

TURKEY

General History

Some people love Turkey, some people hate it - it is undeniably the go either way country on the overland trip I'm willing to bet that the travellers who dislike it most are the ones who spend the shortest time there. It is far more than Istanbul and a long haul across Anatolia to or from Iran. Spend some time in Cappadocia, the south and explore the beautiful Mediterranean coast, get into the delicious Turkish food and you too will be looking forward to your next visit. The Turks can be a little heavy at times, particularly in the east, but if you have a smooth trip this is one country you can't get enough of.

History

Traces of early Turkish people have been dated right back to the 6th millennium BC but the earliest known Turkish civilisation was that of the Hittites. Long believed to be a purely mythical people they actually had power over much of Anatolia, Asian Turkey, from 2000 to 1200 BC. You can gauge the power of their culture from the stupendous size of their ruined capital city of Hattatusas. It is only a short distance off the road between Ankara and Samsun on the Black Sea coast.

After the collapse of the Hittites, Turkey broke up into a number of small states and not until the Greco-Roman period were parts of the country reunited. Later Christianity spread through Turkey, carried by people such as Paul the Apostle, who operated from Tarsus in southern Turkey.

In 330 AD the Emperor Constantine transferred the capital of the Roman Empire to Byzantium, modern Istanbul. He renamed this strategic city Constantinople and for a thousand years it was the centre of the Byzantine Empire. During the European dark ages, as Greece and its culture became just a memory and as Rome was overrun by the barbarians, Byzantine kept alive the flame of their culture. At times it was threatened by the same barbarian hordes and on one occasion the Crusaders, looking for easier prey than Jerusalem, took and sacked the city, but still Byzantine stumbled on as the government became increasingly confused and entangled in webs of intrigue.

The end of the now decrepit empire was spelt by the rise of the Moslem Arab states and the arrival of the Turkish people from the east. Adopting Islam as they moved west the first great Turkish empire of the Seljuks soon pressed the Byzantines back until they were little more than a city-state. The Seljuks were followed by the Ottoman Turks and in 1452 Constantinople fell to Mehmet the Conqueror. It's strange to consider that this last outpost of the Roman Empire lasted until little more than 500 years ago, only 40 years before Columbus sailed to America.

Constantinople, once more the capital of a mighty empire, went through a new golden period as magnificent mosques and palaces were constructed. Less than 200 years later, under Suleyman the Magnificent, the Ottoman Empire had spread far into Europe. The Janissaries, the first modern standing army, gave the Turks a military power unknown amongst the European nations who had to raise an army from scratch each time a war started. The Turks also treated minority groups, including Christians and Jews, with some consideration but decline soon set in.

The Ottoman success was based on expansion - not industry or agriculture. When their march westwards was abruptly halted at Vienna in 1683 the rot started and Turkey quickly became the 'sick man' of Europe. A procession of incompetent and ineffective Sultans hardly helped matters; especially when combined with scheming in the harem and discontent amongst the now totally unreliable Janissaries.

As the nationalist ideal swept through Europe, after the French revolution, Turkey found itself with unruly possessions in the Balkans and Greece. Harsh attempts to crush the popular risings with cruelty only hastened the decline. In 1829 the Greeks won their independence followed by the Serbians, Romanians and Bulgarians in 1878. Italy took Tripolitania in North Africa from Turkey in 1911 and Albania and Macedonia escaped after the 1912-13 Balkan War. Finally the unfortunate Turks picked the wrong side in WWI and emerged stripped of their final possessions - Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia (Iraq) and Arabia. At this low point of Turkish history Mustafa Kemal, the father of modern Turkey, came to the fore. Ataturk, as he chose to be called, had made his name by repelling the Anzacs in their futile and wasteful attempt to capture Gallipoli. Turkey at this time was about to be chopped up and parcelled out amongst the victorious allies, but when it was suggested that even the Greeks should get a slice things had gone too far. Rallying the tattered remnants of the army he pushed the final weak Ottoman rulers to one side and out-maneuvred the allied forces.

Unhappily the conflict with the Greek invaders was a bloody affair and after a massacre at Smyrna - a predominantly Greek city on the Mediterranean coast of Turkey, today known as Izmir - an exchange of populations took place similar to that in India at the time of the India-Pakistan partition. Well over a million Greeks left Turkey and nearly a half million Turks returned.

Relations with Greece have never been good since that time.

With Turkey reduced to smaller, but secure, boundaries Ataturk then proceeded on a rapid modernisation programme, the essence of which was the separation of religion from politics, introduction of the western alphabet and western dress, and moving the capital from European Istanbul (the name change from Constantinople was another Ataturk innovation) to Asian Ankara. Naturally such sweeping changes did not come easily, progress has been slow and much of the country is still desperately poor although Ataturk remains very much the symbol of modern Turkey.

Turkey is also hampered by its strategic position and importance to both the major powers. Periodic confrontations with Greece, most recently over the still stalemated Cyprus conflict, also have their cost. Turkey has also made a very poor recovery from the oil crisis of the early '70s and at times teetered on the brink of bankruptcy. As the '70s wore on Turkey became more and more unstable politically and was wracked by left-right conflict, mob violence and terrorism, all spurred on by the shocking economic situation with high unemployment and galloping inflation. Finally, to almost nobody's surprise, the often reluctant military kicked out the hopelessly inept civilian government in 1980. Hopefully a strong democratic government and less internal conflict will now get the country back on the straight and narrow.

Facts

Population - the population of Turkey is approximately 45 million. The four major cities are Istanbul (2.5 million), Ankara (1.7 million), Adana (0.47 million) and Bursa (0.35 million). Ankara, centrally located in Asian Turkey, is the capital.

Geography - Turkey is divided into Asian and European parts by the Dardanelles, the Sea of Marmara and the Bosphorus. Thrace, European Turkey, comprises only 3% of the total 780,000 sq. km land area. The remaining 97% is Anatolia a vast plateau rising towards the Russian steppes in the east. The coastline of Turkey is over 7,000 km long and rapidly becoming a popular resort area.

Economy - Turkey is still primarily an agricultural country although chrome is an important export and there is some other mining. Sheep are the main livestock and Turkey is the biggest wool producer in Europe.

Religion - Turkey is almost 100% Moslem, but due to the efforts of Ataturk, religion and government is not so tightly intertwined as in other Moslem states and the religious attitudes are not so oppressive.

Climate

In the west Turkey has a southern European climate and in the east a central Asia one. The weather there comes direct from Siberia, combine it with the altitude and you will know what cold means. In Istanbul the summer temperatures average around 28 to 30 degrees Celsius while the winters are not too cold in general - usually above freezing. In Ankara the climate is more extreme - warm and dry in the summer (not as hot as Istanbul) but much colder in the winter. Summer never gets as hot as further east but spring (April and May) and Autumn (September and October) are the pleasant times for a Turkish visit.

Istanbul

Istanbul is a treasure trove of places and things to see - after a day of wandering around mosques, ruins, walls, aqueducts and tangled streets where empires have risen and fallen, you'll realise how the description 'Byzantine' came about. Istanbul is undoubtedly one of the most historic cities in the world - simply listing its changing names sounds like a history lesson - Constantinople, Byzantium, Stamboul, Istanbul. Nor should it be forgotten that it was here, little over 500 years ago, that the final fragment of the Roman Empire eventually crumbled. Or that through the European dark ages this was the city which carried European civilisation on from its Greek and Roman origins.

In the centuries before Christ, Byzantium had already been a thriving city, perched as it was on the contact point between Asia and Europe. Already it was a city in a state of continuous flux - pushed from one side by the Persians then from the other by the Greeks. In the late 2nd century AD Rome conquered Byzantium and in 325 AD the Emperor Constantine began to turn it into his capital - in 330 the capital of the empire was transferred from Rome. For the next thousand years it was the site of an almost continuous struggle both with the enemy without and between factions within. The city walls, extended time after time as the city grew, kept out barbarians for century after century as the western part of the Roman Empire collapsed before Goths, Vandals and Huns.

When Byzantium did first fall it was not to the infidel hordes but to the 4th Crusade. The Crusaders had always been more intent on pillage than liberation and when Jerusalem proved too hard a task their attention was turned to easier prey. The city fell in 1204 after a prolonged siege and the crusaders ravaged the churches, shipped out the art, melted down the silver and gold. Prior to this invasion Byzantium had enjoyed four relatively peaceful centuries but when the Byzantines regained the city in 1261 it was only a shadow of its former glory. The next two centuries were a story of decline and decay. Indeed the city was often overshadowed by the Venetian and Genoese trading colonies which operated from the Golden Horn and were often far more powerful and rich. Their own squabbles only added to the general instability.

Now Byzantium was besieged by the Ottoman Turks who had been gaining strength from the east for centuries. In 1314 they actually reached the walls of the city but withdrew. In the 1400s the Ottomans were delayed in their conquest for another 50 years by the threat from Timur and his Mongols in the east. Finally in 1453, after a long and bitter siege, the walls were breached and Mehmet II, the Conqueror, marched to St. Sophia and converted the church to a mosque. The Byzantine era had ended.

