to the plateau along a calcium path through the travertines themselves. Tiny ridges of calcium make this tough on tender feet. The best time to visit is morning and late afternoon to avoid the massive influx of tour buses.

Swim in the Antique Pool (see right) in Hierapolis, or the **public swimming pools** with travertine views on the main road past Pamukkale village.

HIERAPOLIS

The ruins of Hierapolis brilliantly evoke life in the early centuries of the modern era. Here pagan, Roman, Jewish and early Christian elements evolved into a distinctly Anatolian whole. To inspect the sprawling ruins carefully could take a day, but most visitors settle for a couple of hours.

Founded around 190 BC by Eumenes II, king of Pergamum, Hierapolis was a cure centre that prospered under the Romans and even

more under the Byzantines, when it gained a large Jewish community and an early Christian congregation. Sadly, recurrent earthquakes regularly brought disaster and after a major tremor in 1334 the city was abandoned.

The centre of Hierapolis may originally have been the sacred pool, which is now the swimming pool in the courtyard of the **Antique Pool** (adult/child TL18/9; ☎ 9am-7pm) spa. You can still bathe in it amid submerged sections of original fluted marble columns. The water temperature is a languid 36°C. There are lockers for your gear, and the pool is surrounded by a number of café-bar kiosks. In the peak season from around 11am to 4pm, the pool is a busy watery scrum of day trippers, but it generally empties out later in the afternoon.

Near the Hierapolis Archaeology Museum stand a ruined **Byzantine church** and the foundations of a **Temple of Apollo**. As at Didyma and Delphi, the temple had an oracle tended by eunuch priests. The source of inspiration was an adjoining spring called the Plutonium, dedicated to Pluto, god of the underworld. To confirm its direct line to Hades, the spring released toxic vapours, lethal to all but the priests, who would demonstrate its potent powers by tossing small animals and birds in to watch them die.

To find the spring, walk up towards the Roman theatre, enter the first gate in the fence on the right, then follow the path down to the right. To the left, in front of the big, block-like temple, is a small subterranean entrance closed by a rusted grate and marked by a sign reading 'Tehlikelidir Zehirli Gaz' (Dangerous Poisonous Gas). Listen and you will hear the gas bubbling up from the waters below. Note that it is still deadly poisonous, and before

the grate was installed there were several fatalities among those with more curiosity than sense.

The spectacular **Roman theatre**, capable of seating more than 12,000 spectators, was built in two stages by the emperors Hadrian and Septimius Severus. Much of the stage survives, along with some of the decorative panels and the front-row 'box' seats for VIPs. It was restored by Italian stonemasons in the 1970s (seeboxed text below). The new wooden rails are intended to stop people toppling down the tiers.

From the theatre, rough tracks lead uphill to the extraordinary octagonal **Martyrium of St Philip the Apostle**, built on the site where it's believed that St Philip was martyred. The arches of the eight individual chapels are all marked with crosses. The views are wonderful and few of the tours bring visitors this far.

Across the hillside in a westerly direction is the completely ruined **Hellenistic theatre**. Looking down you'll see the 2nd-century **agora**, one of the largest ever discovered. Marble porticoes with Ionic columns sur-

rounded it on three sides, while a basilica closed off the fourth.

Walk down the hill and through the *agora*, and you'll re-emerge on the main road along the top of the ridge. Turn right towards the northern exit and you'll come to the marvellous colonnaded **Frontinus Street**, with some of its paving and columns still intact. Once the city's main north-south commercial axis, this street was bounded at both ends by monumental archways. The ruins of the **Arch of Domitian**, with its twin towers, are at the northern end, but just before them don't miss the surprisingly large **latrine** building, with two channels cut into its floor, one to carry away sewage, the other for fresh water.

Beyond the Arch of Domitian are the ruins of the **Roman baths**, then the Appian Way of Hierapolis, an extraordinary **necropolis** (cemetery), extending several kilometres to the north. Look out for a cluster of circular tombs, supposedly topped with phallic symbols in antiquity. In ancient times Hierapolis was a place where the sick came for a miracle cure, but the scale of the necropolis suggests the local healers had mixed results.

