

Turkey

April 2015 - June 2015

Jim and Jennie Russell

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Itinerary

Turkey 2015 JK & JE Russell

Day	Date			Notes
1	26/04/2015	Sunday	Depart Melbourne for Istanbul 22:55 QF9	
2	27/04/2015	Monday	Arrive Dubai 07:05 Depart Dubai for Istanbul 14:20 QF8121 Arrive 17:55. Transfer to hotel	Enchanted Lantern tour Starts
3	28/04/2015	Tuesday	Istanbul City Tour	
4	29/04/2015	Wednesday	Istanbul - Ankara	
5	30/04/2015	Thursday	Ankara - Cappadocia	
6	1/05/2015	Friday	Goreme, Avanos - Cappadocia	
7	2/05/2015	Saturday	Cappadocia - Konya -Pamukkale	
8	3/05/2015	Sunday	Pamukalle - Hierapolis - Kusadasi	
9	4/05/2015	Monday	Ephesus - Sirence - Kusadasi	
10	5/05/2015	Tuesday	Pergamum - Troy - Cannakale	
11	6/05/2015	Wednesday	Gallipoli - Anzac Cove - Istanbul	
12	7/05/2015	Thursday	Enchanted Lantern tour Ends Istanbul - Fly to Fethye TK2554 IST-DLM 09:25/1:45	
13	8/05/2015	Friday	Morning Ferry Fethye to Rhodes Afternoon Ferry back to Fethye	
14	9/05/2015	Saturday	Bus to Antalya	
15	10/05/2015	Sunday	Antalya - Day Tour to Perge, Aspendos, Side and Kursunla Waterfalls	
16	11/05/2015	Monday	Antalya to Cappadocia - TK7350 AYT-Nav 17:00/18:05 -Morning free to visit Hadrian Gate, Archaeological Museum and Old Town of Kaleici	Eastern Turkey Tour Starts
17	12/05/2015	Tuesday	J&JR R&R in Cappadocia	
18	13/05/2015	Wednesday	Cappadocia to Gaziantep	
19	14/05/2015	Thursday	Gaziantep - Zuegma - Sanli Urfa	
20	15/05/2015	Friday	Sanli Urfa - Kahta	
21	16/05/2015	Saturday	Kahta - Mt Nemrut - Mardin	
22	17/05/2015	Sunday	Mardin - Van	
23	18/05/2015	Monday	Van - Dogubeyazit	

24	19/05/2015	Tuesday	Dogubeyazit - Kars	
25	20/05/2015	Wednesday	Kars - Erzurum	
26	21/05/2015	Thursday	Erzurum	
27	22/05/2015	Friday	Erzurum - Trabzon, Sumela Monastery	
28	23/05/2015	Saturday	Trabzon - Istanbul - TK2833 Trabzon - Istanbul 17:55 - 19:45	
29	24/05/2015	Sunday	Depart Istanbul 19:15 TK1843 Overnight Sofitel Athens Airport	Eastern Turkey Tour ends
30	25/05/2015	Monday	Athens to Naxos 08:20 A37004	
31	26/05/2015	Tuesday	Naxos	
32	27/05/2015	Wednesday	Naxos	
33	28/05/2015	Thursday	Naxos	
34	29/05/2015	Friday	Naxos to Athens 09:25 A37005 Athens to Izmir 12:25 PC806	Faya Izmir Hotel
35	30/05/2015	Saturday	General Assembly of ICW	Faya Izmir Hotel
36	31/05/2015	Sunday	General Assembly of ICW	Faya Izmir Hotel
37	1/06/2015	Monday	General Assembly of ICW	Faya Izmir Hotel
38	2/06/2015	Tuesday	General Assembly of ICW	Faya Izmir Hotel
39	3/06/2015	Wednesday	General Assembly of ICW	Faya Izmir Hotel
40	4/06/2015	Thursday	General Assembly of ICW	Faya Izmir Hotel
41	5/06/2015	Friday	General Assembly of ICW	Faya Izmir Hotel
42	6/06/2015	Saturday	Depart Izmir 11:20 PC2812 Arrive Istanbul 12:30 Istanbul to Dubai Depart Istanbul for Dubai 16:30 EK124 Arrive 21:45	
43	7/06/2015	Sunday	Depart Dubai for Melbourne QF10 01:35 Arrive Melbourne 20:55	

MAPS

Turkey 2015



Turkey

Legatees Jim and Jennie Russell toured Turkey for five weeks in April and May before attending an International Women's Conference in Izmir during the first week of June. In early May they travelled to Gallipoli. The essay is in two parts.' Impressions of Turkey', and 'Tour of Gallipoli'.

Turkey is as old as civilization itself; it has the world's very first known Neolithic religious site and town, dating from 10000BC, at 'Gobelki Tepe', found in central Anatolia in 1996. It claims 2 wonders of the world; Mausoleum of Halicarnassus in Bodrum and the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus along with the "Horse" at Troy, Noah's Ark, Virgin Mary's last home and Saint Nicholas (Father Christmas) who was born in Demre, Antalya. 'The lady with the lamp', Florence Nightingale worked in an Istanbul hospital on the Asian side of Turkey during the Crimean War.

Turkey or Anatolia has seen the rise and fall of many civilizations including the Mongols, Assyrians, Hittites, Phrygians, Urartian's, Romans, Byzantines, and the Seljuk Turks before the Ottoman era. One town alone (Erzurum- where in 1919 Ataturk mapped the borders for Independence) has been occupied by eighteen conquerors. It was captured and ruled by Hurries, Urartus, Cimmerians, Scythes, Medians, Persians, Parthes, Romans, Byzantines, Sassanides, Arabs, Seljuks, Mongols, Ilhanides, Safawides, Ottomans, the Russians and of course finally by the Turks in 1919. During last century alone the British, Germans, French, Italians, Syrians, Russians, and the Armenians all acquired sections of the old Ottoman Empire within Turkey's current borders. I asked if there were any true Turks (Ozturks) "I doubt it" came the answer, there have been too many invasions.

Jews, Christians and Muslims are very aware that Abraham is reputed to have been born in Haran in Asia Minor near today's Syrian border. Besides Paul, early Christians saw many Apostles like Simon-Peter, John, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew and Thaddaeus walk the Roman roads of (Turkey) Mesopotamia and Asia Minor to preach in places like Ephesus, Perge, Demre, Konya, Izmir, Antalya, Troas (Canakkale) and Antioch. A few were martyred and buried in places such as Hierapolis.

The Turkish era started in AD 11th Century Central Asia with the 1st ruler of the Ottomans, Sultan Osman, by 16th Century the empire had spread from North Africa to Vienna with Mecca and Medina seen as important religious centres.

Two main festivals are celebrated: Seker Bayram (sugar festival) after Ramadan and Kurban Bayram, which commemorates Abraham's readiness to sacrifice his son- Isaac to prove his faith.

Russia called Turkey 'the sick man of Europe' when its Sultans made the mistake of joining Germany in WW1. Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk), already a military hero in 1915 at Gallipoli, galvanised the army to start the 'War of Independence', he removed all invaders and formed a republic in 1923. He is revered by all Turks for his forward thinking and vision. He banished the corrupt weak Sultan and developed national pride by creating the current geographic borders. Ataturk changed all aspects of Turkish society (political, social, legal, economic, and cultural) unparalleled throughout the world. He introduced western dress, changed the written language to Latin script from its Arabic and Persian base, increased

literacy, introduced surnames, banned polygamy, gave women the vote and enabled, indeed encouraged, women to stand for parliament. Every year on November 10th all Turkey comes to a standstill to mourn his death.

Ataturk founded a secular state believing religion was a personal matter. Up until the present day religion has not affected the running of everyday life. Many Turks believe it is unfortunate that the current president has introduced conservative ideas without the expected nationwide improvements for all.

Turkey has four sea borders, Black, Mediterranean, Aegean and Sea of Marmara. It also has seven neighbouring countries: Greece, Bulgaria, Georgia, Armenia, Iran, Iraq, and Syria. However the Bosphorus has always been strategically important to Russia as 45% of its trade passes through these waters as well as 80% of Russia's wheat.

Turkey is incredibly different east to west, north to south and certainly in the central region. There are two high 'new' rugged alpine ranges with active volcanoes running through the country. It lies between three converging continental plates causing active fault lines and many earthquakes over the centuries, the last one in 2011. It has very high bleak stony plateaus, low rich alluvial Mesopotamian plains and many fertile valleys. Close to Mt Ararat fields were covered with arms of a relatively new lava flow that stretched for kilometres. Its most famous rivers are Euphrates and Tigris. Ataturk Dam is on the Euphrates and is part of the GAP (Great Anatolia Project) project. Turkey is the fastest growing country in Europe; its industries and car manufacture are doing particularly well. Wool and silk rugs and carpets are sold throughout the country; these are either tapestry or Kilim. Our favourites were Kurdish, often dowry rugs with their geometric designs depicting stories and stylized insects and animals from the region, created using local plant dyes were simply beautiful.

There is a great mix of old and new architecture throughout Turkey; especially lovely are the two storied mostly stone or brick, Ottoman and Byzantine houses. A few, fortunately, have their wooden façades and balconies remaining for us to see. Many of these homes are making way for new multi-storied apartment blocks necessary to accommodate the fast growing Turkish population and replace homes destroyed by earthquakes. In older, often rural areas Roman and Turkish baths (Hamman's) hold pride of place, probably because very few of the old homes have had running water or bathrooms. In the Central Anatolian Province of Cappadocia it is only in very recent years that people have finally moved from their cave dwellings into apartment blocks. The sky line of every town features the many mosque minarets and the red Turkish flag with the white crescent moon which proudly flutters from most buildings in most towns where a statue of Ataturk holds pride of place.

Animals and Birds- Very few indigenous birds and animals were visible, that doesn't mean they weren't there because we know Turkey has 482 species of birds alone. At Pergamum we saw several: owls, 'magpies with long tails', a few storks and ibis and later in the trip we saw kingfishers, red robins and thrush. We know that wolves, deer, gazelles, hyenas, leopards, foxes and brown bears roam in the national parks, and we saw squirrels at the Church of the Virgin Mary. We have been told there are hedgehogs, hamsters, scorpions and centipedes as well!!

Domestic cats and dogs were everywhere and everyone feeds and cares for them. It appears that these animals are neutered and then allowed to roam the streets and parks.

Turkish Food: This proved wholesome, colourful and healthy and hygienically prepared, certainly no-one on the trip had ill effects. Perhaps at times for the tourist, a little monotonous with the same dishes offered on each menu.

Breakfast: A huge range of foods were offered. Fresh tomatoes, cucumber, peppers and lettuce along with local fruit, chillies, nuts, dried fruits and honey spread one table. A wide range of black and green olives along with fresh soft cheeses, mainly sheep and goat were displayed on the next table. Eggs or omelettes and often local spinach pancakes were offered as well. There was always a wide range of Turkish breads and many different sweet jams, along with Turkish coffee and teas. We weren't tempted to try the processed 'turkey-ham', 'chicken-ham', or 'beef-ham' nor the 'beef-bacon' at breakfast, as we were not sure of the authenticity.

Between meals: All Turks enjoy their black tea or cayi in a glass. The speciality for us was apple tea and tasty fresh juices especially pomegranate served throughout the day.

Lunches: soups; mainly lentil or mercimek feature throughout the country. Flat bread filled with cheeses and salad or served with Döner Kebabs. Tost and pide (pizza) were also popular.

Dinners: Always salads and yoghurt soups as starter, followed by beef, chicken, lamb or fish served in casseroles, stews, grilled and fried. These were accompanied by rice, cracked wheat and often, vegetables. As Turks cannot be seen to drink alcohol in public, water or juices are served. However in hotel restaurants we found the Turkish wines to be most acceptable, quite obvious by the number of empties at the end of each night!

Sunday 26th April, 2015 - Depart Melbourne for Istanbul 22:55 QF9

Day 01

It is rather surprising the numbers of people who have their luggage removed from a plane because they miss the last flight call. Are they eating a meal, buying duty free? Who knows but this happened several times! The removal of luggage from the plane causes the delay.

The delay also causes problems at the arrival point when connecting flights are missed. For us however, it was an advantage, there was less anticipated time before the next flight.

There were no comparisons in our hardships to the long cramped conditions experienced on their ship by the young adventurers soon to become war weary men in 1914/15 sailing

from Australia to Europe. Yesterday was the 100 years commemoration of 25th April 1915, ANZAC Day in Australia and New Zealand. Our thoughts revered the feelings expressed by all people watching the ANZAC Day march and seeing the 1,000's of red poppies in Federation Square. The poppies made me think of the blood bath suffered by both sides at Gallipoli.



Galata Tower - Istanbul

Istanbul remains the social, cultural and economic heart of this country although Ankara is Turkey's capital. Old Istanbul just grew; it has a maze of interesting cobbled steep streets within its walls, certainly no 'La Trobe grid' of Melbourne. People were touting carpets, ceramics, leather goods as well as their restaurants.



Hagia Sophia from hotel room



Tram - Istanbul

We arrived late evening to our hotel which was so close to the flood lit Hagia Sophia that the muezzin's call to worship at five AM 'helped' us welcome the new day. The call repeated 5 times

daily from the countless numbers of Turkish mosques tells us 'there is but one god (Allah) and that Mohammed is his prophet.



New Mosque - Istanbul



Suleymaniye Mosque - Istanbul



Dolmabahce Mosque - Istanbul



Fisherman - Bosphorus - Istanbul



Dolmabahce Palace - Istanbul



Fortress of Europe - Istanbul



Fortress of Asia - Istanbul



Topkapi Palace - Istanbul

Sadly our time in Istanbul was far too short so we were unable to see many of the places we had hoped.



Restored Vaulted Stall - Spice Market - Istanbul

Istanbul City Tour *This morning discover Istanbul from a new angle on a Bosphorus Cruise .The strait is lined with Ottoman palaces, fortresses, old wooden villas, parks, gardens and eateries also seeing the Golden Horn (Altin Boynaz) Inlet of Bosphorus separating Europe/Asia with its Galata Tower, and Maiden's Head.*



HMAS Anzac - Istanbul



HMNZS Te Kaha - Istanbul

Follow this by experiencing the colour and excitement in the spice market and the rambling 1453 built Grand Bazaar, the world's oldest covered market. Visit the Basilica Cistern.

https://www.google.com.au/search?q=Things+to+see+in+Turkey&rls=com.microsoft:en-AU&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&startIndex=&startPage=1&rlz=117ADRA_enAU427&gfe_rd=cr&ei=UdSDVPwQqY3xB-CcgegB&gws_rd=ssl#rls=com.microsoft:en-AU&q=Things+to+see+in+IstanbulBosphorus

Our guide led us through the streets of Sultanahmet, down passed the local trams and through the narrow bazaar streets to the harbour for our cruise of the Bosphorus which separates Cosmopolitan European Thrace and Asia Istanbul and Turkey.



Dried Fruits - Spice Market - Istanbul

I was very surprised at how narrow and short this world famous stretch of water is however there are many grand old palaces,

universities and homes along its shoreline. It is only from a ferry that it is possible to view the extent of the Dolmabahçe Palace.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dolmabah%C3%A7e_Palace



Tulips - Near Spice Market - Istanbul

On the distant Camlica Hill on the other side of the Golden Horn in Beyoglu, the Galata Tower stood out.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galata_Tower



Turkish Delight - Spice Market - Istanbul



Spices - Spice Market - Istanbul



Basilica Cistern - Istanbul



Fish - Basilica Cistern - Istanbul

The boat turned for the return trip just after we saw Yoros Castle, the Byzantine Fortress, in the ancient town of Anadolu Kavagi, placed high on a hill.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yoros_Castle



Grand Bazaar – Istanbul

There were countless ferries, private motor boats and large cruise liners all vying for the waters. It was nice to get a second look at the impressive and large Fortress of Europe (1452) and Fortress of Asia (1398) across the waters from one another.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rumelihisar%C4%B1>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anadoluhisar%C4%B1>

Being a sectarian country there are Catholic and Orthodox Churches (some of

which have been converted to mosques), synagogues, countless new and old mosques. We realised quickly the mosque minarets are by far the highest point of all towns and that most people these days seem to live in high-rise apartment blocks.



Medusa Head Column Base – Basilica Cistern – Istanbul

As we returned to the ferry wharf we noticed HMAS Anzac and HMNZS Te Kaha berthed below Topkapi Palace and at the entrance to the Bosphorous, the Maiden's Tower.

<http://turkishnavy.net/2015/04/29/hmas-anzac-and-hmnzs-te-kaha-in-istanbul/>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maiden's_Tower



Ottoman era House – Istanbul

Fishing is a Turk's favourite pastime, there were many with a rod in hand on the bridge as we started our river cruise. I asked the difference between Sunni and Shia Mosques to try to understand the different Islamic faiths. As Ali (Mohammad's daughter's husband) was murdered in a mosque, Shia Muslims use prayer houses,

not mosques; also they must have earth beneath their bowed head during prayer. While hearing about the ruthless battles before and after the Ottoman Empire we reflected that 2 Australians were put to death in Indonesia for drug running on this day. It made us wonder if we have advanced at all over the centuries.



Teardrop Column – Basilica Cistern – Istanbul

Once back on dry land we walked the colourful Spice Market (Egyptian Bazaar) full of aromatic herbs, spices, and teas of all varieties. The herbal teas like pomegranate and apple became our favourite. Large colourful bunches of dried vegetable such as tomatoes; eggplant, chillies and mushrooms were hanging from many shop awnings.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spice_Bazaar,_Istanbul

Shops of colourful delicious Turkish Delight was everywhere, the flavours of nuts and fruits, nougat and halvah made our mouths water.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkish_delight

The Grand Bazaar alleyways shone with diamonds, gold and silver jewellery, colourful candle lanterns, leather goods, silk scarves, and carpets galore. Each touter informed us their shop was special because it was owned by family: “my father, cousin or brother”.



Vaulting - Basilica Cistern - Istanbul



Blue Mosque - Istanbul



Dome - Blue Mosque - Istanbul

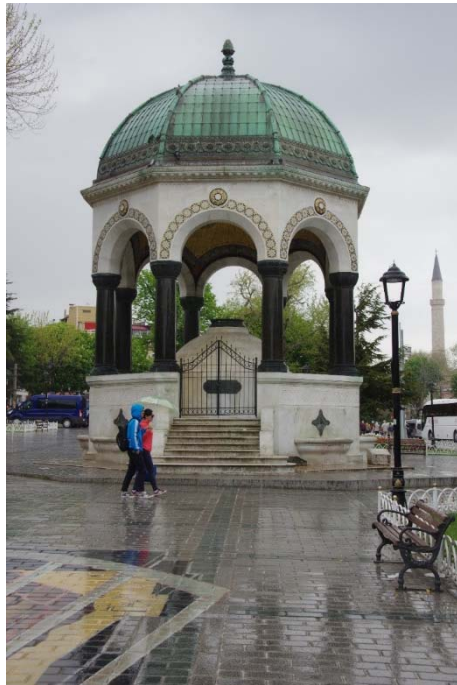
http://www.grandbazaaristanbul.org/Grand_Bazaar_Istanbul.html

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Bazaar,_Istanbul

In the evening Jim and I visited the fascinating 6thC underground Basilica Cistern with its many columns and arches where 2 blocks of stone with carved medusa heads are used as the base of a pillar and another pillar has tear drops carved all the way down it. It was surprising to see schools of large fish swimming freely in the dark.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basilica_Cistern

Istanbul is a clean friendly city where many locals speak English or at least understood our needs.



German Fountain - Hippodrome - Istanbul

Today you step back in time on a guided day tour of Old Istanbul, seeing the extravagant Ottoman Topkapi Palace, once home to Ottoman Sultans, then the famous Sultan Ahmed or Blue Mosque with its Iznik tiles and bustling square. Highlights include the architectural marvel, Hagia Sophia (originally a Greek Orthodox Church), Imagine life in a Byzantine capital

at the Hippodrome. Take an afternoon flight to the nation's capital Ankara to see the Museum of Anatolian Civilisations housing the world's most extensive collection of Hittite artefacts. Also see the Mausoleum of Ataturk, founder of modern Turkey.



