

Turkish delights

Tuba Satana, a local food and travel blogger, selects her favourite food hotspots across the country

PHOTOGRAPHY TUBA SATANA

URKEY HAS
everything from
sizzling street
food to fantastic
fine dining. It
may vary across
the country – they eat green
food in the north and red in
the south – but one important
factor remains constant: the
superb quality.

In Istanbul, Turkey's largest city, you can expect to find local specialties such as simit (circular bread with sesame seeds), roasted chestnuts and boiled corn. Istanbul's streets smell of freshly baked bread, pide (stuffed flatbread) and borek (a thin pastry filled with cheese or minced meat), and is brought to life by dazzling open markets, home to butchers, fishmongers and spice shops.

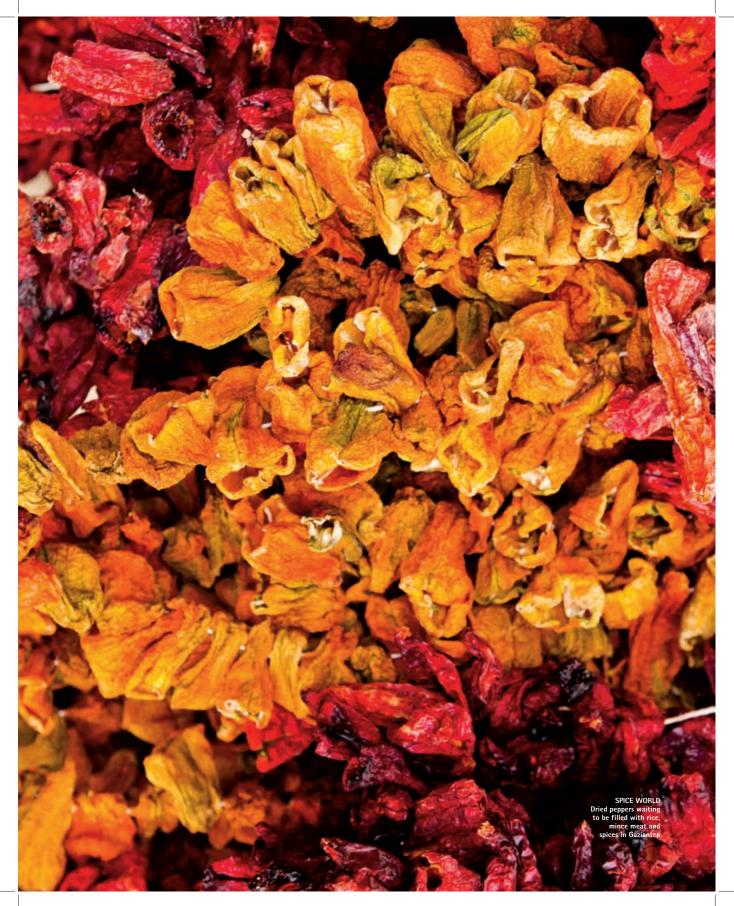
You'll also find some of the city's most wonderful food in unpretentious tradesmen's restaurants, with an emphasis on home-cooked meals and stews. For me, the best food is cooked at home, so if you're lucky enough to be invited to a family dinner, accept immediately.

The even more adventurous should look out for the delicacy kokoreç (lamb's intestines cooked on charcoal), which is served from a cart leaving the most seductive smell in its wake. But if all that sounds like too much trouble, delicious döner stands, lahmacun (pizza-thin dough with meat) shops and kebab houses are easily found dotted throughout Turkey.

Hungry? Let's dig into a selection of the tastiest treats across the country...









ISTANBUL

You can sample cuisine from the whole of Turkey here, but for great local cooking, head to Kantin (30 Akkavak Sokağı, +90 212 219 3114, kantin.biz) in the fashionable Nişantaşı district for lunch and Lokanta Maya (35A Kemankeş Caddesi, +90 212 252 6884, lokantamaya. blogspot.com) at Karaköy where the menu is seasonal and changes daily - for dinner. The tradesmen's restaurant, Şahin Lokantası (11A Orhan Adli Apaydın Sk, Beyoğlu, +90 212 $244\ 2543)$ is also recommended for traditional fare.

Seafood lovers should make a beeline for Balıkçı Sabahattin (1 Seyit Hasan Kuyu Sokak, Cankurtaran, +90 212 458 1824, balikcisabahattin.com) and Giritli (Keresteci Hakkı Sokak, Armada Otel Yanı, Cankurtaran, +90 212 458 2270, giritlirestoran. com) in Eminönü, a peninsula steeped in history.

