

# Female Safety Report



## TURKEY



### Local Customs and Laws

There are some local customs that a female traveller should take into consideration in Turkey. Refrain from wearing clothing that could be considered too tight or revealing in conservative areas, including in *Konya* and *Erzurum* which are home to a predominately conservative religious population. In these areas, visitors are advised to wear loose-fitting and concealing clothing with high necks, skirts or slacks worn well below the knee and sleeves below the elbow. Women are expected to wear a scarf covering their hair when entering mosques.

Dress according to the country's culture, especially when visiting places of cultural and religious importance. Familiarise yourself with your destination prior to travel, and be respectful and mindful of any possible cultural sensitivities, which may include dress, behaviour and topics of discussions.

Only use official, licensed taxis and avoid sitting in the front seat; always take the seat behind the driver to minimise risks of harassment and assaults. Exercise personal safety awareness if walking alone at night. Stick to main, well-lit streets and avoid walking through desolate areas or unfamiliar neighbourhoods.

Refrain from wearing headphones while walking in the evening. Turkey's police force maintains a degree of professionalism and encompasses a dedicated tourist police unit.

While female travellers will not encounter any problems dealing with first responders or reporting crimes to local authorities, they are unlikely to speak languages other than Turkish, including in Istanbul.



### Safety

There are some safety concerns that a female traveller should take into consideration in Turkey. You may receive unwanted attention from men, ranging from open displays of catcalling to staring, including during the daytime. Such street harassment is more common in touristic areas and crowded markets or bazaars. Note that friendly behaviour considered normal at home such as smiling or making small talk with strangers may open yourself up to more unwanted attention or advances. Avoid making conversation or eye contact if strange men approach you. It is best to ignore these advances and walk away.

In the event that harassment escalates, draw attention to what is happening and locals will likely come to your aid.



### Health and Wellness

Women have access to some specialised gynaecological and reproductive health services, medicines and products in Turkey. Specialised clinics, emergency contraceptives, prescription contraceptives and a full variety of feminine hygiene products can be found. Emergency contraceptives are sold behind the counter at pharmacies and typically can be purchased from a pharmacist without a prescription.

By law, abortion is available on request during the first 10 weeks of pregnancy and during later periods under various health and socioeconomic circumstances. However, several hurdles make abortion access difficult in practice. Few public facilities perform abortions for non-emergency reasons and many hospitals refuse to perform abortions altogether. The consent of the husband is required for married women.