

## Didim

Didim, home of the antique city of Didyma with its ruined Temple of Apollo, is a small town, popular seaside holiday resort and district of Aydın Province on the Aegean coast of western Turkey, 123 km (76 mi) from the city of Aydın.

### Geography

Didim is located on the north shore of the gulf of Güllük opposite the Bodrum peninsula villages such as Torba, Türkbükü and Yal1kavak. The district consists of Didim itself, a coastal town of 26,000 people and a number of small towns including Alt1nkum (which means golden sand), Gümü\_kum (silver sand) and Sar1kum (yellow sand).

Tourism is the main source of income for the area, especially in summer, but agriculture is also an important contributor, the main crops are wheat and cotton. Animals, especially sheep and goats, are raised mainly for local consumption.

### History

See Didyma for a full account of this ancient city, settled in the neolithic period, established as colony of Mycenae and then Crete in the 16th century BC and subsequently possessed by Persians, Seleucids, Attalids, Ancient Romans, and Byzantines as part of the province of Caria. The area came into the hands of Turks following the defeat of Byzantium at the Battle of Malazgirt in 1086. She was captured again Byzantines in 1098. She was captured at first by Menteshah in 1280, after Aydınolu in 1300. Didim was brought into the Ottoman Empire by Mehmet I in 1413.

### Etymology

Didim takes its name from ancient Didyma, sited close to the town. During the Ottoman Empire the town was known as Yoranda or Yoran and under the Turkish Republic was called Hisar (meaning castle) and following its destruction in an earthquake in 1955 was rebuilt and renamed Yenihisar (new castle). She was bounded to Söke district until 1991. She became the district as Yenihisar and was later given the ancient name Didim to distinguish it from other places in Turkey called Yenihisar in 1997.

### Tourism

This coast has thus become a very popular holiday resort and is genuinely attractive with its long sandy beaches, clear blue sea, ancient ruins to visit, and its own microclimate, benefitting from hundreds of days of sun a year and warm winters, allowing residents to enjoy the famous beaches and watersports even in January. Perhaps the most attractive bays are the smaller quieter ones further from the centre, such as Haydar, along a dirt road around the shore of Akbük (white bay).

As Didim is so well-situated in the 1980s people from large cities around Turkey, especially Ankara, began to buy holiday homes, apartments, and villas in the area. Most of these were built as cooperative housing projects with private beaches. The attraction of the area is proved by the number of Ankara families that have now been going to Didim for two or more generations, and even today you will see many cars with Ankara (06) numberplates in Didim in summertime. Property values are now rising dramatically and the building boom continues as foreign buyers, especially the families of Turks living and working in Europe, follow their lead. The growth of Didim in the 1980s was enhanced with the building of hotels to accommodate visitors, originally from Britain but now from Turkey itself, on cheap package holidays. Since about 2001 British people have begun to buy holiday homes in Didim, establishing themselves as a visible community of many thousands, to the extent that utility bills in the district are now printed in English as well as Turkish. [1] You will see the Union Jack and other British flags all around Didim, especially in the bars.

Didim town has hotels, a weekly market, a waterpark and the antique temple of Apollo nearby. Didim is also close to a number of other ancient towns and natural wonders: Lake Bafa national park is nearby, along with the Büyük Menderes River and historic sites such as Miletus and Priene.

In the evenings, visitors try to find somewhere quiet to sit by the sea and look at the lights of other towns across the water, but for those of a more energetic nature, Didim has a number of discotheques, smaller bars and clubs, some with live music, mostly Türkü (Turkish folk music). However, Didim is mostly a quiet, family resort with a great coastline, and visitors looking for nightlife would be better off in Bodrum. Summers in Didim can involve sitting on the balcony drinking rakı, playing volleyball, sitting on the beach, or wandering along the seafront while eating sunflower seeds. The local station, Didim TV, is in fact an amateur project by a television repair shop owner and neighbourhood councillor (muhtar), and is mostly advertisements for local shops and hotels.

The construction of the new fifty million dollar Didim D Marina is expected to encourage further tourism and rising property prices in the area. Development of the third beach area in Altinkum has already begun with an expected completion date of 2009.

#### Places of interest

For many the most dramatic feature is the ruins of the Ionic Temple of Apollo with its columns pointing up into the sky, and its legend of the romance between Apollo and Daphne. The original temple and home of an oracle was destroyed during the Persian Wars and the one we see today was rebuilt following the victory over the Persians of Alexander the Great. [2] [3] [4]

Nearby Miletos, the ruins of the ancient city including a well-preserved antique theatre, stadium, baths of Faustina, temple of Serapis and much more.