

# FABULOUS FOOD & DRINK

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## FOOD AND DRINK IN TURKEY

Nowhere quite shows off fusion food like Turkey – it's a melting pot of the Mediterranean meets the Middle East. That means fresh, sun-kissed produce from the Med mixed with smoky spices and bold, full-on flavours from the east. Tantalising to say the least, it's no surprise Turkish cuisine gets a ten out of ten in the taste stakes.

Think spice-scented bazaars and sizzling street food stalls for starters, mixed with a love of feasting and socialising over sharing platters, with a traditional tea culture to top it all off. Marinated meats, sizzling hot from the coals, silky spice-laden sauces, and rainbow-bright salads give you a good idea of the treats in store. And that's not forgetting the fragrant, syrupy sweet treats this fabulous country is famous for.

## THE MUST-TRY DISHES OF TURKEY

### DÖNER KEBAP

*A takeout favourite*

You simply can't leave Turkey without trying the classic *döner kebab!* It all starts with lightly-spiced lamb (or chicken) that's grilled until tender on a slowly rotating rotisserie, then thinly sliced and stuffed into a soft flatbread with garlic yoghurt and zingy salad. Whether you grab one on the go from a street vendor or enjoy as part of a sit-down meal, you just can't beat the real deal.

### MEZE

*Small plates made for sharing*

Try a bit of everything with a moreish meze platter. The usual line-up includes things like *dolma* – rice-stuffed vine leaves – *köfte* meatballs in a tangy tomato sauce, *tulum* goats cheese, and grilled aubergines. It's all served with puffed-up *lavaş* bread and plenty of zesty *tzakiki* and creamy *hummus* on the side for dunking.

### MENEMEN

*Tasty breakfast eggs*

This is the Turkish take on scrambled eggs. Beaten eggs are mixed in with sautéed peppers, onions and tomatoes, then finished with a pinch of parsley, dollop of yogurt and chilli flakes if you like a kick. Best of all, it's usually a scoop-up-with-bread affair. So, ditch the full English and dig into this – you won't regret it.

### BAKLAVA

*A sweet, sticky pastry*

These bite-sized beauties are buttery, rich and utterly delish. Layers of honey-drenched, flaky filo are filled with pistachios, then baked until golden. Blossom water and cardamom often make their way in there too. Shapes can vary, and garnishes could be anything from more nuts to candied fruit and chocolate drizzle.

### LOKUM

*Turkish delight*

The jewel in Turkey's dessert-scene crown, these gooey, sugar-dusted cubes are the prettiest sweet treats around. Classic recipes use rose water for flavour, but bergamot orange and lemon are also popular. Look out for nougat varieties too, and be sure to bag a box or two for souvenirs to take home.



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## DIVINE DRINKS OF TURKEY

### RAKI

*An aniseed-flavoured spirit that packs a punch*

This super-strong apéritif plays a big part in Turkish dining, and goes particularly well with seafood thanks to its fragrant, almost fennel-like taste. It's often enjoyed diluted with two parts water (which turns the clear liquid milky white) and lots of ice.

### ELMA ÇAYI

*Fruity apple tea*

A refreshing, apple-infused tea will make a tasty change to your usual brew. This isn't actually tea per se, but dried apple pieces stewed in boiling water with a hint of cinnamon and cloves. Expect your cuppa in an ornate glass with an almond-based biscuit called a *kurabiye* on the side.

### SALEP

*The dessert-like drink*

Warm, sugared milk sums up this simple yet lovely drink. Crushed orchid roots gives it a thick, creamy texture, while comforting cardamom essence makes this dairy delight extra moreish. You might even get a drop of rose water or a smattering of crushed pistachios on top to jazz things up.

### TURKISH COFFEE

*A powerful pick-me-up*

Served in a small cup called a *fincan*, a traditional Turkish coffee is strong, thick and just the right side of bitter. Of course, you can add sugar to taste, and it's sometimes brewed with aromatic cardamom. This is one to try in a traditional setting for the full effect, like among the souk stalls of a local bazaar.

### AYRAN

*Cold, frothy yoghurt drink*

Give this yoghurt and water drink a go with your spicy kebab and you'll find it has a really refreshing finish. A sprinkle of salt gives this savoury milkshake an interesting edge, and it's always served cold. Look out for mint and lime variations if you fancier something a tad sweeter.



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