

Over three million British people choose Turkey as the destination for traveling each year, and there is a rise in this number. In recent years, the favorable exchange rate has made Turkey an affordable option when we compare to other destinations where the cost of living is increasing. Turkey is famous for offering diverse landscapes i.e the beautiful beaches and stunning ranges of mountain to rich history of ancient ruins and its vibrant cities. The cuisines available in Turkey offer a tapestry of flavors that contains a blend of Middle Eastern and Central Asian in foods. The kebabs and mezes are so aromatic and sweet baklava with refreshing ayran, which caters to a wide range of tastes for tourists. However, the UK Foreign Office has warned to avoid travel to specific areas in Turkey. In this article, we will understand which regions of Turkey are safest for travelers to visit and which are not safe due to several reasons. We will also provide some tips for the travelers to stay safe while they travel to the country.

Areas in Turkey which are unsafe for Tourists:

Wildfires in the southeastern coast of Turkey:

Is it safe to travel to Turkey? Let's discuss in detail some facts. Fires that blazed on June 29, 2024 in the southeastern coast of Turkey have affected the provinces of Diyarbakir and Mardin. The Turkish government had deployed helicopters over these provinces to tackle the fire. People have been safely removed from hotels, homes, and the tourist resort of Kusadasi due to the incident of wildfire to protect them from potential danger. Ali Yerlikaya, an Interior Minister of Istanbul has described the major cause of fire in the region as "stubble burning". He informed the nation of Turkey that farmers usually prepare lands for the new season by clearing up the crop residue, which has led to the recent wildfire. However, they should manage the risk of fire carefully.

According to the latest report by the Forestry Minister Ibrahim Yumakli of Turkey in 2024, nine fires have been seen in the Mediterranean and Aegean coasts. Moreover, heatwaves are occurring in western and southern Türkiye these days, therefore tourists are strictly advised to avoid travel to Antalya, Mersin, Mediterranean, Aegean coasts and Alanya, as these areas have high temperatures and are highly affected by wildfires. These forest fires usually happen in months of summer due to low levels of humidity. Recently in 2024, famous tourist spots like Kusadasi on the Aegean coastline have been affected by wildfire.

The Foreign Office also known as Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office located in the UK keeps the British nationals well informed with updated travel advice, which are

concerned with safety issues related to wildfire as well. Therefore it is important to follow the directions of local authorities.

Regions in Turkey that are occupied by military operations:

Tourists should be informed that most regions in Turkey are safe and tourist-friendly. However, the Foreign Office currently advises the people to stop the travel within 10 km of the border with Syria, and the provinces of Sirnak and Hakkari. This is because the Turkish government has initiated military operations in these areas to control the risk of terrorism and maintain the security. It is important for the travelers to stay vigilant and follow the latest travel advice with the assistance of official travel advisories i.e Foreign Office. Therefore the threat of terrorism is very high in the restricted areas of Turkey.

However, it is important to note that the UK Foreign Office allows tourists to visit most of Turkey. But they have warned some areas to travel. Tourists must not travel the regions that are near to the Syrian border and areas occupied by the Iraq border.

Safest cities to travel in Turkey for Tourists:

Despite Turkey's current challenges against terrorism, there are many areas in Turkey that are absolutely considered to be safe by Foreign Office and enjoyable for tourists. Here are some recommended destinations tourists can travel to while staying in Turkey. Cappadocia, Pamukkale, Ephesus, Antalya, Bodrum, Izmir, Marmaris, Kaş are the safest places in Turkey.

Tips for the Tourists to stay safe:

Across Turkey more generally, the rate of crimes are lower in number but robberies and thefts are common, particularly tourists must be aware of pickpocketing in busy areas.

Travelers are also advised to reject any offers of food and drink, as it has been reported that many tourists have faced betrayal offers to take them to a club or restaurant or to help them change currency, which resulted in fraudulent activities.

Here are 5 tips to stay safe when traveling:

1. Tourists must avoid walking alone at night, especially avoid walking in such unfamiliar areas that lack proper lighting and reliable transportation. Because they are unable to call for help in case of emergency.
2. Visitors must keep their valuables, such as their passport and money, hidden and secure. They should avoid carrying large amounts of cash, and use a money belt or hidden pouch to keep their valuables safe.
3. They must keep a photocopy of their passport and ID and visa, in case they are lost or stolen.
4. Pickpocketing is a common problem in every country, therefore people are advised to be vigilant in crowded areas especially in public sites and public transportation.
5. People should keep in mind they can call the emergency number (112) and the information for the nearest embassy or consulate.

Turkey is an affordable country to visit.

In recent years, the Turkish lira has suffered a substantial loss of value as compared to the major currencies of the US dollar, euro, pound sterling and Japanese yen. This substantial loss of currency value makes a visit to Turkey less expensive for travelers who convert those currencies to liras.

Protests of Turkish people for the solidarity with Palestinians:

Turkey has diplomatic mission offices, consulates and other offices based in Istanbul and Ankara that represent the country. People from Istanbul have been seen to protest for the solidarity of Gaza near the embassies and consulates of foreign countries in Istanbul.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the country's president, has publicly announced that people should refrain from aggressive acts. He has also said while talking to the journalists that Turkey will do whatever it will take to ease the tensions and stop the violence.

The conflict is ongoing between Israel and Hamas which has resulted in protests of peasants in Ankara and Istanbul. People from Ankara and Istanbul show sympathy and solidarity with Palestinians as per violence in Gaza. These protests have surrounded the broader region of Ankara and Istanbul, Turkey.

What are the entry requirements for Turkey?

British citizens are allowed to travel to Turkey. They can travel without any need of a visa for up to 90 days within any 180-day period. It must be noted that this 90-day limit applies over a rolling 180-day period, not a calendar year. If they visit Turkey and stay for 90 days, they must stay out of the country for the next 90 days before they can return. However, if they stay 45 days, they can return back after a 135-day absence. As long as they should not exceed the 90 days allowed limit within any 180-day window. This system helps manage how long they can stay in Turkey over time. People visit Turkey for short trips or sometimes multiple visits that totals up to 90 days over six months. It has also been seen that tourists plan to stay in Turkey for more than 90 days. In this case they must apply for a visa or a permit for residence.

People should make sure that they fulfill specific passport requirements to ensure smooth entry. Their passport must have at least 150 days of validity remaining from the date they arrive in the country. This ensures that their passport will not expire while they stay in the country. In addition to this, their passport must have a full blank page for the entry and exit stamps. These stamps are aimed to track entry and departure dates of the tourists. Many people check these requirements well before their travel date. They make sure that the passport meets all the necessary criteria.

Conclusion

Visitors are eager to travel to Turkey due to its diverse landscapes and rich history, which has always been an amazing experience for everyone. However, it is important to them to avoid travel to the regions that are near to the Syrian border and areas affected by wildfires. While they should stay updated on local tensions in the country and safety advisories by adhering to the travel advice. By following local guidelines and travel advisories provided by the Foreign Office, will surely help them to ensure a safe and enjoyable visit.