Hagia Sophia - Istanbul

At the start of our early morning walk we jumped the flushed water as shop keepers hosed down their pavements just as they have done for 100's of years. First place visited was Sultan Ahmed or the Blue Mosque with its beautiful mosaic tiles, (this mosque has 6 minarets, the largest number of minarets in all Turkey, most mosques have 1, some 2, and we even saw a few with 4).

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sultan_Ahmed_Mosque

<http://www.sacred-destinations.com/turkey/istanbul-blue-mosque>



Dome - Hagia Sophia - Istanbul

Next we walked passed the many brightly coloured beds of the national flower, the tulips to get to the Byzantine Hagia Sophia Church, now a museum. This amazing building has passed the tests of time and survived earthquakes while other buildings perished.

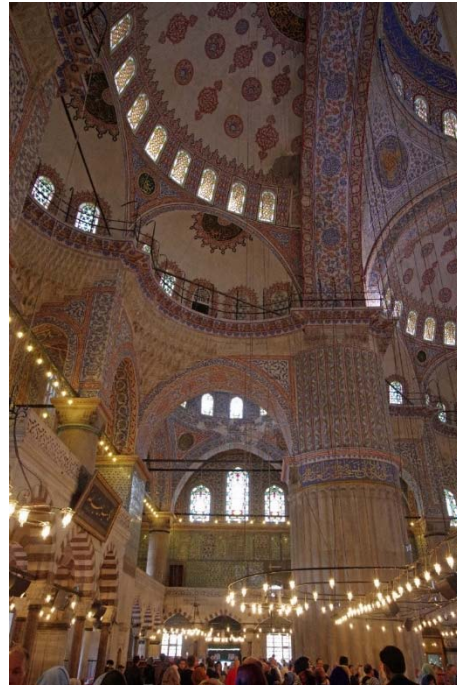
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hagia_Sophia

<http://www.hagiasophia.com/>

<http://www.sacred-destinations.com/turkey/istanbul-hagia-sophia>



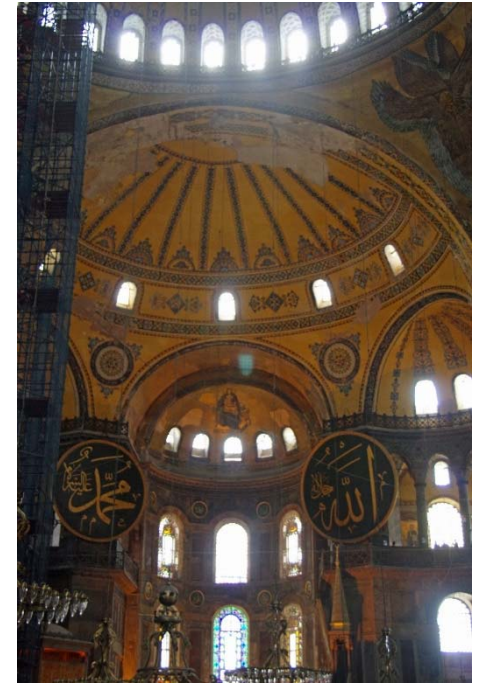
Obelisk - Hippodrome - Istanbul



Blue Mosque - Istanbul



Milion Stone - Istanbul



Hagia Sophia - Istanbul



Christian Fresco - Hagia Sophia - Istanbul



Islamic Symbols - Hagia Sophia - Istanbul



Tulip Carpet - Hagia Sophia - Istanbul



Lunch Stop - Istanbul



Church of Hagia Eirene - Topkapi Palace - Istanbul



Gate of Salutation - Topkapi Palace - Istanbul



Hagia Sophia - Istanbul



Garden Topkapi Palace - Istanbul

The Hippodrome with its 3 columns came next, the stadium is long gone however the 1500 BC carved Egyptian Obelisk, the Serpent 479 BC and Brazen or Constantine 10thC AD Columns certainly look majestic in the park. The German Fountain is a more modern structure. It was constructed to commemorate the

second anniversary of German Emperor Wilhelm II's visit to Istanbul in 1898.



Audience Chamber - Topkapi Palace - Istanbul

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hippodrome_of_Constantinople
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_Fountain
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milion>

We walked on to Topkapi Palace set in beautiful gardens right at the meeting point of Golden Horn, Marmara Sea and start of the Bosphorus. In the mind's eye you see how wonderful it would have been in its Ottoman day. It contains a church on the grounds as Sultan's mother was Christian. The excellent weapon, jewel and treasury museums had long entry queues which correctly indicated how worthwhile they were to visit. We could see the Maiden's Tower's Island; huge tankers passed it as they sailed through from the Mediterranean into the Marmarus then on to the Black Sea.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Topkap%C4%B1_Palace

<http://english.istanbul.gov.tr/Default.aspx?pid=349>



Imperial Council Hall - Topkapi Palace - Istanbul

In the late afternoon we were dropped off at International instead of domestic air terminal in Istanbul causing a few moments of panic as we ran from one to the other. We were then informed

there was only one available seat left! With the assistance of a great staff member we were all on board the flight!



Bosphorus from Topkapi Palace - Istanbul

Thursday 30th April, 2015 - Ankara to Cappadocia - MDC Cave Hotel

Day 05

Travel to Cappadocia stopping at a 13th century caravanserai en-route. Later explore the underground city of Kaymakli.

Ankara

<https://www.google.com.au/search?q=Ankara+Turkey&rls=com.microsoft:en->

[AU&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&startIndex=&startPage=1&rlz=117ADRA_enAU427&gfe_rd=cr&ei=CO6EVOzlBaKN8Qelm4GADw&gws_rd=ssl">AU&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&startIndex=&startPage=1&rlz=117ADRA_enAU427&gfe_rd=cr&ei=CO6EVOzlBaKN8Qelm4GADw&gws_rd=ssl](#)

Turkish capital, a very old city (known for its Angora goats and Muscat grapes) Ataturk's mausoleum, citadel, temple of Augustus and Roman baths.

Ankara, significant for its Angora goat wool and milk was developed into the capital by Ataturk in 1923. Although it has a long history 24C BC, Ankara appears to be a new clean well designed spacious city of interesting architecture, many parks and wide boulevards.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ankara>



**Female Figure - 3rd Millennium BC -
Museum of Anatolian Civilizations -
Ankara**

The Museum of Anatolian Civilizations gave a brilliant understanding of the region's full history; the displays even offered an excellent background into country's pre-mogul past. Just above the museum up on the hilltop sits the 2,000 year old Ankara Castle or fort which was started by the Hittites.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Museum_of_Anatolian_Civilizations



Museum of Anatolian Civilizations - Ankara



**Iron Age Diorama - Museum of Anatolian Civilizations -
Ankara**

We were very aware of new conservative dress adopted by men and women in country areas away from Istanbul. Ataturk's desire to modernise women's dress is being undermined by new president who has introduced more conservative ideas and is

conforming to the influence of Imams, instead of advancing Ataturk's work. Turkey's Intellectuals not happy, however the average citizen seems to be conforming!



Statues - Museum of Anatolian Civilizations - Ankara



View of Ankara from Ataturk Mausoleum

Ataturk's mausoleum, with its 24 stone lions flanking the pathway occupies a huge open courtyard that reminded me of the old

roman forums. Several ceremonies were performed while we were at the cenotaph in front of Ataturk's sarcophagus by the guards using an unusual goose step march. Very fitting to see the ceremonies considering ANZAC Day had just passed.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/An%C4%B1tkabir>



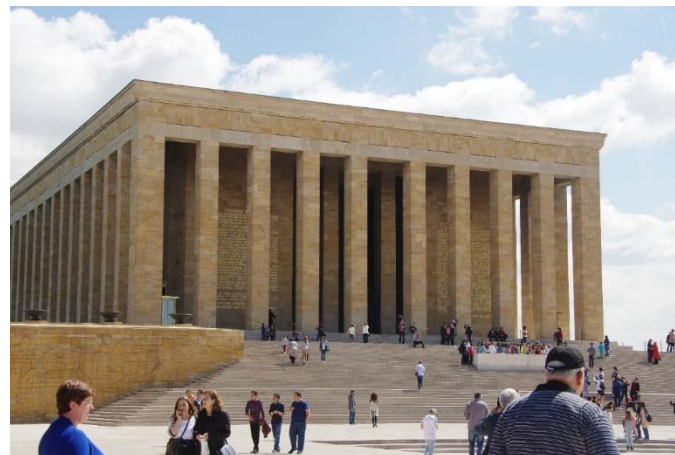
Gold Jewelry - Museum of Anatolian Civilizations - Ankara

The Ataturk museum was most interesting, his exceptional ability to inspire an entire

'fading, dispirited' army into battle and later a nation to change its written language, dress, and culture was evident. Ataturk had a great inspirational vision and amazing influence over all in Turkey.



Guards - Ataturk Mausoleum - Ankara



Ataturk Mausoleum - Ankara

https://en.wikipedia.org/?title=Mustafa_Kemal_Atat%C3%BCrk



School Children - Ataturk Mausoleum - Ankara



Mt Hasan - 3,268 m - Near Aksaray

Respect and appreciation for women and children was clearly shown, also the women's role in war of independence 1922 was highlighted. I could not help but notice Ataturk's shaky signature after changing the written language from a Farsi and Arabic script to Roman script.



Stone Figure - Museum of Anatolian Civilizations - Ankara

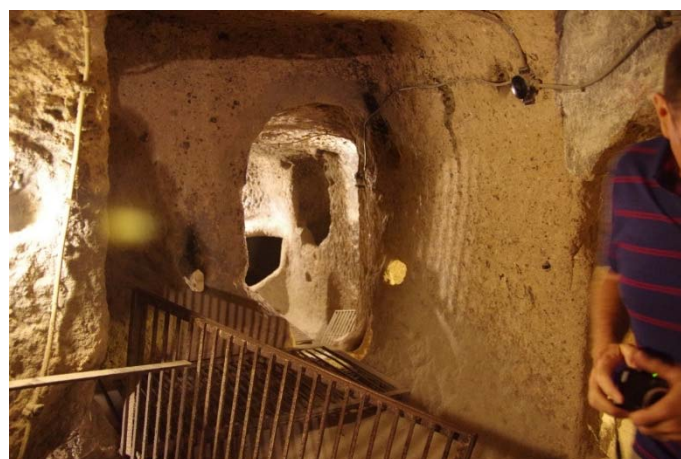
Our new guide, Ishmet, is looking forward to the forthcoming elections and is very critical of the President's changes. He is well known in Turkey for his mountain climbing throughout the world, Everest, Mt Ararat just to name two.

As we departed Ankara we saw a large industrial area (factories for motor cars, cheese and butter and wheat silos). This gave way to undulating fertile emerald green pastures and grazing countryside

which is also noted for growing saffron. We were now in Central Anatolia an area noted for its fertile soil and abundant crops.



Into the Bowels of the Earth - Kaymakli Underground City



Kaymakli Underground City

From what we could see the infrastructure of Turkey is very good, excellent roads, (many were new), orderly traffic, new satellite

housing developments taking over from crumbling villages of single-story mud-brick and terracotta houses affected by the many earthquakes the area is prone to.



Door Stone - Kaymakli Underground City



Entrance to Kaymakli Underground City

On this warm sunny day we passed Lake Tuz, a large (famous) salt lake, rugged mountain ranges topped with melting snow, also

green mountains covering a wealth of marble used during the centuries for sculpture and buildings.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lake_Tuz



**Inside the Ataturk Mausoleum -
Ankara**

It was impossible to imagine how the Romans had moved the huge marble blocks from these distant mountains to their construction sites. The same long, deep

valley pasture lands had been farmed since before 14thC, the remains of housing is still there. We saw original cave houses that had given way to old mud brick and stone houses, some of which were now being restored.



Sheep and Shepherd's Pack Donkey

The rich pasture lands were used for fruit and nut trees, market gardens, wheat crops. This area is also noted for its potato growing; however potatoes were in short supply and expensive this year. There were numerous, perhaps lonely, shepherds with their sheep roamed many hills and valleys, their flocks ranging from 20 to 100; one wondered how they could survive on such meagre herds!

On our way to our hotel we stopped off to see Kaymakli, discovered in 1964. Little is known about this underground city from the 6-9th C which housed thousands of people, it descended 8 levels of carved rock each level had varying functions;

collection and storage of water, grain and wines as well as kitchen areas for cooking, animal care, sleeping etc.



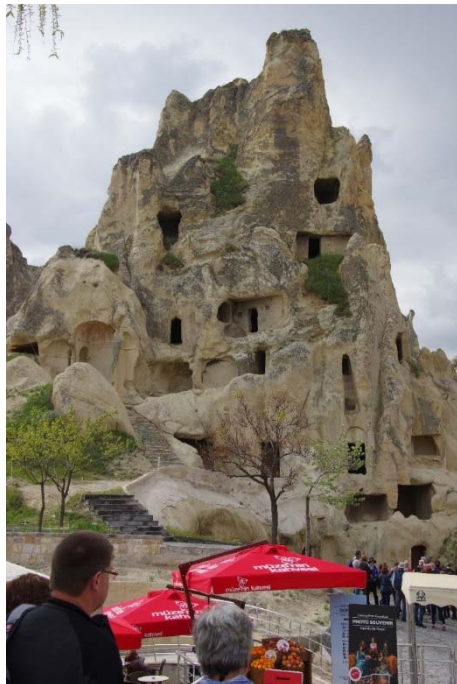
Weathered country near Cappadocia

There were huge carved stones to roll over and cover the entrances, rather like the one that protected Jesus tomb should an enemy army arrive. Tiny holes between each level allowed light and air to pass through and warn of any trouble.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaymakli%C4%B1_Underground_City

As we neared our hotel and passed the city of Nevsehir, Cappadocia we could see a strange new rugged landscape around us. It was rather a moonscape.

Optional - Sunrise hot air balloon flight over the volcanic valleys, fairy chimneys & caves.



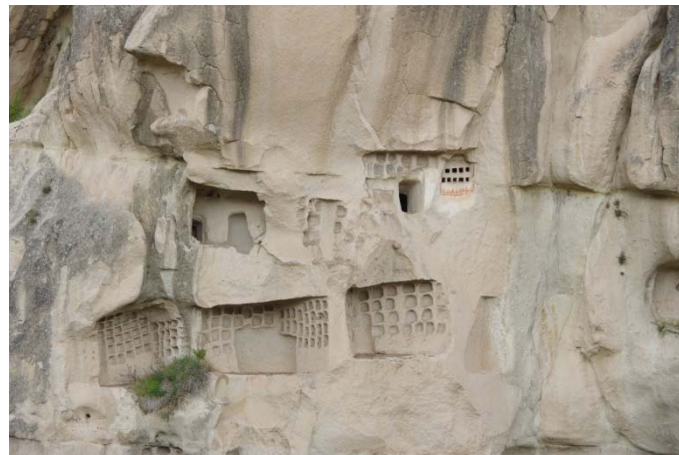
Monastery Complex - Goreme Open Air Museum

Cappadocia:

<http://www.turkeytravelplanner.com/go/CentralAnatolia/Cappadocia/index.html>



Our Group - Goreme



Pigeon Houses - Goreme Open Air Museum

Earthquakes and conquerors have created constant redevelopment. Clean friendly helpful city! The Goreme World Heritage site is first this morning. This area was first settled in

Roman times and still boasts many Christian churches that were honed by hand from the volcanic rock. Later visit Avanos, famous for fine earthenware since antiquity, for a brief workshop in a cave-based regional ceramics studio.



Cave Churches - Goreme Open Air Museum

We were delighted with our hotel, a new construction on many levels built from a blend of 4 old cave houses carved from a rock-face that had been bought by one of the original owner following the National Archaeological and UNESCO laws and requirements. With the abundant use of Persian carpets, cushions, low tables and festoon blinds, Ali Baba and the forty thieves' tent came to mind. The place was brilliant and every guest room was different. The staff were friendly and very understanding my dietary issues, they even obtained corn bread for me for breakfast.

<http://www.mdchotel.com/>



Fresco - Cave Church - Goreme Open Air Museum

Cappadocia was an amazing province for geographic land formation caused by erosion. The first stops were to view the Fairy Chimney landscape from a high point and then up close. They reminded me of giant Swiss mushrooms with their dark tops. They had been eroded by rain, floods, and wind, leaving bands of granite, sandstone and conglomerate/ sedimentary

rock. There were plenty of old lived in cave houses as well as pigeon lofts in the village.



Domed Ceiling - Tokali Church. - Goreme Open Air Museum



Carpets - Gallery Cappadocia - Avanos

<http://scribol.com/travel/the-fairy-chimneys-and-underground-cities-of-cappadocia>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hoodoo_\(geology\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hoodoo_(geology))



Fairy Chimneys - Cappadocia



Decorating a Ceramic Bowl - Omurlu Ceramics - Cappadocia

Next stop was the UNESCO Goreme Open Air Museum to see the large Byzantine Christian Monastery dating from the 9th C.

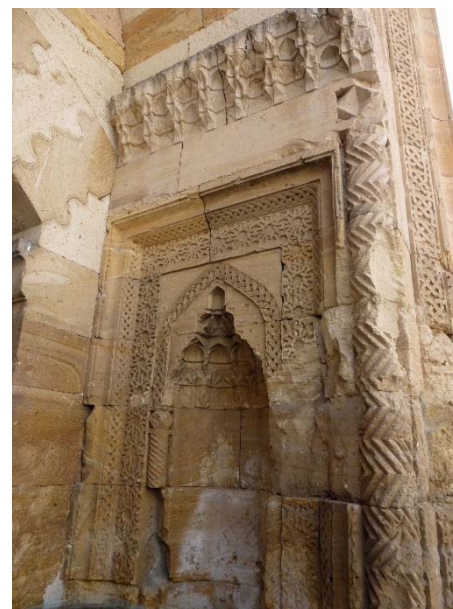


Fairy Chimneys - Cappadocia

Like our hotel it had been carved out of the stone "Chimneys", there were many chapels with wonderful religious frescos depicting bible stories. As the monastery had been visited by both St Paul and St John- some frescos depicted this. We noticed that many of the fresco figures had suffered eye gouging, guides gave us several reasons, kids throwing stones, religious fanatics believing fresco faces should not be in holy places, we will never know as it was done centuries ago.



Entrance - Saruhan Caravanserai - Cappadocia



Decorated Niche - Saruhan Caravanserai - Cappadocia



Sufi Performers (Whirling Dervishes) - Saruhan Caravanserai - Cappadocia



Fairy Chimneys - Cappadocia



Saruhan Caravanserai - Cappadocia

Some caves were for praying, for dormitories, one even had a large table and benches carved as a dining hall; some also had empty graves at the entrance. The freezing cold rain did not deter the many curious visitors as they ran from one opening to the next! We saw our first Turkish red poppy and an indigo plant at the monastery.

<http://www.goreme.com/goreme-open-air-museum.php>

Next, with Roman origins, Avanos, noted for its crafts, ceramics and wine, we visited a carpet factory (bought a beautiful long red runner carpet) and a ceramic factory with entrecote hand painted ware, (bought a beautiful plate) and saw the largest collection of Turkish “blue eyes” hanging from a dead tree.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avanos>
[http://www.omurlu.com/index.php?page=h](http://www.omurlu.com/index.php?page=home&dil=en)
[ome&dil=en](http://www.omurlu.com/index.php?page=h) - ceramicware
<http://www.gallerycappadocia.com/> -
 carpets



Dome - Saruhan Caravanserai - Cappadocia

In the evening we were to witness a “whirling Dervishes” performance so went to the large Sarihan Caravanserai built in 1249 with a mystic and romantic “Silk Road” connection. It had high external carved volcanic stone with rooms around the perimeter, a huge grand entrance, a protected large courtyard with a fountain and alcoves for animals and bartering. A 13th C place for world travellers to stay, have their camels care for as well as show their wares, a bit like a present day motel!

