

# 2012 Turkey

June 12-13, 2011 Istanbul



The capital of Turkey is full of monuments from Greek, Roman, Byzantine and current times. The city has plenty of museums and mosques.



In the early first century, Paul did much of his missionary work here in Turkey, then called Asia Minor, its Roman name. His work was largely concentrated in the Southwest. Christianity was persecuted by the Romans until the 4<sup>th</sup> century so it was kept underground. Thereafter, church buildings were built to provide facilities for the church to worship. Some of these original churches were converted to mosques but some images still remain.



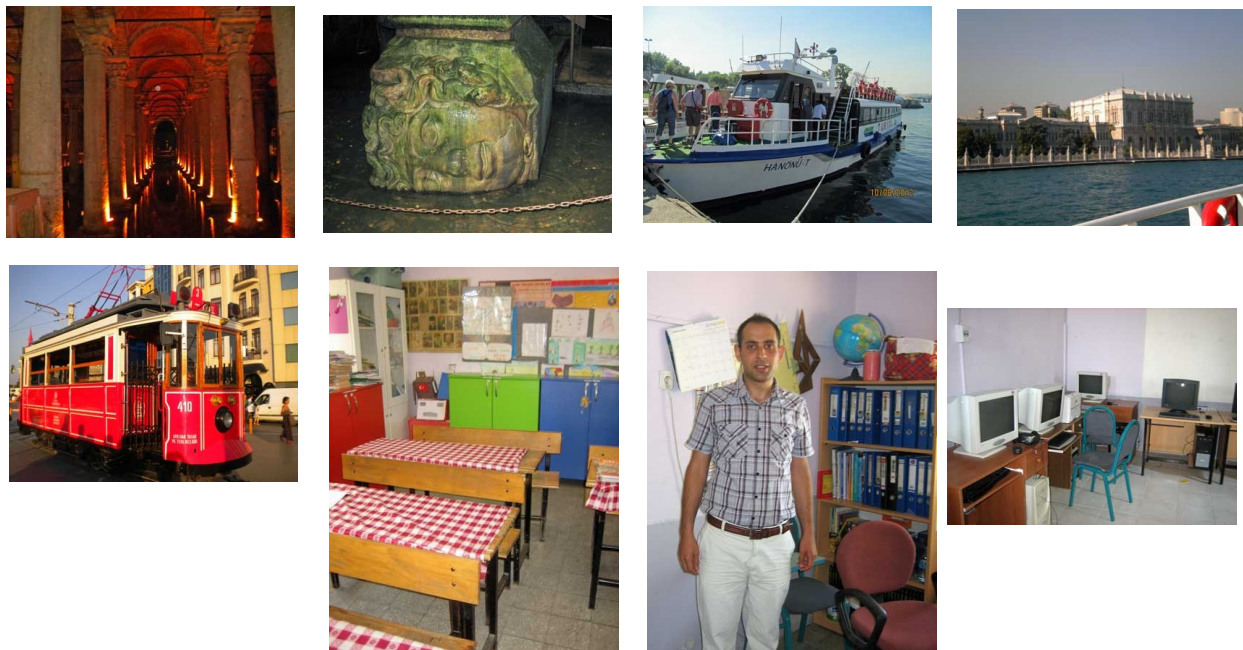
The Grand Bazaar has thousands of merchants in the open air building. Here we stop for tea after hard shopping.

Credit is due to Fred, Linda, Pam and Judy who took many of the photos shown here. I took some too.

Cars pass through the Roman aqueduct more than 1,000 years old.



We visited an underground water cistern, made out of abandoned temple pieces. The Bosphorus is the waterway between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. We took a boat ride that evening to see the sites. Then we took a funicular train through the subway and these cute trolley cars to our evening dinner site.



**June 14-15, 2012** One of the very special things about trips with Overseas Adventure Travel is the opportunity to visit a local family. After we flew to Izmir, we went by bus to the country and visited this school. You see a classroom, a teacher and the computer lab. OAT provides money to the school and to the community and they were happy to show us how they used it.