You can't leave Istanbul without sampling a meyhane or traditional Turkish bar that also serves mezze – and the street Asmalı Cavit, in Beyoğlu, is filled with them. And for the best Turkish delight – known as lokum – in the city, Şekerci Cafer Erol (sekercicafererol.com) has been serving the sweet for four generations.





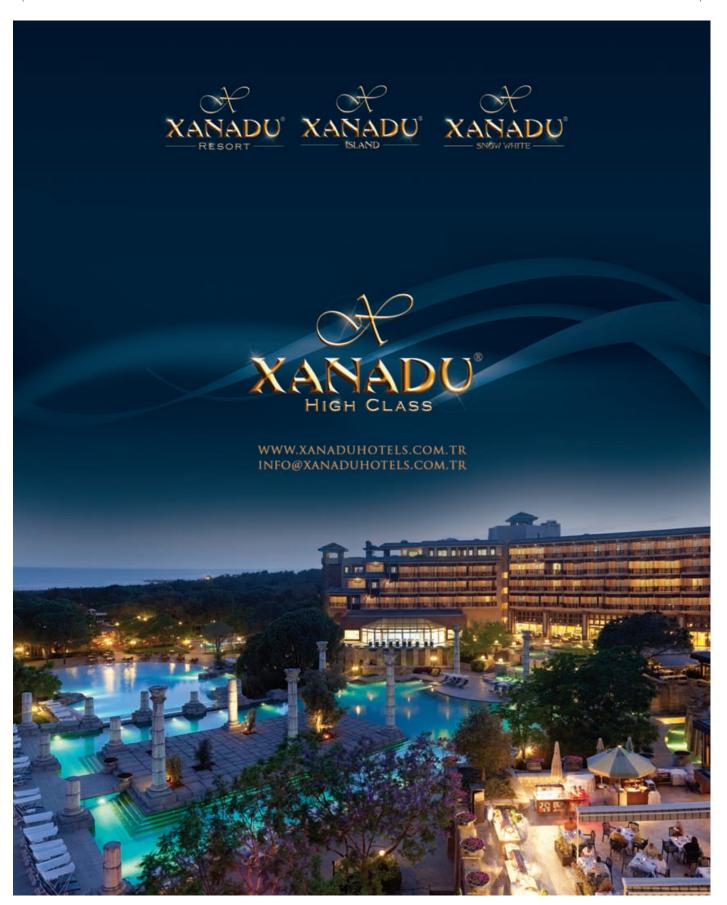






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İZMIR

Locals here start their days with boyoz, a pastry largely sold on the streets of Izmir. Served plain is the favourite, but they also come filled with meat, cheese or spinach. If there's any room left, try a kumru, a warm sandwich stuffed with loads of charcuterie and cheese from trendy Şevki (9 Cengiz Topel Cad, +90 232 330 8600), at Karşıyaka. The sautéed liver at Ciğerci Zarif (67 Şehit Fethi Bey Bulvarı, Pasaport, +90 232 445 7526) must also be eaten to be believed.

BODRUM

Visit the local food markets in and around Bodrum, Yalıkavak,

and Milas and you'll discover exciting seasonal fruit, vegetables, olive oil, olives, homemade cheeses, bread, and wild, green edible herbs.

Kortan Restaurant (32 Cumhuriyet Cad, +90 252 316 1300, kortanrestaurant.com) overlooking Bodrum Castle has been serving excellent fish and seafood for over 30 years.

And if a night of dancing at the open-air Küba Bar (Neyzen Tevfik Cad, +90 252 313 4450) has whetted your appetite, Liman Köftecisi (172 Neyzen Tevfik Caddesi, Western Bay, +90 252 316 5060) is the place to go for a kofta and a glass of rakı (the local, anise-flavoured spirit) by the seafront.



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MARMARIS AND FETHIYE

The best way to start your day in Marmaris is to take a boat cruise, diving into the inviting turquoise sea.

Having worked up a sailor's appetite, drop anchor at Liman Restaurant (40 Sokak 38, +90 252 412 6336) inside the Turkish bazaar for fine soup and buğulama (steamed fish), or visit Kordon Balık Restaurant (56 Yaşar Aytaç Sok, +90 252 243 5251) – known as İsmail Usta'nin Yeri – where great ingredients are the key. Tranquil, beautiful Fethiye is also a haven for food lovers. For starters, you'll never have your fill of the heavenly slipper lobster pasta at Osman'ın Yeri