<http://www.goreme.com/whirling-dervishes-ceremony.php>
<https://en.wikipedia.org/?title=Sufism>
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rumi>
<http://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/875661.Rumi>



Saruhan Caravanserai - Cappadocia

Inside the large domed hall with many supporting arches the lights were dimmed for a most interesting exhibition of religious dancing with one hand facing heaven to carry God’s spirit through to the other hand facing the ground. Sufism and the Dervishes is an interpretation of Islam’s love, tolerance and self-discipline established by the mystic and poet, Rumi!

On returning to our room we found our bed decorated and covered with rose petals!

The following morning dozens of colourful silent hot-air balloons moved across the sky in front of our room. Our group sadly missed out on the very popular flights!



Inside Aksary - Sultanhanı Caravanserai

This morning depart for Pamukkale, stopping in Konya along the way. Here you will visit the Mausoleum of Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi and its accompanying museum. The poet, theologian and Sufi mystic, Rumi, founded the dervish order known today as Whirling Dervishes

Konya:



'Disaster' - Ishmet takes control



Aksary - Sultanhanı Caravanserai (1229)

<http://turkeytravelplanner.com/go/CentralAnatolia/Konya/index.html/>



Mosque - Aksary - Sultanhanı Caravanserai



Mevlana Museum - Konya

Central Antalya, on the old Silk Road, home of Whirling Dervishes (800yrs) Greeks, Persians



Mevlana Museum - Konya

On the road early because of the long journey and suddenly we had a tyre puncture. A kind villager took four of us at a time in his car to a stop over point between Konya and Aksaray to wait.

Fortunately it was straight opposite an even older and larger more original Silk Road caravanserai from 1229 AD with marble internal walls, a central mosque, and perhaps even the smell of camels was old too.



Ishmet and School Girls - Mevlana Museum - Konya



Tombs - Mevlana Museum - Konya

The highway in the valley followed the snowcapped Alps all the way and passed through the wilderness of national park areas renown for wild animals that roam there. On such a sunny warm day we could see the snow melting fast and forming rivulets beside the road. Sometimes we saw crops of barley and wheat, sometimes grassed areas with people searching for truffles, in

other places, the occasional marble quarry or the land was covered with glorious spring wild flowers of all colours even the odd red poppy and yet in others there was salt flats and spinifex.



Ceiling - Mevlana Museum - Konya



Turkish Tourists - Mevlana Museum - Konya



Green Dome - Mevlana Museum - Konya

The one expensive crop grown in this region I don't believe I saw growing was saffron, Turkey is renowned for its

expensive crops of saffron or the stamens of flowers which are sort after worldwide.



Young Woman and Mother Interviewing Ishmet - Mevlana Museum - Konya

In conservative, religious Konya we were thrilled with the numbers of young girls and older women who wanted to talk and practice their English with us. Celalddin Rumi or Mevlana's mausoleum, mosque and museum were extremely crowded with local tourists all wanting to visit the tomb, it was then we realised

it was a public holiday and long weekend. Turks were out travelling and sightseeing and paying their religious respect to the founding Sufi of the Whirling Dervishes.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mevlana_Museum

Pamukkale

<http://www.turkeytravelplanner.com/go/Aegean/Pamukkale/sights/>

In Denizli province/ a plateau with ruins of Hierapolis- bridge, amphitheatre/ Anatolia cemetery and Thermal pools. Ruins of many centuries and conqueror's, Roman followed by Byzantine ruins obvious at the necropolis and ancient agora or market place

By now we had left Central Anatolia and entered Denizli Province and arrived at an enormous, yes colossal hotel in Pamukkale, The crowded dining room must have sat 1,000 people. We had now entered the region with a long Roman history; no wonder the hotel was called Colossae.

Sunday 3rd May, 2015 - Pamukkale - Hierapolis – Kusadasi - Marina Hotel

Day 08

The brilliant white lime cascades of the Cotton Castle beckon today. Nearby, at the Roman health spa of Hierapolis you wander through the intriguing Necropolis and enjoy a dip in the warm mineral waters amongst

ancient fallen columns. Continue to Kusadasi for overnight.

https://www.google.com.au/search?q=Kasadosi+Turkey-+sites&rls=com.microsoft:en-AU&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&startIndex=&startPage=1&rlz=117ADRA_enAU427&gfe_rd=cr&ei=wXcfVZ2eG6Hu8wfMq4G4Cg&gws_rd=ssl



Pool - Colossae Thermal Hotel - Pamakkule



Dining Hall - Colossae Thermal Hotel - Pamakkule



Northern Necropolis - Hierapolis - Pamakkule



Thermal Pools - Colossae Thermal Hotel - Pamakkule



Field of Poppies - Colossae Thermal Hotel - Pamakkule



Lizard - Hierapolis - Pamakkule

Hierapolis: Ancient Roman City ruins/ Temple of Apollo/ Pluto's Gate.

Kusadasi: Ottoman from 1413, House of Virgin Mary/ Temple of Artemis(Diana), / Basilica of St John, Ephesus Archaeological Museum (3,000BC), Statue of Artemis also Church of Mary

https://www.google.com.au/search?q=Thaings+to+do+in+Turkey&rls=com.microsoft:en-AU&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&startIndex=&startPage=1&rlz=117ADRA_enAU427&gf_e_rd=cr&ei=FNuEVPnfF6eN8QeJnYDoDA&gws_rd=ssl#rls=com.microsoft:en-AU&q=things+to+do+in+Ephesus

Before departure we took a short walk and found a field of large red poppies, it rather made our morning, particularly as we were heading towards Gallipoli. First stop for the day was to the ruins of Hierapolis, we walked the old Roman road through the necropolis of many varying sized and shaped tombs towards the remains of the town with the Arch of Domitian at its the entrance. It was easy to pick out the remains of the agora, baths,

theatre and Martyrium of St Phillip Church as we headed towards the sacred hot therapeutic springs and the Antique Pool (Cleopatra's Pool). What a sight they were crowded with people, even women still wearing their scarves with their bikinis!



Tombs - Hierapolis - Pamakkule



Domitan Gate - Hierapolis - Pamakkule

According to legend, this artificially sculpted pool was a gift from Marc Anthony to Cleopatra. In the 7th Century, an

earthquake toppled the surrounding building and the massive marble columns tumbled into the pool – where they rest on the bottom to this day and visitors can swim among them

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hierapolis>



Cathedral 6th C AD - Hierapolis - Pamakkule



Antique Pool - Hierapolis - Pamakkule



Travertine Terrace - Pamakkule



Tourist - Travertine Terrace - Pamakkule

Not far way we entered the famous and crowded Pamukkale travertine terraces formed by deposition of calcium carbonate from the water that flows from the springs at the side of a hill.



Paraglider - Pamakkule



Theatre - Hierapolis - Pamakkule



Travertine Terraces - Pamakkule



Our Best Hosts

We took careful steps to prevent slipping into the warm calcium rich water and

marvelled at the frozen crystallized forms made by 1,000 of years of water that had cascaded down and glistened in the sun. It was made even more fascinating as the very small area was surrounded by high snow-capped mountains that added to the strong blues and white hues of colour.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pamukkale>



Group at Our Best Lunch Stop



Our Best Lunch Stop

The harbour of Kusadasi was our night stop but we needed lunch before that. The first café chosen by our guide was run by a disagreeable man who wanted bookings. We left, drove on, and patronised a tiny local peasant woman's roadside stall. The place was basic, very homely and friendly, the food proved delicious and nutritious! Most of the group had the potato, cheese and spinach pancakes, she made meat balls without wheat flour for

me! Their home cured olives were sensational. How pleased we all were that the guide had chosen such a small local

place instead of a tourist place without character.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ku%C5%9Fadas%C4%B1>

We enjoyed a late dinner outside on the balcony with the large full moon sending a perfect staircase over the harbour where cruise ships were anchored.

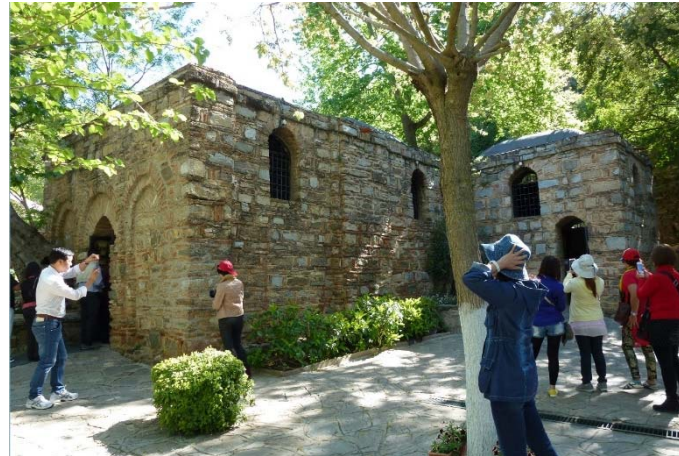
Monday 4th May, 2015 - Ephesus - Sirence – Kusadasi - Marina Hotel

Day 09



Kusadasi Harbour

Explore the ruins of Ephesus on an enlightening guided tour. Its 2,000 year old marble streets lead the way to Hadrian's Temple and the renowned Celsus Library. The Temple of Artemis is next, then Mary. While away the afternoon in the wine-growing village of Sirence.



Mary House - Ephesus



Small Theatre - Ephesus



Temple of Hadrian - Ephesus



Frescos - Terrace Houses - Ephesus



Mosaic Footbath - Ephesus

On leaving the harbour we took a very steep winding road to the top of a mountain, every view of the valley showed grape vines covering the land, we voted the wines from this area to be great! Our first stop, the House of the Virgin Mary secluded in a park. It is believed that after Jesus was crucified the Virgin Mary moved to this quiet spot in AD 37, rediscovered in 1960's it was converted to a chapel.

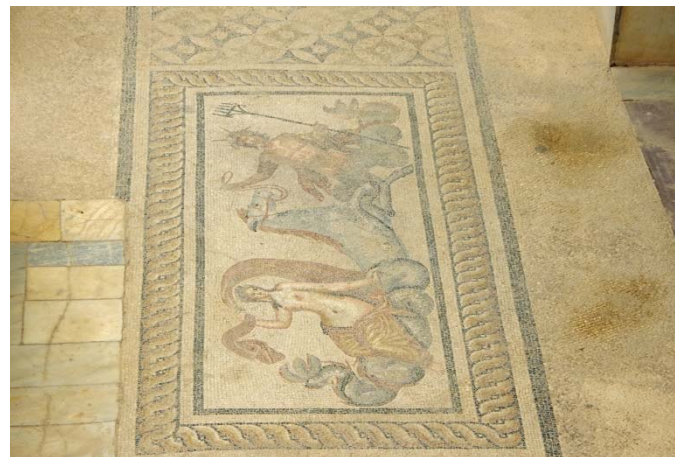
It has now been restored and received a visit by 2 popes. The pilgrims of many religions and nationalities come here to

pray, it was very crowded the day we were there.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/House_of_the_Virgin_Mary



Frescos - Terrace Houses - Ephesus



Mosaic Floor - Terrace Houses - Ephesus



Library of Celsus - Ephesus



Theatre - Ephesus

Back on the bus and up to the hilltop to the Ephesus Ruins which really needed far more time to do them justice. As we walked down the main street (Marble Street) there were huge slabs of carved marble used as columns, and arches in every building, the Temple of Hadrian, Gate of Hercules, Library of Celsus just to name a few.

I found the canopy covered Terraced Houses most interesting, the geometric and pictured mosaic floors and frescoed walls were wonderful; they provided a better understanding of life at that time.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ephesus>



Sirence

To complete the day we went to the historic hilltop wine town of Sirence for lunch under wisteria vines, no wine served- we had

tea! There were lots of shops to stroll passed, a jeweller caught my eye, I haggled happily for a turquoise pendent and a set of filigree cufflinks for a fellow traveller.



Moonlit Kusadasi Harbour



Sirence

Tuesday 5th May, 2015 - Pergamum - Troy – Cannakale at Limani Hotel

Day 10

This morning, visit the ancient city of Pergamum, renowned for its beautifully intact Asclepeion, theatre and temple relics. Continue to the ruins of Troy, where excavations began in the late 1800s.

Today's scenic coastal journey concludes in the port town of Canakkale. Pergamum: near town of Bergama, 5th BC ruins mentioned in bible as one on 7 churches of Asia/ Acropolis, seat of learning/culture/ Medicine, Temples of Trajan and Athena

<http://www.viator.com/tours/Istanbul/Istanbul-Super-Saver-2-Day-Troy-and-Gallipoli-Tour-plus-Istanbul-in-One-Day-Sightseeing-Tour/d585-3795SSIST2?aid=tripen1&refid=VITSjQokKzEAACvVrDkAAAAA>
[A](#)



Temple of Trajan - Pergamum



Temple of Trajan - Pergamum



Mud Brick Walls - Troy



Model of Pergamum - Pergamum



Ancient Troy



Ancient Troy

Troy: 4,000yrs Trojan Horse and Greek Mythology, Archaeological Byzantine City site, a Bridge between Anatolia (Asia) and the Mediterranean Europe. Greek City Ruins 530 BC, Temple of Athena, Theatre etc, stone houses, Ottoman Bridge, Ancient harbour. Canakkale: on Dardanelles (territory in both Europe and

Asia- Gallipoli was Ottoman from 1367/ close to Troy (Horse BC 4,000) a Tourist resort

As the day was very cloudy it was great for walking around the Pergamum ruins. Ancient tribes liked their towns to be perched high to oversee the world; the Roman simply built on top of C8th BC Alexander the Great's Greek ruins. We took a cable car to these hilltop ruins, on the way up in the distance we could see a

large marble quarry; did the huge slabs of marble used to build this place come from there? After the huge crowds yesterday at Ephesus, we were surprised at how few came to this equally interesting place. We saw the remains of Hadrian's Temple of Trajan, the library, the huge amphitheatre that sat 10,000 people but what we didn't see was the Temple of Zeus! It had been taken piece by piece to Berlin in the 1880's.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pergamon>
<http://www.bibleplaces.com/pergamum.htm>



Theatre - Pergamum

After leaving Pergamum on our way to Troy every sign post indicated the way to Izmir and Perge, both places were very close but that was for later! As a Christian one needed to remember that the disciples walked and preached and had churches built in this area.

Yet another lunch restaurant claimed they were not ready even though the tables were fully set? The place chosen by Ishmet further along the road suited us admirably;



Foundations - Temple of Trajan - Pergamum

especially as they brought spelt bread and fussed over me!

The road to Troy along the Aegean Sea followed the very rugged coastline with a high mountain range on the right giving an idea of what the Gallipoli landscape maybe like! We could see the Greek Islands very clearly off the coast. Mountains were no obstacle when building roads here; they put a tunnel with good lighting straight through! Outside major towns where apartment buildings seem to house everyone there were far more individual and smaller perhaps older houses. No matter where all houses and apartments had solar panels for hot water on their roof.



Foundations - Temple of Trajan - Pergamum



Trojan Horse - Troy

The first thing you see in Troy is the reconstructed 13th C BC wooden Trojan Horse; today's symbol of treachery! However there is much more to see as the area and its civilization dates back 4,000 years BC. Excellent examples of stonework and mudbricks used in the King Priam's palace, the aqueduct and houses that have been excavated are visible while walking around.

Unlike many other archaeological sites archaeologists have identified as many as IX cities on the site. As each was destroyed by war or earthquake another arose. Troy was important as its location allowed for complete control of the Dardanelles.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Troy>
http://www.academia.edu/9503629/Anth.245_Ppt_lecture-17_Late_Bronze_Age_Troy_and_Mycenaeans_Part_1_Anth.245_Mediterranean_Area_by_G._Mumford

It was quite late by the time we arrived at the tourist port town of Canakkale, the closest place for lodgings before Gallipoli.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%87anakale>



Profile of Ancient Troy



Odeon - Troy

Wednesday 6th May, 2015 - Gallipoli - Anzac Cove – Istanbul - Celal Sultan Hotel

Day 11



Turkish Memorial - Gallipoli



Kilitbahir Castle - Eceabat - Gallipoli



Battlefield Model - Eceabat - Gallipoli



Memorial Statue in Eceabat, Gallipoli

<http://www.viator.com/Istanbul-attractions/Anzac-Cove-tours-tickets/d585-a8864?aid=tripen1&refid=VITQZAokLC8AAANqM-EAAAAI>

National Park, Anzac cove, Lone Pine, Chunuk Bair, The Nek and Johnson's Jolly (original trenches) Brighton and Beach Cemeteries. Cross the Dardanelles this morning for Gallipoli, with its memorials and museum devoted to the events of 1915. Visit Anzac Cove before trekking to Lone Pine and Chunuk Bair memorials.

The Nek and original trenches at Johnston's Jolly are final stops before the return trip to Istanbul.



ANZAC Cove - Gallipoli



The Hills of Gallipoli

Along with our bus, we took the first ferry from Canakkale across the Dardanelles to the Gallipoli Peninsular at Eceabat on the European or Trace side of Turkey. Gallipoli means 'Beautiful City'

in Greek - it was certainly so for our visit. As we approached Eceabat we had a good view of Kilitbahir Castle, built in 1463 which together with a fort on the other side of the Dardanelles narrow controls access to the Black Sea.



Ataturk's famous words - Gallipoli



Hell Spit Cemetery - Gallipoli



IMGP0610 Shrapnel Valley Cemetery – Gallipoli



Tortoise - Shrapnel Valley Cemetery - Gallipoli

The sea was calm, the morning warm and welcoming yet we were silent, probably caught up in our thoughts of the ill-fated journey made by so many young Australians 100 years ago.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kilitbahir_Castle



View from Lone Pine - Gallipoli



Lone Pine - Gallipoli

<http://www.gallipoli.gov.au/explore-turkish-memorials/kilitbahir.php>
Near the ferry port is a realistic model of the Gallipoli Battlefield.

<http://www.turkeycentral.com/turkey-photos/image/3870-battlefield-model-gallipoli/>

Jim and I proudly wore the red felt poppies Nurcihan Ozturk and the Melbourne Turkish Women's Group had given us.



Lone Pine Memorial - Gallipoli



Legacy Wreath - Lone Pine - Gallipoli

We had the ANZAC Cove Memorial on North Beach to ourselves apart from the crew dismantling seats, it was very clean, still and peaceful, there were no distractions from our thoughts. How privileged to be the only ones there and so different to 12 days previously, when 10,000 descendants and visitors crammed

the peninsular. The lawns were in perfect condition, never could you have believed so many people had trampled over them. Four of our group had been there on the 25th April; one had been picked in the ballot.



Respect to Mehmetçik Memorial – Gallipoli

Silent rows of mauve irises swayed in the breeze as the shallow crystal clear water lapped up against the shore. The aromatic rosemary, indigenous to the peninsula had been pruned into neat hedges. Many cargo

ships were quietly passing through the Dardanelles heading to or from the Sea of Marmara; the Greek Islands were clearly visible and behind them somewhere was Egypt.



Turkish Memorial – Chunuk Bair – Gallipoli

I could help but think once the Trojans ruled these waters, followed by the Greeks, Romans and Ottomans, and in 1915 the British and ANZACs tried to take a submarine through the minefield waters

and beached 1,000's of men in enemy territory.



Old man and young girl – Turkish Memorial – Chunuk Bair – Gallipoli

The colours of the little pebbles being washed towards the shore by the tide were not obliterated by the blood of our soldiers. Behind us the rugged hills and valleys lay silent and empty. Our soldiers had been told to capture 'the heights' from where the enemy guns were firing. How did the so called lucky ones make it past those gullies

with only scrub bush for protection from bullets?

We walked to the memorial with Atatürk's words spoken to the ANZAC mothers in 1934, nearby the beautifully maintained Hell Spit Cemetery was hidden behind the trees. At least the men had a beautiful view of the waters from their graves



Trenches – Chunuk Bair – Gallipoli

We visited most sites: Shrapnel Valley, Artillery Road, The Nek, Shell Green (no cricket match while we were there), at

Shrapnel Valley a mother and baby tortoise guarded the silent graves identifying each soldier with a plaque.



