

...a warm welcome to the East...



Turkey



Gerda Raffetseder on Gizmo (7c),
Sector Anatolia of Geyikbayiri, photo by Hermann Erber

Merhaba!

A land with an intriguing history and unique culture, full of magical traditions and secrets. A land characterised by surreal landscapes with high mountains, endless plateaus, valleys, never ending rocky beaches, and unlimited climbing opportunities. But above all, a land where the friendliness of the people is beyond limits. This is Turkey.

The Turkish people originated in central Asia a long time ago where they ruled several empires before migrating west, forming the Ottoman empire that controlled most of the Middle East during its reign. However, Turkey as a nation is relatively young - it was only formed in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal, known as Atatürk, the Father of all Turks. His picture is to be seen just about everywhere, in case you wonder who that man is in every picture-frame when you're there! Geographically the country sits in both the European and Asian continents, divided by the Bosphorus river running through Istanbul, but a mere 3% of the whole country is on the European side.

These days, Turkey has what could be described as a split personality. On the one hand, it's very much a modern, secular society that is trying hard to be seen as European in its outlook. On the other, Turkey retains its strong sense of Islamic identity, albeit with a liberal streak. In a push to gain full EU membership, Turkey already has made progress in addressing some of the international community's human rights concerns: it has given the right to the Kurdish people to use their language in education and media, and has effectively abolished the death penalty. Still, this colourful country has a very long way to go, and there remain some political sticking points.

However, travelling to Turkey is quite a normal experience for many people – each year, millions of tourists find their way to the thousands of >>



Ala Dağlar National Park, Cimbar Vadisi

concrete buildings that function as holiday resorts along the Aegean and the Mediterranean coasts. For this reason there are many cheap flights to Turkey, and this is an extra attraction for curious and adventurous climbers wanting to uncover the Turkish climbing scene. Besides fantastic climbing and a beautiful coastline, Turkey has some great mountains, of which Mount Ararat in East Turkey is widely known. There is also the Taurus Mountains offering great hiking and climbing, and Cappadocia has truly one of the most beautiful landscapes in the world. A climbing trip to Turkey is definitely worthwhile purely for the climbing, but it is also a great opportunity to travel round other parts of this friendly and amazing country!

Climbing information

Rock climbing in Turkey started relatively recently, with French climbers being the first to put up bolted routes in the Ala Dağlar National Park in 1993. So, as one might expect, the Turkish climbing community is not that big and only consists of an estimated 600 enthusiastic climbers. Nevertheless, the sport is becoming more and more popular and at this point in time there are already 13 different climbing areas to be found in Turkey with in total over 1000 well-protected sport climbing routes. However, these numbers are sure to rise – there is massive potential for new routes, with many enthusiastic local and visiting foreign climbers active in opening new routes. Besides sport climbing, bouldering is starting to pick up as well and the options for trad climbing remain enormous, especially in the Ala Dağlar National Park.

In addition to the crags described in this guide, Turkey has many other smaller ones. The crag close to Istanbul, Istanbul-Ballikayalar, is popular with local climbers and offers a reasonable number of routes, but the area as a whole is not of particular interest to a visitor. The climbing close to Izmir is some of the best of the country, according to a number of Turkish climbers. However, this area is not included in this guide: at the time of research, not only were there not enough routes to justify the effort in going there, but there was also a distinct lack of local accommodation making a visit by non-locals difficult.

Although the climbing in Turkey is excellent, Turkish climbing ethics dictate that there should be no writing of route names on the crags. You'll need to bring your route-finding skills with you in certain areas!



Cappadocia

Climbing area Antalya

Here you can find Turkey's world famous crags of Geyikbayiri, with the largest number of routes in the country. This area also includes the crags of Akyarlar, which is situated on a beautiful beach and is suitable for both sport climbing and bouldering. There are also the boulders of Feslekan Yayla high up in the mountains.

Climbing area Olympos

The crags of Olympos are situated in a little backpackers' paradise that has all the ingredients of a relaxing holiday. It's an ideal destination for families during the low season! If you've got a car, it is also possible to visit Olympos for a few days from Antalya or Geyikbayiri.