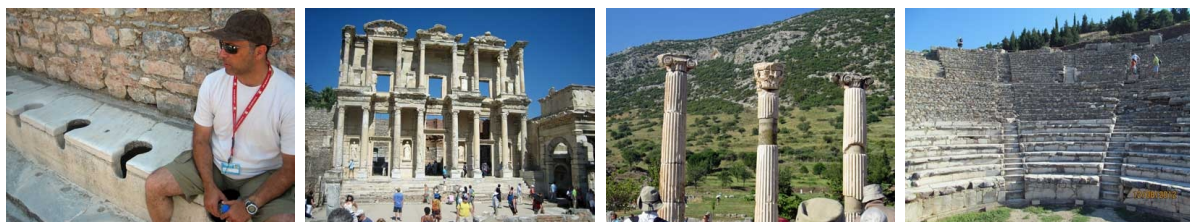
We then had lunch at the home of a farmer and met him, his wife and his children.



The ladies showed us the tractor and the scarves that they had made after lunch. We also visited a women's cooperative where they teach the ladies how to sew. This avoids some of the migration to the overcrowded cities. We stopped for ice cream and to observe some men playing the most popular game in Turkey, Okey. It is similar to gin rummy with a double deck but played with tiles and a wild card. Four generally play.



We then continue to Ephesus, the place in Asia Minor where Paul visited and then wrote to the church and where John is legend to have lived with Mary after his exile on Patmos had ended. Ephesus is one of the best preserved Bible archeological sites in the world. Below, modeling the Roman bath, as Paul would have is our guide and host, Selahattin. At the right the theater at which Paul would have addressed the Ephesians.





The ruins of the 5<sup>th</sup> century Basilica of St. John. It is noteworthy as one of the first church buildings as the church was underground until about 400 A.D. This building was made in the first 100 years of church buildings and parts remain today. At the right, the house of the Virgin Mary. As Jesus directed John to take care of his mother, it is assumed that she lived in his vicinity, hence her home here in Ephesus.

**June 16, 2012** Turkish rug weaving. We stopped en route to visit a modern carpet weaving facility. This ancient art of the Turks continues as young ladies are taught this pain-staking trade.



Here Judy is taught how to make the double “knot” that is the signature of fine carpet weaving.

carpet weaving.

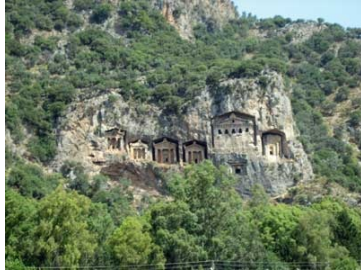


We also learned how silk is made from caterpillar cocoons and the dying process.



They displayed carpets one after another explaining the differences between the fabrics of the weave and the skeleton. They also taught us how the patterns developed over the ages. At the end, Judy picked out the perfect carpet for our home office which is being displayed by the lady who wove it.



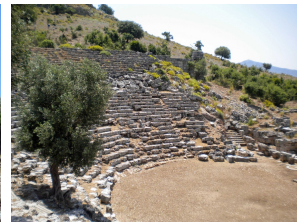


### June 16, 2012

On our way to our ship cruise we saw these tombs cut into the rock. Life in caves is not unusual in Turkey. Finally, we reach Marmaris where our gullet awaits us. Dinner is on board tonight.

### June 17, 2012

We set out on a small river boat to see Loggerhead Sea Turtles and eat some crabs. Our destination today is the Lycian site of Caunus, an ancient site with Temples, baths and theater.



### June 18, 2012

Today's adventure is for a mountain walk to see the forests, coastal scenery and to visit a nomad who lives on this hill. He helps people who injure themselves and raises a few chickens and a donkey that helps him. Judy is coming out of an ancient cistern as Fred watches.



The donkey takes a liking to Pam as we catch our breath. Part of the ancient ruins of Lydea.

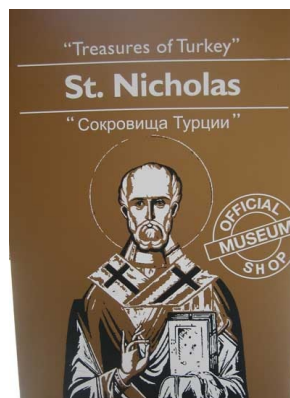
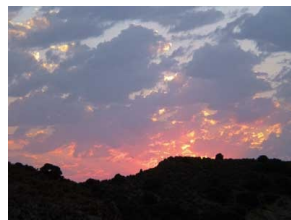


When we return for lunch our crew poses on the bow of the ship.