As capital of the Ottoman empire the city entered a new golden age with many new buildings and mosques. Although it was no longer besieged by hostile neighbours, the city once again started to decline as the Ottoman Empire became the 'sick man' of Europe. After WWI it seemed certain that the Turkish state would collapse until

Ataturk rallied support. In 1923 the capital of the new Turkey was transferred to Ankara and in 1930 the city's name was changed from Constantinople to Istanbul.

Many of the most interesting places in Istanbul are concentrated in the Sultan Ahmet area. But first it is worth visiting the city walls on both sides of which so many of the city's history took place.

Information

The tourist office opposite the Pudding Shop in Sultan Ahmet is open from 9 am to 9 p.m. daily. There are a number of other offices including one in the Hilton Hotel and one at the airport. The main office is at Mesrutiyet Caddesi 56 in Galata Saray. There is also an Istanbul city tourist office in the Sirkeci station and the Hadarpasa station, open daily from 8 am to 7 p.m..

Orientation

Istanbul is divided into three parts. It straddles the Bosphorus which separates Europe from Asia so first there is Asian Istanbul and European Istanbul. European Istanbul is further divided by the historic inlet known as the Golden Horn, into new Istanbul and old Stamboul. It is in this old part of town where you will find many of the historic attractions and most of the good restaurants.

Old Stamboul is a neatly packaged area - bounded on three sides by water (the Golden Horn, the Bosphorus and the Sea of Marmara) the fourth boundary is the old wall which runs from the Golden Horn across to the Sea of Marmara. It is worth learning the locations of the major regions of Istanbul since most of the transport (taxis and minibuses) operate by simply shouting out the destinations. Millet Cadessi which runs through the centre of old Stamboul like a spine is the entrance for most travellers from Europe.

It passes through the city wall at a place known as Topkapi (not to be confused with the Topkapi Palace). There is a major bus marshalling area just outside the Topkapi gates. Half-way into town the road passes through a major inter-change known as Aksaray - the road to the left runs across the Ataturk bridge into new Istanbul. Further on the name changes to Divan Yolu Caddesi and it passes by the covered bazaar (Kapali Karsi) and ends at Sultan Ahmet - location of many interesting sights. North of Sultan Ahmet is Sirkeci where the rail line terminates and close to the Galata Bridge across the Golden Horn to new Istanbul. Many of the Bosphorus ferries run from around the Galata Bridge.

By most standards Istanbul is pretty old but the new shops and buildings can be found here, especially along Istiklal Caddesi which terminates in Taksim Square in the big hotel and airline office area known as Taksim. The Sishane air terminal is back from Taksim towards the old town. The Bosphorus straits' bridge is further north.

Dotted along the side of the Bosphorus, north from Istanbul towards the Black Sea, are many small villages that act as dormitory suburbs. There are also a number of islands in the Sea of Marmara - popular as weekend holiday spots. Asian Istanbul is not of particular interest except for watching the sun set over the minaretted skyline of the European side.

City Walls

Stretching for over six kms from the Golden Horn to the Sea of Marmara, the walls in their present form date back to about 420 AD. They are still in remarkably good shape considering the goings-on they have witnessed. The inner wall was about 10 metres high and separated from the lower, outer wall by a 20 metre-wide ditch. You can walk along the outer wall and muse on the armies with their battering rams down below and the defenders pouring the old boiling oil on them. Or the terrible effects of 'Greek Fire' an early version of napalm.

Aya Sophia

The church of St. Sophia was commenced under the Emperor Justinian in 532 AD with the intention of building the finest church in the world. Five years later when the Emperor first entered his completed masterpiece, stunned by his own work, he spoke the immortal words, 'Oh Solomon, I have surpassed thee!'

It is indeed a pretty fine piece of work on a colossal scale. Today only the far newer St. Paul's in London, St. Peter's in Rome and the Milan Duomo are larger cathedrals. The interior is the building's true magnificence - stunning even today, it must have been overwhelming centuries ago when it was covered in gilded mosaics. St. Sophia has survived but the centuries have not always been kind to it. Earthquakes have damaged it and subsidence has rippled the floor and tilted the columns. If you look up at the huge dome, its perimeter is marked on the floor by metal crosses, you will see that it is no longer perfectly circular - one side is of greater diameter than the other.

Climb up to the gallery and look down at the scene below. You will also find some of the finest mosaics up there. After the Turkish conquest many of the mosaics were covered over and not revealed again until Ataturk had the building converted into a museum in the 1930s. The minarets were, of course, added after St. Sophia's conversion to a mosque.

Overlooking the main entrance to St. Sophia is a fine mosaic showing the Virgin and Child with Constantine on one side holding his city, Justinian on the other holding the church.

The Blue Mosque

The Sultan Ahmet or Blue Mosque was built between 1609 and 1619 and stands across the square from St. Sophia. It is somehow light and delicate in comparison to the squat massiveness of St. Sophia. The exterior is notable for having six slender minarets but it is inside where you will find the blue - a luminous overall impression created by the tiled walls. One of Istanbul's finest monuments can be seen from the park in front of the Blue Mosque. Each evening it looms in black silhouette as the sun sinks down behind it. There is a 'son et lumiere' in the evenings - different nights, different languages.

The Hippodrome

Beside the Blue Mosque is the site of the Hippodrome where the chariot races and all those other Roman activities took place. Construction started in 203 AD and it was later enlarged by Constantine. Today only three columns mark the site. The obelisk of Theodosius is an Egyptian column from the temple of Karnak, resting on a Byzantine base. The perfectly clear hieroglyphics are nearly 3500 years old. The 10 metre high column of Constantine Porphyrogenetus was once covered in bronze (the crusaders stole it) - the base rests at the former level of the Hippodrome, now several metres below the ground line. Between these two columns is the remains of a column of intertwined snakes. Erected at Delphi by the Greeks to celebrate their victory over the Persians it was later transported to the Hippodrome.

These few traces in no way indicate the size and splendour of this arena. The Imperial Box of the emperor once looked out on the track from close to the Egyptian column. He had a passage back to his palace for use when the unruly mob became too unruly. When from time to time they did in a fashion which would make a British soccer riot look passe. In 532 a rebellion against the emperor broke out in the stadium and 40,000 spectators were 'put to the sword'.

The Mosaic Museum

If you admired the mosaics in St. Sophia then pop around behind the Blue Mosque and visit the mosaics museum with its old bazaar street and fine mosaic palace floors. The stones are all naturally coloured.

Cistern Basilica

Just around the corner from the Pudding Shop is a small building which is the entrance to the underground cistern known as Yerebatan. Built by Constantine and later enlarged by Justinian this vast, columned water tank held water not only for regular summer use but also for times of siege. When the revolting Janissaries revolted once too often and a sultan decided to have done with them for once and all their last survivors took refuge here but were overpowered and slaughtered.

Topkapi Palace

Situated behind St. Sophia and bordered by the Bosphorus, this was the palace of the sultans from 1462 until they transferred to the Dolmabahce Palace, across the Golden Horn, during the last century. Topkapi is not just a palace but a whole collection of gardens, houses, libraries and, of course, the harem. You enter through the Imperial Gate and on the left is St. Irene - the first church built in the city by the Byzantines. On the right in the central courtyard is a map indicating the main parts of the complex.

Amongst the things to be seen is the jewel collection in the treasury where you will also find a not unexpected footprint and hair from the beard of the prophet and the perhaps less expected right arm (well most of it) of John the Baptist. Out front there's a spectacular view of the Bosphorus. If you know where to look you can also find the executioners block and the place where those unlucky heads were hung for public inspection and warnings).

Not to be missed is the tour of the harem, which you will probably find a rather dull, cold place - not at all like the fantasy picture we tend to have. Life was pretty boring for the odalisques (ladies of the harem) sitting around waiting for the sultan to 'pleasure' them. They were strictly guarded by the harem eunuchs and, as a visitor from Venice reported: 'it is not lawful for any one to bring ought in unto them, with which they may commit deeds of beastly uncleanness; so that if they have a will to eat cucumbers, they are sent in unto them sliced, so to deprive them of the means of playing the wantons'.

There are three museums in the old palace gardens. The Archaeological Museum has a collection of classical art work and the sarcophagus of Alexander the Great. The Museum of the Ancient Orient is dedicated to the pre-Islamic and pre-Byzantine civilisations. The Cinili Kiosk or tiled pavilion has an exhibition of tilework and momentos of Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror.

The Burnt Column

If you walk up Divan Yolu Caddesi from Sultan Ahmet towards the bazaar you pass the column of Theodosius II. During a storm in 1105 his statue toppled off the top killing several people sheltering below. In 1779 the column was badly damaged by a fire and subsequently strengthened with the iron hoops you can see today.

The Grand Bazaar

The bazaar (Nepali Carsi) is a labyrinth of passages and paths but compared to bazaars further east it's a relatively tame, antiseptic place. Most of the old stalls have been converted into modern, glassed-in shops. Still it is an enjoyable place to wander around and get lost in. The bazaar is divided into areas - carpets, jewellery, clothing, silverware and so on.