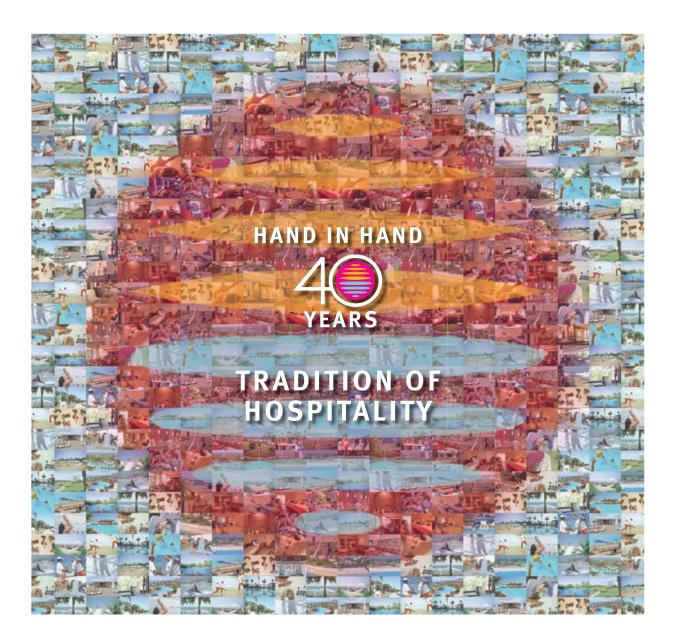
(Kaya Köyü Turunç Pınarı Mevki, +90 542 262 1879). The wholesale market hall is also a trendy place to visit and eyeball the daily catch.

And make sure you don't miss out on those roadside *gözleme* stalls, for delicious herb and cheese-filled dough layers, cooked on special metal plates.

ANTALYA

For a real taste of Antalya, pop into Şişçi Ramazan'ın Yeri (44 Yener Ulusoy Bulvarı, +90 242 242 6637) and sample some delicious köfte and tahini piyaz (salad). Have a sweet tooth? Why not finish your meal with a caramelised milk ice cream at Zamora (55 Cebesoy Cd, +90 242 322 3632).



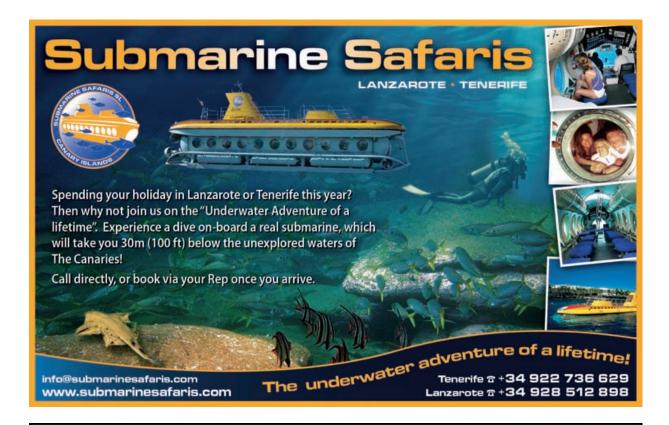




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About Kalkan...

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Sample local delicacies such as kaytaz böreği (savoury pastry with minced meat) and kağit kebabi (oven-roasted lamb with cheese) at Sultan Sofrası (20A Istiklal Cad, +90 326 213 8759, sultansofrasi.com).

For dessert, order a künefe (a vermicelli-like pastry with a sweet cheese filling) at Çınaraltı (90 Carsi Cad, Kuzguncuk, +90 216 553 7385) or a haytalı (a flour pudding-based dessert served with ice cream and rose water) at Affan Kahvesi (42 Kurtulus Caddesi, +90 326 215 1248, affankahvesi.com) while watching the local men playing backgammon or reading papers.

GAZIANTEP

Start your day bright and early around 6am with a *cartlak kebabi* (liver kebab grilled on charcoal) at Cartlak kebabi, Ali Haydar Usta (Köprübaşı Sk. Kaleatı, Şahinbey). Alternatively, for something sweeter – and more western – at that hour, a *katmer* (hand-stretched dough filled with pistachio, sugar and butter) from Zekeriya Usta (16C/D Çukur Mh. Körükcü Sok. B Hilmi Gecidi, +90 342 230 09 71, katmercizekeriya.com) will surely hit the spot.

Gaziantep is also renowned for its spicy tomato salads and divine baklava. Stock up on the latter at Koçak (Budak Mah, 3 Şehit Mehmet Özgil Sok, +90 342 321 0519, kocakbaklava. com) to bring a taste of Turkey back home with you.

GETTING THERE

For more about Turkey visit your local Thomas Cook or Going Places store, call +44 (0)844 412 5966 or visit thomascook.com