

Road Tripping in Türkiye

A Practical Guide for Travelers

Driving is one of the best ways to explore Türkiye beyond its major cities. A road trip gives travelers access to smaller towns, archaeological sites, coastal areas, national parks, villages, and landscapes that may be difficult to reach by public transportation.

Driving in Türkiye is generally straightforward once you understand a few local systems and customs. This guide covers the practical details travelers are most likely to encounter, including toll roads, petrol stations, rest areas, toilets, roadside vendors, police and Jandarma checkpoints, useful Turkish phrases, and basic road-trip preparation.

TIFFLES IN TÜRKİYE

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Before You Drive

Before starting your trip, make sure you have the documents required for your vehicle and driving status.

Depending on whether you are visiting Türkiye, living in Türkiye, driving your own vehicle, or renting a car, these may include:

- Passport or accepted identification
- Valid driver's license
- Rental agreement, if applicable
- Vehicle registration documents
- Insurance information
- Residence permit, if applicable

Requirements concerning foreign driver's licenses can depend on your residency status and how long you have been in Türkiye. Check current official requirements before traveling.

If You Are Renting a Car

Before leaving the rental office, confirm:

- What type of fuel the vehicle uses
- How HGS tolls are handled for the vehicle
- What roadside-assistance number to call
- What to do in the event of an accident
- Whether there are restrictions on where the vehicle can be driven

It can also be helpful to photograph the vehicle's fuel information and any existing damage before leaving.

HGS and Toll Roads

Türkiye uses an electronic toll system called **HGS — Hızlı Geçiş Sistemi** on many motorways, bridges, and tunnels.

HGS is not a special feature built into the vehicle. It is an electronic toll-payment system connected to the vehicle's license plate and, depending on the setup, an HGS tag or account.

Drivers generally pass through electronic toll points rather than stopping to pay cash.

Rental Cars

Rental vehicles are usually already registered for HGS through the rental company. When you use a toll road, bridge, or tunnel, the charge is recorded electronically and the rental company may bill you afterward.

Before leaving the rental office, ask:

How are HGS tolls charged to me?

Also ask whether the company adds any administrative or service fee to the toll amount.

Do not assume tolls are included in the rental price.

Foreign-Plated Vehicles

Drivers entering Türkiye with a foreign-plated vehicle should check current HGS registration and payment requirements before using toll roads.

The General Directorate of Highways, **Karayolları Genel Müdürlüğü (KGM)**, provides current information about toll roads, HGS, motorway charges, and requirements for foreign-plated vehicles.

Because toll rates change, check current prices rather than relying on older travel guides.

Petrol Stations

Petrol stations in Türkiye may operate differently from those in countries where self-service fueling is standard.

At most stations, an attendant fills the vehicle for you.

Pull up beside the appropriate pump and tell the attendant:

1. Which fuel you need
2. Whether you want the tank filled completely or a specific amount

Common Fuel Terms

Turkish	English
Benzin	Petrol / gasoline
Motorin	Diesel
LPG	Liquefied petroleum gas
Dolu	Full
Depo	Tank

Useful Phrases

Depoyu doldurun, lütfen.

Please fill the tank.

Beş yüz liralık, lütfen.

500 lira worth, please.

Kart geçiyor mu?

Do you accept cards?

If you are driving a rental car and are unsure which fuel to use, check the information near the fuel cap or confirm with the rental company before filling the tank.

Paying for Fuel

Payment procedures vary. Depending on the station, you may pay inside the shop or use another available payment method.

Credit and debit cards are widely accepted at major petrol stations, but carrying some Turkish lira is advisable for smaller or rural locations.

Tipping Petrol Attendants

Tipping the attendant for simply filling the vehicle is not generally required.

If an attendant provides an additional service, such as cleaning the windows or offering extra assistance, a small tip may be given at your discretion.

Petrol Stations as Rest Stops

Large petrol stations in Türkiye often serve as full-service travel stops.