UNEARTHING AN ESSENTIAL PAST

How long were you involved in the excavations of Hierapolis? I'm retired now, but I worked with Paolo Verzone and the Italian Archaeological Mission for 29 years from 1975. There were also Germans and Argentinians involved in the excavation of Hierapolis. Germany and Argentina both also provided sponsorship.

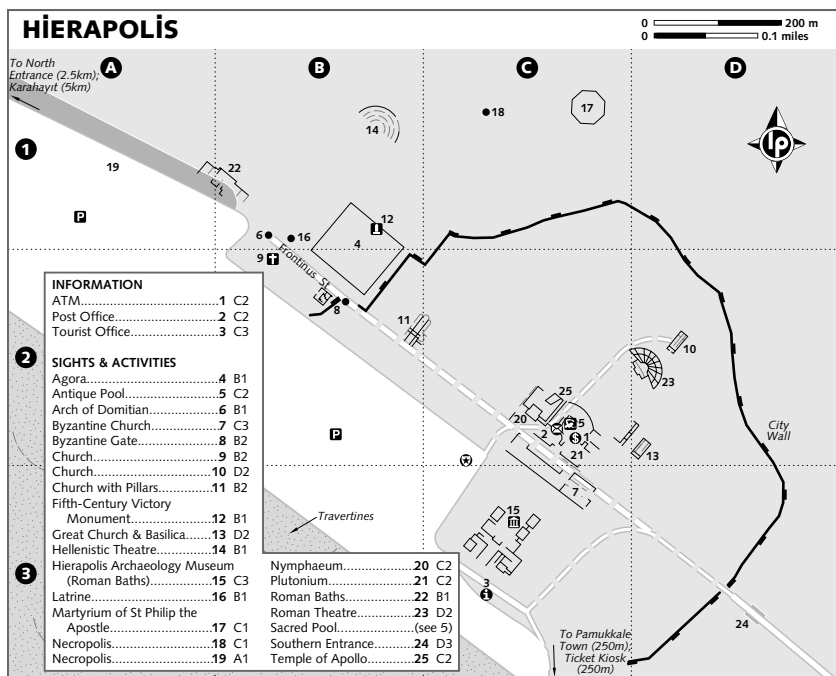
How did you get the job? In the 1970s up to 90% of Pamukkale village was working at Hierapolis. In those days, Pamukkale was still called Ecirli. It was just a matter of chance to get assigned to be a winch operator. I only had a couple of weeks training and then I began working in the Roman theatre. When I first began I was very nervous, and we'd have up to six people working together on stones weighing up to 4 tonnes. I was always scared the rope would break. We'd take one block at a time very, very carefully. One day the winch moved and the block of stone just stayed put. Another time the rope actually did break. It was pretty dangerous work.

How have the excavations changed over the years? In the early days we had no electric motors and everything was done by hand. It was very slow and painstaking work. There were more than 200 people involved in the excavations in the 1970s. Now there are only 80 or 90 people involved. They've still got lots to do though. It's estimated only 5% of the entire site has been excavated.

How have the excavations changed Pamukkale over the years? These days tourism is more important. Some of my kids are working in a silver shop, but one of my sons is still working at Hierapolis. He's a *çavuş* (foreman).

What's your favourite memory of the excavations? It has to be the Italian music concert that was held in the Roman theatre in 2007 for the 50th anniversary of the excavations. It was very emotional to see the theatre full of people and to hear the music, especially after all the hard work my workmates and I had done over the years.

Hasan Özel is a retired winch operator in Pamukkale



Hierapolis Archaeology Museum

Housed in what were once the Roman baths, this excellent **museum** (admission TL3; ☎ 9am-12.30pm & 1.30-7.15pm Tue-Sun) has three separate sections, one housing spectacular sarcophagi, another small finds from Hierapolis and Afrosdisias, and the third friezes and Roman-era statuary from the Afrosdisias school. Those depicting Attis, lover of the goddess Cybele, and a priestess of the Egyptian goddess Isis, are especially fine.