Beyazit Square

Between the bazaar and the Beyazit Square in front of the university is the old book market with many stalls selling second-hand books. Beyazit was the son of Mehmet the Conqueror and his graceful mosque looks out on to the square. The university also has its imposing entrance on the square, it has frequently been the site of violent student protests. Inside the university grounds is the Tower of Beyazit which, if it is open, you can climb to the top of for a fine view over the city. Like the Galata Tower across the Golden Horn it has been used as a fire lookout point. Many of Istanbul's buildings were once wooden and fires were frequent and disastrous. You can still find many streets of old wooden buildings.

Suleymaniye Mosque

Behind the university is the mosque which many consider to be the finest in Istanbul. Construction was completed in 1557 and its designer, Sinan, was rated the architectural genius of his century. He personally thought his Selimiye mosque in Edirne was an even greater achievement. The terrace of the mosque provides another good viewpoint over the city because regulations have been passed prohibiting buildings blocking the view of the mosque. Sinan's mausoleum can be found close to the mosque.

The Aqueduct of Valens

This huge Roman style aqueduct was built in 368 AD to bring water into the city - it straddles the road from Aksaray to the Ataturk Bridge.

The Galata Bridge

The floating bridge crossing the Golden Horn only dates back to 1912 although there were earlier wooden bridges in the last century. It carries a constant stream of vehicular and pedestrian traffic and serves as the landing point for many ferries. Around the bridge fishermen sell fresh fish and on the lower level are cafes where you can sip tea and watch the activity.

The Galata Tower

It is uncertain when the tower was first built although its present form probably dates back to 1216 when this area was a Genoese trading colony. Later it served as a prison, an observatory, then a fire lookout tower before it was burnt out itself in 1835. In 1967 it was completely restored and turned into a restaurant and night club.

Taksim

This is the modern centre of Istanbul close to the big hotels and airline offices. It is also a major dolmus and bus station. Istiklal Caddesi is the main shopping street in this area.

The Islands

Once the site of monasteries and a haven for pirates, the string of islands known as the Princes Isles are a popular weekend and summer getaway for local residents. They make a pleasant escape from the noise and hustle of Istanbul.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Time:	GMT + 3 hours (GMT + 2 Hrs 24 Sept - 30 Mar)
Inflation	Running at approx. 75% p.a. (March 94) so prices quoted in Turkish lire can only be a guide and require regular updates please.
British High - Commission	Sehit Ersan Caddesi Cankaya Ankara ph. 27 4310
British Consulate General	Tepebasi Beyoglu Istanbul ph. 447540
Hungarian	Open:?? 2 Forms, 3 Photos and 1 Comfort Letter Express Visa US\$ 50 Next Day. Visa US\$ 40 Australian Comfort Letter AUS\$ 15 (Paid in TL) New Zealand Comfort Letter US\$ 15 (Paid in US\$) Visa not required by British; Dutch; Irish; Spanish; Swedish; Danish; Swiss; Canadian.
Romanian Embassy	Open 9-12am, Mon-Wed-Fri only. 1 photo and 1 form required. Single transit US\$22 (US\$43 for British) payable in US\$ cash only. Transit visa issued in one hour for extra US\$5. Ibo will arrange a taxi. Drop off and pick up. Costs at border: US\$ 32.00
Bulgarian	V. crowded need to get there very early. At least 1hr taxi ride from Londra towards Ankara. Embassy. Get Ibo to organise a taxi driver. No form and No Photo All nationalities US\$ 53.00 Cost at border US\$ 67.00 Or Edirne Consulate (Westbound) - See Page 3 (Europe)

EASTERN EUROPEAN VISAS (WESTBOUND)

All 3 visas can be obtained in Istanbul, through IBO, (this make the border crossing very easy and quick) in 2 working days. 3 Days if you get the non-express Hungarian visa. IBO uses a guy who will do everything himself at a cost of US\$ 100

Syrian Open 09.30-11.30 for Put IN: Collect 14.00-14.30 next day. This is if group is less than 10. Require 1 photo, 1 Form, Letter of recommendation. British Cons (Open 09.00) will do for N.Z's + quite central (No N.Z. mission in Istanbul). Ask IBO about Australian and Canadian Cons. Single Tourist Visa costs: US\$ 60 for British, payable in T.Lire ONLY, US\$ 6.50 for Canadian, Australian + N.Z.

Insurance	Green Card
Telephone	International phones operate with tokens/phonecards if you can get them to work. Phonecards vary with the district though so don't hoard them.
Telex	In most major centres
Exchange	Cash in most Largish PTT's in Turkey.
Mail Stops	Londra Camping, Istanbul Poste Restante, Kayseri
Gas	Easily obtainable. If you have Turkish bottles need to change with same gas company.

Shopping Fresh meat and vegetables easily obtainable daily. Sundays may be difficult in central and eastern Turkey. Costs decrease as head east.
 Ruins Marked by yellow signposts - often blend into surrounding countryside and sites can be missed as your M type hurtles along at 42 mph.
 Student cards If group have them they are invaluable here as they half the ever spiralling entry fees.

ROUTE

ISTANBUL - TEKIRDAG - GALLIPOLI - CANNAKALE - IZMIR - EPHEBUS - PAMUKKALE - FETHIYE - ANTALYA - ALANYA - ANAMUR - MERSIN - ADANA - SYRIAN BORDER.

TURKEY ROUTE PLANNER

Part 1

		Timing	kms/miles
Istanbul (mail stop)	Gallipoli	7 hrs	
Eceabat	Troy	45 mins.	
Troy	Esphebus	7 hrs	
Troy	Bergama	3.5 hrs.	
Bergama	Selcuk/Ephesus	4 hrs	
Ephesus	Pammukale	4 hrs	184/115
Pammukale	Fethiye/Olu Deniz	7.5 hrs	272/170
Olu Deniz	Kale	4.5 hrs	
Kale	Olympos Beach/Chimaera	2.5 hrs	
Olympos Beach	Termessos	3 hours	
Termessos	Aspendos	1 hour	
Aspendos	Side	45 mins.	
Side	Alanya	2 hrs	
Alanya	Anamur	4 hrs	
Anamur	Selifke	5 hrs	170/106
Selifke	Adana (via Tarsus)	1.5 hrs	
Adana	Syrian Border (Bab El Hawa)	5 hrs (missing	
Antakya)			

Part 2

Adana	Goreme	7 hrs	
Goreme	Kayseri (mail stop)	2.5 hrs	
Kayseri	Erzurum	9 hrs (approx.)	
Erzurum	Dogubeyazit	4.5 hrs	

See Page 35 for timings to Nemrut Dagi and Van.

ISTANBUL (See map No 1)

Enroute to Istanbul from Edirne is a Levi's factory shop v.v. cheap (US\$15) - all Levi's garments available - think at Babeski.

Camping Londra Camping (7km from Istanbul on RHS on road from Tekirdag) If on E5/100 exit right for Yenibosna immediately after airport exit. If on motorway: At Tekirdag/Edirne exit, go 100m PAST it and exit for Istanbul. Follow round to main road and immediately exit for Yenibosna. (SEE MAP 2)

Manager Ibo

Reception Farat

Encounter Overland get a discount. Leaders gets a free cabin.

Phone (00 90) 212 560 4200/01/02

Fax: 559 34 38

Telex: 28733 LOKA TR - 28730 LOPA TR

IBO (v.v. helpful) is back again as manager of Londra Camping and can be contacted at Londra or at:

IBO AGCA

7.8. KISIM C 3 D D.25

ATAKOY - ISTANBUL

Tel: 212. 661 2030

Winter If the group are willing to put in a little extra, then (See Map 3) could always go to a cheap hotel in Sultanhamet i.e.

PARIS HOTEL

Piryerloti Caddessi, Dizdariye Medresesi Sokak no.9 11, Cemberlitas, ISTANBUL

Tel: 212. 518 9820-21 Fax: 212. 518 9918

You can park your truck at Londra camping.

Gas Available at Londra camping - bottle refill 750,000 TL. Can buy blue Turkish bottles through Ibo for 3,000,000 each (Apr. '97).

Exchange At reception at Londra camping but not quite as good as
Rate the bank can change cash at a reasonable rate at the till in the cafeteria.

Telex/Fax At reception Londra Camping

General Camp shop is good for basic food - bread eggs milk, and cheap beer

Workshop In truck park next door to the camping. See Hussein (ask Ibo) great guy and he can find/make/fix anything for very fair prices. He has a friend in a workshop next to his who is an electrician.

Truck wash Better to hook up hose at bottom of camping and do it yourself.

Parts - some useful truck things in the TIR park next door -trailer feelers, maps, stop ice, brake fluid, mirrors, horns etc.

Buses/Metro can now walk to the nearest metro (turn R out of camp 15 mins. walk) much easier than bus - get off at Sultanahmet for the mosques etc. Best to leave the truck at camp. Make sure that forgetful" pax take card for camp from reception to find their own way back.

Taxis These all use meters now, but its quite a long way from camp to city centre so probably better to use the metro.

Hospital American Hospital highly efficient but expensive. Ask Ibo for details (3 days for stool/urine, analysis thorough).

