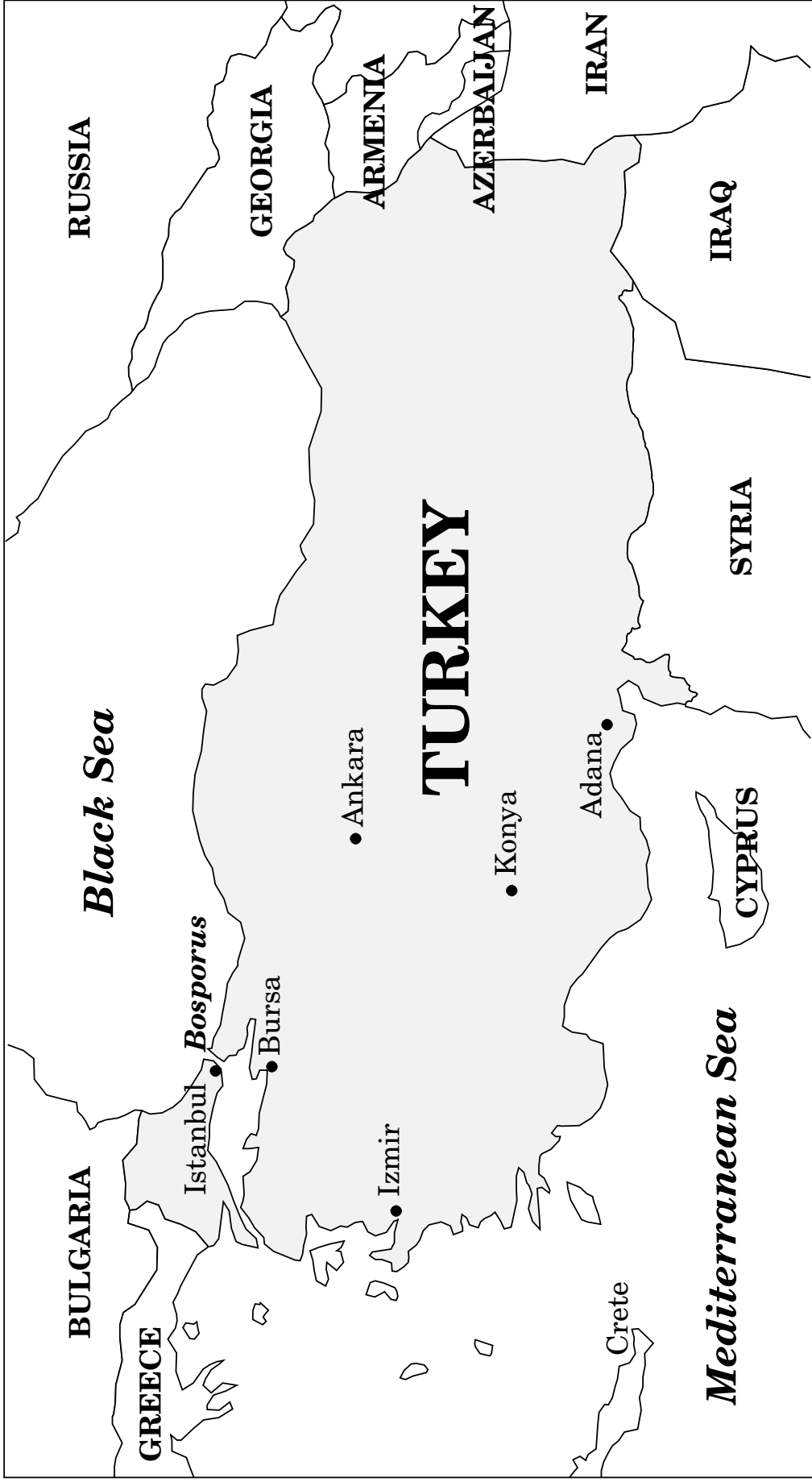


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Turkey

Two thousand five hundred years ago, people who came from Europe called it the “land of sunrise.” A thousand years later, early Christians called it the “second holy land.” A thousand years ago, Turks, who had come from Mongolia in Central Asia, named it **Türkiye** (TIR–KEY–EH), which means “home of the Turks.” In 1923, it was officially renamed, for the last time, **Türkiye Cumhuriyeti** (TIR–KEY–EH COO–MUR–E–YEH’T). Today, the “Republic of Turkey” is a progressive republic balanced on the ancient mountain crossroads of Europe and Asia. Strictly speaking, the Asian part of Turkey is called Anatolia and the European part is called Thrace, but some Turks still call their country Anatolia, **Anadolu** (UH–NA DOH–LOO) in Turkish, meaning “sunrise.”