Festivals & Events

In early June the annual **Turkish-Greek Friendship Festival** (Türk-Yunan Dostluk Festivali), takes place. Pamukkale is twinned with Samos in Greece, and a series of talks, concerts and performances are held in both locations over several days, often using the travertines and Hierapolis as venues.

Sleeping

Prices vary seasonally, peaking in July and August. Competition ensures excellent value for money, with services such as internet access, book exchanges, multilingual TV,

in-house catering and swimming pools all commonplace. Pension owners will crowd around your bus and flood you with offers, and anyone with rooms still available after this initial onslaught will intercept you on the street. If you've booked in advance or know where you want to stay, give the accommodation a call and someone will often collect you from Denizli otogar for free.

CAMPING

There are several **camp sites** (camp site per person about TL7) set around swimming pools beside the highway as you come into Pamukkale from Denizli. Some pensions also allow camping on their grounds.

PENSIONS & HOTELS

Several welcoming, family-run pensions are clustered at the junction of İnönü and Menderes Caddesi.

Hotel Dört Mevsim (☎ 272 2009; www.hoteldortmevsim.com; Hasan Tahsin Caddesi 19; dm TL10, s/d TL20/35; 📺 📺 📺) The 'Four Seasons' is quite different to its top-end namesakes, but has simple and clean family-run rooms in a quiet lane. Expect

excellent home-cooked food, lots of bright decor and an even brighter welcome. A camp site is TL10 for two people and there's free wi-fi and a pool. Breakfast is an extra TL5.

Artemis Yoruk Hotel (☎ 272 2073; www.artemis.yorukhotel.com; Atatürk Caddesi; dm €7, s/d/tr/q €15/19/25/32; 🚽 📺 📺) With a super-central location, this sprawling edifice has a wide range of rooms from four-bed backpacker dorms through to single, double, triple and five-bed family rooms. It's a popular choice for small groups, so the bar offering "bloody cold beer" can get pleasingly raucous.

Aspawa Pension (☎ 272 2094; www.aspawapension.com; Turgut Özal Caddesi 28; s/d €13/22; 🚽 📺 📺) Another centrally located pension, the Aspawa ticks all the requisite boxes for good value Pamukkale: pool, aircon, wi-fi and good food in a family atmosphere. A worthwhile backup.

Melrose Hotel (☎ 272 2767; www.allgauhotel.com; Hasan Tahsin Caddesi; s/d TL35/50; 🚽 📺 📺) Recent renovations have installed an outdoor dining area at this friendly, family-run spot with clean-as-a-whistle rooms and a deserved reputation for excellent home-cooked food. There are also flasher rooms (TL70-80) with bijou balconies and kitschly romantic circular beds. There are also two swimming pools. Decisions, decisions.

Beyaz Kale Pension (☎ 272 2064; www.beyazkale.pension.com; Menderes Caddesi; s/d €15/25; 🚽 📺 📺) The 'White Castle' is handy to the centre of the village and has spotless aircon rooms arrayed around a pool. Welcoming family hostess Haçer is a whiz in the kitchen, especially when it comes to vegetarian food. Larger rooms sleeping up to six are also available.

Kervansaray Pension (☎ 272 2209; www.kervansaray.pension.com; İnönü Caddesi; s/d €15/25; 🚽 📺 📺) This honeysuckle-scented place has comfortable and clean rooms and a breezy terrace with excellent views of the travertines, especially when the spotlights are switched on after dark. Downstairs is a compact pool that's probably best enjoyed during daylight hours.

Venüs Hotel (☎ 272 2152; www.venusihotel.net; Hasan Tahsin Caddesi; s/d/tr/q €20/28/38/41; ☒ 🚽 📺 📺) One of Pamukkale's best, the Venüs combines spotless rooms – some recently built – with an airy poolside restaurant and a wonderful kilim-lined social area. Right down to two friendly dogs, Çilek (Strawberry) and Findik (Hazelnut), the Durmuş family couldn't be more welcoming. Excellent food and wi-fi

access make choosing the Venüs a straightforward decision. Rates include breakfast.