Night-club Through Ibo you can go to "Gar". 3 x belly dancers/folksingers cossack dancers (all very good) plus "International" singer (YUK!). 5 course meal including either 2 bottles of beer/1 bottle of wine/1 small pot raki/2 soft drinks (drinks are expensive afterwards: beer tl, wine 150,000 tl). Well worth going. Dress smart as possible. Price 1,200,000 tl (US\$28.5)(June '95) including minibus there and back. Driver complimentary. Quite touristy, but good fun if you're not snobbish! Full of Lebanese and Arabs. Alternative club on Bosphorous. Very good but much further to drive and £16.

For ordinary nightclubbing should go to Istiklal Caddesi area in Taksim.

City Tour Either use Ibo (Londra), or possibly use
PASIFIK (PACIFIC) TOURS

Address: Divan Yolu No: 34, 34410 Sultanhamet/ISTANBUL

Tel: 212. 519 16 84 or 522 23 98 or 513 66 81

Fax: 212. 522 93 27

Ibo will arrange someone else to give tour of Blue Mosque (free), Topkapi Palace (500,000tl US\$ 3.85 - Apr. '97); Aya Sofia (500,000 TL = US\$ 3.85) and Islamic Art Museum (250,000tl US\$ 1.92 - Apr. '97) at a cost of approx. 5,500,000 = US\$ 42 for guide. Minibus 6,000,000 US\$ 46.00, S. Sofia US\$ 5.50, Cisterne 250,000tl - US\$ 1.92.

2. Find guide via Ibo at Londra camping but they get booked up so suggest putting it to him on telex if required. Leave at 9/10am and make sure that guide meets you/group at the campsite as you will never find him in town! After the tour lunch at the pudding shop if its not too crowded, (group can pay) and then either more tour or free time to shop. Warn group that if they take guide shopping he will get commission so prices will be higher. Suggest do Topkapi Palace last as huge and some pax need more time therefore not rushing them.

Group can easily visit Grand Bazaar (Kapali Cars) from here, Sancta Sofia, underground cisterns (1000 000tl - US\$ 2.33 - Jul '94) and walk to Galata Bridge. From here get boats for Bosphorous Islands trips. Alternatively could negotiate for a private boat trip at Eminonou.

TRY NOT TO DO "GAR" THE SAME DAY AS TOUR ETC. AS GROUP REALLY ARE TIRED!

Shopping 5 minutes away and just as easy to take a taxi, there is a big Hypermarket ATAKOY ATRIUM - out of Londra turn right onto motorway - take the first exit, top of ramp turn right - onto roundabout, turn right - take second turning on the right to ATAKOY ATRIUM - has money changes, shops and Migors supermarket.

For markets you can walk out of camping, turn right and over second footbridge. Walk straight on and all the markets are there. Closed on Sundays!.

Shop in campsite sells a few basics plus drinks/choc etc. Fresh bread in the morning and the cheapest beer. To restock truck on Sunday drive 6 km towards Istanbul and BIG. BIG hypermarket - just like Europe! They are not overly expensive except fresh goods more than markets. Careful if you take the group in as there are lots of expensive imported goods.

For total overindulgence go to "Galleria" shopping centre, ice rink, McDonalds etc. and really great kids area with various electronic games etc. DON'T MISS IT!!! All taxi's know it.

Coming from Kathmandu it is extra exciting - open in the evenings!

Meals Cafe outside the camp (TIR Cafe) does a group meal for about \$4 per pax. Good and plenty of food. Friendly truck drivers

N.B. ... DO NOT let the girls use the toilets out of the back of this cafe - they must go to the campsite unless 'guarded'.

"Gelik" restaurant near Galleria is v. good for approx. 20,000tl per head and heaps to eat and drink.

Good food at the Vitamin Restaurant, just down from the Pudding Shop, about \$6 per head. Should be able to get 10% disc. on a group

Tools/Gear Bazaar - Go east over Galata Bridge and turn immediately left into alleyways.

Tent/stool Turn right out of the camp and cross over the first repairs footbridge. Turn down the slip road and it is the shop on the right hand end. Does a great job providing you watch!

General St Sophia (closed Mondays)
Topkapi Palace (closed Tuesdays)
Grand Bazaar (closed Sundays)

Ferry To Uskudar (Asia side)
To Golden Horn from Eminonu (4 Hours) up Bosphorus from Eminonu to Black Sea. Sails 0830 & 1300 hrs. Returns 1630 & 2200 hrs., but check at docks.
Tourist information office near Sultanhamet Metro Station has free maps and all and boat timetables.

ISTANBUL-GALLIPOLI

Distance 320 kms
Driving Time 7 hours
Retrace route to Tekirdag, veer left off main road (just after harbour) onto secondary road to Barbares and Sarkey. Road then turns inland through villages and farmland or continue along coastal road (dirt & very steep), or from Tekirdag go to Kesan then to Gallipoli. (Faster).
Camping Deniz Camping (Campsite), Kumbag, Tekirdag
R/C approx. 25 kms east of Tekirdag on the beach front.

GALLIPOLI (Anglicized form of Gelibolu)

War Memorials are towards Eceabat about 1/2 hour past Gallipoli.
Main Memorials of interest: - All have very good inscriptions with details and some moving stories/history etc., however a big fire has cleared all the forest around the memorials.

Gallipoli Museum 100,000 TL (US\$ 0.75 Apr. '97) entry, good parking - not particularly good, some like it though. Can pick up 'Gallipoli Plaques' guide leaflet here which enables you to follow the plaques from 1-10 in the Anzac Cove area. The museum opens at 8.30. Can drive up the old artillery road, (turning off to the Shell Green cemetery on your way up) and should be able to return to the camp for a beach lunch.
If group keen to see more the British and French memorials (among others) are about half an hours drive to the south.

Anzac Cove Follow signs to beach about 3 km from Muge.
Lone Pine (Aus) Back to turnoff near Muge, up road marked 'Conkbayeri'
Conkbayeri (Turk) Up hill, 5 large memorials, steep hill.
Chunuk Bair (NZ) Walk up hill another 100 m.
Cape Helles (Brit) Entry point to Dardanelles.

Camping No rough camping now allowed. Kum Camping - restaurant/bar, showers, beach. (US\$ 2.00 P/P Apr. '97) not a bad spot, manager Kemal. Tel 0286 8141466 fax 0286 8141917.

Ferry to Cannakale - From Eceabat, sails approximately every 30 minutes in season, hourly on the hour out of season. Loads 15 mins. before departure (30 minute crossing).
Cost:1,200,000 tl (US\$ 28.00) truck and trailer + 20,000 tl (US\$ 0.50) per head.

(Jul '93) Hide the gas bottles before going onto the ferry. Just put them in the trailer. You may experience problems with them accepting the truck as an autobus, hence the charge of 730,000 TL (US\$23.00) for the vehicle and 12,500 TL (US\$ 0.40) P/P

Accommodation in - Dardanelles Pension down small road opposite gun. Or Cannakalle House next to gun, near ferry, cost 60,000 TL/ US\$ 2.00 P/P Jul '94 tl/head, here they show video of Gallipoli and sell vegimite on toast. Excellent value, park truck ferry car park across street for small fee.

TROY (TRUVA)

Driving time from Eceabat 45 mins
25 kms from Cannakale.

Entrance 250,000 TL US\$ 1.92 /person and leave truck at entrance.(Apr '97)

Opens 8.00am. Groups coming west will need very little time here as its quite unimpressive after the rest of Turkey, perhaps 1 hr.

Can do lunch in carpark - one of the restaurant/shop owners will probably offer you use of their tables.

Shopping Ezine has excellent market. But not on Saturday P.M.

Camping Good rough camp Sarimsakli Beach. Just south of Ayvalik turn R SP Sarimsakli Plaj - go left at first roundabout then right at second one follow your nose through cafes and then through a small holiday apartment type village, then head out over sand flats towards

beach, look for the ruins in the far corner - nice spot to swim and camp - there may be some day visitors, but they will clear off at sunset.

Jandarma may need some persuasion but generally OK.

Campsites in Ayvalik - cheap.

Helena camping - bar, restaurant, hot showers - right next to Troy gate 50,000 TL P/P = US\$ 1.50 P/P

General History

There's not much of the historic 'Trojan Horse' Troy to be seen because it is estimated that nine successive cities have been built on this same site. Troy 1 goes right back to the bronze age. The history book Troy is thought to be Troy 6. Most of the ruins you see are Roman ones from Troy 9. Still it is nice to say you've been there and there is a museum on the site. Entrance 30,000 TL/head (US\$ 0.85)

BERGAMA (Driving time from Troy - 3.5 hrs.).

Close to this city are the ruins of Pergamum, capital of a kingdom from the 3rd to the 1st century BC. There is an extensive series of Roman ruins in the lower city and three km above the town Greek ruins with an Acropolis, a theatre, temples and the Altar of Zeus. Entrance to Akropol = 250,000/head US\$ 1.92 (Apr. '97)- 08.30 - 19.00 Hrs

Take the truck up, follow signs marked "Acrop" to right of large hill. Excellent views, poss carpet shopping, not too touristy. Parking 500,000tl (Apr. '97)

(Driving time Bergama - Selcuck/Ephesus - 4hrs).