A Family Remembers - Shrapnel Valley Cemetery - Gallipoli

At Lone Pine the stands were waiting to be dismantled, the many wreaths from ANZAC Day were still there, withered. Prince Charles' and the Legacy brightly coloured wreaths stood out for us. The seating hid the beautiful coastline behind them. People had been asked to adopt a grave and had placed a flag, a story or poem or simply a poppy next to the young man's head stone.



Prince Charles' Wreath - Lone Pine - Gallipoli

From the New Zealand memorial at Chanuk Bair and Hill 971 you gained an excellent view of the peninsula's shape and learnt how the supplies were carried up to battle.

In several places the shallow reinforced bunkers remain to try to give a better understanding of the unexplainable.

Just after Quinn's Post a statue of a Turkish soldier carrying an injured ANZAC brought many thoughts.



New Zealand Memorial - Chunuk Bair - Gallipoli

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Respect_to_Mehmet%C3%A7i_Monument

Our guide's father was present when Mustafa Kemal asked his men why they were leaving the battle. When told the men had no remaining ammunition, he said, go back, lie down and use your bayonets. Our guide Ishmet's father lost an arm and eye in the Gallipoli battle. These men did not feel the Australians were their enemy; they just did as they were told. The shoes on the

Turkish soldier feet were homemade poorly cured sheep leather moccasins, when they were starving they ate their shoes.

After enjoying the silent serenity of the Australian and New Zealand battle fields and cemeteries and knowing full well there had been Nepalese, Indian and British lying in graves there as well we were taken by surprise at the large crowds around the Turkish soldier's memorial.

In one corner of the Turkish Cemetery was a sculpture of an old man telling the story of Gallipoli to a young girl who is bringing flowers to put on a grave.

Large crowds of Turks, Chinese, Japanese and Dutch wandered between the Turkish graves that told the same sad story as the ANZAC's had; the boys were of similar age.

There were large busloads of conservatively dressed Turks arriving at the memorial; the men were in separate buses to the fully covered women. It was a very hot day, our long shorts and elbow length tops received very disapproving looks.



Ataturk Memorial - Chunuk Bair - Gallipoli

After seeing and learning of the Gallipoli carnage there can be no doubt, the boys who returned home developed a true national ANZAC identity.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gallipoli_Campaign



View from Chunuk Bair - Chunuk Bair - Gallipoli

It was at this point I realised I'd lost the centre of my felt poppy. When I told my story of the poppy's significance and its connections to a stall holder she was so overwhelmed. With kisses and hugs she gave me a new badge with Turkish flag and Ataturk on it as a replacement.

The entire Gallipoli Peninsular is a memorial site; there are large signs to inform you that no camping, no picnics are permitted and no rubbish to be left. Sadly there are precious few toilets either!

As we drove away I thought of coined phrase often used. Turkey may have won the battle but they lost the war, it wasn't until 1923's War of Independence that Ataturk cleared his country of invaders.

The road to Istanbul took us close to the borders of Greece and Bulgaria; in the fields were the remnants of WW2 dugouts and cement bunkers, a constant reminder that these wars must not happen again.

Thursday 7th May, 2015 – Istanbul - Fethiye

Day 12

*Enchanted Lantern tour ends Istanbul AM
Fly to tourist resort of Fethiye - staying at
Yacht Boutique Hotel*

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fethiye>

Fethiye is named after Turkey's first naval pilot, Fethi Bey, born in the town. A 28 year

old who was killed when his plane crashed on the 27th February 1914 en-route to Cairo.

<http://www.earlyaviators.com/ebeyfeth.htm>

<http://www.ozelacademy.com/ojss.v5.i3-5.pdf>

From our hotel balcony and across a bay filled with yachts and gulets we could see snow-capped mountains in the distance, it

made quite a picture. Fethiye has a protected harbour and large coastal area; it is known as a market port and for fishing, hence it became a resort and harbour for many expensive cruise yachts. On the hill above the town you can be seen the ruins of the Tomb of Amyntas (Doric temple 350th C BC) at Telmessos.

<http://romeartlover.tripod.com/Telmesso.html>



Fethiye Martyrs Memorial - Fethiye



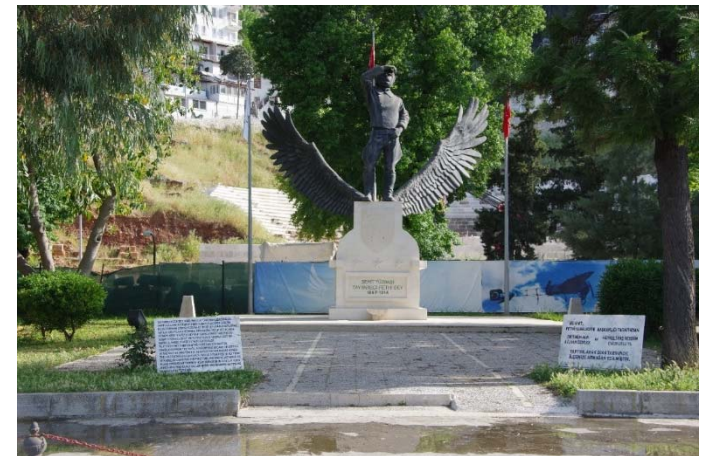
Gulets in Fethiye Harbour - Fethiye



Acropolis Fortress - Telmessos - Fethiye



Fethiye Harbour - Fethiye



Fethi Bey - Fethiye

Friday 8th May, 2015 - Rhodes

Day 13

Morning Ferry Fethiye to Rhodes - Afternoon Ferry back to Fethiye

https://www.google.com.au/search?q=Rhodes+greece&rls=com.microsoft:en-AU&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&startIndex=&startPage=1&rlz=117ADRA_enAU427&gfe_rd=cr&ei=KueEVLXpGcru8weTnYKwDg&gws_rd=ssl



Entrance to Maridraki Harbour - Rhodes



Windmills - Rhodes



Modern Rhodes from the Acropolis - Rhodes



Tower of St Nicholas - Rhodes



Church of Virgin Mary - Rhodes



Theatre - Acropolis - Rhodes

*Medieval City and Isle of Rhodes, Greece.
Palace and hospital (Museum) of Knights
of Rhodes, acropolis.*

We took a busy hydrofoil over to visit Rhodes Island, 100 minutes off the Turkish coast, obviously a popular destination. With Nicholas as our guide we were taken right around the island to

see the medieval towns, evidence of the Knights of St John and the journeys of St Paul. We saw the bay named after him as well as the new resort areas.



Church of Virgin Mary - Rhodes



Temple of Pythian Apollo - Rhodes



Tourists - Lindos - Rhodes



Church Bell Tower - Lindos - Rhodes



Anthony Quinn Bay - Rhodes



St Paul's Bay - Lindos - Rhodes



Acropolis of Lindos - Rhodes



IMGP0690 Acropolis of Lindos - Rhodes



IMGP0691 Acropolis of Lindos - Rhodes



IMGP0700 Ruined Church – Old Town – Rhodes



Path to Acropolis of Lindos - Rhodes

The island varies considerable from very dry and rocky to rich fertile soils, Rhodes is

noted for its wine, olives and vegetables. Our visit coincided with the start of the 5 month tourist season; with a crippling Greek economic situation people on Rhodes were worried tourist may not come.

http://www.visitgreece.gr/en/greek_islands/dodecanese/rhodes
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhodes>

Already at the port we could see the 40 years of Italian influence on New Town as well the Tower of St Nicholas at Maridraiki Harbour with the deer columns protecting the entrance. Right on the water's edge stood the 14th C Byzantine Church of Virgin Mary, with its amazing frescos and next door the Chapel of St Paul where the Knights of St John prayed. Further along, the Knight's Hospitaller, now a museum but closed. On leaving the town the remaining pillars of the Temple of Pythian Apollo and surrounding ruins were visible on the hill, next came the ancient Doric, 3,000 years BC flat roofed, white town of Kamiros out on a point. It was rebuilt by the Romans in 5th C BC. Rhodes has had many conquerors since Doric times, the Romans,

Byzantines, Ottomans and Italians all left their mark. It was the Ottomans who pushed the Knight Templers out in 1523. The converted churches to Ottoman mosques and baths are evidence of the Turkish presence.



Old Town - Rhodes

We could have been a Knight's of St John crusader from a bygone era walking up the steep path and then steps to the stoa of the medieval walled city of Lindos at the hilltop. Called "the

Rock", Lindos has an excellent view of the well preserved old town below as well as surrounding waters and Turkey in the distance. The ruins of its acropolis and temple at the open and bare top must have

coped with many weather changes from perishingly cold to burning heat over the centuries.

Before heading for our return ferry we entered the walled Old Town of Rhodes via the magnificent 'Liberty' gates and large

towers from the 3rd C BC, then strolled up the cobble stoned street to the Temple of Venus and surrounds, the history came alive before our eyes.

Saturday 9th May, 2015 - Fethiye – Antalya - Tuvana Hotel

Day 14



Clock Tower – Antalya

This is the base for the historical Roman/ Ottoman and Arabic coastal region of Pamphylia's Perge, Side and Aspendos.

http://www.tripadvisor.com.au/Tourism-g297962-Antalya_Turkish_Mediterranean_Coast-Vacations.html
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antalya>

Beautiful coastal historical town



Hadrian's Gate – Antalya

Departing our hotel and travelling the surprisingly long distance to the bus station made us realise how very large Fethiye is. It hugged the coastline for many kilometres; the town is enclosed

by surrounding hills. At the bus station a flustered panicking woman who had 3 huge suitcases, 3 large full sacks, 4 big boxes, a budgie in a cage, a guitar, crutches, 2 handbags, an umbrella, and a child. She thought she would miss her bus!!!!



Hıdırlık Tower – Antalya

The bus took us right up and over the Alps where the snow was melting fast in the heat of the sun. The icy rivers and canals were flowing particularly fast. Only rocks and a few pines survived at

this height, there was no top soil to speak of, the picturesque mountains are very rugged and 'new'.



Colourful Street - Antalya

I'm sure nothing would have changed in this region for 100 years; there were old wooden houses, rudimentary farming tools, women in long garments and head scarves out planting crops in the crisp sunshine.



Colourful Lights and Spices - Antalya

Antalya's old walled town on the harbour with its prominent fortress had an old clock tower, a Hadrian's gate with 3 great arches, ruins of a parliamentary building cum church cum mosque which was finally burnt down. There was much more in its narrow cobbled streets and alleyways; loads of tourist's shops selling the same tourist items with the same 'genuine product' story line of a brother, father! I succumbed and bought a 'Nina Ricci' leather coat from a Kurdish man.

Our charming old restored hotel reminder us of the Arabian Nights, with its carved wooden ceilings, great lamp shades and tasteful wooden balconies. These contrasted beautifully against the lovely cream stone walls, and small courtyards.



Broken Minaret - Antalya

Elections were definitely getting closer; there was bunting, flags and loud campaigning at every town we visited. Few Turks seemed happy with the present conservative president or his government who was reverting Ataturk's progressive westernisation back into a conservative Islamic state. Sadly he has not continued the reforms started by Ataturk but has spent TL 5 million unwisely on his presidential palace, cronyism and corruption and appears to be under the power of Imams!



Tuvana Hotel Garden - Antalya



Hellenistic Entrance - Perge

Day Tour to Perge, Aspendos, Side and Kursunla Waterfalls

We waited many minutes for the rest of the group to arrive for our tour to the ruins of Perge, Aspendos and Side.

Fortunately we were next to a park with one of Atatürk's home and the mayor's house close by; we saw an interesting old sculpture of a water or tea carrier. Weeks later we saw the container being used by a man dressed in a similar costume.



Agora - Perge



Butcher's Sign - Perge

Perge:

https://www.google.com.au/search?q=Kas&rls=com.microsoft:en-AU&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&startIndex=&startPage=1&rlz=117ADRA_enAU427&gws_rd=cr,ssl&ei=HfuEVJG8JcLI8AXX6YLACA#rls=com.microsoft:en-AU&q=Perge+Turkey

Archaeological ruins, from Bronze Age, St Paul travelled there, St Matrona of Perga- cross dressed to avoid D Violence-became a martyr! Near Artemis Temple



Cathedral Ruins - Perge

One may say that all Roman ruins are similar, however on closer scrutiny there are many differences. Perge, which declined during the Byzantine times, has all the same buildings seen elsewhere however the entrance is

marked by two Hellenistic towers and within the agora the shops are identified by large marble signs with carvings to indicate the trade. The butcher has a large hook and a knife outside the entrance.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perge>

<http://romeartlover.tripod.com/Perge.html>



Wheel Ruts - Perge



Nymphaeum - Perge



South Baths - Perge



Tourist Street - Side

The city of Side, a centre dominated by pirates and the slave trade in the olden days, was built right at the harbour. The Temple of Apollo and Athena, the large theatre and agora are still recognisable, sadly however, between these majestic monuments by incredible craftsmen are dozens of tacky shops selling the same

touristy items seem everywhere. The lunch was eaten by a turquoise coloured river where frogs played.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Side>



Temple of Apollo - Side



Theatre - Side

Aspendos:

https://www.google.com.au/search?q=Aspendos+Turkey&rls=com.microsoft:en-AU&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&startIndex=&startPage=1&rlz=117ADRA_enAU427&gfe_rd=cr&ei=TAKFVI2JMa_u8wfJ8oJg&gws_rd=ssl/

Southern coast of Serik near Antalya, Roman ruins



Vespasian Gate - Side



Theatre - Aspendos

Aspendos is quite different again; it has a brilliant amphitheatre, built in 162 AD which seats 12,000 people and is still in use. It is made of marble and has excellent acoustics. Nearby we saw an interesting Aqueduct and siphon system built around 100 AD.

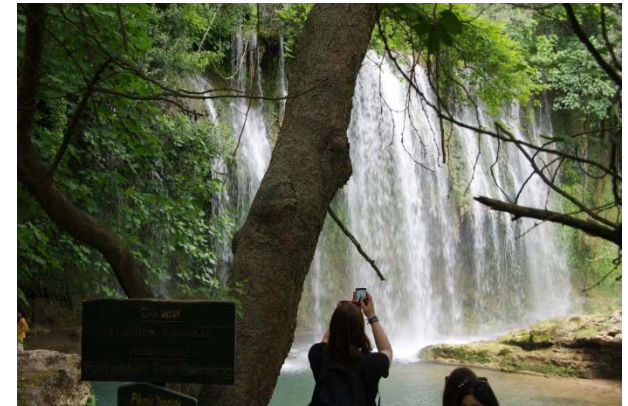
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aspendos>



Theatre - Aspendos



Panoramic View of Theatre - Aspendos



Kurşunlu Waterfall

Before returning to Antalya we spent a few minutes at the Kurşunlu Waterfall; a pleasant aqua coloured waterfall camouflaged by over grown trees. Nearby is a popular local BBQ and picnic spot.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kur%C5%9Funlu_Waterfall_Nature_Park

I was becoming more aware of small habits of the Turkish people like the numbers of men who unconsciously use prayer or worry beads. These seemed to be a fashion statement and come in many semi-precious stones or silver. With smoking banned in most places in Australia we have forgotten the horrid smell. Large numbers of old and young, male and female Turks smoke, even with the pictorial warnings on cigarette packets. Of course Turkey grows tobacco so they are not going to destroy one of their major industries for the sake of people's health - sadly!



Tram - Antalya

Morning free to visit Hadrian Gate, Archaeological Museum and Old Town of Kaleici

The much anticipated archaeological museum in Antalya was closed, a disappointment for us. Of course, it was Monday! Instead, we walked along the tram line to the old port and naturally protected harbour. We descended by lift and strolled around the cove, constantly being approached by cruise operators or other

touters wanting our patronage! Short cruises and fishing trips seemed to be on offer.



Old Antalya



Harbour - Antalya

We filled our morning easily until our departure for the airport, the driver pointed out places of interest along the way. The claim that Mount Olympus, close by, was the 4th highest Turkish mountain was disputed later. It is definitely not at 2366m it is not in the top 10. (There are 7 Mt Olympus in the Mediterranean area- a very popular name).

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tahtal%C4%B1_Da%C4%9F%C4%B1



Snow Capped Peaks in the Distance - Antalya

On flying into central Anatolia and the Cappadocia region we had a panoramic view of a bushwalkers paradise. Especially the Goreme area where there were many lakes dotted between the high mountains. Trees were bursting into leaf and blossom after

the winter snows and chill. What I assumed were fallow fields had been planted with potatoes sown for an autumn harvest.

We felt quite at home as we were welcomed back to the cleverly designed Ali Baba cave reception area. This time our room was right at the top of the terraced hotel with a sensational view over the region. The welcoming waiters in the restaurant were once again most considerate of my wheat intolerance.



Cruise 'Ship' - Antalya



An Interesting View - Antalya

We were advised to be ready at 4.00am for our much anticipated balloon flight, thrown in as a gift for a cancelled tour.

Tuesday 12th May, 2015 - Cappadocia - MDC Cave Hotel

Day 17



Swarms of Balloons Aloft - Cappadocia



Ready for Take-off - Cappadocia



We Flew with Urgup Balloons - Cappadocia



Early Morning Lift off - Cappadocia

We were ready and waiting in the early morning darkness for the bus that took us to the balloon centre of the moon landscaped Fairy Chimneys of Cappadocia. After refreshments hundreds of expectant tourists from different companies climbed aboard mini buses and descended upon the same general departure area.

<http://www.urgupballoons.com/en/index.html>

There was about one hundred spectacularly coloured and patterned

balloons being inflated- a colourful exciting sight indeed in the early morning light. Minutes later, 20 to a balloon, we jumped aboard the baskets and were airborne for a treat of our lives.



Cave Dwellings - Cappadocia



A Cave Hotel - Cappadocia

We flew high, low, travelling silently and slowly across the amazing tranquil eroded landscape shapes marvelling at the skill of all pilots who came close but not too close to our balloon.



Cave Houses - Cappadocia



Pigeon Lofts in the Cliff - Cappadocia

From the air the lilac, quince and cherry blossoms brightened the near white sandstone ground. The rock faces were dotted with

pigeon houses as well as windows and doors of old cave homes decorated with carvings of symbols of the sun, moon and flowers, perhaps lotus dating back to the Seljuk period.



Passing Balloonists - Cappadocia

The hour flew quickly and after finding an idea spot on top of an old chimney, we landed. One bounce on the ground, up and then straight into the retrieve trailer, amazing skills of a competent pilot and crew.

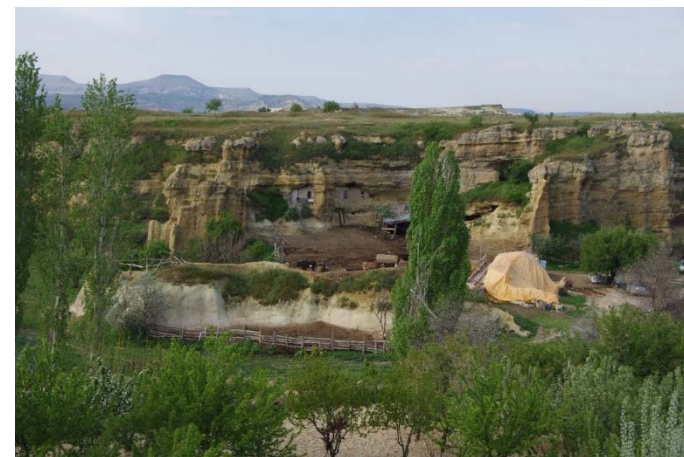
Besides the pilot, there were 7 staff, the retrieve and balloon trainer drivers and 5 other assistances that made the entire job look so easy. Of course the success of the occasion was celebrated with a glass of Champagne.