Facilities may include:

- Toilets
- Restaurants
- Cafés
- Convenience stores
- Pharmacies (Eczane)
- ATMs
- Prayer areas
- Outdoor seating
- Children's areas
- Local or regional products

Facilities vary considerably by location, so travelers should not assume every station offers the same services.

Roadside Rest Areas

In addition to petrol stations, major intercity roads frequently have larger rest areas or roadside facilities.

These may include:

- Restaurants
- Cafés
- Markets
- Bakeries
- Souvenir shops
- Toilets
- Prayer facilities
- Regional food products
- Fresh produce
- Outdoor seating

Some intercity bus routes use these facilities as scheduled rest stops, so larger locations may be quite extensive.

Rest areas are also useful places to stretch, purchase food, use the toilet, and take a break from driving.

Toilets in Türkiye

Travelers may encounter two common types of toilets:

Western-Style Toilets

These are the seated toilets familiar to travelers from Europe and North America.

They are common in modern petrol stations, restaurants, hotels, airports, shopping centers, and larger rest areas.

Squat Toilets

Traditional squat toilets are installed at floor level and are still found in some public facilities, older buildings, roadside stops, and rural areas.

Many facilities offer both types.

How to Use a Squat Toilet

Place your feet on the raised foot areas on either side of the toilet and squat over the opening.

Keep clothing away from the floor.

Some toilets have a conventional flush mechanism. Others provide water that can be used to rinse the toilet manually.

Water for Personal Cleaning

Many toilets in Türkiye—including Western-style toilets—have a small water nozzle, tap, or built-in washing system.

This water is intended for personal cleaning after using the toilet.

What to Carry

For road trips, consider keeping a small bathroom kit containing:

- Toilet paper or tissues
- Wet wipes
- Hand sanitizer

Larger facilities are usually well supplied, but smaller roadside locations may not always have everything you need.

Food at Roadside Stops

Food options vary considerably according to the size of the facility and the region.

Common possibilities include:

- **Simit** (a ring-shaped bread coated with sesame seeds, often compared to a Turkish-style bagel)
- **Gözleme** (a thin, savory flatbread cooked on a griddle and filled with ingredients such as spinach, potato, cheese, or herbs)
- Soup
- Toasted sandwiches
- Salads
- Rice or bulgur dishes
- Tea
- Turkish coffee
- Other coffee drinks
- Packaged snacks
- Fresh fruit
- Nuts
- Regional sweets

Large rest areas may have full-service restaurants.

Vegan Road-Trip Tips

Traveling vegan in Türkiye is possible, but roadside options can be unpredictable.

Foods that appear plant-based may sometimes contain butter, yogurt, meat stock, milk, or eggs.

Useful questions include:

Et var mı?

Is there meat?

Süt var mı?

Is there milk?

Tereyağı var mı?

Is there butter?

Yumurta var mı?

Is there egg?

Hayvansal ürün yemiyorum.

I don't eat animal products.

Potential vegan choices may include:

- Simit
- Fresh fruit
- Nuts
- Some salads
- Vegetable dishes
- Beans
- Some lentil soups
- Rice or bulgur dishes
- Gözleme prepared without cheese, butter, or other animal ingredients

Preparation varies, so ask when you are uncertain.

It is also advisable to carry snacks on longer drives, particularly when traveling through rural areas.

Roadside Vendors

Roadside stalls are common on some routes, particularly in agricultural regions and around tourist destinations.

Products may include:

- Fresh fruit
- Vegetables
- Nuts
- Olives
- Dried fruit
- Honey
- Preserves
- Regional foods
- Handmade items
- Souvenirs

Cash can be useful when purchasing from smaller vendors.

Bargaining and Negotiating Prices

Bargaining is appropriate in some situations in Türkiye, but there are certain situations where you should not try to haggle prices.