EPHESUS-PAMUKKALE (HIEROPOLIS)

Distance 115 miles

Driving Time 4 hours

Road Conditions Average tarmac, heavy traffic

Entrance fee 200,000 TL p/p = US\$ 1.50 (May '97) at gate (Pamukalle)

There is a short cut (check the map) that avoids going through Denizli- the road is OK and you come out right at the top of Pammakkale - don't miss the turn (L) to the travertines - its a dirt road with a ticket booth after a few hundred meters.

Can laze in hot springs that have created amazing white cliffs - best at sunset. If you walk through hotel by car park can swim in mineral pool filled with Roman ruins, columns etc. - worthwhile and very relaxing, and v. expensive 700,000 TL (USD\$5.00 May '97) - public baths nearby are much bigger and less than US\$ 1.00 P/P (Jul '94) But not as good.

Camping Mistur Hotel/Mocamp - at the top, by the ruins.

- Small campsite right amongst the ruins, near the amphitheatre, very handy for travertines and ruins, (and bars) if its full you can camp on parking area outside the fence and use their showers/loos.

Many campsites in Pamukkale village immediately below the travertines for approx. US\$ 3.00 (Apr. '97) P/P. Try camping YALCIN on RHS as you approach; good facilities and usually empty.

Suggest group walk up the old road to the travertines and ruins as it's now a long drive round to take the truck up there.

Pension Hotel Konray/Mornay can bargain down to \$1 /head in winter.

Most Pensions Charging 40,000 TL (US\$ 2 - Mar '94)

Rough Camp From Pamukkale go back through Denizli and start climbing mountains to Kazik. 8-10 km out of Denizli good spot on side of mountain overlooking valley.

General History

Ephesus, as it was once named, is 76 km south of Izmir. During its Greek heyday only Athens was more magnificent and the ruins of Efes are pretty amazing even today. The Arcadian Way through the town to the port was the main street. The immense amphitheatre held 24,000 people. The Temple of Hadrian, the Celsus Library, the Marble Way (on which the richest lived) and the Fountain of Trajan, should all be seen. And don't miss the brothels with their descriptive floor mosaics. Efes later became a Christian religious centre. In the nearby town of Selcuk is the Basilica of St. John, said to be built over his tomb. Between Efes and Selcuk are the foundations of the Temple of Artemis, one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

Entrance Charges 500,000tl, US\$ 3.85 P/P (Apr '97)

Guide Charges US\$ 20 per hour (Apr '97 minimum and apparently non-negotiable)

Good Guide Saffet TONGUC (See cards at rear) or Muharrem Oral tel. 0232 892 3630 or 0542 4237703 (mobile) - very good. Best to start tour at top gate.

Aphrodisias If you have time. It is well signposted about 38km (1 hour) each way off the main road. Well worth the visit, but 7500tl / head entrance. Could have lunch there.

SELCUK Big tourist centre, good to stay here in winter as no reason to go to Kusadasi. Cheap pensions is Aus/NZ which charges 350,000 TL (US\$ 2.70 May '97) P/P - phone ahead for rooms (Leader Free)

Contact Steve (0232 892 6050) You can cook in the latter. AZ/NZ pension is excellent and does good BBQs for @ US\$ 3.00 P/P Might also try camping at Pamucak site. - from Ephesus turn left towards Kusadasi, at roundabout go straight on.

Camping Garden Motel and camping 500 m from Bascillica St. John signposted from Bascillica

KUSADASI Big and touristy, expensive and difficult traffic.

Shopping excellent market.

Camping Yat Camping Main road into Kusadasi on LHS - good facilities- OK rough camp, turn right at R'about from Efes to K'dasi & follow for approx. 6 km's & you will see beach on LHS with very steep track. Ask Steve at Aussie Pension if your not sure in Selcuk.

***** HAVE YOU CONTACTED KIWAN YET? - SEE NOTES ON 'SYRIAN BORDER'.

IF YOU KNOW YOUR DATES OSMAN IN OLU DENIZ HAS USE OF A TELEX ON WHICH YOU CAN GET A MESSAGE SENT - KIWAN ALSO HAS A FAX NOW.

PAMUKKALE-FETHIYE (OLU DENIZ)

1. KAZIK - TAVAS - KALE - MUGLA - ORTACA - FETHIYE

2. THROUGH DENIZLI - ACIPAYAM AND CAMLI (very scenic - but very slow and hilly, make sure your brakes are OK).

Distance 170 miles

Driving Time 7.5 hours

Roads Some road works, hilly

Camping Some good rough camping in the hills south of Cameli about 3.5 hrs. from Olu Deniz.

FETHIYE

Camping Deniz Camping, Olu Deniz,. Very small area but excellent facilities, bar/restaurant. Great party place but loud every night. Tel. 0252 617 0045. Fax 0252 617 0054.

Cost: 210,000 TL = US\$1.61 p.p. (Apr. '97) Truck, driver, and tents free.

Beware the road to Oludeniz is very steep - may need to use low ratio - watch your brakes coming down too.

Boat trip Shopping limited in Olu Deniz, therefore purchase all necessary food and refreshments in Fethiye, there is a large market in town centre: drive towards harbour along the main street, past PTT, look for turnings on LHS, a large Coca Cola sign on wall, turn left and about 150- 200 m up street on the LHS is the entrance to the market. Good place to stock up on beer and soft drinks. Driving into Fethiye or out on road towards Mugla about 500 m on LHS is a big wholesalers for EFES - cheapest place found so far in Turkey - 1,400,000 TL (US\$14) for a case of large tins - also available large tins of Maxwell House coffee (US\$12) Will also accept dollars.

Boat trip now departs directly from Olu Deniz early morning and drops back early evening following day. Can be very expensive for small group, but can organise small boat to take group around bay and sights, drop off at beach and collect next day - costs £5.00 per person. (Mar '94)

Alternatively, it is possible to organise boat trips from near Kale the day after you leave Fethiye.(see later).

Note : Optional boat trip at Fethiye is on the Asia itineraries.

It's far cheaper to find a suitable boat yourself (there are many in Oludeniz), approach the captain directly and negotiate your own price etc. One excellent captain is Nasuti Deger, contact at Hotel Dedeoglu in Fethiye , next to harbour masters office near the harbour

Ph 252-6144010/11/12 Fax: 252-6141707.

Also you can ask around for him on the waterfront in Oludeniz near where the Fethiye Dolmus stops.

He has an excellent 17m double decker boat available for approx. US\$ 270 for 2 days and 1 night (US\$ 330 in August), plus he can help with all the shopping, beer etc. Another is Captain John Mehmet - Boat CON II - US\$ 35.00 P/P (60ft luxury yacht).

Could also try Crazy Eddie at Deniz Camping who charges US\$ 100 a day for the boat with 10 EMS, good fun and the group love him.

Camping: Turn right at beach 1.5km 3 campsites. 1st campsite Olu Deniz camping 50,000TL p/p. Next campsite has good bar and music, run by young guy Mustapha who also owns a boat. Chartered 2 days for 1,250,000 TL (US\$30) p/p including 2 x lunch, 1 dinner, 1 breakfast, nice new boat and great crew.

Group meal Can do at campsites. Best bet - go and talk to Susan at OBA, she'll do you a meal for whatever your budget may be. Susan and Ahmet are very helpful and friendly. Ask the Jandarma if you want to BBQ on the beach - normally no problem.

FETHIYE-KALE/ANDRIAKE

Driving time 4.5 hrs.

Shopping Kale or back into Fethiye

Roads Winding, long, steep hills

KAS Nice tourist town.

Shopping Excellent market, can get ice

Gas Available here.

Camping Olympus Mocamp, about 2 km from Kas on the road to Fethiye. Cold beers and good swimming. Approx. US\$ 1.50 P/P (Jul '94)

There is a great little non touristy place to camp at restaurant LIKYA at the end of the long beach when you drop down to the sea before Finike and cross the causeway

look for the blue sign - very friendly, deserted beach, cold beer. These directions not v good -if anyone finds this place please give better info.

Boat trip Possible to arrange for 2 days/1 night for 5,000,000 TL = US\$ 166.00. A great deal quieter than Olu Deniz. Also camp site 2 kms before Kas next to sea. Could leave truck here.

KALE-OLYMPUS BEACH/CHIMAERA

Distance

Driving Time 2.5 hours

Roads Winding coastline, good tarmac

Turning is signposted off the main Antalya road to 'CHIMAERA' and 'CIRALI 7' after a turning signposted Olympus (If going east)

Follow road to bottom, (7ks). Before you reach the beach you will pass a bar just before crossing a stream bridge. Over the bridge turn left.

Follow signs for Chimaera which will lead you through the village of Cirali to the northern end of the bay and ultimately to the foot of a pine wooded hill. The path will lead you to gas flames emanating from the rocks in about half an hour on foot. Best seen at night if you know the way. Can park the truck on the beach (but apparently its disgusting) at this end.

Follow your nose round the northern end of the village. - Nice and quiet.