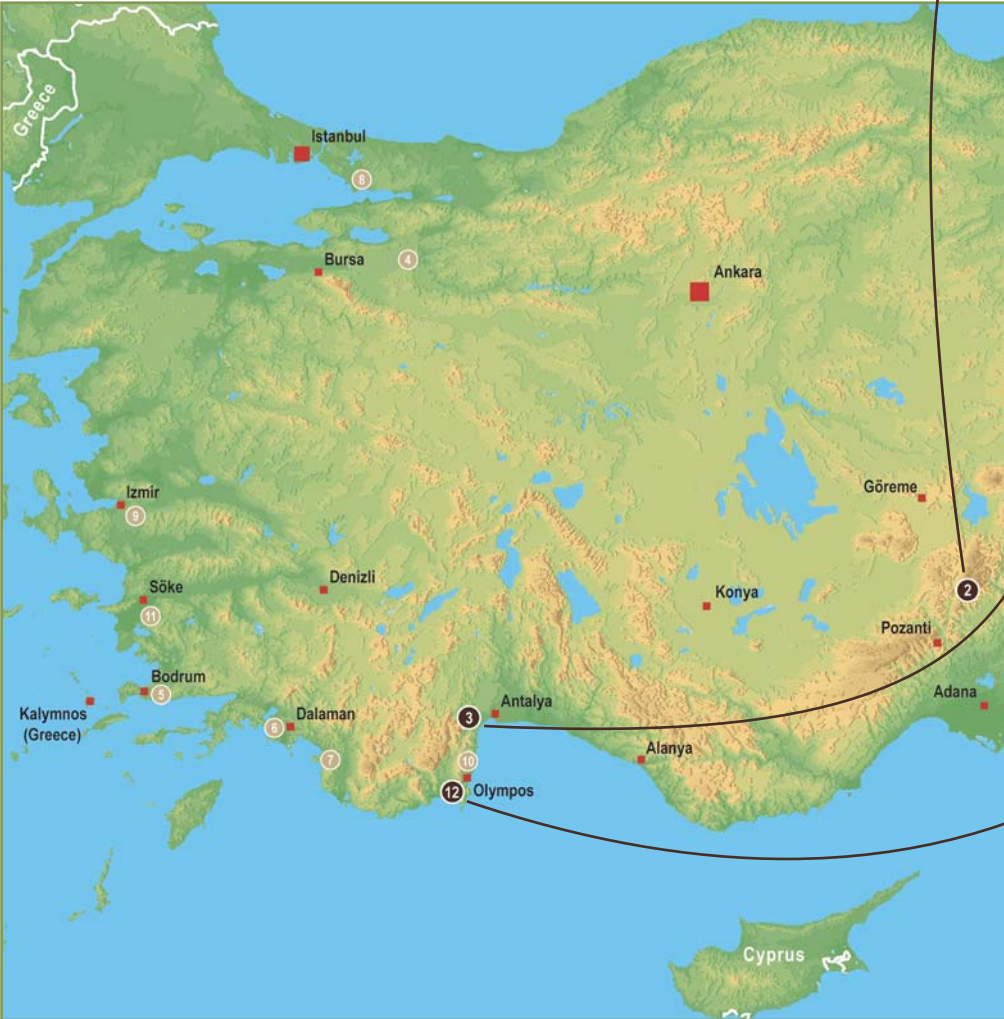
Climbing area Ala Dağlar National Park

The place to be for those who love climbing in a beautiful mountain setting! The national park offers perfect sport climbing routes as well as many traditional climbing opportunities. There's even Alpine climbing for the more adventurous, with some peaks around the 3700 metres mark. Naturally, the hiking possibilities are endless too.

Turkey



Cimbar Vadisi



Climbing area	#		Climbing area	#	
1 Adana	75		6 Dalyan	25	
2 Ala Dağlar National Park			7 Fethiye	12	
Cimbar Vadisi	257		8 Istanbul-Ballikayalar	78	
3 Antalya			9 Izmir	75	
Geyikbayiri	450		10 Karatas	65	
Feslekan Yayla	30		11 Lake Bafa	98	
Akyarlar	24		12 Olympos		
4 Bilecik	54		Olympos	95	
5 Bodrum	8		13 Trabzon	13	



Climate

There are considerable differences of climate within Turkey. The narrow coastlands and mountain slopes facing the Black Sea in the north, the Aegean Sea in the west, and the Mediterranean Sea in the south have dry, hot summers with wet and wild winters. The coastal towns along the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas have the same climate as Greece. Central and Eastern Turkey have their own continental climate - due to the higher altitude, temperatures in summer are fairly comfortable, while in winter it can get very cold with lots of snow.