Hotel Hal-Tur (☎ 272 2723; www.haltur.net; Mehmet Akif Ersoy Bulvarı 71; s/d €40/60; 🚽 📺 📺) With unencumbered views of the travertines and arguably Pamukkale's best swimming pool, the Hal-Tur is a step up from most other places around town. Sauna, massage, free wi-fi and... er... table tennis cover all mod cons but it's still worth asking for a discount.

Eating & Drinking

Pensions and group travel dominate the Pamukkale market and conventional restaurants have struggled to hold their own. There are a couple worth trying, but the home-cooked food at your pension is bound to be good.

Mustafa's (Atatürk Caddesi 22 mains TL8-13; ☎ 9am-10pm) Scatter cushions and rustic tables overlooking the street are a top location for wood-fired pizzas and good value falafel wraps (TL5).

Konak Sade Restaurant (☎ 272 2002; Atatürk Caddesi 23; mains TL8-14; ☎ 9am-10pm) Attached to the hotel of the same name, travertine views and garden water features add a little flavour to more of the usual dishes.

Kayaş Restaurant & Bar (☎ 272 2267; Atatürk Caddesi 3; mains TL8-15; ☎ from noon) As well as a diverse menu, the Kayaş' terrace offers plenty of scope for a big night out, with cocktails, a nargile corner and satellite TV coverage of big football matches.

Tropical Bar (☎ 272 2267; Atatürk Caddesi 17; ☎ from noon) This rustic bolthole with Kilims-R-Us decor offers five different beers and a good array of spirits. Make a night of it in the nargile area that lingers casually out front.

Getting There & Away BUS

In summer Pamukkale has direct buses to Selçuk, but it's best to assume for most destinations you'll have to change in Denizli. Check when you book your ticket.

Pamukkale has no proper otogar. Buses drop you at the Denizli dolmuş stop. Ticket offices are on the main street. We've had reports of travellers buying tickets to Pamukkale, but being offloaded in Denizli. Insist you're reimbursed the additional TL2 you'll need to catch a bus or dolmuş on to Pamukkale.

Buses run between Denizli and Pamukkale every 15 minutes or so, more frequently on

Saturday and Sunday (TL2, 30 minutes). The last bus runs at 10pm for most of the year, but check before leaving it late.

In summer dolmuşes (TL2) run more frequently, but see p322 for a warning on pension touts and delays.

TAXI

A taxi between Denizli and Pamukkale costs about TL40, but don't take one until you're sure the bus and dolmuş services have stopped for the day, as drivers will try to take you to a hotel where they can claim commission.

AROUND PAMUKKALE

Laodicea (Laodikya)

Once a prosperous commercial city at the junction of two major trade routes, Laodicea was famed for its black wool, banking and medicines. It had a large Jewish community and a prominent Christian congregation, and was one of the Seven Churches of Asia mentioned in the New Testament Book of Revelation. Cicero lived here for a few years before being put to death at the behest of Mark Antony.

Although the spread-out ruins (admission TL5; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Tue-Sun) suggest a city of considerable size, there's not much of interest left for the casual visitor. The outline of the stadium is visible, although most of the stones were purloined to construct the railway. One of the two theatres is in better shape, with most of the upper tiers of seats remaining. More striking are the remains of the agora, with the ruins of the basilica church mentioned in the Bible right beside it.

Heading from Pamukkale to Denizli by bus, a sign in the village of Korucuk leads to Laodicea. From the sign it's a 1km walk to the site. Alternatively, you might want to sign up for a tour from Pamukkale that also takes in other local sites.