Fairy Chimneys - Cappadocia



Fairy Chimneys - Cappadocia



Farm across the Valley - MDC Cave Hotel - Urgup



View of Urgup from Our Rear Balcony - MDC Cave Hotel - Urgup

To fill in the rest of the day we walked into the Urgup Township passing many hotels converted from restored original cave houses. Urgup, a UNESCO site since 1985, has started a national trend to restore original centuries old Turkish houses to the delight of many tourists. These were so much nicer to the eye

than the sameness of newly constructed apartments. We passed a traditional Ottoman Hamman or bathhouse still in use and wondered if the old cave houses ever had bathrooms?

ourselves and bought many varieties of delicious dried fruit. On our return walk we stopped at Fairy Chimney Tour Centre to learn more from Markus about Islam. We were told we would be the only takers for the next eastern Turkey tour; a blessing and a disappointment in one!

<http://www.captivatingcappadocia.com/cappadocia-kuruyemis-love-story-dried-fruit/>



Dried Egg Plant - Urgup

Urgup is a busy rural hub with lots of small markets, mechanics, barbers, jewellers, tourist spice shops. We were enticed into a shop by young English speaking lass and while sipping a pomegranate tea enjoyed learning more about the different dried fruits, herbs and spices. We couldn't help



Hamam - Urgup



Town Centre - Urgup



Urgup Natural Spices, Nuts and Dried Fruit



Our Suite - MDC Cave Hotel - Urgup



Chilies – Urgup

Our cave suite is brilliant; it has been carved out of one fairy chimney. From the 4 metre wide sandstone facade with 2 windows and central door it appears small. Open the door and you find a large foyer/lounge with Persian and kilim scatter rugs on a marble floor. That's when you realise the extent to which the mountain has been carved out. The foyer's ornate wood and sandstone ceiling, a seating area with fire place and spare bed creates a deceptive impression.

To the right and up 3 steps is a "U" shaped divan and cushion seating area, carved from solid stone, no windows but tiny alcoves (like dove houses) carved out for soft lighting.

Another 4 metres and turn left from the foyer or lounge you enter the grand circular bathroom by descending 6 steps. Again, carved out of solid stone like a cave, it has a marble floor, with

one small attic like window and an air vent. There is a large Jacuzzi, spacious shower alcove, vanity and toilet.

Back to the lounge and walk further into the mountain and up 5 steps you enter a huge bedroom with another door leading to a balcony with a town view at the back. There are 'pigeon' holes with subdued lighting around the walls and an attic window carved from the stone, a large queen bed set on a stone base, scatter rugs on the wooden floor, double divan camel bag for seating and a long dressing table.

On the walls throughout there are paintings and embroideries giving a warm homely feel helped by the great floor heating.

Wednesday 13th May, 2015 - Cappadocia - Gaziantep - Ibis Hotel

Day 18

Early morning departure today for Gaziantep, where we will see the superb roman mosaics of Zeugma in the archaeological museum. Along the way we will visit Gumusler Monastery and Yesemek.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaziantep>

Gaziantep: the world's oldest continuously lived city, Hittites, Greeks, Romans, Seljuks, Ottomans

Today we met our new guide Unlu and driver Burhan who would take us to the eastern part of Turkey. On day one we travelled 3 provinces from Central Anatolia down through Mediterranean Turkey to Eastern Anatolia, close to 500 kilometres. The landscape changed from shallow top soil on rock capable of produced fruit trees, wheat and potato fields to a very fertile

valley in situated between 2 rivers noted for its vegetable growing and finally to a dry semi-desert area.

While still in Cappadocia Province we visited the cleverly camouflaged 8th C Gumusler Cave Monastery which protected Christians hiding from Roman persecution, similar to cave churches of Goreme. Carved out of the centre of a large rock, the monastery had dormitories, a kitchen and eating area and many religious paintings and frescos in the high conical vaulted

ceilinged church of many arches. One painting showed a smiling Mary and baby Jesus; another 12 apostles and several saints. The simplicity of the nativity scene was lovely, animals with smiling faces watching baby Jesus in the manger with Mary seated nearby and the 3 wise men offering their gifts.



Unusual Minaret - Bazaar - Gaziantep

We noticed once more that all painted figures had their eyes gouged out; our guide gave us several explanations!



Fresco - Gümüşler Monastery - Niğde



Entrance to Gümüşler Monastery - Niğde

<http://www.turkeyfromtheinside.com/42-places-to-go/553-esk-guemueler.html>

http://www.todayszaman.com/columnist/pat-yale_348187_in-the-monastery-of-the-south.html

http://www.researchgate.net/publication/273697752_Structuralgeological_problems_in_Gmler_archeological_site_and_monastery



Gaziantep Fortress - Gaziantep



Remembering the Silk Road - Gaziantep

We had the new toll road virtually to ourselves; locals used the old busy highway. Many secondary roads are in great need of

attention due to heavy rain and snow. We passed through many tunnels of the still snow-capped Taurus Mountains and drove passed the sign to Tarsus where Saul (St Paul) was born.



Black Steps Bazaar – Gaziantep

A speeding Porsche passed with an Arabic number-plates, possibly Syrian, we were definitely getting close to the Syrian border. Toilet stops sadly indicated we had left the land of western toilets and entered smelly squat world.



Mosaic – Zeugma Museum – Gaziantep



Mosaic – Zeugma Museum – Gaziantep

Once in Gaziantep, the Kale (castle) on the hill of the old Hittite town from 1,200 BC was clearly visible. We stopped to visit the Zeugma archaeological museum and see the amazing mosaics found during construction a dam on the Euphrates River. Most of the 2nd/3rd century BC geometric and pictorial lifelike mosaics were moved to the museum for safe keeping. The brilliant varied

colours of the tiles are still as bright and strong today. The artisans creating the 'gipsy girl' mosaic used the tiniest tiles to depict her features, hair and eye shading. In other mosaics the folds of the gowns, leg and arm muscles appeared three dimensional.



View from Zeugma Museum – Gaziantep



Coppersmith – Bazaar – Gaziantep

The other mosaics from the 4/5th BC were more rudimentary and less colourful depicting mainly animals.

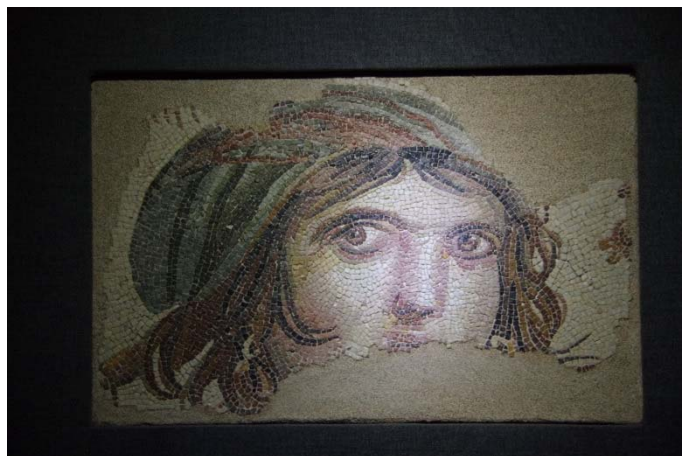
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zeugma,_Commagene

<http://www.archaeology.org/issues/44-1211/features/252-features-zeugma-after-the-flood>

Out the front, along the road are larger than life stone carvings of the “Silk Road” camels with their driver, what a great introduction to the town’s bazaar and the craftsmen also advertising the fact that this town was another famous ‘Silk Road’ stop over.

The old (1759) and new (1798) grand bazaar received the next visit, walking down alleys of silver smiths, iron, copper and brass mongers working on their beaten and etched ware made us realised we were watching a brilliant but dying ‘dirty’ craft. The rest of the market place proved very similar to all seen elsewhere.

<http://turkishtravelblog.com/coppersmith-bazaar-gaziantep/>



Gypsy Girl - Zeugma Museum - Gaziantep



Copper Street - Bazaar - Gaziantep

In a tiny redesigned original market square café, our guide introduced us to pistachio tea, it was very creamy, smooth and quite delicious. We dined at an outdoor restaurant frequented by locals and enjoyed a simple regional meal of local BBQ lamb,

salads, and a chick pea yoghurt soup with pieces of liver in it. We saw an engagement party entering the restaurant; the girl’s dress was made from metres of brightly coloured gathered tulle glittering with sequins and embroidery. The guests were in full evening dress.

We bought some expensive, bad “fire water” to ‘enjoy’ at the hotel later (Turks do not drink in public). If you want alcohol in this Muslim country, be prepared to pay handsomely for the tax!

At the Ibis Hotel we fell into bed after the long journey, it was pokey, small, airless and bare hotel none of which kept us awake.



Delicacies - Bazaar - Gaziantep

Today we drive to the ancient city of Sanli Urfa, home of Abraham. On the way we will visit remains of the ancient Roman city of Zeugma by the River Euphrates to see the magnificent tile work.



Archeological Site - Zeugma



Mosaic Floor - Zeugma



Archeological Site - Zeugma



Birecik Dam - Zeugma

Kurdish and Upper Mesopotamia people maintained their own culture, language from early bronze era. South Eastern area, discover the 'City of Prophets' as we visit Abraham's caves, the pool of sacred Carp and the busy

colourful silk bazaar before visiting nearby Harran to see the incredible beehive houses.



Ruins of Ancient Harran



Beehive Houses - Harran

Harran:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harran>



Mevlid-i Halil Mosque - Sanli Urfa

We headed into near desert country, hot, dry, and rather bare, apart from the olive, pistachio and fig trees grown using irrigation. First we visited the Birecik Dam on the Euphrates River, built on the site of Zeugma Township to see where the mosaics were uncovered. This dam is part of the GAP electric and irrigation project system to aid development in the eastern

states. The canopied area showed terraced houses similar to those at Ephesus.



Artifacts - Beehive House - Harran



Inside a Beehive House - Harran

Heading towards Harran we passed the isolated dam spillway and saw a very large refugee camp. High fences and guards surrounded many prefab huts. We were told the guards are not

keeping the people in but protecting the refugees from terrorists/religious fanatics who may come from Aleppo in Syria next door!



Courtyard - Beehive House - Harran

Whether in the street or the fields more and more men and women in the eastern region wore traditional shalwar pants. Men wore black ones with a white shirt, waistcoat, suit coat and crocheted takke cap while the women's shalwar are brightly floral. These pants are very wide gathered 'skirts' joined at the bottom just above the ankle.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shalwar_kameez

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Birecik_Dam

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zeugma,_Commagene

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southeastern_Anatolia_Project

In desert Harran, an Arab town only 10kms from the Syrian border, perhaps where Abraham was born and lived for 15 years.

The Moguls in 13thC destroyed and reduced the entire town along with the citadel, Ulu Camli Mosque and university to a pile of rubble strewn everywhere. Ulu Camli Mosque is reputed to be the first mosque in Anatolia, built in 750AD.



Bazaar - Sanli Urfa

Next to old Harran we met the Arab headman at his beehive mud brick home working those worry beads with great skill. Beehive houses are constructed from many (between 6 and 9) mud beehives joined together for ease and cool

movement in the severe heat. Each earthen floored room was decorated with rugs and old tools hung on the walls. The people, still wearing distinctively traditional Arab robes and head scarves came over the border about 100 years ago.



Urfa Castle - Sanli Urfa



Abraham's Pool - Sanli Urfa

Local tourists love to dress up in old costumes for photos; here was the perfect spot for them.



'Ayn Zelfha Lake - Sanli Urfa



Entrance to Abraham's Cave - Sanli Urfa

Back on the highway we saw police intercepting some ragged children trying to run away. They looked rather like gypsies, perhaps Syrian who should have been at school.

Sanli Urfa:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C5%9Eanl%C4%B1urfa>



Stream flowing through Customs Inn - Bazaar - Sanli Urfa

As every Turk loves his cayi or chai and a chat, we had many bus stops for a glass of tea and a drivers rest. Back in Sanli Urfa, the town known as the City of Prophets, we visited Abraham's supposed place of death, in a cave in a beautiful garden at the bottom of the castle wall. We heard many

stories surrounding his life. The Pool of Abraham or lake is full of black spotted carp, was created from fire when Abraham was supposed to die, the smaller lake, Ayn-ı Zeliha, developed when the princess jumped to her death from the castle wall on hearing the sad news.

<http://www.skyscrapercity.com/showthread.php?t=1746749>

<http://www.kultur.gov.tr/EN,35806/sanliurfa.html>



Customs Inn - Bazaar - Sanli Urfa

Urfa was settled 5,500 years ago. Urfa was conquered repeatedly throughout history, and has been dominated by many civilizations, including the [Ebla](#), [Akkadians](#), [Sumerians](#), [Babylonians](#), [Hittites](#), [Armenians](#), [Hurri-Mitannis](#) ([Armeno-Aryans](#)), [Assyrians](#), [Chaldeans](#), [Medes](#), [Persians](#), [Macedonians](#) (under [Alexander the Great](#)), [Seleucids](#), [Arameans](#), [Osrhoenes](#), [Romans](#), [Sassanids](#), [Byzantines](#), and [Crusaders](#).

Urfa was officially renamed Şanlıurfa (Urfa the Glorious) by the [Turkish Grand National Assembly](#) in 1984, in recognition of the local resistance in the [Turkish War of Independence](#).



Shoe Cleaner - Bazaar - Sanli Urfa

As our driver and guide ate lunch we observed the bazaar below with its narrow busy streets full of action. A butcher skilled with his very sharp boning knife removed all flesh and fat from the bones of a hanging side of lamb while cats sat waiting for a morsel. Shoppers ambling by had to jump out of the way of motor bikes and hand carts. Some restaurants were constantly patronised while others served not a soul. The dozens of cats prowled and jealously protecting their roof and alleyway territory. No matter which town, we saw men with their elaborately decorated shoe-shine boxes; here was no different. They all seemed to have a customer or two.

The heart of the bazaar is the glorious Gümrük Hanı (Customs Inn) which wraps itself around a courtyard shaded by plane trees.

The building was constructed as a caravansary by Urfa Gavarnot Behram Pasha in 1566.

<http://travelguideturkey.org/?p=658>

We accompanied our 2 hosts to a street restaurant and eat an early dinner watching

the world wander by. The only annoyance was the constant loud spruiking and music in vans of the competitive political parties driving passed. The most popular political party in this area was the Kurdish Party.

My other concern in many of these places was about the numbers of young children pushing carts, working in restaurants or simply hanging around so late in the evening!

For the first time we encountered beggars, a substantial number of women with small poorly dressed children always on the lookout for police. Were they all illegal Syrians or just hungry young kids? I believe I saw desperation etched into their faces.

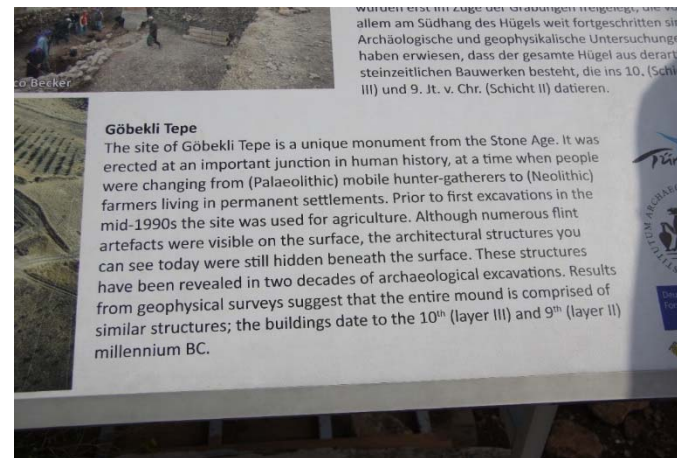
Friday 15th May, 2015 - Sanli Urfa to Kahta - Grand Isias Hotel, Adiyaman

Day 20



Animal and Bird Carvings - Göbekli Tepe

Drive to Kahta with a brief stop at Ataturk dam, third largest in the world



Gobekli Tepe

There is no doubt this part of Mesopotamia is dry and desolate, the yellowing wheat in the fields and the flat roofed mud dwellings added to this appearance.



Limestone Columns - Gobekli Tepe

We visited the 10,000 year old ruins of 'Gobekli Tepe' (Potbelly Hill) set on the highest hill of a mountain range; it had been discovered in 1995 by a shepherd.

The locals always believed this mountain to be mystical or spiritual, once excavated it definitely proved to be special with carvings of animals and birds the pillars.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G%C3%B6bekli_Tepe
<http://www.ancient-origins.net/opinion/secret-gobekli-tepe-cosmic-equinox-and-sacred-marriage-part-1-002861>



View from Gobekli Tepe

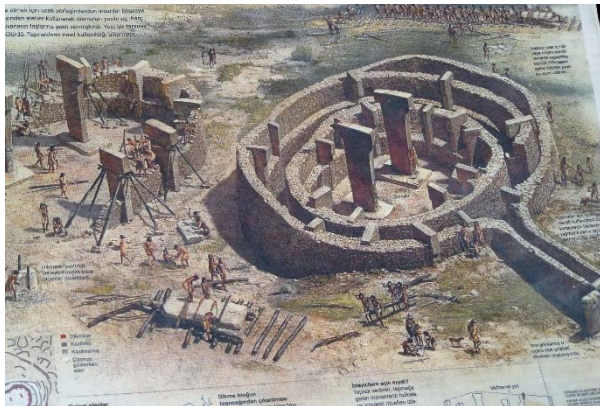


Animal Carvings on Column Head - Gobekli Tepe

These ruins were of a primitive culture more ancient and larger than Stonehenge. Much is still to be uncovered, so far there are home sites, a hilltop grave and a temple with large T shaped decorated stone pillars set in two circles like corridors or a narthex leading into the nave.



Columns with Animal Carvings - Gobekli Tepe



Schematic - Gobekli Tepe

Where the entrance gate would have been you could see the gouges the door hinges and frame had made and two

large holes carved into the stone may maybe for water storage or trapping birds and animals.



Ataturk Dam - Euphrates River



Euphrates River Downstream from Ataturk Dam

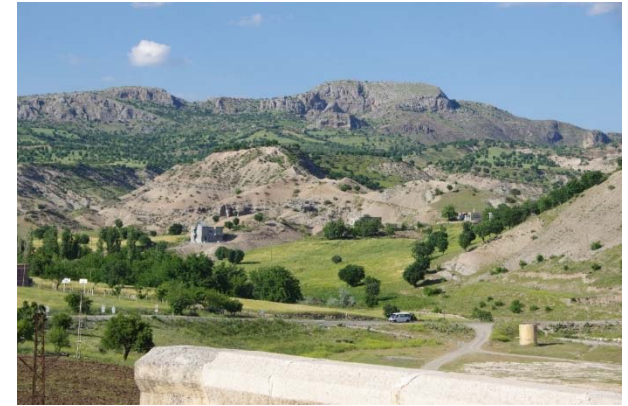
Our next site was the huge spillway and turbines of the Ataturk Dam and the beautiful turquoise Euphrates River, also part of the GAP project. The locals loved the place, they were there were in busloads.



Septimius Severus Bridge



Modern Road Bridge over Chabinas Creek



View from Karakus Tumulus



Memorial to Workers who died constructing the Ataturk Dam



Chabinas Creek Gorge at Septimius Severus Bridge



Massive Head - Mt Nemrut

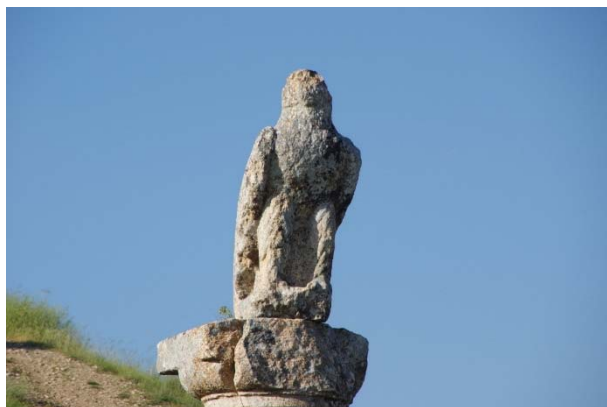
Driving north to Kahta and our hotel, (really Adiyaman about 20 kms further on), near the lakes and catchment area for the Ataturk Dam. In the distance we could see the snow-capped Tauris Mountains that run right through the country.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atat%C3%BCrk_Dam

Assisted generously by the hotel staff we changed rooms due to the stench of cigarette smoke, a smaller and less offensive room was selected. After a short break we headed to Mt Nemrut for the sunset with a few stops along the way.