Prices Are Generally Fixed At:

- Petrol stations
- Supermarkets
- Chain stores
- Restaurants
- Cafés
- Convenience stores
- Shops with clearly marked fixed prices

Negotiation May Be Possible At:

- Some roadside stalls
- Souvenir stands
- Markets and bazaars
- Independent vendors
- When purchasing several items together

Always remain friendly and respectful.

Useful Phrases

Ne kadar?

How much?

Biraz indirim olur mu?

Could you give me a small discount?

İkisini alırsam ne kadar olur?

How much if I buy two?

If the seller declines, simply decide whether you want to purchase the item at the stated price.

Police and Jandarma Checkpoints

Roadside checkpoints are common enough in Türkiye that travelers should know what to expect.

They may be operated by:

Polis — Police

Jandarma — Gendarmerie, which commonly performs law-enforcement duties in areas outside many urban police jurisdictions.

Travelers may encounter checkpoints on intercity roads, near towns, or while entering or leaving particular areas.

A checkpoint does not necessarily indicate that anything unusual has happened.

Authorities may be conducting routine traffic, vehicle, documentation, or security checks.

What to Do at a Checkpoint

When approaching a checkpoint:

1. Reduce your speed.
2. Pay attention to officers directing traffic.
3. If you are waved through, continue normally.
4. If directed to stop, pull into the area indicated.
5. Lower the window and wait for instructions.
6. Provide identification or vehicle documents if requested.
7. Follow the officer's directions.

Do not reverse, turn around, or attempt to avoid a checkpoint.

Keep your identification and vehicle documents somewhere accessible during the trip.

Documents You May Be Asked to Show

Depending on the circumstances, these may include:

- Passport or identification
- Driver's license
- Vehicle registration
- Rental agreement
- Other vehicle documentation

Police vs. Jandarma

Travelers sometimes wonder why they see different law-enforcement uniforms during road trips.

Polis

Police commonly operate within cities and other police jurisdictions.

Jandarma

Jandarma are part of Türkiye's law-enforcement system and are commonly encountered in rural areas and locations outside regular police jurisdictions.

Both may conduct road controls.

Travelers do not need to determine which organization has jurisdiction. Follow the directions given by the officer controlling traffic.

Useful Turkish at a Checkpoint

Türkçem çok iyi değil.

My Turkish isn't very good.

İngilizce biliyor musunuz?

Do you speak English?

Anlamadım.

I didn't understand.

Tekrar eder misiniz?

Could you repeat that?

Daha yavaş konuşabilir misiniz?

Could you speak more slowly?

Kiralık araba.

It's a rental car.

Ankara'dan geldik.

We came from Ankara.

Kapadokya'ya gidiyoruz.

We are going to Cappadocia.

Replace Ankara and Cappadocia with your actual origin and destination as needed.

Traffic Stops

Although travelers may frequently encounter fixed checkpoints, Turkish traffic authorities can also stop vehicles elsewhere.

Do not assume that police only conduct enforcement through checkpoints.

If an authorized officer signals for you to stop, follow the officer's directions and pull over safely.

Driving on Motorways

Controlled-access motorways have specific restrictions designed to protect drivers and passengers.

Do not:

- Reverse because you missed an exit
- Make an unauthorized U-turn
- Stop in a traffic lane
- Park on the motorway except where permitted
- Use the emergency lane as an ordinary traffic lane

If you miss your exit, continue until you can safely change your route.

Speed Limits and Enforcement

Speed limits differ according to:

- Road type
- Vehicle type
- Location
- Posted restrictions

Follow posted road signs.

Speed enforcement may include police controls and electronic systems.

Do not determine the speed limit based on how quickly surrounding vehicles are traveling.

If you are using a rental car, fines associated with the vehicle may later be charged to you according to the rental company's policies.

Navigation

Google Maps and other navigation apps are commonly used in Türkiye.

For long trips:

- Download offline maps when possible
- Check the route before departure
- Keep your phone charged
- Carry a charging cable
- Consider carrying a power bank

Remember that navigation apps may not always reflect temporary road closures or construction.