Kaklık Mağarası (Kaklık Cave) & Ak Han

Hidden away beneath a field, Kaklık Mağarası (admission TL2) is like an underground Pamukkale. Calcium-rich water flows from near the surface into a large sinkhole, creating a bright, white pyramid with warm travertine pools at the bottom. Guides claim that the deposits became white only after the local earthquake of the mid-1990s. Outside there is a pool for bathing. Surrounded by concrete it looks just like a pool at Sea World; cavort in the shal-

lows for long enough and someone might throw you a fish.

En route to the cave, pause to inspect the **Ak Han** (White Caravanserai; admission free; ☎ daylight hr), a Seljuk *han* 1km past the Pamukkale turn-off on the main Denizli-Isparta highway. With a beautifully carved gateway, its excellent condition belies its construction in 1251.

Getting to the cave by public transport is time-consuming and it's easiest to take a tour from Pamukkale. To visit independently, catch a bus or dolmuş (TL4) going west from Denizli to Afyon, Isparta or Burdur. In the village of Kaklık a huge sign points left (north) to the cave. Grab a ride on a farm vehicle, or walk 4km to the cave.

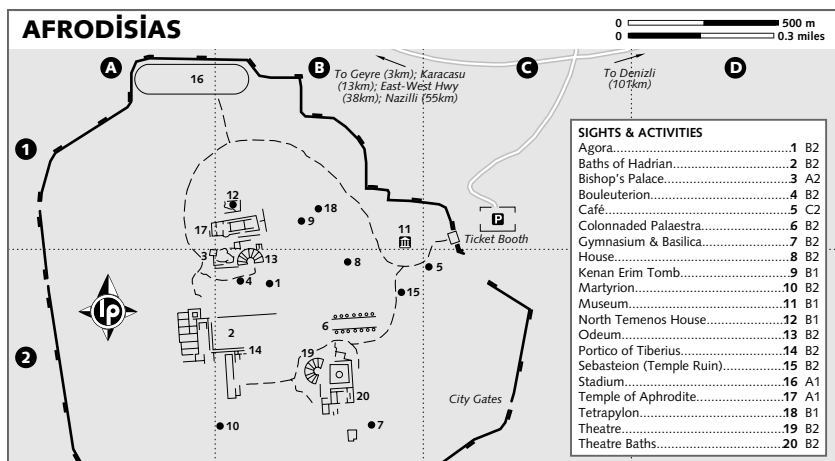
Afrodisias

Sprawling and well-preserved, Afrodisias is where visitors can most easily conjure up the grandeur of a lost classical city. And with fewer visiting tour buses, you could be exploring the city's exalted stadium and theatre without constant chatter in several modern languages. While there are finer individual ruins in Ephesus and elsewhere in Turkey, Afrodisias is where the scale of an ancient city can be best appreciated. Come in May or June and you'll find the rambling ruins awash with blazing red poppies.

HISTORY

Excavations have proved that the Afrodisias acropolis is a prehistoric mound built up by successive settlements from around 5000 BC. From the 6th century BC its famous temple was a popular pilgrimage site, but it wasn't until the 2nd or 1st century BC that the village grew into a town that steadily prospered. By the 3rd century AD Afrodisias was the capital of the Roman province of Caria, with a population of 15,000 at its peak. However, under the Byzantines the city changed substantially: the steamy Temple of Aphrodite was transformed into a chaste Christian church and ancient buildings were pulled down to provide stone for defensive walls (c AD 350).

During the Middle Ages Afrodisias continued as a cathedral town, but it was abandoned in the 12th century. The village of Geyre sprang up on the site some time later. In 1956 an earthquake devastated the village, which was rebuilt in its present westerly location, allowing easier excavation of the site.



The pleasant plaza in front of the museum was the main square of pre-1956 Geyre.

Although other archaeologists worked on the site before him, Afrodísias will always be associated with the work of Professor Kenan T Erim of New York University, who directed work at the site from 1961 to 1990. His book *Afrodísias: City of Venus Aphrodite* (1986) tells the story. After his death, Professor Erim was buried at the site that he had done so much to reveal.

