

# TURKEY'S TOURISM REVENUE SURGES TO NEARLY \$10 BILLION IN Q1 2026



Early signs point to steady momentum in Turkey's travel economy during 2026, as revenue rose 4.2% compared to the same period last year, totaling \$9.89 billion by March. Fresh numbers issued by TurkStat reveal persistent demand despite shifting conditions worldwide. Though growth appears modest, underlying patterns show changes in how visitors - from abroad and overseas Turks - allocate their budgets while exploring the region. While some markets slowed, others compensated through longer stays and adjusted consumption trends across coastal and urban zones.

## Steady Inbound Flow with Growing Diaspora Influence

From the overall tourism revenue, visitor spending made up \$9.69 billion; meanwhile, transit travelers added \$201.9 million. During the first three months of the year, 9.26 million international tourists left Turkey - an uptick of just 1.5% compared to last year's early months. Among these were 2.38 million Turks living overseas, who formed nearly a quarter of all outbound travel movements and delivered slightly less than that share - 25.6% - in visitor-related revenue.

## Spending Moves More to Services and Experiences

Spending by independent travelers made up most of the income, reaching \$8.47 billion, whereas packaged trips contributed \$1.22 billion. Visitors leaving the country typically paid \$102 each night; in contrast, Turks residing overseas spent \$72 nightly.

Breaking it down by sector, food and drink made up 27% of tourism revenue - the biggest portion. International travel came next, contributing 15.8%, while lodging accounted for 13%. Compared to the previous year, some areas saw notable gains. Spending on places to stay surged by 21.2%. Health services climbed 18.4%, whereas what people spent on meals and drinks went up 13.7%. Despite differences in size, each part played a measurable role.

## Why People Visit Places for Fun and Traditions

Most people visiting Turkey during early 2026 came mainly for holidays tied to culture. Activities like sightseeing, events, performances, games, and shows represented slightly more than half of total arrivals. Staying with family or close acquaintances was next, making up roughly a quarter of visits. Purchasing goods drew less attention yet still contributed meaningfully, standing at just over eight percent. Such distribution highlights variety in traveler motivations across global and community-based visitors alike.

## Outbound Travel Shows Clear Increase

Not only did inbound tourism continue rising, but outbound trips by Turkish travelers saw notable growth too. A 13.1% increase brought the count of Turkish citizens going overseas to 2.94 million in the first three months, compared to last year. Each traveler spent roughly \$758 on average during these journeys. Rising personal earnings, alongside broader access to international destinations, likely fueled this trend among locals. Though arrivals climbed steadily, it is the outward movement that revealed deeper shifts in spending habits.

## Looking Ahead

Despite cooler months, visitor numbers keep rising across Turkey. Gains in lodging choices show travelers now expect more than just sightseeing. Instead, wellness retreats attract growing interest throughout the year. Meanwhile, meals at local eateries contribute noticeably to total spending.

**Visitors from abroad return frequently, often joined by family members living overseas.**

Such patterns help stabilize income for many service-based businesses nationwide. Summer reservations may reveal if current growth holds through season's peak. Should demand stay high, annual results could surpass previous highs. Growth seems less about volume, more about what people do once they arrive.

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