Karakus Tumulus



Royal Eagle - Column - Karakus Tumulus

This countryside is beautiful with long sweeping fertile valleys surrounded by high escarpments. The road travelled along the mountain top then descended a steep snake like road to the valley below.

Farmers were working hard to make the most of the great late spring weather. I couldn't imagine what it would be like to be a woman here, working in the field in black

stockings, a long black skirt or pants covered by a full length black coat and head covered with a large black scarf while my male companion had short sleeves loose pants and sandals!



Path to the Summit - Mt Nemrut



Headless Statues - Mt Nemrut

Around a bend and standing next to a small hill in a field of ripening wheat was a Roman column with an eagle at the top but sadly we drove straight on without stopping!



View from Mt Nemrut



Massive Statues - Western Side - Mt Nemrut

We descended to the picturesque and very wide Kahta Creek bed to see the Septimius Severan Roman Bridge spanning Chabinas Creek. I guess any emperor could build a magnificent bridge like this 1,600 years ago if he had 10,000 slaves helping him. The swiftly flowing river full of melting snow had just gouged through a gorge forcing the water to rush towards the bridge built at the narrowest section.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Severan_Bridge



Summit Tumulus - Mt Nemrut



Waiting for Sunset - Mt Nemrut

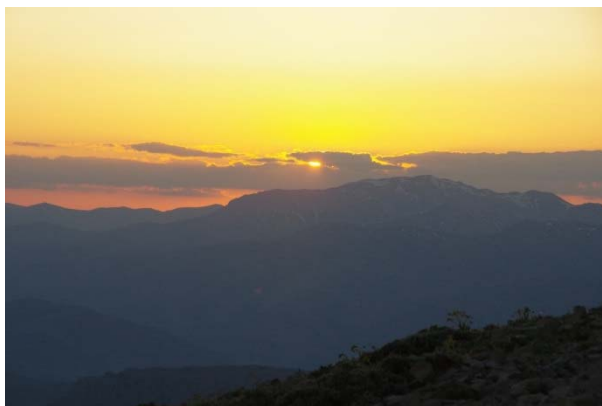
Back in the bus, up the hill again, we now visited the column I'd seen! This was Karakus tomb on Mount Tumulus, a women's (daughter of a king and others) burial site with 3 columns, one at the front and 2 behind the hill. The view from this point across the river valley,

escarpment and dam was stunning, however we couldn't dally.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antiochis_of_Commagene

<http://www.kultur.gov.tr/EN,33232/mound-tumulus-and-monuments.html>

http://www.adiyamanli.org/karakus_hill.htm



Sunset - Mt Nemrut

Continuing on the long winding road we headed for Mt Nemrut at sunset, passing through one of the many oilfields in Adiyaman Province. Petroleum reserves were discovered in Adiyaman in 1971, and the province soon became an important center of the oil industry. The Turkish Petroleum Corporation operates 14 production plants with a total of 156 oil wells in the province of Adiyaman. Crude oil production in the region is run by the private sector.

<http://seanatolianheritage.org/eng/southeastanatoliaguide/adiyaman.pdf>

Long and winding it really was, like entering a very stony rocky moonscape with a view for hundreds of kilometres in every direction. With snow still on the ground and a sharp bitter wind it made the 1,500 metre walk over the moving scree to the very top rather difficult. Just before sunset we finally reached the summit and there facing both to the north and south were the carved heads of King Antiochus, Zeus, Apollo, Heracles and their guards 2 lions, and 2 eagles. The carved thrones and bodies of the king and gods sat just behind the heads on the hill. Earthquakes cause lots of damage; here was yet more evidence. Only on this day we had slippery snow to contend with as well. The snow covered stony summit top behind the carvings is believed to be the burial place of Antiochus. Although we had seen few people as we walked up, the summit was crowded with people waiting for the sun to slide down behind the magnificent horizon. Many had their glasses and champagne poised. Fearing the walk back down to the bus after sunset we started our descent early, we knew we could see the sunset view along the way.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Nemrut

A simple kebab meal in Kahta before completing the journey some 90 odd kms from the mountain and back to our 'Grand Hotel' in Adiyaman! that was not so grand!

We constantly crossed paths with a group of local fully clad happy women who had toured similar places to us,

they had climbed up that same mountain and their outfits had not hinder them.

Saturday 16th May, 2015 - Kahta - Mardin - Hilton Garden Inn

Day 21



Deyrul Zafaran Monastery - Mardin

Kahta:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/K%C3%A2hta>

Small town at base of Mount and Nagi-heads, Roman Bridge, large eagle pedestal / very poor area.



Deyrul Zafaran Monastery - Mardin



Deyrul Zafaran Monastery - Mardin



Sun Worshippers Chapel - Deyrul Zafaran Monastery - Mardin



Deyrul Zafaran Monastery - Mardin

Mardin:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mardin>



Deyrul Zafaran Monastery - Mardin

1230BC On Tigris River, right on border, Assyrian/ Persian Invaded by Mongols, WW1 Armenian genocide there.

As we had seen Mt Nemrut at sunset our next destination was Mardin. For 5 hours we travelled over 500 kilometres along a river valley sown with wheat which was

surrounded by barren crag mountains. We passed many large turquoise coloured lakes; saw several small villages of flat roofed mud-brick houses where locals were busy working on their lands.



Deyrul Zafaran Monastery - Mardin



Carved Stonework - Mardin

We were now very close to both the Syrian and Iraq borders on the very busy main highway to Iraq. Many oil tankers and lorries

carrying construction and other materials were heading in that direction, while what looked like empty trucks were returning back into Turkey.



Mardin Castle



Mardin Museum

In 2012 Turkey began importing 5 -10 road tankers of oil from Iraqi Kurdistan. It was expected that the number of tankers would rise to 100 – 200 per day. The endless line of tankers we saw confirmed the projection.

<http://www.ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc/2012/7/turkey4020.htm>



Deyrul Zafaran Monastery - Mardin

We stopped at the saffron coloured stone Deyrul Zafaran Syrian Orthodox Christian Monastery, right up on a hillside. It is known

as the Metropolitan training centre, monastery and church of the Syrian Orthodox. This peaceful environment is surrounded by vines and olive trees used by the monks for wine and olive oil making. The old patriarch was seated in the courtyard enjoying at chat with faithful parishioners.



Narrow Street - Mardin

Because Mardin is an old "silk road" trading post, people of all the main religions (Jews, Christians and Muslims) have been

accepted for 630 years to come on pilgrimages and live harmoniously in this Monastery. The monastery also has a Temple of the Sun constructed by the Aramaic's, ancestors of the Christian Assyrians

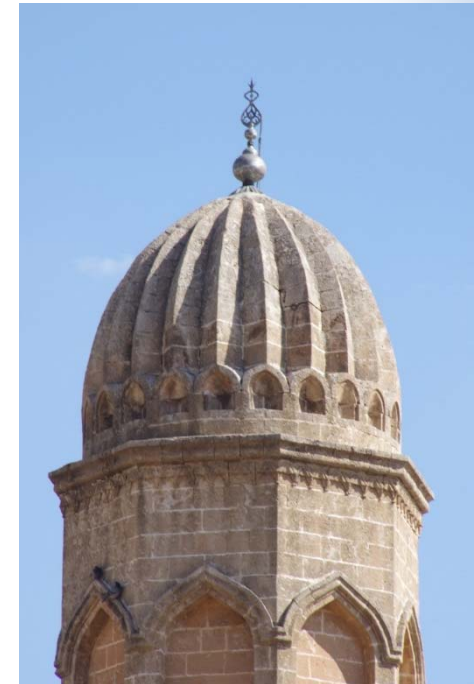


Minaret - one of many - Mardin

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mor_Hananyo_Monastery

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/the-pearl-of-mardin-deyrulzafaran-monastery.aspx?pageID=438&n=the->

[pearl-of-mardin-deyrulzafaran-monastery-2008-03-25](http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/the-pearl-of-mardin-deyrulzafaran-monastery-2008-03-25)



Typical Dome - Mardin

Mardin has an old and new town, the new town is growing very fast; there are many half-finished apartment blocks along the highway. However it was the old Arabic stone town of flat roofs and narrow alleyways we came to see.



Şehidiye Mosque – Mardin

Time has stood still in this place- nothing appears to have changed for thousands of years. With the Mardin Castle on the hilltop, the town's houses, monasteries, churches, mosques, madrasas, and caravanserais have been built on top of each other down the hill slope. You can see domes, minarets, church spires in amongst the other roofs built over the town's 4,500 years. The old sandstone buildings are intricately and delicately carved with filigree and engraved with words and patterns. The tiny alleys and arches joining buildings

allow cool air to flow through, so necessary in the intense heat, it is only with donkeys that luggage, and rubbish can be moved in and out of these narrow alleyways. As part of the Silk Road trade route, Old Mardin was established as a trading post and military base. It has seen many conquerors over time, all leaving their mark, the last were the French. Standing at a high point in the town and overlooking the enormous dry plains and valley of Mesopotamia you can see the lights of Iraq towns in the distance and not far away the Tigris River.



Beautiful Stonework – Mardin

The town was a very busy and colourful mix of many different races and cultures, this was very obvious from facial features and manner of dress but which was which? I'll not know however I believe many of those in Arabic dress were tourists like us. There would have been conversations in Kurdish, Turkish, Arabic, Syrian, Yazidis and Armenian all of which were local.

There were less and less European tourists in this part of Turkey, when you leave the coastal regions, those tourists go too. However local tourists made up the numbers handsomely.

There appeared to be no touting on this side of Turkey, while we walked the alley ways and streets we never felt harassed into buying tourist items. They don't need to worry about westerners buying anyway, local tourists were purchasing everything.



Stairway – Mardin

We were told that the further you travelled from the seat of Government power the more people do as they like. Ataturk's decree on code of dress is not followed in Mardin; people have definitely reverted back to old habits.

Hilton Garden Inn is set high on a barren hill facing north overlooked an immense valley where once an army of soldiers marched into Iraq, today the soldiers are

still guarding the area in-case of insurgents from neighbouring countries.

There was a wedding at the hotel, the bride wore a white lace, fully gathered tulle skirted dress with many petticoats, and the

guests were dressed to the nines in long flowing gowns and men with bowties and morning suits. The bride and guests cars were all white Mercs; most had Iraqi Arabic written number plates.

Sunday 17th May, 2015 - Mardin – Van - Rescate Hotel

Day 22



Kurdish Motif on Modern Building - Midyat

This morning we continue onto Hasankeyf, to visit the cliff top Roman ruins of ancient

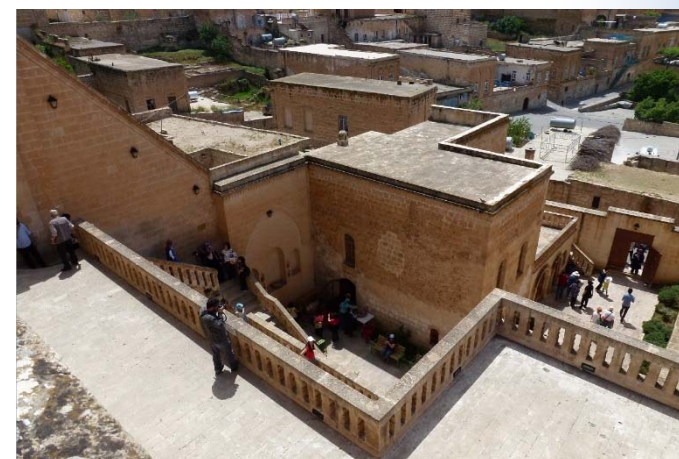
Cephe and the old town of Midyat. After lunch by the Tigris River we depart to Tatvan, a small village on the edge of Lake Van and watch the sun set over the lake before heading to Van.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Van_Province

On Lake Van with Iran to east and Iraq to south 3,000BC – Armenian history until 19th C



View from Roof of Midyat Devlet Konuk Evi



Midyat Devlet Konuk Evi

To travel to Van we turned inland leaving the Iraqi border. This was to be another long day of travelling in semi-arid country. We passed many unoccupied army bases along the way although there are also many army bases still in use as well. Our guide informed us that the Turkish Air force had shot down a Syrian plane the night before and that just over the border from where we were the US military had killed an IS leader and captured his wife.



Stone Houses - Midyat



Street outside Midyat Devlet Konuk Evi



Happy Kids - Midyat



Midyat Devlet Konuk Evi

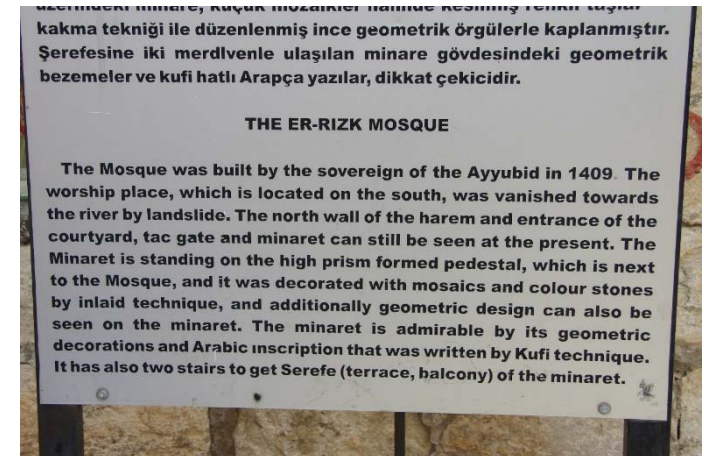
He also mentioned that this region was "Hicksville", there were many Kurds in area and a few were gun totting troublemakers. Many houses of worship and religions were practiced in this area; like Sunworshippers and Zoroastrianism an ancient Persian religion that faces the sun.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solar_deity

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zoroastrianism>



Carved Stonework - Midyat



Er-Rizk Mosque - Hasankeyf



**Minaret - Er-Rizk Mosque -
Hasankeyf**

First we visited the stone Arabic town of Midyat, a place popular with film producers because all renovations must retain the original sandstone culture and oval topped windows, great for authentic films. All homes along the winding but empty alleyways have no windows to the street, windows only faced into a courtyard- Old men sat in groups under the few trees available drinking cayi, there was not a woman to be seen. We climbed the tower of an old mansion, Midyat Devlet Konuk

Evi, for a better view. The town's old mosque had a sign to tell us the harem was within its walls!

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Midyat>

<http://www.midyatcity.com/>

<http://travelingbydefault.blogspot.com.au/2013/05/midyat-devlet-konuk-evi.html>



Kufi Arabic Inscription - Er-Rizk Mosque - Hasankeyf

Next stop was to the ruins of an old Roman bridge swept away years ago by the flooded Tigris River with only a few stone remnants remaining. The river was definitely flowing swiftly as we watched. Hasankeyf was originally called Cephe after the very traditional cliff top Roman ruins of the ancient town; it is a very popular place for locals. We had seen the cave houses, citadel and fortress castle on the hill face from some distance away as we approached. These dwellings had been lived in until 1975 but became unsafe after an earthquake caused cracks and rock falls.

The very old mosque next to the river had developed a decided lean to it.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hasankeyf>

<http://www.hasankeyfmatters.com/>

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/endangered-site-the-city-of-hasankeyf-turkey-51947364/?page=2>

<http://www.hasankeyfmatters.com/2013/11/protest-dialogue-raise-hopes-for-better.html>

The site is threatened by the planned construction of the Ilisu Dam.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Il%C4%B1su_Dam

http://www.todayszaman.com/expat-zone_human-face-of-the-ilisu-dam-project_349056.html

Old farming methods are still used in this region; this was not an affluent area. Donkeys pulling very ancient carts with very heavy loads moved slowly along the road. On the road side there were an abundance of forget-me-nots, red poppies, yellow butter cups, purple thistles, everlasting flowers, mustard flowers, sprays of white wild carrot flower, grapes vines flourishing. It may have been a poor area but it was very beautiful. There appears to be no indigenous trees left in this region, probably cut down centuries ago for fuel. Pines plantations are on many hills and crops grown on the flat. Out of the blue we even saw oil wells in the wheat fields. Batman Province is a major oil producer.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Batman_Province

On waking after a doze, the landscape had changed considerably. There were fertile, rich, emerald green river flats for farming and grazing of sheep and cows. The high very craggy and rocky mountains above them looked as if they had been pushed right up forming giant waves in the rock face. Poplar trees identified the path of the river while in the meadows plump cows and sheep grazed. Melting snow and water poured out of rock-faces, this water was so alkaline it formed "Pamukkale" waves near the road. The land and crops looked like a giant patchwork blanket; the cherry, peach and almond trees were bursting into blossom because the snows were only just melting.

This is an old volcanic region; I was pleased to learn this because I was sure we had passed some glacial valleys on our travels. From this point we could even see Agri (Mount Ararat) at over 5,000 metres in the distance to the north.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Ararat
<http://www.allaboutturkey.com/ararat.htm>



Citadel - Hasankeyf



Ruined Roman Bridge over Tigris River - Hasankeyf

Around the next corner the huge turquoise Lake Van came into view totally surrounded by mountains. More like a sea it is so big; it sits at 1640 metres above sea level. We didn't stop in Tatvan

as we were running out of time; we just drove through a rather newish area.

The melting snows fill the lake but as there are no rivers coming from the lake so no water can escape. Of the 2 varieties of fish, pearl grey mullet is the only edible one. The water is so saline that sea gulls frequent its shores in huge numbers. The original outlet from the basin was blocked by an ancient volcanic eruption. Although Lake Van is situated at an altitude of 1,640 m (5,380 ft) with harsh winters, it does not freeze due to its high salinity except occasionally the shallow northern section.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lake_Van

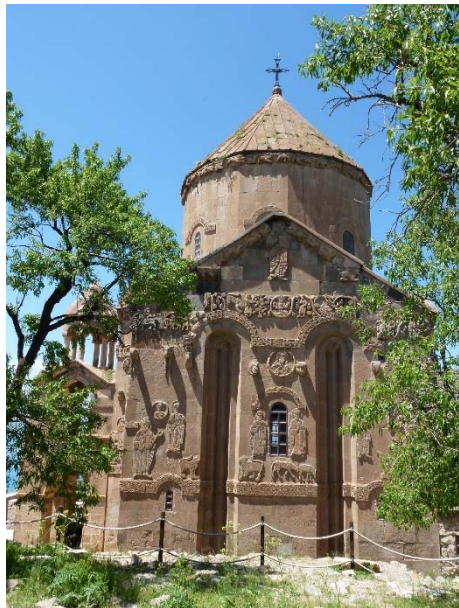
The Van Cat is another peculiarity of the region; the white long furred cat can swim, it has one blue and one amber eye. We actually saw one near the castle visited later in the day.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Van_cat

Van sits on a fault line which rises in the Himalayas causing many tremors and quakes, the last one was in 2011 forcing many people from their homes permanently. Those lucky to survive the quake are too afraid to return so a temporary prefab city has been set up for them. We had seen many new apartment blocks under construction so now knew the reason.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011_Van_earthquake

Today we take a ferry to Akdamar Island and visit the Armenian Cathedral of the Holy Cross built in the 10th century.



Akhdamar Armenian Church of the Holy Cross - Lake Van

This area was settled over 4,000 years ago by the Urartian people; cuneiform script tells the story up to 7th C. There had been a Chalcolithic, Bronze, Iron, and Assyrian age as well as Roman, Byzantine, Persian and Caspian Turks who had occupied the region. Van province is noted for iron,

sulphur, weaving and dyes. There are 12 islands in the lake, 4 of which have had a church or monastery constructed on it.

The largest island is Carpanak.

Akhdamar Armenian Church of the Holy Cross

The Church was built by monk/architect Manuel between 915 and 921, by the order of Gagik I, King of Vaspurakan. Built at the form of a four-leaf clover and under the plan of a cruciform, the church was covered by a dome from inside and by a pyramidal cone from outside. The church has two gates, one at the southern and another at the western side. During subsequent periods, the Chapel of Zacharias I, a jamatun and a bell tower were added to the church and the Chapel of Saint Stephanos was built separately. Built in the name of the Holy Cross, the church has been transformed into a monastery in 1131. On the stone reliefs of the façade of the church, religious scenes taken from the Old and New Testament, palace life, hunting scenes as well as human and animal figures are depicted. These depictions are important as they distinguish the church from similar ones. There are various wall paintings representing descriptions taken from the Bible on the inner side of the church's walls.