Follow official road signs and instructions from authorities when they differ from your navigation app.

Emergency Assistance

Türkiye uses **112** as the national emergency number.

Call **112** for emergencies requiring services such as:

- Ambulance
- Police
- Jandarma
- Fire services

For vehicle breakdowns, contact your rental company's roadside-assistance service or your vehicle-assistance provider.

Keep emergency and rental-company contact information accessible during the trip.

Essential Road-Trip Turkish

Fuel and Petrol Stations

Turkish	English
Benzin	Petrol / gasoline
Motorin	Diesel
Depo	Fuel tank
Depoyu doldurun, lütfen.	Please fill the tank.
Kart geçiyor mu?	Do you accept cards?
Tuvalet nerede?	Where is the toilet?

Shopping and Rest Stops

Turkish	English
Ne kadar?	How much?
Bir tane, lütfen.	One, please.
İki tane, lütfen.	Two, please.
Su var mı?	Do you have water?
Kahve var mı?	Do you have coffee?
Biraz indirim olur mu?	Could you give me a small discount?

Asking for Help

Turkish	English
Yardım eder misiniz?	Could you help me?
Anlamadım.	I didn't understand.
Tekrar eder misiniz?	Could you repeat that?
Daha yavaş konuşabilir misiniz?	Could you speak more slowly?
İngilizce biliyor musunuz?	Do you speak English?

What to Keep in the Car

A basic road-trip kit may include:

- Water
- Snacks
- Tissues or toilet paper
- Wet wipes
- Hand sanitizer
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen
- Phone charger
- Power bank
- Turkish lira
- Bank card
- Reusable shopping bag
- Necessary medication
- Copies of important travel information
- Emergency contact details

During winter or travel through mountainous regions, additional seasonal equipment may be necessary.

Before You Leave: Quick Checklist

Vehicle

- ☐ Confirm fuel type
- ☐ Check fuel level
- ☐ Ask how HGS tolls are handled
- ☐ Check tires if appropriate
- ☐ Save roadside-assistance information

Documents

- ☐ Passport or ID
- ☐ Driver's license
- ☐ Rental agreement
- ☐ Vehicle documents
- ☐ Insurance information

Technology

- ☐ Phone charged
- ☐ Charging cable
- ☐ Power bank
- ☐ Navigation ready
- ☐ Offline maps downloaded if needed

Supplies

- ☐ Water
- ☐ Snacks
- ☐ Toilet paper or tissues
- ☐ Hand sanitizer
- ☐ Cash
- ☐ Medication

Know Before You Go

- ☐ Emergency number: 112
- ☐ Expect possible Polis or Jandarma checkpoints
- ☐ Follow posted speed limits
- ☐ Never reverse or make an unauthorized U-turn on a motorway
- ☐ Check current road and weather conditions for longer journeys

Official Information and Further Reading

Rules, tolls, documentation requirements, and road conditions can change. Travelers should confirm current information before driving.

Karayolları Genel Müdürlüğü

Official website: www.kgm.gov.tr

Republic of Türkiye General Directorate of Highways

Useful for:

- HGS
- Toll roads
- Motorways
- Bridges
- Current toll charges
- Road information
- Foreign-plated vehicles

Emniyet Genel Müdürlüğü

Official website: www.egm.gov.tr

General Directorate of Security

Useful for:

- Traffic police
- Traffic rules
- Enforcement information

Jandarma Genel Komutanlığı

Official website: www.jandarma.gov.tr

Gendarmerie General Command

Useful for:

- Jandarma services
- Road-control information
- Rural law enforcement

Emergency Services

Official website: 112.gov.tr

112

Türkiye's national emergency number.

Important Note

This resource provides general travel information and is not legal advice.

Traffic regulations, toll charges, foreign-license requirements, rental policies, documentation rules, and enforcement procedures may change. Always verify current requirements through official Turkish authorities and your rental company before traveling.