



EDC GUIDE

CULTURAL TIPS FOR DOING BUSINESS IN TURKEY

How to maximize your success

Canada

 EDC
TAKE ON THE WORLD

When it comes to business etiquette, what's acceptable in one country, may not be in another. To be successful in international trade, you need to understand the culture, traditions and business habits of your clients and partners in your target markets and adapt your communication and business strategies accordingly. It could mean the difference between winning—or losing—a contract.

As a member of the G20 and Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Turkey is a significant trading partner for Canada and continues to offer opportunities to our exporters and investors.

In 2020, Canada-Turkey bilateral trade was more than C\$3 billion, despite the challenges posed by COVID-19. There's still considerable untapped potential in sectors such as infrastructure, power, advanced manufacturing, cleantech, information and communications technology and agri-food as Turkey is on the cusp of a major economic transformation. Despite significant market volatility in recent years, the average annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate of the country for the 2010-2020 period was 5.5%; far above the 2.3% OECD average.

With a population of 84 million, signed trade agreements, including the European Union Customs Union (EUCU), and an enviable strategic geographical location, Turkey offers access to 1.5 billion people and a combined market worth of US\$24 trillion GDP in Europe, Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia.

Cultural differences vary from country to country, but by adapting your negotiation and communication strategy, you can optimize your success for doing business in Turkey.



5 KEY ETIQUETTE TIPS

1. **Establish personal relations.** Social interactions and hospitality are of utmost importance as the majority of Turkish corporations are family-run businesses. To establish a warm rapport, begin the conversation with small talk before business-related topics while enjoying a tea or Turkish coffee. If you're invited to a Turk's home for dinner, it's customary to bring a gift, like dessert or a decor item.
2. **Be ready to negotiate.** Negotiation is expected and is a critical part of the business culture, so you should factor this dynamic into your market strategy. Being patient is key as the process may take longer than usual in Turkey.
3. **Be punctual.** Turkey is a dynamic country and has a fast-paced business environment. As a result, and given Istanbul's infamous traffic, give yourself plenty of time to arrive before a scheduled meeting. If the meeting starts late, be patient.
4. **Show interest in the local culture.** Turks are proud of their country, history and culture. Expressing a willingness to explore and learn about Turkey will help you create personal relations quicker. At the same time, be ready to talk about your country as Canada has a very positive image in Turkey and many people send their children to Canada for education.
5. **Use formal greetings at your initial meeting.** Turkish people tend to use the words *Bey* (Mr.) and *Hanim* (Ms.) when addressing one another in the work environment. You can also use *Bey/Hanim* as a suffix to first names to show that you're familiar with Turkish customs.

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT TURKEY

- › The city of Istanbul, which is separated by the Bosphorus, a narrow, natural strait, spans two continents: Europe and Asia. Like Rome, the historical city was built on seven hills. Fun fact: Ankara, not Istanbul, is the capital city.
- › The Grand Bazaar in Istanbul, the world's oldest "shopping mall" with more than 3,000 shops, dates to the 15th century and had been visited by 90 million tourists every year, prior to the pandemic.
- › Santa Claus or St. Nicholas isn't a myth; the Christian saint and Greek bishop of Myra was born in Turkey.
- › Known for its Turkish Delights (candy), strong coffee and love of tea, Turkey is also the world's largest producer of hazelnuts.
- › Turkey is credited with introducing tulips to the world. The story goes that in the 16th century, after a Flemish ambassador visited the Ottoman Emperor Suleiman the Magnificent, the beloved bulbs were brought back to Holland.
- › Turkish Airlines flies to more destinations than any other airline in the world, including direct flights from Istanbul to Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver.
- › The Turkish economy was one of the few economies that grew in 2020 despite the pandemic.
- › Turkey is ranked 33 out of 190 countries in the World Bank's *Ease of Doing Business* 2020 report.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- › Visit EDC's [country and market info](#) page.
- › Visit the Canadian Trade Commissioner Service [country and sector information](#) page.
- › Reach out to [Famer Engin](#), EDC's senior regional manager for Turkey.
- › Read this insightful EDC article on doing business in [Turkey](#).

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Who are we?

Export Development Canada (EDC) is Canada's export credit agency. Our job is to support and develop Canada's export trade by helping Canadian companies respond to international business opportunities. We're a self-financing Crown Corporation that operates at arm's length from the Government of Canada.

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