Akhdamar Armenian Church of the Holy Cross - Lake Van

The 10th C Armenian Church of the Holy Cross is located on the second largest island Akdamar. In 915 Chapel of Zacharias was added and then in 1131 the Chapel of Stephanos was also added. At one stage many village people and religious hermits lived on the small island. The spectacular carvings on the outside of the church depict new and old testament stories. Many frescos inside had been tampered with but you could still identify the biblical stories. The Turks and Armenians have had heated arguments many times about this church, at one stage the Turks

nearly destroyed it. We walked around the quiet, peaceful pretty island and then saw a small black snake while waiting for the ferry to take us back to the mainland.



Akhdamar Armenian Church of the Holy Cross - Lake Van

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akdamar_Island

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenian_Cathedral_of_the_Holy_Cross

<http://www.sacred-destinations.com/turkey/akdamar-armenian-church>

<http://kurdistantribune.com/2015/lost-armenian-history-unknown-island-in-lake-van/>

The locals are definitely very friendly and really want to chat and find out where we are from and why we are here. Sometimes

hand gestures are simply not enough and we all are reduced to a frustrated silence with embarrassed smiles and hugs. The Turkish language has so few similarities to our Latin and Greek based English, of course there are some newer written words that are the same the world over.



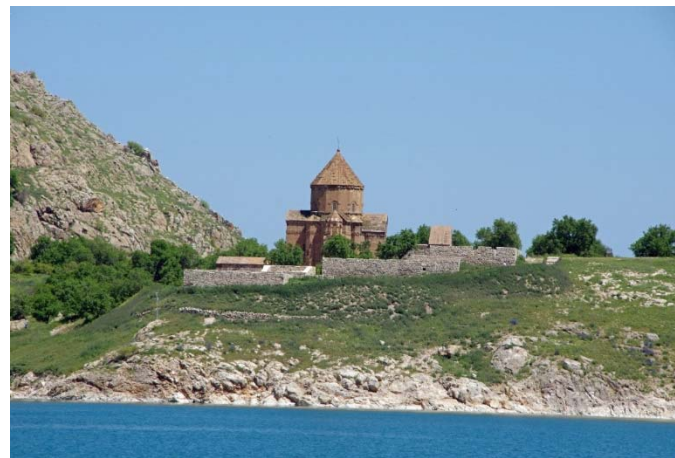
Akhdamar Armenian Church of the Holy Cross - Lake Van

Turkish public toilets are a great source of money for the quick thinkers. As soon as a non-local heads towards a WC sign someone runs to collect 1 T lira from them,

great pocket money if it's a full bus load of people.



Snow Capped Mountains - Lake Van



Akhdamar Armenian Church of the Holy Cross - Lake Van

Surrounded by very flat land the ruins of the ancient Van Castle sits at the highest point of a small unusual yet natural hill. The original Urartian stone fortress was built in 9th C BC. The differing architectures between this and much later eras proved most

interesting and easy to identify. The remains of ancient mud-brick buildings are still standing, they are surrounded by the stone Ottoman additions. The castle was bombed and burnt out in 1915 during WW1.



Noah and the Whale - Akhdamar Armenian Church of the Holy Cross - Lake Van



Van Fortress

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Van_Fortress

We were privileged to be allowed to visit the burial chambers of Urartian King Argishti I and his family in the western wing the ancient castle. Access to the chambers was by a narrow path and stairway carved into the high Cliffside.

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=0103114452435-2011-01-03>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urartian_language

Staying by the lake side, we had planned to eat at a small local restaurant in Van Township itself but our driver went in there for petrol and saw many police and army mobilising with teargas and guns. The elections were coming and a large rally was planned for the evening; best we stay away! The Kurdish Party is also popular here.

We had been noticing many large army barracks as we travelled; the Armenian and Kurdish concerns within this area were not oblivious to a stranger but the military is watching constantly and the borders are well managed. The armoured vehicles

used in Turkey would scare me if I had evil intent.



Urartian Cuneiform Text - Urartian Royal Burial Chamber - Van Fortress



Van Fortress

One interesting observation; there were several groups of neat red uninhabited houses with many windows broken, maybe 15/20 buildings at each settlement. Were these empty and the

windows broken as a result of the strong Kurdish Nationalist feelings or resentment?



Ruined Mosque - Plain below Van Fortress - Van



Bridge - Van Castle

The large local tourist restaurant we ended up at was very gimmicky, they offered 'kebab by the metre'!! Turkish restaurants outside of the hotels definitely sell no alcohol particularly on this

side of Turkey, tea is always on offer. Hence I guess there are few drunk or argumentative drivers and no police brandishing breathalysers!

We came across yet another working synagogue but have no ideas how many Jews live here.

We are hard pressed to see practicing Muslims, when the call to pray sounds, no-one moves, runs to the mosque or alters their daily routine in any way. The shops don't even close on Friday nor do they observe Saturday AM, unlike some other Muslim countries.

People who came for the ANZAC 100 year commemoration at Gallipoli were still travelling Turkey, like us, Carl from Queensland joined us in Van. Carl had lost many male relations in WW1 especially Gallipoli where 3 brothers of his grandfather died, the Gallipoli trip meant a lot to him.

Tuesday 19th May, 2015 - Van - Dogubeyazit – Kars - Kars Buyukkale Hotel

Day 24

2700BC, Armenian and Kurdish, near Mt Ararat, many wars, WW1

Today we drive the ancient 'silk road' Dogubeyazit located at the foothill of Mt Ararat, the highest mountain in Anatolia and Noah's Ark is thought to have landed. We also tour Ishak Pasa Palace and visit the remains of Eski Beyazit, an ancient Urtian City before continuing onto Kars.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doğubeyazıt>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kars>

At breakfast there must have been at least 16 different cheeses on offer. A few resembled yellow tasty cheddar but most were white, soft varieties or a curd. Where

ever we have stayed there have been countless varieties of local cheese – some with mountain herbs in them, some so sour or salty they are not to my taste. We have now entered honey country as well. Many farms have dozens of beehives in the fields.



Muradiye Waterfall



Distant View of Mt Ararat

The honey offered is thick, of a good amber colour and delicious. Turkey has such a very wide selection of flat and risen breads in all shapes and sizes, sadly all are made from wheat! I've had a small taste of many new hot loaves offered but dare not try more.

Today is a public holiday; it is the celebration of Atatürk's declared 'National Youth and Sports Day'. The Muradiye waterfall we visited was crowded with very happy, excited young people preparing for a long day of fun and BBQ's. Everyone, even tiny kids were happily carrying blankets or heavy crates of food and drink over the swing bridge to be consumed later.

<http://www.goturkeytourism.com/about-turkey/muradiye-waterfall-in-van-turkey.html>



Ishak Pasha Palace - Dogubeyazit



Ishak Pasha Palace - Dogubeyazit



Ceiling Decoration - Ishak Pasha Palace - Dogubeyazit

It was hard to imagine that we passed so many differing landscapes again today. Around Lake Van there were snow-capped mountains with fertile valleys, later, arid stony rocky

areas with no sign of trees or grass. With Mt Ararat close by we saw relatively new lava plains with jagged lava arms extending out for kilometres covering very fertile productive farming land. You could even imagine that the basalt was still flowing and glowing red, it appeared so fresh. The entire area reminded me of a science fiction film. Then we entered an area of brown coloured rock, so barren and wind swept it didn't even appear to be from this planet. We saw the evidence of many landslides and rock falls as well, soil stability must be an issue in this area.



Ishak Pasha Palace - Dogubeyazit

The land, at times, closer to Dogubeyazit appeared hardly arable it was so rocky and shallow. However farmers were ploughing and planting crops and in some cases were using hand ploughs. The absence of trees was still a puzzle; however it was a very high plateau- perhaps they wouldn't have survived so high.

We passed many military watch towers along the way, dozens of tanks, planes and army vehicles all ensuring peace would

prevail! Both the soldiers and gendarmerie offered the community support as well as carrying out borders checks, our guide said.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gendarmerie_General_Command



Decorated Niche - Ishak Pasha Palace - Dogubeyazit

We were stopped by a very thorough 'Agri' province police check on our driver, we were too close to the Iran and Armenian

borders for them to risk not checking every vehicle.



Wife's Apartment - Harem - Ishak Pasha Palace - Dogubeyazit

Today we saw Agri or Mount Ararat at very close range, how really exciting! Imagine after all the bible stories I'd been told as a child I was actually seeing this wonderful mountain. We have our doubts about the Noah's Ark story's authenticity! Over 5,000 metres high and our last guide had climbed it! The sky was kind to us, on clouds and perfectly sunny for a great photo shot.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Ararat
<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2010/04/100428-noahs-ark-found-in-turkey-science-religion-culture/>

In the smaller fertile areas birds; like storks had their nest well away from predator's and high on electricity poles, while the crows or ravens had to cope by making many nests in the few available willow trees by the river. There have been parrots, falcons, eagles and red breasted robins in the fields as we

passed. We saw a hawk on the prowl and learnt the area is noted for Eider Ducks; please do not tell me a hawk grabbed a duck! I was shocked to learn the eiderdown is plucked from live ducks, Oh dear!

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Down_feather



Eski Beyazid, an ancient Urartian City - Dogubeyazit

We had entered a very, very poor region, apart from a few shepherds with sheep there seemed to be little else for people's survival. This district had not only suffered many wars, but had been occupied by invaders and withstood great upheaval over time. Persians, Romans, Mongols, Arabs, Byzantine, the Armenians and then the Russians had occupied the area until the 1930's. The lands around the sad looking Dogubeyazit city had been ravaged by WW1 and the War of Independence as well, how did the local people cope?

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dogubeyazit>



**Main Gate - Ishak Pasha Palace -
Dogubeyazit**

Arriving at Dogubeyazit confirmed the full extent of a sad story. It was a dusty, dilapidated, poor place where the very necessary new road construction works made it appear worst. The buildings were crumbling and facilities old; I even saw a public oven for communal use by the many apartments. Throughout Turkey some Kurdish apartment blocks have colourful designs down the front; these were a welcome relief from the local drabness.

There should be more tourists here to raise hopes and funds for the people.

We also saw far more evidence of the army presence in this area, current the global news about the massacre/genocide of Armenian during WW2 in this town has increased tensions in this area.



**Carpet Weavers - Ararat Carpets and Kilims -
Dogubeyazit**

The Ottoman built Ishak Pasa Palace was impressive, built up on the side of a hill; the remains of Eski Beyazid, an ancient Urartian City on the road close by were also interesting. This was yet another stop over point for traders on the 'Silk Road'. The very Georgian looking castle of many rooms (366 rooms) was relatively new, dating from eighteen hundreds. It even had central heating, a necessity as they lived there during winter and would have been snowed in! Sadly the palace has been used as an army barracks when occupied by Russian soldiers (1878-1919) they took pot-shots at the minaret and dome of the mosque, the

beautiful red stone is covered with holes, the delicate stone carving and cuneiform script on the sandstone walls had survived. The Turkish army also used it for years, it is currently under renovation.



A Closer View of Mt Ararat - Dogubeyazit

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ishak_Pasha_Palace

<http://www.kultur.gov.tr/EN,32817/ishak-pasha-palace.html>

Another carpet place and yeah, you guessed, we bought a 50 year old dowry rug! All rugs shown were Kurdish, many were traditional old family rugs, salt bags, donkey covers with family designs and colours used. Mainly wool is used for weaving here as no goats are found in the area. The only reason families sold their rugs was because they were short of money. Many children especially girls received little or no education because families could not pay the costs. There were very few schools available also well trained teachers do not want to move to remote areas and those teachers who were available were poorly trained.

<http://www.araratcarpetkilim.com/>

We walked through the local sad and sorry bazaar full of plastic stuff from China and Iran. As we drove on with Mt Ararat always in our view we saw the zig-zag road going

right up to Ararat's snowline. Mt Ararat climbers can attempt the South-West side only; the North Eastern side is far too dangerous and too close to Iran, therefore forbidden.

Moving on with Kars the destination, we saw large white tulips growing wild on the high wind swept flat plateaus; the entire area had a very cold bleak appearance. We saw many villages of

mud-brick houses with turf roofs; they looked uninhabitable until you saw the smoke rising from the chimneys. What these people put up with! Close by would be the new town of 2 story cement rendered houses with corrugated metal roofs. I hope slowly all families will be moved to the new houses.

Wednesday 20th May, 2015 - Kars - Kars Buyukkale Hotel

Day 25



Church of the Holy Redeemer - Ani

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kars;>

It was an early morning departure to the medieval City of Ani, close to the Turkish-

Armenian border. We also have a chance to visit the impressive Kars Castle, and surrounding ancient churches.



Castle of Kars - Kars

Kars means gate in Armenian, and snow in Turkish, it is right on the Armenian border, and has suffered many wars and occupation, the last by Russia. Soviet Union and Bolsheviks produced a tragic history for the town with countless deaths. The

Seljuk's, Georgian and Ottoman era's all left their mark. During the Russian occupation, many solid Russian styled grey basalt buildings were constructed.



Entrance Gate - Ani

The Ottoman and Armenian relationship has not been a happy one after the many massacres in this town in the past. The Kars River which runs through Kars has been a war zone on many

occasions; it appears not much is needed to set them off! The town is especially noted for its very special Gruyere cheese and fondue. Kars is not as poor looking as Dogubeyazit but pretty close, the shops had little to offer foreigners.



Armenian Church of St Gregory of Tigran Honents - Ani

Like most places we have visited mosques are plentiful for the faithful. Interesting to note that Ottoman mosques always have strips of 2 coloured stone used on the minarets.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ani>

http://www.todayszaman.com/travel_the-ghost-town-between-two-rivers-ani_155639.html



Armenian Church of St Gregory of Tigran Honents - Ani



Dome - Armenian Church of St Gregory of Tigran Honents - Ani



Frescos - Armenian Church of St Gregory of Tigran Honents - Ani



Church - Ani

Not surprisingly the ancient ruins of Ani city sits on the highest point of the treeless mountain plateau, so windswept and cold not many trees could possibly survive. It is right on the Akhurian River (Arpa Çayı, Barley River) which is the Armenian/Turkish

border; we could see the guards in the many posts over the river watching us from Armenia.



Ani Cathedral - Ani

Ani could tell a wide variety of tragic tales from its many masters, the treatment dealt out by them as well as the effects of earthquakes. Spread out over a large area each ruin needed to be viewed up close. The architecture in brown, black and sand coloured stone covers many periods. There are Armenian, Persian and Seljuk churches, churches converted to mosques,

ruins of shops, workhouses and homes, earthquakes had made short work of many buildings. A few Christian frescos of biblical stories remain in the Church of St Gregory; again most eyes were gouged out.



Ani Cathedral - Ani



The Mosque of Minuchir - Ani

There was Persian script on the walls of some churches dating from the year 1,001; sadly there was new graffiti too. The main mosque was built in 1123 AD; the stone ceiling had wonderful geometric patterns.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akhurian_River

How exciting to once more see evidence of trade with the remains of the 'Silk Road' bridge and the old stone road leading away into Armenia. We were also close to the Georgian border however this border caused no problems for Turkey. Ani was a trading post as well as an Islamic pilgrim's stop-over for those heading to Mecca, Iran, even India.

Around every old site we have visited, the swallows circled in their hundreds. It was hard to work out why as we couldn't see their nests.



Kars from Castle of Kars

There are few fences in Turkey, hence the many shepherds at work. We wondered how farmers knew their boundaries when ploughing; the snows were melting and there was great activity on the land.



IMG1202 Ani Cathedral - Ani

Returning the 45 bumpy km to Kars we visited the bluestone Kars castle and citadel up on the hill, perfectly place to keep an eye on the entire area. Originally occupied by the royal family, it has been used by Russians and then Turks as a military base.



Ceiling - The Mosque of Minuchir - Ani



Kars Cathedral - Kars

It has suffered badly during the many conflicts and then WW1 bombing causing most of the crumbling; now the many cracks make it very dangerous.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Castle_of_Kars



Remains of Silk Road Bridge - Ani

Beneath the castle wall there is a pretty bluestone bridge built in 1725 over the fast flowing Kars River. Nearby were several old bath houses (Hamman), this would have been the entry point to the old town.

Over the road stood a lovely Armenian Church, the Cathedral of Kars. It has had a chequered history having been alternately a Christian church and a Mosque since its foundation in the 10th C. The church is currently being restored as an Armenian Orthodox Church.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cathedral_of_Kars

After a local lunch we bought some not so interesting (after Cappadocia) nuts and dried fruits for the long bus journey the next day.



Russian Bluestone Building - Kars



Russian Bluestone Cottage - Kars



Grand Russian Bluestone Building - Kars

There were even fewer tourists and travellers in this part of Eastern Turkey. The distances between historic sites of interest are great making for very long days in the bus.

I wondered if people were simply too afraid of potential trouble arising.

Thursday 21st May, 2015 - Kars - Erzurum – Erzurum Palan Hotel on Mt Palandoken

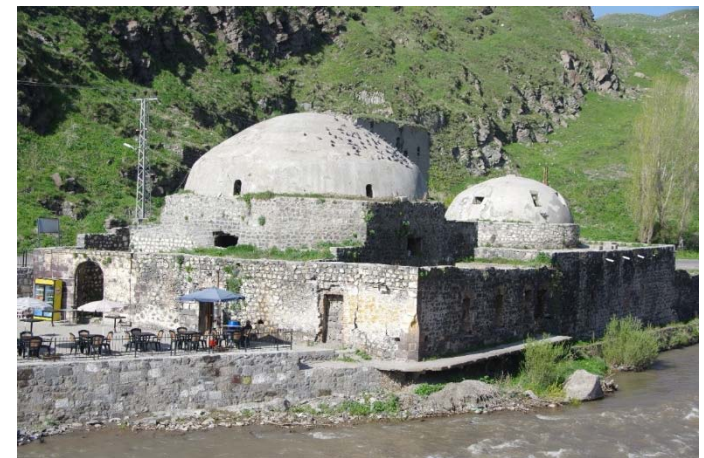
Day 26

https://www.google.com.au/search?q=Erzurum+Turkey-+sites&rls=com.microsoft:en-AU&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&startIndex=&startPage=1&rlz=117ADRA_enAU427&gfe_rd=cr&ei=44sfVfuLG6eN8QfrylHgDQ&gws_rd=ssl

Called the "Rock" by NATO Armenian, Byzantine, Russian history /massacres in 1895 and 1915.



Stone Bridge - Kars



Mazlum Aga Hamami - Kars

Today we drive southwest to the scenic heights of Erzurum .On the way we will visit a 12th century Medrese, talk with the imam at the 12th century Mosque and enjoy the ethnographic museum.



Tiled Minaret - Yakutiye Seminary Museum - Erzurum

We followed the high cold bleak plateau, heading north-west to our overnight destination. Dating back to 4,000BC, the entire province of Erzurum has another sad history; before Independence it was occupied by many invading forces with

disastrous consequences. Erzurum was captured and ruled by Hurries, Urartus, Cimmerians, Scythes, Medians, Persians, Parthes, Romans, Byzantines, Sassanides, Arabs, Seljuks, Mongols, Ilhanides, Safawides, Ottomans, the Russians and of course Turks. The Russians left the place as rubble, much of which is still there today. It has suffered massacres and genocide, we were told both Turks and Armenians died in 1895 and 1915. At one stage in history nearly 2,000 Turkish troops froze to death while being forced to fight by the Russians. During the Crimean War, the town fortunately suffered less than Kars apparently.



Yakutiye Seminary Museum - Erzurum

There is still a large army garrison stationed in the town, also here, is a popular university.

The boundaries of modern Turkey were drawn up by Atatürk's Nationalists in 1919 in this town.



