

Konya, Turkey: What You Need to Know Before You Go

If you are asked what the first things that you associate with the word Turkey you will mention Istanbul and Cappadocia right away. Oh, I have to tell you, however, that Konya, Turkey is a city and that the world has no idea about it yet. I always wanted to visit Konya for historical and architectural significance and it is quite religious.

Perhaps you're asking right now: "Why Konya?" Maybe it has reached you through word of mouth or you came across some information online that amazed you. Regardless of that, I am here to show you around this interesting city we have.

Let's explore!

History of Konya

Konya's history goes back to ancient times when it was called Iconium. The Hittites, a powerful group of warriors, founded the city and left their mark on the region of Anatolia. Over time, different groups took control of the city, including the Persians, Greeks, and later the Romans.



During the Middle Ages, the Seljuk Turks made Konya their capital. They built large, beautiful

mosques and monuments, many of which still stand today. It was at this time that the city got its name, Konya.

One of the most important figures in Konya's history is Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi. He was a poet and philosopher who started the Mevlevi order, also known as the Whirling Dervishes. Their famous spinning dance has deep spiritual meaning and still draws visitors from all over the world.

In the 13th century the Ottomans occupied Konya. They also contributed their own styles of architectures to the city by erecting mosques, schools and inns for those who travelled. Many of these buildings are still in existence today with marvelous tile work and huge domes to boot.

Nowadays Konya is a city that combines both ancient and modern architecture. It is a modern growing city hosting over 2.2 million people. Its market is active, festivals are more vibrant and people are friendly in the country.

While you are there you can learn about the history of the city by visiting a museum such as the Mevlana Museum or take a leisurely walk in Alaaddin Hill. You can also taste such national meal as kebab which is known all over Turkey.

Konya is one of the most culturally and spiritually charged cities that any tourist should not miss. For lovers of history and architecture, those keen on spirituality, Konya will be interesting and rather colourful because it remains a living chronicle of different epochs.

What to Do in Konya?

Curious what things to do in Konya, Turkey? This city has so much to do for anyone interested in history, nature or just the general culture. Here is the list:

1. Discover Konya Turkey Historical Places

Konya is rich in history, and there are numerous great places to visit. First on the list is the **Mevlana Museum**. The mausoleum is of the famous poet and **Sufi mystic Rumi** and sees over 2 million visitors annually. Lovers, lovers of Rumi, visit the tomb for various reasons - some to pay homage to the great Sufi saint others for serenity.

Similarly, the Alaaddin Mosque that was constructed at the time of Seljuk Empire cannot be afforded a miss. The stand of this mosque is on a gentle hill that provides good views of the city. It is quite a good opportunity to enjoy the views of Seljuk architecture with high minarets and intricate carving.

2. Outdoor Adventures in Konya

Konya's natural beauty makes it a great destination for outdoor activities. You can visit **Lake Beysehir**, which is the largest freshwater lake in Turkey. Here, you can go boating, fishing, or simply relax by the water. Birdwatchers will be thrilled as the lake is home to various bird species.

If you enjoy hiking, check out the **Sultan Marshes** just outside the city. These wetlands are rich with wildlife and offer scenic trails perfect for nature lovers. Imagine hiking through green landscapes while listening to the sounds of nature—it's an experience not to miss.

3. Cultural Experiences

Konya's cultural scene is lively and diverse. You can experience the city's famous **Whirling Dervishes**, who perform a spiritual dance known as **Sema**. The best time to see this unique performance is during the **Mevlana Festival** held every December. The dervishes' spinning dance represents the soul's journey to enlightenment and is both mesmerizing and deeply meaningful.

4. Visit Ince Minare Museum

For a deeper dive into Islamic history, stop by the **Ince Minare Museum**. This building was once a madrasa, or religious school, and its name translates to "Slender Minaret." Inside, you can see **Seljuk-era artifacts** like stone carvings and woodwork, which showcase the artistic achievements of this period.

5. Relax at Alaeddin Hill Park

After a day of exploring, head to **Alaeddin Hill Park**, right in the heart of Konya. It's a peaceful, green space where you can relax and take a break from sightseeing. You can even grab a cup of tea from a nearby cafe while enjoying views of the **Alaeddin Mosque**. It's the

perfect spot to unwind.

6. Shopping in Konya

If you love shopping, Konya won't disappoint. Head to the **Alâeddin Bazaar**, where you'll find everything from local crafts to trendy clothes. The marketplace is lively and full of energy, giving you a chance to practice your bargaining skills. Whether you're looking for souvenirs or fashion items, the bazaar has plenty to offer.

7. Konya's Festivals and Events

Konya isn't just about history and food; it also knows how to celebrate. The city hosts several **cultural festivals** throughout the year, the most famous being the **Mevlana Festival**. This annual event celebrates Rumi's teachings through Sufi music and dance. The festival draws people from all over the world and offers a captivating experience of Turkish culture.

How to Get to Konya

Konya is super accessible whether you're traveling from within Turkey or internationally. You can fly directly into **Konya Airport**, or take a high-speed train from **Ankara** or **Istanbul**. Once in the city, getting around is easy with public transport options like buses, trams, and taxis.

Getting to Konya

Traveling to Konya is straightforward, whether you're coming from within Turkey or abroad. **Konya Airport** offers direct flights, while high-speed trains connect the city to major hubs like **Ankara** and **Istanbul**. Once you arrive, getting around is easy with public transport options such as buses, trams, and taxis.

What to Eat in Konya

When in Konya, indulging in local cuisine is a must. The city's food scene is rich and diverse, reflecting its cultural heritage:

1. Etli Ekmek

This local specialty features flatbread topped with minced meat (lamb or beef) and spices. It's delicious and often served with yogurt.

2. Tandır Kebab

Slow-cooked lamb or beef in a clay oven creates a melt-in-your-mouth experience that's hard to resist.

3. Fırın Kebab

Meat and vegetables cooked in a clay pot result in a hearty, flavorful dish.

4. Konya Manti

Similar to dumplings, these are filled with spiced meat and served with yogurt and garlic sauce—a delightful treat!

5. Sweet Treats

Don't forget to try local desserts like **Baklava** and **Kunefe**, which are sure to satisfy your sweet tooth.

Where to Stay in Konya

Konya offers a variety of accommodations to suit all budgets:

- **Rumi Hotel:** Located next to the Mevlana Museum, this mid-range hotel is perfect for easy access to major attractions.
- **Hilton Garden Inn Konya:** For those seeking modern comforts, this hotel provides a stylish stay with convenient access to the city's highlights.

Best Time to Visit Konya

The ideal time to visit Konya is during **May, June, and September**. These months offer pleasant weather, perfect for exploring cultural and historical sites, as well as enjoying the city's beautiful landscapes. With mild temperatures and minimal rainfall, you'll have a more enjoyable experience during outdoor activities and sightseeing.

Practical Tips for Visitors

- **Dress Modestly:** Konya is a conservative city, so it's essential to dress respectfully, especially when visiting religious sites.
- **Carry Cash:** While credit cards are widely accepted, having some cash on hand for smaller purchases is advisable.
- **Stay Hydrated:** The climate can be dry, particularly in summer, so keep a bottle of water handy.

Last Words

Konya, Turkey, is a city where history, culture, and spirituality intertwine beautifully. Whether you're drawn in by the rich past, delicious food, or spiritual experiences, Konya has something for everyone. From the captivating Whirling Dervishes to breathtaking architecture, this hidden gem is worth adding to your travel itinerary. So next time you plan a trip to Turkey, don't just stop at Istanbul—make sure to explore Konya. You'll find a city that leaves a lasting impression.