

# Mandarin Oriental, Bodrum, Turkey

*The latest hotel in the luxury chain is an elegant and beautifully secluded affair*

**TELEGRAPH RATING** 9/10

Wrapped around its own private bay on the northern shores of a rugged peninsula jutting out from Turkey's beautiful Aegean coast, it's hard to imagine a more laid-back yet sophisticated and exclusive retreat than the Mandarin Oriental. Daytime activities revolve around the twin beaches and crystal clear waters fronting them, or relaxing by an elegant pool complex. Evenings see most guests fine-dining on Turkish, Italian or Japanese cuisine at one of the à la carte beachfront restaurants, then sipping cocktails and listening to mellow sounds at low-key beach-bars run by Istanbul's leading club, Babylon. What's really special about this place, though, is that the size of the grounds compared to the number of guests is so generous, and that the low-rise hotel buildings have been subtly designed to blend perfectly into the olive groves among which they have been built. At times it's hard to remember that you are in a holiday complex at all, especially when all you can hear is the incessant creaking of the cicadas.

## Location 9/10

The mountainous land mass that is Anatolian Turkey, tilting eastwards and upwards into Asia, throws out long, gnarled fingers of limestone into the Aegean. One of these digits, the heavily indented, 27-mile long Bodrum Peninsula, is home to the Mandarin Oriental. Built in tiers up a green hillside curving around twin beaches, the complex has sublime views across the bay it backs. Chic Bodrum lies 15 miles away on the peninsula's south shore.



## Style/character 9/10

The gnarled trunks of aged olive trees dot the property and the subtle, green-tinged grey stone that sheaths the hotel was chosen to match the hue, while a medley of Mediterranean shrubs sprout from the flat roofs of the cubist-inspired buildings. Spread across almost 15,000 acres, this is a world within a world, about as exclusive a getaway as you can imagine, making it entirely appropriate that the complex is situated on a stretch of shore known locally as Cennet Koyu - Paradise Bay.

## Service 9/10

With the same number of staff as there are guests even when full, and the rigorous demands of the Mandarin Oriental brand, it's not surprising that the service is excellent.

## Rooms 10/10

Restrainted elegance is the key to all of the 86 rooms and 23 apartments. The Mandarin's oriental roots show in the emphasis on simple vertical and horizontal lines, delicately grained wooden wall panelling and floors, sleek charcoal furniture, off-white rugs and low sofas, not to mention the



The Mandarin Oriental in Turkey hugs Paradise Bay on the Aegean coast, and covers a 15,000-acre area, making it as private a large hotel as you are ever likely to visit

potted orchids. A welcome feature is the separate storage room, where you can dump your clutter out of sight, and a sizeable veranda for lounging out front. The stylishly long, narrow bathrooms have heated marble floors and oversized free-standing oval baths from which, in sea-view rooms, you can relax and gaze out over the Aegean.

## Food and drink 9/10

Given its deliberately isolated location, it's just as well as that there are 10 different eating and drinking spots on site. Nudging the smallest beaches is Olive, which serves excellent Turkish cuisine. Kurochan, set on decking right over the water, has an open-kitchen devoted to innovative Japanese-Asian

cuisine. Assagio, with its own stunning pool, handles the Italian side of things superbly, while Sofra is the place for monumental breakfast and evening meal buffets. Chilled music emanates from the sophisticated beachside JuJu and M2 bars.

## Facilities 9/10

The two beaches have lovely soft sand imported from the Black Sea of Turkey, though getting into the delightfully clear water one encounters hard Aegean pebbles - bring swimming shoes. There are loungers set-out in the water in the pool complex, with a great kids' playground next to the shallow children's pool. Inside the hotel is a well-supervised toddler's

playroom and computer games room for the older ones. The beautifully designed spa and wellness complex offers specialist oriental treatments as well as sauna and Turkish bath experiences, and includes a full-sized indoor pool and a gym crammed with the latest machines.

## Value for money 8/10

Considering the superb location, exclusivity, attentive service and complete "other-worldliness" of what is a retreat rather than a resort, it almost certainly represents value for money for those who can even consider staying at a place like this. Garden view rooms start from €795 (£630) and there are plenty of special offers available.

## Access for guests with disabilities 9/10

It is possible to access all levels of the hotel via superbly-functioning lifts and there are step-free corridors throughout; in addition there are buggies available to guests.

## The details

Cennet Koyu, Çomça Mevkii, 314, Bodrum (0090 252 311 1888; [mandarinoriental.com/bodrum](http://mandarinoriental.com/bodrum)).

## Terry Richardson

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## The Fab Five

### Turquoise Coast hotels

#### The Courtyard, Kalkan

Three turn-of-the-century cottages have been stunningly restored to make Kalkan's premier boutique hotel. There are only six rooms, each individually designed, ranged around a tranquil yet stylish courtyard, with a distinctive pebble mosaic floor, potted plants, spreading bougainvillea and benches for lounging. The sweet-smelling cedar-wood floors, ceilings, windows and shutters have been worked

by a top-notch craftsman, and are perfectly complemented by the restrained pale neutral walls, soft, textured white bed-linen and stone fireplaces, while the bathrooms are elegantly modern. Superb breakfasts.

#### Mehmet Ali Aga Mansion, Datça

From the rose garden and citrus orchards to the intricately carved wooden ceilings, everything about the mansion oozes style and elegance, without overstatement. The Ottoman



#### The Courtyard in Kalkan: the resort's premier boutique hotel

ambience, created by the vintage furniture pieces and impressive frescoes, are beautifully set-off by the tasteful and calming décor. At the Elaki Restaurant, the chef serves up local, seasonal food, with the outside seating located in the heart of the walled garden.

#### Villa Perla, Antalya

This former Ottoman mansion house survived the vicissitudes of time far better than most buildings of its type and was painstakingly restored, rather than rebuilt, in its conversion to a

hotel. Breakfast is a grander version of the Turkish standard cheese, olives, tomatoes, cucumber and bread jazzed-up with pancakes and omelettes.

#### Likya Yolu Palas, Demre

Restrainted elegance is the key attribute of each individually furnished room, (one has a turn-of-the-century birdseye maple French bedroom suite with ivory handles), with plain walls and traditional Turkish rugs on the gleaming wooden floors. All rooms have their own built-in balcony which opens onto a terrace and the hotel's pool.

#### Arikanda River Garden Hotel, Adrasan

While its basic concrete-block construction is never going to win any architectural awards, it's a tidy, well-maintained building in a stunning setting - and once you're ensconced on your balcony watching the ducks squabble on the river below who cares about architectural merit? Rooms are bright and simple, and the food is one of the high points of a stay.

See [telegraph.co.uk/turquoisecoasthotels](http://telegraph.co.uk/turquoisecoasthotels) for the full reviews