The ruins of the Lycean city of Olympos and several beach bars are at the south end of the beach - a long walk. Good spot for a BBQ and day on the beach.

Gas Flames - a disappointment during daylight hours.

OLYMPUS BEACH - TERMESSOS

Driving time 3hrs

Shopping Antalya difficult parking, could try turning off to Kemer

Costs 150,000 tl for truck + 30,000 p.p. (Oct 1994). or throw him a backhander - Much cheaper

Camping can camp at bottom in pine trees/ picnic area, minimal cost.

Fethiye to Termessos - take Korkuteli road, hilly but beautiful scenery. 4-5 hours, sign on rhs.

TERMESSOS

Some of the best (? Debatable!) ruins and have been left untouched. Ancient city on summit of mountain. Only city in area not conquered by Alexander the Great.

Coming from Antalya take road to Burdur, turn off towards Kortukelli. 20 km along signpost Termessos. Pay at gate. TL 230,000 p/p = US\$ 1.80) (Apr '97). Drive up 9 kms and then group walk 1 km further to city ruins. Camp in trees at bottom.

ANTALYA (See Map No 5)

Shopping Good but difficult parking

Gas/Muftak Gas. Go out on Burdur road after 11 km turn left to Yenikoy, (just after turn to Termessos) after about 10 kms turn left to Karain, Muftakis is 1 km on RHS. Will fill European bottles. Closes for lunch at 12.00

Repairs Electrical and mechanical at 'Industrial Market' marked on map.

Diesel injector and pump servicing.

Pension Try Ukler Pansiyon, Tel 129636 near tourist office about 12000tl/head

ANKARA

The capital of Turkey since 1923, Ankara's site was a Hittite settlement nearly 4000 years ago. Apart from a couple of interesting things to see it not of special interest but due to its central location there is a good chance you may pass through.

Mausoleum of Ataturk

A massive tomb and memorial to the father of modern Turkey. His house in Cankaya is now also a museum.

Museum of Anatolian Civilisation

If you are going or have been to Hittite sites you will find this museum, with the biggest collection of Hittite artifacts in the world, an essential visit. Closed on Mondays.

CAMPING (if necessary for visa run)

DSI Camping - on E 88 road approx. 10 kms from centre.

from Ataturk Bulvari - head to bottom of road, opposite end from embassies (approx. 5 kms away). Pick up signs for Samsun at the end of Ataturk Bulvari, turn right onto E 88. approx. 10 kms out of town on RHS is camp site.

Price (August '94)

Camping P/P - 30,000 TL = US\$ 1.00)
Tent - 30,000 TL = US\$ 1.00) Per Night
Truck - 30,000 TL = US\$ 1.00)

CAPPADOCIA

Please advise route info for the 'Classic Overland'

On a Backroads of Asia trip will only visit on the East of Suez sector. See later for route info.

Situated south-east of Ankara, approximately half way to Adana this area is notable for the fantastic natural rock formations of the Goreme Valley. The soft stone can easily be carved into rooms and chambers - you will find churches, fortresses, even complete underground cities, all hollowed out of the other-worldly rock outcrops.

There are two routes south from Ankara to this area. One runs more or less directly south by the salt lake, Tuz Golu, then turns off east. On this stretch of the Konya-Kayseri road you pass three medieval caravanserai. One of them is still well preserved, camel stalls and all.

ANTALYA-SIDE (VIA ASPENDOS) - HALF DAYS DRIVE

ASPENDOS Take road to Alanya 43 km turn left - Aspendos 5 km. Best restored Greco/Roman amphitheatre in Turkey (allow 1 hour).

Cost 400,000 tl (US\$ 3.00) entrance fee (Apr '97).

Water Good spot to fill and wash truck.

SIDE Very touristy town, good discos and bars etc. Good Beaches. Used to be ancient slave trading port, now small harbour village.

Can't take truck into the village. Great ruins and great place for a final fling on the beach and clubs etc. before going into Syria etc. Beautiful Sunsets !!!!!

Camping drive through the barrier on road to Side village (tell policeman your going to campsite) turn immediately right onto narrow road, follow down slight hill for about 200 m and drive into hotel grounds straight in front of you. They have small, shady camping area around the back - US\$ 2.00P/P

Side is very, very, very touristy - suggest you give it a miss unless you like Torremolinos!

ALANYA

Touristy, beaches, hotels etc. Good shopping and parking - follow signs to harbour. Alanya castle 3 km up steep road. New supermarket on lhs on way into town.

Driving Time From Termessos 4 hours

Distance 153 miles

Roads Slow, winding and hilly

Camping Approx. 20 km before Anamur, small bay - Mellec - Camping Libre, free camp.

16 km east of Alanya, Pearl campsite, on the beach, good facilities and cold beers US\$ 1.00 P/P (Jul '94)

Anamur castle - nice little campsite near here, right on the coast 3km E of town. Castle is quite interesting too - 200,000tl p/p (\$1.70 Apr. '97).

ALANYA - ANAMUR

Driving Time 4 hrs.

ANAMUR-SELIFKE/KIZ KALESI

Driving Time 5 hours

Distance 106 miles

Roads Slow, very winding and hilly

KIZ KALESI (Maidens Castle). Built on island by Greeks and later added to by Romans. Entrance 3000 tl

*** (WHEN SWIMMING - WARN OF DANGEROUS UNDERCURRENTS) ***

Caves Of Heaven & Hell. 20 km east of Selifke, turn off main road, 3 kms up hill. Worth a visit. Entrance 24,000 tl (Less than US\$ 1.00 P/P - Jul '94)
Camping Campsite about 1.2 km east of town. Small sign posted entrance on RHS about 150 m past ruined castle. Excellent spot. 50,000 TL - US\$ 1.50 (Jul '94)

ADANA

Coming east, first non-touristy city. Has good bazaar. Watch out for cars trying to stop you on road, it's an old trick used in this area!!

Camping Rough camp after Adana turn south (E5) towards Antakya, 15 down is sign to Erzincan LHS. Go through town. Road forks, take LH 1.5 km out of town on LHS is old stone building (mill), fresh water, water fall.

Castle on hill 40 kms east of Adana on rhs. Called Yılanlikale - Snake castle. Look out for snails if there's rain.

Quite a good camp with even better backdrop. Can camp at the castle with a small group. V. friendly.

ANAMUR Anamurium - ancient Phoenician city. Signposted left at bottom of hill before you get to Anamur. Can go into city (paying the entrance fee), drive to the end of the ruins road and have lunch and a swim at a pleasant little beach.

Anamur Castle - Crusader fortress built by Italians 1100 AD. Subsequently used by Seljuks to guard against raids from Cyprus. Apparently never overrun. Go straight through town, can't miss it.

ISKENDERUM - Good shopping in town.

Campsite in town (signposted) 12500tl/head plus 5000 tl for truck

KIZ KALESI - ADANA

Driving time: 2hrs

ADANA - BORDER (BAB EL HAWA)

4 hrs.

SYRIAN BORDER

Two options - 1. Bab-el-Hawa - 24 hours. 2. Kilis Border - quieter, closes 5 p.m..

Kiwan prefers us to use Bab Al Hawa

BAB EL HAWA

ROUTE: ADANA - ISKENDEREN - KIRIKHAN (follow TIR route)

REYHANLI.

Driving times above given for this. Much faster. OR

ADANA - ANTAKYA - REYHANLI

Camping 7 km from Syrian border, good camp, Yenisehir - restaurant, beer and money change. By a lake, take the road towards Antakya (if not already on it) 5 k's from border - drive into Reyhanli - follow signs - first left after service station, 250 m down turn right - camp amongst trees by lake, many locals around but very friendly. Take a room in the hotel for shower/toilet, and camp for free in the picnic area opposite - can use their tables & chairs if you buy beer from the bar here.

Antakya Good mosaic museum.

Turkish Duty Free - US\$ or D M

Side Collect all passports - go to police check and stamp

Passports collected back individually

- Customs

- Final check at gate

Syrian - Presume you have notified/telexed Kiwan at least one week in advance: Arrival date & time and at which border with the total group size.

You need to fax him a group list.

His agent should then meet you at the border to arrange for the group visa. Kiwan NOW charges US\$ 15 (APRIL '97) per person for the group visa on first entry and US\$ 7 (APRIL '97) per person for those group members returning north. (Payable in cash at his office in Damascus).

*NB. It is not possible to obtain a group visa for groups of less than ten.

In this case you would have to acquire letters of recommendation and then visas in Ankara or Istanbul (See Istanbul notes). (Or, coming north from Jordan just visas in

Amman - letters of recommendation are now required here). In this case there is no need to contact Kiwan although you will still need to quote his company on the visa application forms. [Please advise details re visas Ankara: Costs, opening times, addresses etc.]

Re: Obtaining Syrian visas in Amman, Jordan. All pax now require Comfort letters as of August 1994 - will not issue British with a visa unless they have been out of country for more than 6 Months. Even if you comply with this it's still difficult.

- Drive up hill and meet Kiwan's man. He will require 5 stamped IDENTICAL AND CORRECT GROUP LISTS.