Month	Average temperature (°C)	Average rainfall (mm)
Jan	13	112
Feb	14	84
March	17	76
April	21	43
May	26	33
June	31	15
July	33	5
Aug	33	5
Sept	29	20
Oct	24	53
Nov	19	84
Dec	14	122

Climate table Antalya

The most interesting climbing areas are those on the Mediterranean coast, so climbing in Turkey is a reality year round. However, December and January do see some rain and July and August are always very hot.

Getting there

By plane

There are many low cost carriers operating to different places in Turkey. The cheapest and most convenient way to get to Geyikbayırı or Olympus is to fly to Antalya. Return tickets from London or

Frankfurt to Antalya are already available for €150. For cheap tickets, try for example: www.airberlin.com, www.sunexpress.de, www.thomascook.com or www.condor.com.

If you plan to visit the Ala Dağlar National Park, book a flight to Adana or to Ankara. Turkish Airlines (www.turkishairlines.com) operates flights to Adana via Istanbul, among others. Unless you're entering Turkey from outside Europe and have an onward flight to Adana or you want to check out one of Europe's most appealing capital cities, don't fly to Istanbul! You'll need to travel further to get to any of the climbing areas.

By train

Trains from Western Europe run via Thessaloniki in Greece or via Sofia in Bulgaria. However, it's a long trip and bus connections are more frequent and much faster.

By bus

From Greece there are international buses linking Athens and Istanbul via Thessaloniki and Alexandroupolis [21h, €60]. Buses depart from the Peloponnese Bus Station in Athens on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday evenings.

From Bulgaria there are several daily international buses between Sofia and Istanbul [6h, €22] via Plovdiv. Buses depart from the Central Bus Station in Sofia arriving at Büyük Otogar in Istanbul.

By car

Driving to Turkey from Western Europe is possible but best done by those with plenty of time on their hands, or those travelling overland to Iran or Syria. Europeans do not require a carnet de passage and the car can stay in the country for six months. The most popular route to Turkey is via Istanbul from Greece. From Istanbul it's then a long drive to the most interesting climbing areas described in this guide.

You can also get to Turkey by way of the Greek

Facts about Turkey

Facts & figures		Language	
Population:	70 million	Good day	<i>Merhaba</i>
Religion:	Muslim (99%)	Thank you	<i>Teşekkürler</i>
Capital:	Ankara	Goodbye	<i>Görüşürüz</i>
Time zone:	GMT +2	Yes / No	<i>Evet / Hayır</i>
Telephone code:	+90	Right / Left / Straight	<i>Sağ / Sol / Doğru</i>
Money		Rock climbing	<i>Kaya tırmanış</i>
Currency:	Lira (YTL)		
Exchange rate:	€1 = 1.90 YTL		
ATM machines:			
In all big and medium sized towns, but not in smaller towns, such as Olympos and Geyikbayırı.			

Visas & formalities			
EU	Other European nationalities	USA / Canada	All other nationalities
<p>Most nationalities require a visa. A sticker type visa is easily obtained at the Turkish borders.</p> <p>The costs and allowed duration of stay differ per nationality.</p> <p>Most nationalities pay €10 and can stay for 90 days.</p> <p>The website of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs provides up to date information (www.mfa.gov.tr).</p>			

Safety	Use of mobile phone
<p>Outside the big cities there is hardly any crime. The people are genuinely friendly and they will rarely try to rip you off. However, when shopping, bear in mind that bargaining is common.</p>	<p>There is reasonable GSM coverage in the whole country.</p>
	Internet access
	<p>Almost every town has a kind of internet café that is usually packed with local kids playing computer games. An internet connection costs around 4 YTL (€2.10) per hour.</p>
Emergency numbers	Water
<p>Police: 112</p> <p>Fire Brigade: 112</p> <p>Ambulance: 112</p>	<p>No matter how thirsty you are, do not drink the water from the tap! A bottle of mineral water costs no more than 1 YTL (€0.53).</p>

Climbing area Antalya

Looking for a warm climbing destination in late autumn or early spring with good crags, but don't want to blow your yearly holiday budget on an expensive flight? If so, head for Antalya! Here there is excellent climbing on fantastic crags. This is also tufa country so you can really work your strength and technique. Rest days can be spent on the beach or hiking and biking in the surrounding mountains.