SIGHTS

Most ruins at **Afrodísias** (admission TL8; ☞ 9am-7pm May-Sep, 9am-5pm Oct-Apr) date back to at least the 2nd century AD. The site is well laid out, with excellent signage in English and Turkish, and a suggested route marked by yellow-and-black arrows. Follow the route we outline to go against the flow of the tour groups, which usually arrive around 11am. A tractor and train combo transports visitors from the main highway 500m down the hill to the entrance. If you arrive by private car expect to pay an additional TL5 for the privilege of parking.

Turn right beside the museum and on the left you'll see the site of a grand **house** with Ionic and Corinthian pillars. Further along on the left is the magnificently elaborate **tetrapylon** (monumental gateway), which once greeted pilgrims as they approached the Temple of Aphrodite and has been reconstructed using 85% of the original blocks. The tomb of Professor Erim is on the lawn nearby.

Follow the footpath until you come to a right turn that leads across the fields to the 270m-long **stadium**, one of the biggest and best preserved in the classical world. The stadium has a slightly ovoid shape to give spectators a better view of events. Most of its 30,000 seats are overgrown but still in usable condition, and you can easily imagine a big event taking place with thousands of cheering locals. Some seats were reserved for individuals or guilds. The eastern end of the stadium was converted into an arena for gladiatorial combats and you can still see the tunnels where the fighters made their menacing entrances.

Return to the main path and continue to the once-famous **Temple of Aphrodite**, completely rebuilt when it was converted into a basilica (c AD 500). Its cella was removed, its columns shifted to form a nave and an apse added at the eastern end, making it hard to imagine how it must have been in the years when orgies in celebration of Aphrodite were held here. Near the temple-church is the **Bishop's Palace**, a grand house that may have accommodated the Roman governor long before any bishops turned up.

Just after the Bishop's Palace, a path leads east to the beautiful marble **bouleuterion**, preserved almost undamaged for 1000 years in a bath of mud.

South of the odeum was the **north agora**, once enclosed by Ionic porticoes but now little more than a grassy field. The path then leads through the early 2nd-century AD **Hadrianic Baths** to the **southern agora**, with a

long, partially excavated pool, and the grand **Portico of Tiberius**.

Climb the earthen mound (where a pre-historic settlement existed) to find the white marble **theatre**, a 7000-capacity auditorium complete with stage and individually labelled seats. South of it stood the large **theatre baths** complex.

The path then wraps round and brings you onto the site of the **Sebasteion**, originally a temple to the deified Roman emperors. In its heyday this was a spectacular building, preceded by a three-storey-high double colonnade decorated with friezes of Greek myths and the exploits of the emperors; 70 of the original 190 reliefs have been recovered, an excellent ratio for an excavation of this size. The reliefs are now displayed in a new annex in the Afrodiasis museum.

After looking at the ruins you can visit the **museum** (admission incl in Afrodiasis ticket). During Roman times, Afrodiasis was home to a famous school for sculptors attracted by high-grade marble 2km away at the foot of Babadağ (Mt Baba). The museum collection reflects the excellence of their work. Noteworthy works include a 2nd-century cult statue of

Aphrodite, a series of shield portraits of great philosophers (deliberately vandalised by early Christians), and depictions of the mysterious Caius Julius Zoilos, a former slave of Octavian who not only won his freedom but also gained enough wealth to become one of Afrodiasis' major benefactors.

In 2007 the museum added the new Sebasteion annex showcasing a well-preserved series of 1st-century AD reliefs with Greek and Roman influences. Also on display are statues representing the many ethnic and cultural groups that made up the ancient human mosaic that was the Roman Empire, including everywhere from Egypt to the Iberian peninsula.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Afrodiasis is 55km southeast of Nazilli and 101km by road from Denizli. By public transport, catch a bus from Denizli to Nazilli, another bus to Karacasu and finally a dolmuş to Afrodiasis. It's more sensible to arrange a tour (TL30) from Pamukkale. Tours leave with a minimum of four people, which is usually not a problem to arrange in summer. You'll have around 2½ hours at the site.

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