Long before cars or planes, traders that walked, sailed boats, or rode horses from as far away as India followed mountains that led them to Anatolia. Sailors from the Black Sea still pass between Anatolia and Thrace to reach the Mediterranean, and vice versa. More recently, railroads beginning in Asia and Europe were continued into Anatolia. Few countries share as many roads and borders as Turkey. It borders Greece and Bulgaria in extreme Southeast Europe. In Southwest Asia, Turkey’s much larger area borders Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Iran, Iraq, and Syria.

Official Name—**Türkiye Cumhuriyeti** (Republic of Turkey)

Area—779,452 square kilometers (300,948 square miles)

Turkey is roughly half the area of Alaska, or a bit larger than Texas. About a quarter of its land is forested while half is cultivated for farming. Thrace is 23,000 square kilometers (9200 square miles) and the rest is Anatolia.

Population—About 60 million

The population of Turkey has doubled since 1970, and is expected to double again in the next 30 years. In fact, Turkey has the highest growth rate of any country in the world.

Major Cities

Ankara, founded in 2000 BCE, the capital since 1923, has a population of 3 million.

İstanbul, the city in Europe and Asia, houses 6 million people.

Izmir, a busy port on the Aegean seacoast, 1.5 million residents.

Adana, near the Syrian border, on the Gulf of **İskenderun**, population 1.25 million.

Bursa, first capital of the Ottoman Empire, has 1 million inhabitants.
Konya, one of world's oldest cities, founded in 7000 BCE, population 0.7 million.

Official Language—Turkish

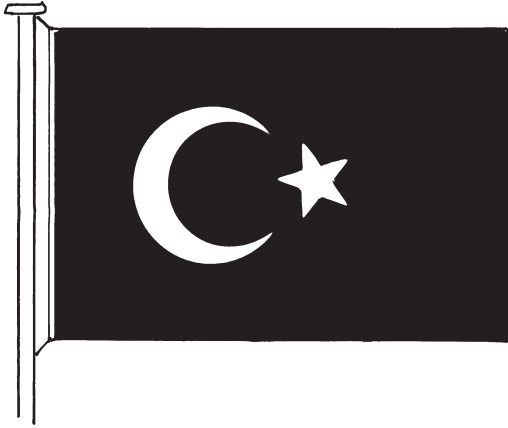
Turkish is spoken by 90% of the people and most of the rest speak Kurdish, Arabic, Hebrew, or English. About 90% of Turkish men and 70% of Turkish women read and write Turkish, though the gap is closing. (In the U.S., about 95% of either sex is literate.) Over 100 million people speak Turkish worldwide.

Official Religion—None

Though the government is officially secular, the population is 99.9% Muslims, which means they follow the teachings of *Istām*. Almost all Turkish Muslims follow orthodox *Istām*, called *Sunnī* or Sunnite, which is distinct from *Shī'ah* (Shiite) (a modernist sect) and *Sūfī Istām* (a mystical sect).

Flag—A red field with a white crescent and star

The crescent symbol, struck on coins in 340 BCE, celebrated Hecate—the ancient Greek goddess of the moon and witchcraft. The star was added to the crescent by Richard I of England (Richard “the Lion-Hearted” from *Robin Hood*) around 1190 CE, symbolizing the star of Bethlehem and Christianity. When Turks, led by the plain red flag of Mehmed II, took Constantinople (now named **İstanbul**) in 1453 CE, they placed the crescent–star on the field of red.



Physical Features

Even though Turkey has deserts and lakes, glaciers and mud flats, 90% of Turkey is covered by mountains. In the north the Pontic Mountains hug the Black Sea coast, and in the south the Taurus Mountains follow the Mediterranean coast leaving a strip of lowlands. The highest point in Turkey is **Ağrı Dağı**, which is called Mt. Ararat in English, and has an altitude of 5137 meters (16,849 feet). Surrounded by tall mountains in the center of Anatolia is a 910–meter (2985–feet) plateau with a salt lake in its shallow basin. This lake, **Tüz Gölü**, is over 1600 square kilometers (640 square feet) but is less than a meter (1 yard) deep! The waters of East Anatolia drain into the Caspian Sea, Southeast Anatolia drains into the Persian Gulf, and the rest of Turkey drains into the Black Sea, the Aegean Sea, or the Mediterranean Sea. Also, the Black Sea (and the rivers that empty into it) bottlenecks through **İstanbul**, a strait called the Bosphorus in English or **İstanbul Boğazi** (the “throat of Istanbul”) in Turkish.