Geyikbayiri lies 25km from Antalya in the Bey Dağları Mountains, away from busy Antalya with all its tourist resorts. This is Turkey's most popular and largest climbing spot. The main crag is a wall of an impressive 1½ km in length and easily competes with the best crags in France. There are two more developed crags of which one is north facing, allowing climbing in summer.

Besides Geyikbayiri, another popular place to visit is the crag of Akyarlar. It's set in a small hidden cove with a great beach and crystal clear blue water, which compensates somewhat for the amount of polish on the routes. It is a very small crag, but a fine spot – you can combine swimming with a couple of short routes and there's some tough bouldering too.

Speaking of bouldering, there are more boulders to be found in Feslekan Yayla further up in the mountains past Geyikbayiri. You are guaranteed a magnificent view and fresh air here.

When to go

Climbing is possible year round. The only months that aren't so ideal are December and January, as it can rain heavily for a few days in a row. That said, if it is not raining the sun will be shining and climbing in a t-shirt is possible. July and August are very hot months, but climbing is still possible at the northern sector of Geyikbayiri, and in the early morning and late afternoon at the other sectors. Temperatures at Feslekan Yayla will always be more comfortable in summer due to its high altitude.



Spring



Summer



Autumn



Winter



Enjoy climbing and swimming at Akyarlar

Climbing area Antalya



Crag

- A** Akyarlar
- B** Feslekan Yayla
- C** Geyikbayiri





Bouldering at the river of the Josito campsite, photo by Hermann Erber



Josito campsite

How to get to the area & how to move around

If you are staying at the Josito campsite a car is not really necessary.

By public transport

If you don't fly to Antalya but to Istanbul or Ankara, you could take the bus to Antalya. There are several direct buses between Istanbul Büyük Otogar and Antalya. [12h, €18-€25]. From the Otogar of Ankara (AŞTİ) there is a bus every two hours to Antalya [10h, €16].

From the bus station in Antalya, north of the centre, there is only one dolmuş per day to Geyikbayırı. Therefore it is best to contact the Josito campsite to pick you up. The campsite offers transfers from the airport for €30 per group (max. 8 people). Make sure to contact them before arrival to arrange the transfer. The hotels along the coast of Antalya can also arrange a transfer from the airport to the hotel. The other option is to hitchhike to Geyikbayırı.

By car

Antalya is 700km from Istanbul, 550km from Ankara, and 430km from Bodrum.

The Josito campsite rents inexpensive cars for about €20 per day, so you can get to Akyarlar, Feslekan Yayla or even Olympos. Although more expensive, car rental is also possible at the airport where several agencies, such as Hertz and Budget, are located in the International Arrivals Terminal. It is also an option to book a car in advance via www.turkey.airport-car-hire.net. Depending on the rental period and type of car expect to pay between €30 and €40 per day with full insurance. Most hotels and resorts also have deals with car rental companies.

Where to stay


Depending on your budget and interest there are two options. The first is to book a package holiday


from your home country, which includes a flight and hotel at one of the many resorts along the coast in Antalya. From there you can rent a car and visit the various crags. Lots of travel agencies, including internet agents, offer fairly cheap package deals to Antalya.



The other option is to book a cheap charter flight and stay in a tent or bungalow at the Josito campsite near the crags of Geyikbayırı. This option is cheaper and definitely better for those who want to climb every day.


Josito Campsite



 Aktamlar Köyü
Antalya

 +90 537 6012529
+90 536 5996003

 climbing@josito.de
 www.josito.de

 N 36°52'25,5 E 30°29'01,6

Open Year round

Grade 1 — 2 — 3 — 4

Price Camping is €3 pppn, Bungalows are €20 to €36 per bungalow per night (up to 3 persons) and a chalet goes for €50 (up to 4 persons).

