

## SPECIAL DAYS, FESTIVALS and HOLIDAYS in TURKEY

### Feast of the Sacrifice (October 15 – 18, 2013)



In Turkey, every year two religious festivals are celebrated: “Ramadan” and the “Feast of the Sacrifice”. Both of them are celebrated ten days earlier than the year before every year, since celebration days are calculated according to the lunar calendar. According to the lunar calendar the Feast of the Sacrifice is celebrated on the tenth day of the month “Zilhicce”. Celebration lasts four days.

This festival is well known with its story. In the past, the prophet Ibrahim did not have a child for many years. Then he promised God ‘if God gave him a son, he would sacrifice him for God’. After he had got a son, he told Ismail that he had to sacrifice him for God. When he intended to sacrifice Ismail for God, a ram fell from the sky. God told Ibrahim to sacrifice a ram instead of Ismail. After that day it became a fashion.

On the first day of the Feast of the Sacrifice, Muslim sacrifice rams. In some parts of Turkey rams are washed, painted with henna. Rams, sheep or veal may be sacrificed. The sacrificed animal must be healthy. If it is female, it must not be pregnant. Before sacrificing, rams’ eyes should be covered with a white towel or handkerchief. Two-third of the meat from sacrificed animals is given to relatives, neighbour and the poor. One –third of the meat should be left in the house. Thus, you can see animal bazaars around during 4 days.



Muslims around the world celebrate this feast of commitment, obedience and self-sacrifice to God. People wear their nicest clothing. Next, people

visit their neighbours, relatives and friends and partake in festive meals with special dishes, beverages, and desserts. Children receive gifts and sweets on this happy occasion. People exchange greeting cards at this time

The main idea of the Feast of the Sacrifice is helping the poors and having a good relationship with everyone. Muslims pray for forgiveness from God and strength of faith. They, in turn, forgive others, releasing any feelings of enmity or ill feeling towards others.

### **Republic Day (October 29, 2013)**



Republic Day marks the creation of the Turkish Republic in 1923. After Turkey's victory in the War of Independence (1919-1923), the Turkish parliament proclaimed the new Turkish state as a republic. A new constitution, which the parliament adopted on October 29, 1923, replaced the constitution of the Ottoman Empire. The leader in the Turkish War of Independence, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, became the country's first president on the same day.

Many people in Turkey celebrate Republic Day on October 29 by attending performances and participating in traditional processions with flags and musical bands. The Turkish Republic's founder Mustafa Kemal Atatürk proclaimed Republic Day as Turkey's most important holiday.

Many people go to local stadiums on October 29 to watch performances dedicated to Republic Day in Turkey. Such performances usually consist of theater sketches, poetry readings and traditional Turkish dances. Many school children participate in school performances for parents and teachers.

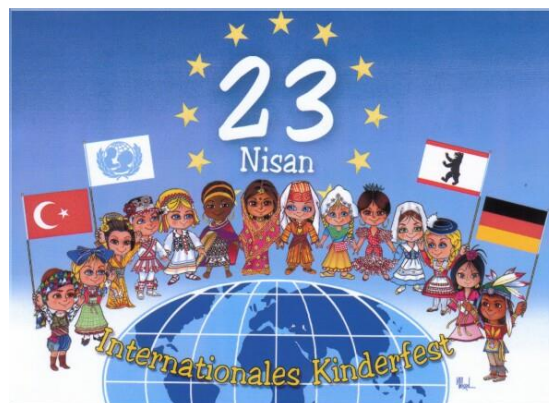
Republic Day is an official national holiday in Turkey. Public administration buildings, schools, post offices and many small businesses are usually closed on this day.

### Atatürk Memorial Day (November 10, 2013)



Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of Turkish Republic died on November 10, 1938. Since then, every year November 10, Turkish people pay tribute to Atatürk. At 9.05 a.m, the moment of his death for about a minute the Turkish people stand silent in commemoration of him. Many people visit Anıtkabir “memorial tomb” in Ankara during this day.

### National Sovereignty and Children’s Day (April 23, 2013)



Many people in Turkey commemorate the first gathering of the Grand National Assembly (the Turkish Parliament), which took place on April 23, 1920, by attending local ceremonies or laying wreaths at monuments of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the founder of the Turkish Republic. The biggest ceremony takes place at the Ataturk Mausoleum in Ankara.

Because Ataturk reportedly dedicated the Turkish Republic to children, Turkish schoolchildren take seats in the Parliament for the day and symbolically govern the country. They elect a president who

then addresses the country on national television. Children’s festivals take place throughout the country.

National Sovereignty and Children’s Day is an official holiday in Turkey. Government offices, schools and most businesses are closed on this day

### **Hıdırellez (May 5 – 6, 2013)**

The Hıdırellez, which falls on May 5-6, is a celebration of “the day of Hızır” -- which is the day that the prophets Hızır and İlyas met in Islamic belief. It is believed that all wishes that are made on that night will be granted within the span of a year.

Hıdırellez festivities are common throughout Turkey. Each province has their own unique way of celebrating the day and making wishes on the night of May 5, following customs passed down by their ancestors.



### **Commemoration of Atatürk, Youth and Sports Day (May 19, 2013)**



The founder of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, arrived in Samsun on May 19, 1919, to start a popular uprising against the decision of the World War I allies. The date of Atatürk’s arrival in

Samsun is accepted as the starting date of the Turkish War of Independence in Turkey. Following Atatürk's wish, the Turkish government declared May 19 to be Youth and Sports Day and made it an official holiday in 1938.

In the run-up to the May 19 celebrations, young Turkish athletes carry the national flag from Samsun, a Black Sea port from where Mustafa Kemal Atatürk started Turkey's War of Independence in 1919, to Ankara, the country's capital. The marathon usually takes about 10 days. The Turkish president accepts the flag at a ceremony on May 19.

Various sports events take place on May 19 throughout Turkey. Many people celebrate this day by watching athletes perform at their local stadiums or by participating in sports events that are open to the public, such as half-marathons. University students usually prepare special programs for their teachers and parents on this day. People lay wreaths to Atatürk's monuments and hang Turkish flags outside their windows.

The Commemoration of Atatürk, Youth and Sports Day is an official holiday in Turkey. All administration buildings, post offices, schools, and most businesses are closed on this day.