Students and Instructor - Yakutiye Seminary Museum - Erzurum



Twin Minarets Madrasah - Erzurum

Set in a basin surrounded by high mountains, it is both Turkey's coldest and hottest place; little grows in the area because of the altitude (1950m above sea level), Oltu (jet) and a green opal stone are mined locally and made into jewellery. The fleece of the few sheep in the region is used for bedding, furniture as well

as spun into wool for clothing and floor rugs. Tea, both green and black is now grown locally.



Inside Yakutiye Seminary Museum - Erzurum

There are several languages spoken by the town's inhabitants, Persian, Kurd, Greek, and Armenian.



Three Seljuk Tombs - Erzurum

The town was alive with vans blaring political music and tirades while we were there, they were like vultures circling on their prey. There was to be a rally later that day and apparently the prime minister was attending. An Imam was standing for parliament; his van was probably the most prominent and the least offensive in sound.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erzurum>

http://www.turkeyforyou.com/turkey_erzurum_attractions

We visited the 1310 Yakutiye Seminary, a mosque converted into a training college or Medrese for Imams and students and now a museum. The outside walls were carved with patterns, double headed Seljuk Eagles and animals; the turquoise and terracotta

tilled minaret shone in the sunlight. Inside the displays of clothing costumes and jewellery depicted town and family life.

<http://www.turkeyculturaltour.com/tr/turkiye/52/highlights-of-eastern-turkey/erzurum-yakutiye-moslem-theological-school-and-twin-minaret-madrasah.html>

Sadly the other old mosques, including the 1562 twin Minarets Madrasah were closed for renovations. Behind these stood 3 interesting old tombs, the area around the tombs and old mosques has been cleared of war rubble; sadly it will be used for new apartments. What a shame to have the new high rise mixed with historic places. The old stone and wood Byzantine housing in the area was spectacular to see.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seljuk_architecture

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%87ifte_Minareli_Medrese

While waiting for the others to have lunch a dust and rain storm developed and turned the town into a swirling dark windy hole, thus living up to its reputation!

Our hotel was above the snow line, a winter ski resort, just after our arrival the storm really hit with heavy rain and hail. Other parts of Turkey fared far worst, suffering great damage.



Frescos - Sumela Monastery

We will enjoy a scenic drive towards the historic city of Trabzon today, via Karaca Cave before visiting the breathtaking Byzantine Monastery of Sumela.

We followed the Euphrates Valley surrounded by the very high snow-capped (all year) Kac Kar Mountains which runs right across the north on Turkey to the Black Sea and are rich in silver. These jagged mountains, so different to our eroded smooth topped mountains in

Australia had many caves (some inhabited) at the top just like Cappadocia.



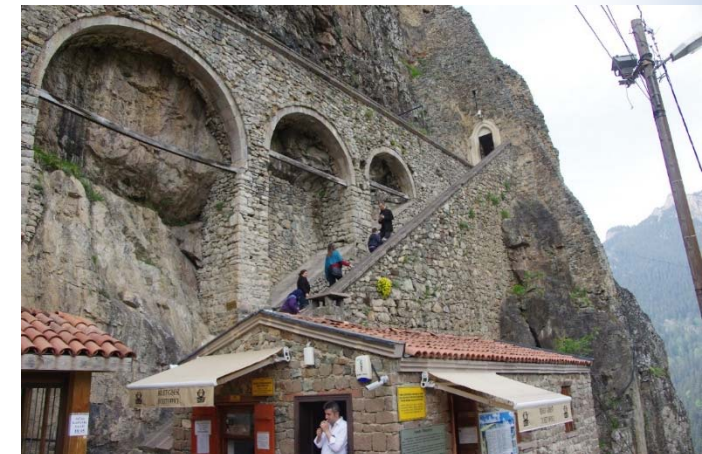
Raging Torrent - Sumela Monastery



Frescos - Sumela Monastery



Sumela Monastery



Aqueduct and Stairs up to the Entrance - Sumela Monastery

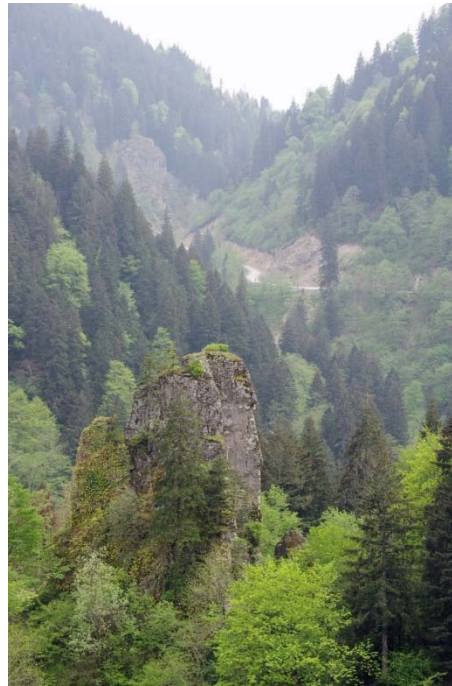
Travelling through the many long tunnels blasted through these incredible mountains saved buses and truck driver's hours of low

gear travel on the slow winding roads over the mountain top. The Karaca Cave, found in the 1980's is rich in different shapes, colours and formations of stalactites, stalagmites, travertines and cave roses. Photography was not permitted.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karaca_Cave



Stairs out of Sumela Monastery



View from Sumela Monastery

With a much higher rainfall, the Black Sea region was emerald green, lush and covered with European trees such as oak, birch, wild rose, ash, rhododendrons, ferns, firs and pines. The rivers roared and rushed with torrents of melting snow. Our bus climbed up steep Mela or Black Mountain to the Greek Orthodox Sumela Monastery, 386 AD nestled into its side at 1,200 m. The monastery looked as if it was stuck on precariously. Once out of the bus we still had a long steep climb up and then down into the monastery. The monastery was granted protection by the Sultan

in 1461. It was abandoned in 1923 during the enforced population exchange. Deserted, burnt and falling into disrepair its many chapels and frescos had been restored by the Turkish Govt. in 2012. These days it is used by both the Russian and Greek Orthodox Religions.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sumela_Monastery



Sumela Monastery Perched on the Cliff Face

We arrived at the hotel just when another monster storm hit, wind, dust and then rain and hail. Later we enjoyed dinner in a tiny place right next to a raging river, not one to fall into! We tried and enjoyed the local cheese fondue and local fish.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trabzon>



Sultan Selim – Trabzon

Settled in 750 BC and situated on the Black Sea it has always a centre of trade, many merchants from world over and a melting pot of religions, cultures, and language.

Today we tour the historic city of Trabzon, once the capital of the Byzantine Empire, before our flight back to Istanbul.



Byzantine Church – Trabzon



Fresco – Byzantine Church – Trabzon



Parkland – Trabzon



A Good Spot for Lunch – Trabzon

Trabzon is being renewed, there was really not as much of the Byzantine or Ottoman town left to see. A few such houses remain, but much has been demolished ready for reconstruction. At least with the new apartments people will enjoy having their

own bathroom and toilet. How on earth they survived up until now using the local Hamman defies me! An old deteriorating Ottoman house visible from our hotel window showed the old lathe and plaster walls covered with cement; most places we had seen in Turkey were stone covered with lime.



Is this for Real? - Trabzon



Election Posters - Trabzon



Main Square - Trabzon

This city apart from a few historic places like the shell of an old church could have been in any global city and country. One street sign telling us we could learn 'Real English' amused; reminding us where we were.



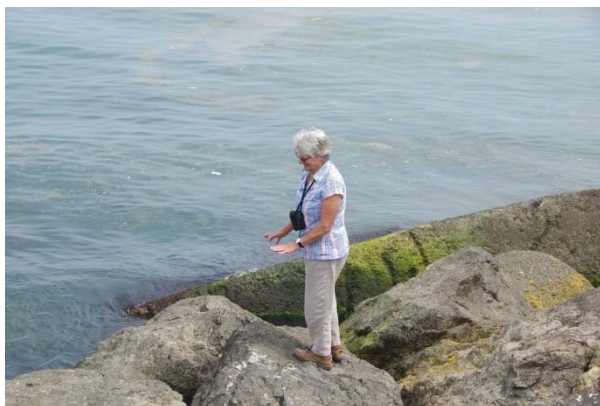
Shopping Street - Trabzon

As I'd not had the chance to put my finger in the Euphrates or Tigris Rivers I was determined to be wet by the Black Sea. It was hard to find a clean good spot as the water lapping the rocks was rather dirty. The water may have come all the way from Russia!

On our return to Istanbul we walked to the final destination for the Orient Express, the famed Sirkeci Station, like many other places seen, it is under wraps and cover for repairs.



Black Sea Harbour - Trabzon



Approaching the Black Sea with Caution - Trabzon



Black Sea Fishers - Trabzon

Sunday 24th May, 2015 - Depart Istanbul 19:15 TK1843 Overnight Sofitel Athens Airport

Day 29



Orient Express Restaurant - Istanbul RS



Gate of the Sultan - Dolmabahçe Palace - Istanbul



Waiting Hall - Istanbul RS

We followed the tram line down to the harbour, walked over the old bridge where locals fished and continued all the way to the Dolmabahçe Palace. Right on the Bosphorus, this is a most opulent and grand 19th Century

Baroque Ottoman Palace particularly as it was for just one family. Within each room its chandeliers, carpets and furniture were particularly lavish. I wondered how many poor people could have been fed on the money used in its construction! The return trip was much quicker by taxi to the spice market.

We were ending our four week tour of Turkey, a place where we had felt very comfortable and at ease. The local people were always willing to help and smile, much like at home.

I guess my only issue came when some conservative people did not approve of my sleeve length above the elbow or the long shorts I had worn once! This was a no-no in Turkey and not to be worn again. My hat intrigued people with all its badges; they loved the references to Turkey and Gallipoli on it.

We were very aware of the differences between Aust. and Turkey, the fact they have 7 neighbours some of whom are very fractious. There is something to be said about

being an island and not having border disputes to worry about. Another Turkish problem is the numbers of refugees coming across the borders of Syria, Iraq and Iran, creating a huge problem for the country.

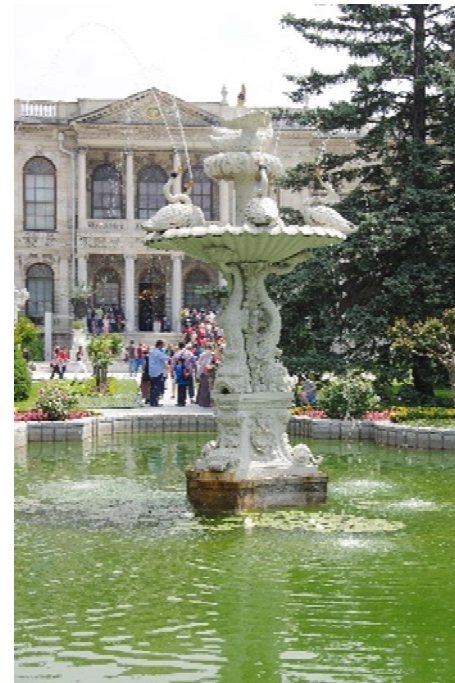
On arrival in Athens we stayed at the most well-appointed Airport Sofitel.



Column of Constantine - Istanbul



Clock Tower - Dolmabahçe Palace - Istanbul



Fountain - Dolmabahçe Palace - Istanbul

Before departure I read "A History of the Arab Peoples" by Albert Hourani to clarify in my mind any misunderstandings about Islam and the Ottoman Empire. While away I read "The Prelude to the First World War - The Balkan Wars 1912-1913" by E. R. Hooton, an excellent introduction to the history of the relatively new country.



Halki - Naxos

http://www.visitgreece.gr/en/greek_islands/cyclades/naxos

Part of the Cyclades and on the Aegean Sea, BC 6th Archaeological sites and Museum. Sanctuary of Demetri and Apollo (white marble) - goddess of agriculture, fertility, harvest.



A Place for a Drink - Halki - Naxos



Bougainvillea - Halki - Naxos



One of Many Churches in the Landscape - Naxos



Rural Landscape - Naxos



**Inside one of the Small Churches –
Naxos**

Arrival at Naxos

We were picked up at the tiny Naxos Airport and crammed into John's car, plus luggage

as boot was broken. Amazing what could fit in! John looked well and happy to see us.

The largest of the Cyclades Islands Naxos is a quiet relaxed place. The countless family chapels constructed on so many hills of so many of the Greek islands were built for name days and memorials and were not churches as I'd thought. As we drove towards Patricia and John's home I saw the marble quarry glistening on the hill. We walked the dog along corrugated farm tracks to see the undulating and very rocky countryside, in the distance stood Mt Zas and a few old dilapidated windmills. Later the four of us visited the quaint local village of Halki, which, since renovation has become an interesting trendy tourist spot adorned with red and pink bougainvillea contrasting against the white flat roofed dwellings. We saw an old distillery there which uses lemon leaves to make 'kitron' and enjoyed the liqueur taste. The carved marble sculptures made by a local artist were accentuated by the beautiful colours in the local marble.

Potatoes, olives, barley, goats and cows seemed to be the local products in June. In the Venetian and Ottoman times the island was a wealthy trading spot; it was also a great hiding place for pirates. The island had snow this winter, a rare event. Now along

with good rain, the hay being harvested will be a godsend later during a long hot summer.

This island has quite different architecture to main land of Greece and Turkey. Yes they are still flat roofed stone places but as local marble is cheap it is used for everything. All doorways, window ledges, window and wall benches, floors and even drain spouts from the roofs are made of colourful local marble.

Patricia and John's house is a 'Pergos' or very traditional Venetian Castle, quite common on Naxos, with little parapets around the roof and walls. These places look like small castles and were built in the 1600's. They have very thick stone walls, decorated marble door and window frames and beautiful olive branches as beams and threshold.

Our evening meals during our stay were taken at different beachside restaurants where we ate while watching the Aegean Sea and listened to the waves roll in.

Tuesday 26th May, 2015 - Naxos

Day 31

We had our hair cut in Naxos or Chora the capital of the Island. While waiting for Patricia we ambled along the water front

and could see the columns of Apollo's Temples 'protecting' the port's entrance.

The Temple of Demeter in the rain came next and then craned our necks to see through the closed windows of the museum.

Patricia was pretty sure that due to the Greek financial crisis, the museum was closed as it could not find volunteer staff.



A Greek Experience - Naxos



Apollo Temple's Entrance - Naxos

Another great thunder, lightning and hail show persisted while we were having dinner; it certainly moved people to

start chatting to strangers as they found dry spaces in the restaurant.



New Greek Orthodox Church - Chora - Naxos

Wednesday 27th May, 2015 - Naxos

Day 32



Temple of Demeter - Naxos



Houses - Filoti - Naxos



Inside Panagia Filiotissa - Filoti - Naxos



Panagia Filiotissa - Filoti - Naxos

The heavens opened during the night, red rain straight from the Sahara Desert staining everything in sight. After cleaning up we drove to the beautiful hill village of Filoti and wandered the narrow streets. Heading up the hill path



Fresco - Panagia Filiotissa - Filoti - Naxos

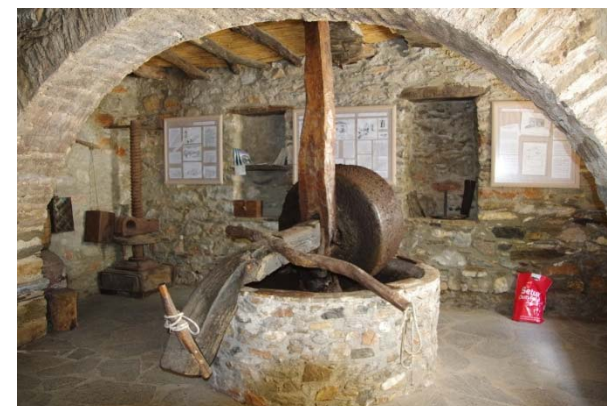


Filoti - Naxos

we were invited into a historic orthodox church covered in Frescos, later as the world went by we enjoyed drink in the village square. The ancient olive press still in community use and traditional pottery workshop in



Ancient Olive Tree - Damalas - Naxos



Olive Press - Damalas - Naxos

Damalas were next, so good to see the old trades still being practiced.



Pergos - Filoti - Naxos



Potter's Wares - Damalas - Naxos



A Walk on the Beach - Naxos



Pottery - Damalas - Naxos

Thursday 28th May, 2015 - Naxos

Day 33

Bright and early we took a ferry to Delos and Mykonos via Paros for the day. As it was overcast, windy and rainy it was good for walking through the interesting Roman

ruins. Delos is a tiny narrow barren island devoid of vegetation, perhaps it was the sunshine that made the place suitable for a Greek Town in those days. We walked

right around the 3,000 year old site, saw the Naxian houses with mosaic floors, and looked at Apollon's sanctuary along with many other ruins. Although there

were many historical Roman connections with the ruins we had seen in Turkey these were probably the least destroyed by invasion and earthquakes.



Terrace of the Lions - Delos



Theatre - Delos

There was evidence of Poseidon, Apollo Colossus of Naxian just to name a few, who had lived in both Turkey and Naxos before the time of Christ. The Pergamum kings fought the Galatians and Macedonians in both Turkey and

Greek islands. The Sphinx of the Naxians now resides in the Delos museum; we saw it along with many other interesting relics.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delos>



Basement Cistern - Delos



House of Dionysos - Delos

Mykonos has not changed; it is still a very trendy touristy expensive place with the traditional windmills taking pride of place above the town. There were countless huge

tourist cruise ships in port with thousands of tourists invading the restaurants or walking the tiny streets of glamorous jewellers, clothes, and cosmetic shops. However we simply wanted some fresh fruit to eat and found nothing!



Cruise Boats in Mykonos Harbour



Mykonos

After returning to Naxos port we followed Patricia down many back alley ways to a small traditional restaurant and the table of many friends for another delicious meal.

The Greek food in general proved as healthy as Turkey's. In the restaurants the starters can be olives, meat balls, mushrooms, dips, and various salads. Many vegetables served with a meal, either salads or stuffed peppers and

egg plants are popular along with fried or fresh soft cheeses. A selection of beef, rabbit, chicken, or pork, as well as fish-or sardines, white bait and shellfish could be cooked and served in a wide variety of ways.

Friday 29th May, 2015 - Naxos to Athens 09:25 A37005 - Athens to Izmir 12:25

Day 34

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C4%B0zmir>

Ancient city of Smyrna, earthquakes 178AD/1688, plague 1676, fires 1743 & 1922. Centre of Secularism. Clock tower, Asansor(tower), Kemeralti (Velvet Castle on the Hill), market, Mount Sipylus(great legends and history)

Up early with our bags packed and to say our goodbyes to Patricia and John before departing for Izmir. We enjoyed 4 delightful days with them and with their great help saw so much on their Island. Back in Turkey, at the hotel, registered and ready for the conference.

Saturday 30th May, 2015 - Izmir - General Assembly of ICW

Day 35

Registration of conference at Hotel

Sunday 31st May, 2015 - Izmir - General Assembly of ICW

Day 36

*Opening cocktails

Monday 1st June, 2015 - Izmir - General Assembly of ICW

Day 37

*Turkish Dinner-6.00pm- guest of NCTW

Tuesday 2nd June, 2015 - Izmir - General Assembly of ICW

Day 38

Wednesday 3rd June, 2015 - Izmir - General Assembly of ICW

Day 39

*Gala Dinner- formal

Thursday 4th June, 2015 - Izmir - General Assembly of ICW

Day 40

*ICW Race Cup and Cocktails Izmir hippodrome 5.00pm

Friday 5th June, 2015 - Izmir - General Assembly of ICW

Day 41

Saturday 6th June, 2015 – Izmir to Dubai

Day 42

Depart Izmir 11:20 PC2812 Arrive Istanbul 12:30 Istanbul to Dubai Depart Istanbul for Dubai 16:30 EK124 Arrive 21:45

Sunday 7th June – Dubai to Melbourne

Day 43

Depart Dubai for Melbourne QF10 01:35 Arrive Melbourne 20:55