Wonderfully situated in a small valley between the crags of Geyikbayırı, this German run campsite offers lovely spots to pitch your tent, as well as small and big bungalows for rent. In the relaxing bar you can get breakfast and in the evening a hearty meal. Naturally the bar is stocked with cold beer and it's all priced reasonably. This is a great place to meet and hook up with other climbers, if you are travelling on your own.

Directions

See Directions to the crags of Geyikbayırı.



Crag details Geyikbayiri

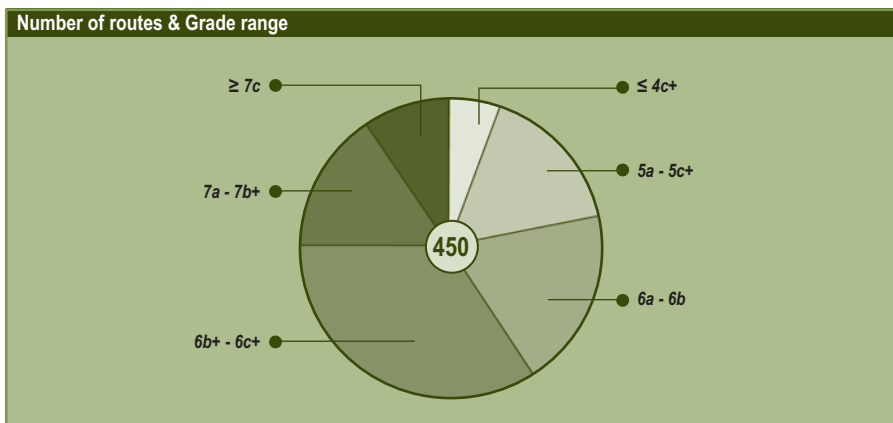


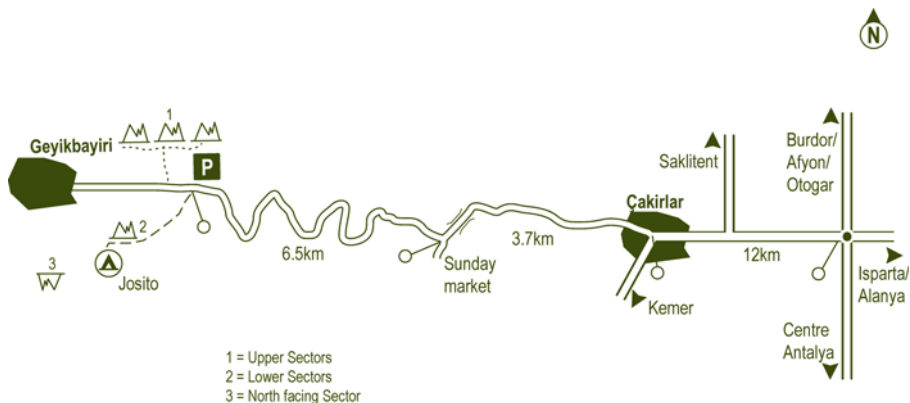
P 2-10 min. → 10-35 metres

Waypoints parking

N 36°52'39,2 E 30°28'57,3

Type of rock	Limestone	Protection	1 2 3 4
Family friendly	Yes	Although the bolting is good there are some routes with distances between the bolts of a little more than 2 metres.	
Climbing angle	<p>Slab Vertical Steep Really steep</p>		
	Face direction <p>lower sectors upper & lower sectors</p>		





Directions



Zuleya Geels on one of her own favourite routes

► If you are going to Geyikbayırı by car from Antalya, head north towards the big road leading to Kemer, Alanya and Burdur.

From the centre of Antalya follow the Otogar signs until you get to a big roundabout. Turn left at this roundabout towards Kemer and Liman. Follow the road in the direction of Cakirlar, which becomes smaller the further you go, until you see a sign to turn left for Geyikbayırı 12km after the roundabout. At the end of this road there is the Sunday market (recognizable by the empty stalls) where you turn right. Continue again on this road as it winds its way up the hill. After 6.5km you'll see the main upper sector on the right and the Josito campsite is on the left and is signposted.