Kiwan's man will take you through it but if he's not there if you have a group of less than 10 you will not have to contact him for the group visa and will do the border alone with previously acquired individual visas.

Here's how it goes

- Pass entry barrier - may have to declare convertible currency here or they wave you through.
- Follow bus sign and park at * in front of immigration building
- Go straight in and collect 1 yellow entry card for each person
- 2 for group visa/ + spares) from foreign arrivals desk (get card printed in English)
- Fill out with group, filling the boxes for driver yourself and write "Bedford" and the Reg. No. on the back of your card only.
- Take all P/p's to immigration with the group list. (5 for group visa - will need Kiwan's man and his stamp for this).
- Immigration boys - don't give them anything !
- Group will have to face up for collection.
- Group to truck or bank behind you
- you require US\$ 116 (for trucks) and US\$ 72 (for buses) Diesel Tax YOU ARE A BUS (Show the carnet for proof) and US\$ 69 Insurance. But insurance to cover return if on Backroads.

Exchange at bank rate into Syrian Pounds. Collect 2 receipts for each exchange (Explain to banker what money is for).

Need to pay a few Syrian pounds for postage stamps for customs man to stick into carnet. Not sure what they're for but get them from small office by one of the two door to immigration building (must have them for customs).

- Take receipts and carnets and postage stamps to insurance office under customs roof. Collect certificate and lose both insurance exchange receipts and insurance money.
- Take carnet and insurance to tax office (two doors away) This guys will fill out carnets and stamp but not slow. Pay diesel tax and keep one of the exchange receipts or you will pay again on exiting Syria. May also have to pay S£ 200 Backsheesh here (I recommend you do).
- At some stage move truck up into sheds
- Customs chief when you can catch him may check truck and then sign carnets.
- Finally check off passports at gate up the hill - Give nothing
- Most people have never been asked

Videos No longer a problem

Visa Costs British passport holders 210 Syrian pounds (not now possible to get at border) - but covered by group visa Aust/NZ and most Europeans 75 Syrian pounds costs US\$10/pax]???? Don't know origin or validity of this information. You might make enquiries at the border to see if it is possible to get individual visas at the border if needs be.

All Syrian immigration officials are prone to enquire as to your route. It's a good idea to brief group prior to arriving at border even if you are not going to 'Disneyland', that you are NOT going to 'Disneyland'.

Fuel Go into Syria empty southbound as diesel cheaper.

Tanks should be full before exiting Syria northbound. Fill up in Aleppo on previous day. Can buy Iraqi Mazut from local service stations (i.e. not BP, Shell, Mobil) for 25% less East and South of Adana. Maybe useful if you missed a Syria fill.

* NB THERE IS AN EXPORT LIMIT OF 70 LTRS OF DIESEL FROM

SYRIA.* If you are nice to the customs man they usually don't check, so its probably worth the risk.

If you exit through Kilis they don't check either.

If Customs dip your tank and you are full they will make you go up the road and sell it back to a servo (at a considerably reduced price). It wont cost much there and then but it takes time to get the permission to get out of the compound etc.

This is only a problem exiting Syria into Turkey.

KILIS

ROUTE: ADANA - OSMANIYE - ISLAHIYE

Camping - Rough camp 40 km before border - picnic spot RHS amongst trees running water.

Border - Formalities similar to Kilis.

NOTE: BE WARY OF KIWAN'S AGENTS TRYING TO DO A FIDDLE RE MONEY. MAKE SURE YOU HAVE ALL EXCHANGE RECEIPTS, CORRECT DOCUMENTS (DIESEL TAX, INSURANCE ETC.) NOTIFY KIWAN WELL IN ADVANCE - AT LEAST 1 WEEK - SO THAT A GUIDE CAN BE ARRANGED TO MEET YOU AND ARRANGE THE GROUP VISA.

SYRIAN BORDER TO IRANIAN BORDER

Route 1 - Either border but probably Bab el Hawa - Retrace steps to Adana - Nidge road, approx. 200 km. One days drive. Climbs several passes, very heavy traffic.

From Nidge take road to Kayseri, after 10 km turn left to Nevsehir.

Driving time Adana - Goreme: 7 hrs. or Goreme - Bab El Hawa: 9 hrs. freeway to Ceyhan, 180,000 TL tolls; after Ceyhan 30kms of potholed road and then excellent to border.

Route 2 - Kilis - Gaziantep - Maras - Goksun - Kayseri - Goreme.

Take this route in summer. You'll encounter some of the best scenery in Turkey.

GAZIANTEP

Camping - difficult - many olive groves. Approx. 25 km before Gaziantep on RHS is a group of pine trees - good spot (probably use this on westbounds).

Camping - Good areas for rough camping by river well off road, approx. 50 km before Goksun - track to left at bridge, follow track up river. Great lunch stop/camping 82 km before Kayseri LHS by river. Flat, lots of grass.

KAYSERI

Mailstop - Main PTT. Open seven days, near cross-roads in town centre.

Shopping - Good bazaar and restaurants, right near truck park and PTT for Veggies and meat

Parking - Large truck park behind PTT and tourist office in town centre.

Funds - Don't forget the banks are closed Sundays - If you check the details ahead you may be able to pick up on the way in to Goreme and save time on the way out.

Repairs - LH coming into town many workshops,

Bedford spares. Good chassis repair shop with heavy duty equipment.

Upholstery repairs - quick and reasonable, on way into town eastbound LHS dual carriageway.

Turkish Baths worth a visit, ask at tourist information near PTT.

General Information

Known in Roman times as Caesarea it is the capital of the province. The city has an interesting covered bazaar - this is a major carpet weaving area and the Turkish carpets are now highly rated. The 1136 Seljuk Ulu Cami (Great Mosque) is only a hundred or so meters from an Ottoman mosque dating from 1580. They make an interesting architectural comparison. There is also a Byzantine fortress, the Mongol Kosk Madresse and an archaeological museum. At Kultepe, 21 km from Kayseri towards Sivas, you can see the foundations of a Hittite city.

GOREME (See 'Kapadokya' maps No. 6 and 7)

Camping Kaya camping, on road to Goreme

Mustafa or Hamdi will organise guided tour, about 5,000,000 TL = US\$ 36 (May '97) for the guide, you pay all entries - but Trevor Edwards found RAMZI great for the Goreme tour - contact via Kaya Camping.

Turkish baths for the group.(50,000 tl/head = US\$ 1.50). Bath in Kayseri much better and cheaper.
Camping costs - Bargain with them. In winter you can get them down to: Winter about US\$ 2.50 P/P (Nov '93) and summer about 450,000 TL = US\$ 3.26 P/P P/N (Apr '97) Less 20% discount Tents are free.
Truck costs 150,000 TL = US\$ 1.00 (May '97). Now has underground disco, so good place to party.
Meals Area used for dancing in the underground restaurant has been hired out so Hamdi will organise another venue if you like.
It's good Turkish folk dancing but may not have any belly dancing - check with Hamdi, plus as much food and drink as you like. Costs 2,000,000 TL = US\$ 14.50 including transport to and from. Excellent! Go!
Telex Available in Urgup, also PTT and bank.
Guided tour Includes Derenkuyu underground city 105,000 TL = US\$ 2.50 P/P open 0830-1700, - Avanos 30,000 TL = US\$ 1.00 need torch and warm clothing, Zelve city, onyx factory, can also do wine tasting instead of onyx tour, and various photo stops. Use truck. Generally need all day with lunch in Nevsehir. Or a truck lunch somewhere with a good view. Careful the locals can be a bit sensitive about where you park. Group can easily do a long walk from the campsite - great - and visit the Goreme open air museum on foot giving you a free day.
If you are heading to Syria it is economical on time to arrange for a guide to come and do the underground city with you on your way out.
Camp guys will sort out Hammam in Mustafa Hotel for 1,000,000 TL = US\$ 7.00 (rubbish)
Its great to have a free day here and hire mountain bikes in Goreme or motorbikes, but warn groups motorbikes only for those with experience - people are always falling off and hurting themselves.

General History

The Goreme valley is one of the most amazing sights in Turkey. Over the centuries the strange outcrops of rock have eroded into fantastic, eerie shapes. Into these soft rocks the Christians built their churches and homes; hollowing them into chambers, vaults and winding labyrinths. Painted frescoes, unlit for many centuries, have hardly eroded at all. Unhappily the effects of vandalism have been more severe. Most of these chapels are from the 10th and 11th century and follow a similar cross-shaped pattern. Some of the best known are named after their fresco paintings. Altogether there are several dozen churches, a monastery and a convent in the small valley.

Avcilar

A nearby village with houses carved into the rocks or perched precariously on top of cones.

Avanos

Another small village, famous for its pottery and onyx.

Ortahisar

A particularly large peak here, has an enormous citadel carved into it. A long scramble from room to room leads to a view over the surrounding country from the summit. There is a similar complex at Uchisar.

Kaymakli & Derinkuyu

These two sites, south of Nevsehir, are just two of the many underground cities used by your Christians in times of persecution. There is another of these amazing complexes in interconnected rooms at Ozkonok.

NEVSEHIR

Good souvenirs and restaurants. Spares - excellent workshops and Bedford parts RHS going out on Ankara road.

EASTERN TURKEY

From Kayseri eastwards Turks are more easily upset and difficult especially during Ramadam. Pax should be careful to observe dress codes. Advised to cover legs and arms.

GOREME-TURKEY/IRAN BORDER - poss 2 days but very long day Goreme to Erzurum.

ROUTE - SIVAS - ERZINCAN - ERZURUM - DOGUBEYAZIT.

or if you have more time -
ROUTE: GOREME - MALATYA - NEMRUT DAGI (see below)- EITHER
NORTH ELAZIG OR SOUTH TO URFA, THEN - DIARBAKIR - TATVAN - VAN
- DOGUBYAZIT.

Note : You cannot get up Nemrut Dagı when there is snow on it.

Driving times: Goreme-Kayseri 2.5 hrs.
Kayseri-Matalya 8.5 hrs.
Malatya-Nemrut Dagı summit via Golbasi, Adiyaman and
Khata - 8.5 hrs.
Last 16ks - 1.25 hrs.

N.B. Road from Khata to Caylarbasi has been closed by the rising reservoir.
Summit - Khata 3 hrs.
Khata - S. Urfa 3 hrs.
Urfa - Dyarbakir 4hrs

Sorry don't have timings for Elazig route but apparently if you go up Nemrut from the north (see note) and head to Van via Elazig and Dyarbakir you should save almost a day.

NOTE: - Can approach Nemrut Dagı from north (Malatya-Tepehan) or on tourist route from south (Khata-Adiyaman). The southern route takes in several minor sights on the way up if you take the old road. It is not possible to go up from the north and drive over coming down in the south.

Dyarbakir - Ahtamar 9.5hrs

Ahtamar - Dogubeyazit 5.5 hrs. (via direct route in summer)

Camping - Rough camp 16kms before Nemrut Dagı. Come down steep gorge at bridge, turn off left down to river follow along 200yds. May be boggy in winter but good sheltered spot for early start to top. Track washed out by river June 93.

Good rough camp around Attaturk Reservoir if you get down to lake through village of Akpinar.

Van, Camping Ahtamara - owner Refike will take group on boat across to Akdamar Island. A beautiful spot where there is a 10th century Church. Great swimming when warm enough.

*NB Kurdistan has been a politically sensitive area for some time and is suffering from terrorist activity. Consequently, there is much military activity and passports may be checked. This sensitive area is south of Lake Van in the mountains particularly around Hakari. The road from Dyarbakir to Tatvan and along the lake shore to Van has been quite safe although the kidnapping of two western tourists (Jun/Jul'93) suggest that it may not be at times. The road from Van to Dogubeyazit over the hill is also dodgy and quite remote. If you plan to travel in the Kurdistan area you must check with E.O.L. first and obviously make careful enquiries in Dogubeyazit or Dyarbakir with the authorities (Jandarma).

It is locally considered unsafe to drive after dark and certainly unsafe to rough camp.

VAN - Good workshops: Dogus Dizel

Bedri Gunel

Yeni Kucuk

Sanayi, Sitesi (13 Block No. 3)

ERZURUM (See map No. 8)

Camping - Ozdemir Gida Camping - behind service station 12kms out of Erzerum on Dogy road on RHS. Basic facilities and is 24 hour truck stop but friendly and helpful management. No other "campsites" in Erzurum. 5,500,000tl for group (May '97)

This place is a must in winter as it has centrally heated indoor parking for the truck, can also cook and sleep by the truck. Hot Showers.

Iran Consulate - Open 9.30am - 13.00 (closed Fridays)

If requesting extensions to visas go only just before departure to Iran and they will give you the 1 or 2 days required. Asking for a one week extension does not go down well. New procedure (Oct '94)

1. Applicants need photo copy of passport details front pages i.e. photo, date of issue etc.

2. Photo copy of Indian and Pakistan visas and photo copy of expired Iranian visa.

3. You have to make contact with the Embassy staff, the man on the gate can be very unhelpful and difficult remember to be persuasive bit polite.

4. Visas issued in 2 hours.

ERZURUM - DOGUBEYAZIT

Driving time - 4/5 hrs.

DOGUBEYAZIT - Border 45 mins.

Camping Good rough camp above town at Isakpasa Sarayu. Visible from town and few signposts. Good view of Mt. Ararat. Also a campsite here - v. boggy if wet and a bit remote for the westbound end of Iran party!

- Best place is the cafe above Isak Pasa (Parachute Camping) - just keep going up! Fabulous view - friendly restaurant owners will let you sleep in a room inside and party in the restaurant - They let us cook inside in the kitchen also - very cheap Top spot! The owner may find you in town and show you the way, but its not hard. +/- 300,000tl p/p.(USD\$ 2.00 May '97)

Hotel Esfahan - (welcome coming westbound)

- Can bargain down to about Us\$ 2.50 P/P
 - overflight contingencies - this is meeting/departure point.
 - can cook in disused dinning room.
 - suggest another hotel around corner, almost opposite PTT down alley
 - Hotel Gubulak, phone 1998, fax 2450. In Beledya Caddesi. Bargained for 25,000tl p.p. could have had it cheaper as there is plenty of competition but it is convenient to have the truck parked safely up the alley. Can cook here also or use the dining room.
 - Another possible, - Otel Salman, phone: 5635/2168. Van Caddesi, Rooms OK about 23,000tl each. Cook in lounge.
 - Murat Camping (Isaac Pasa) US\$ 1.00 p/p p/n
 - Hotel Nua - Opp Hotel Esfahan, grotty. About 10000 tl/head. but warm.
- Local Kurd called Izo may meet you. He is a bit sleazy but helpful.

TURKEY/IRAN BORDER - Gubalek / Bazargan (See plan - 9).

Passengers walk from one side of border to the other through adjoining buildings, while the driver takes the truck through empty. E.M's should take their day packs through with them so that you can leave the truck unattended on the Turkish side.

Note: Gumruk area in Turkey stops for lunch between 12.00 and 1.00 Turkish time. Make sure health cards are valid. Cholera up to date.

Eastbound -buy Iranian rials in Turkey before crossing border may be able to buy them in Dogybeyazit or from Turkish guys hanging around the Turkish trucks at the border. locals follow you around waving rials, so bump the exchange rate up as much as you can, usually get a better rate in Esfahan! Better on Iran side.

If carpets purchased in Turkey show them to Iranian customs who will lock wire them and note them in passport. Same for video cameras. May note other cameras also. May seal cassette box.

No girlie magazines, Hebrew writing, Salman Rushdie books.

- Don't loose the coloured slips the Iranians put in your passport or you'll be in trouble when you leave.

Procedure Eastbound:

(June '97 - very easy and quick)

- Drive into Turkish side and register driver's p/p with first police post. Pick up computer slip.
- * Get slip stamped by health, immigration, customs.
- * Get carnet stamped.
- Get group to walk through immigration carrying daypacks and things to declare (esp. carpets).
- * Get your own passport stamped, give guard at gate the completed computer slip and drive into Iranian side.
- * Get entry form from Iranian policeman on gate.
- * Get form and p/p stamped by police in office on left after parking truck in inspection area.
- * Get carnet initialled by guy in office on rhs.
- * Find customs guy to do truck inspection.
- * Take all docs. To 'transit office' and get carnet stamped.
- * Drive through giving pink slip to guard for initialling.

- * Pick up group near bank.
- * Drive down hill to final customs/police post.
- * Go to office on left to have details entered in yet another big book.
- * Find guy to do final inspection.
- * Drive through police gate and into Iran.
- * Pick up a money changer and on your way!

Westbound - Duty free on Turkish side plus bank. Duty free is v.v expensive (cheaper in Doggy) and you'll get better exchange rates from the many official money changers in Doggy.

- Change excess rials for TL in town before entering Iranian customs also should get better rate for US\$ cash into tl than in Turkey.
 - Immigration and customs not usually a problem.
 - Customs and carnets are now done at the top of the hill with immigration.
 - Iranians always ask for drivers authority.
 - up the hill to immigration and final customs clearance from Iran. Go to police window - not marked, see plan.
 - Have passports stamped.
 - They may well try it on and ask for a 'present'. Don't.
 - 2nd customs check (Gumruk), may unload truck etc. Collect release slip and take truck through right hand passage while group go through on foot. Pax are body searched on way out - take care
 - Collect stamped police slip on entry to Turkish compound, four more stamps are required. Park truck.
 - Go to Police 1. in Offices (see plan), get pps stamped or if visa required (Brits) get form. Take to police office 2. - small window.
- VISAS... on end of building and pay. The following require visas and will have to pay in their own currency: British (10 UKL), Irish (10 Punt): Austrians (10 UKL equiv. in Aus Shillings). Collect Visa sticker and receipt.
- Return to police 1, they will enter into book stamp passports and your police slip.
 - Get Doctor to stamp police slip.
 - Get carnets and police slip stamped in office shown.
 - Go to transport office 50/100yds past duty free shops get police slip stamped.
 - Drive truck and group down to exit gate, go into office, surrender slip and sign out
 - Phew.

28

27