**June 19, 2012**



We visited Kayakoy, a Greek “ghost town” whose Anatolian Greeks were relocated to Greece in the aftermath of the Turkish War of Independence. Afterward, we stopped for a lunch of Turkish pizza, being prepared by this lady for us. That afternoon, we all went swimming in the Mediterranean Sea and were treated to a beautiful sunset.



**June 20, 2012**

Demre, formerly known as Myra, is the bishopry of St. Nicholas in the fourth century A.D. He was a protector of children, showering them with gifts and was later declared a saint. He was the model for Santa Claus or Father Christmas.





In Myra, we saw this very well preserved theater and carved masks. Also an ancient church.

As we travel to Antalya, we see the beautiful beaches on the Mediterranean coast. One of the highlights of our visit was a Turkish bath. No photos inside, we are covered only by a towel. The streets are very steep in the Old Town as it goes down to the sea.



**June 21, 2012**

This morning was one of the best sights yet, Perge, where Paul preached his first sermon in 46 A.D.

The remains are so well preserved you can almost imagine you were in the seats watching the Christians being fed to the lions or watching the gladiators fight.



The arches on the right show how they made the seats rise in a staggered manner. They were also the passages for the animals and the Christians to pass through to the center of the arena.



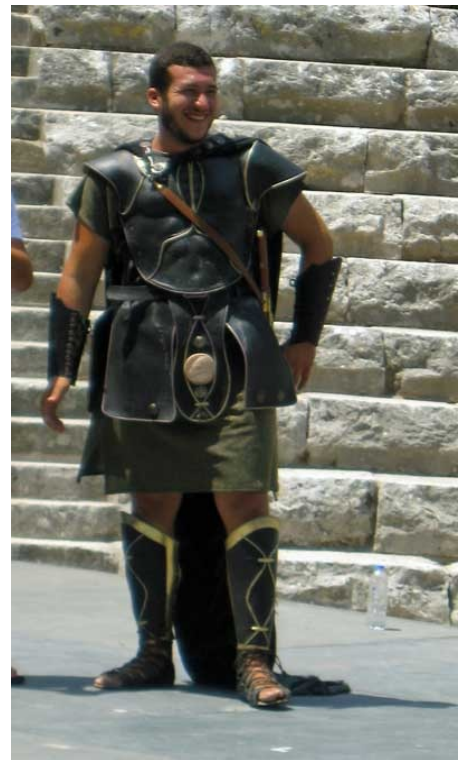
The Roman bath was the center of commerce and conversation. I can see Paul sitting here talking about his last sermon. It was also easy to see who was Jewish or gentile, if you know what I mean.



As we continued to Aspendos, we passed through this Roman aqueduct.



Gladiators were available to have your photo taken. The well-built one on the right was a great ham, having the guests pose while stabbing him with his sword.





June 22, 2012



En route to Konya, known in Bible days as Ikonium, we stopped at a waterfall in Duden. This water falls from the river to the sea, quite a waste you might say. The plans were for a pipeline to be built to send water to Israel however when Israel shot down a few Turkish planes, such plans were scrapped. Relations are still good with Israel, the Turks recognize their error. When I asked, our guide said that Turkey and most of the other Arab countries recognize that Israel has a right to a place on the map as much as other country and they seek peace among all the

middle east countries. However, Iran feels quite different, seeking to remove Israel from the world. Turkey does much commerce with Iran but has never trusted them. Iran's form of Islam includes the Ayatola, much like the Pope. The Iranian Islam is thus Koran plus tradition. Most of the other countries have a more "Baptist" appeal, Koran, alone. Though they say that the Koran recognizes the Pentateuch and the Gospels including Jesus as a prophet and Mary as a virgin birth, it really does so only if it is consistent with the Koran. Whenever there is a difference, Koran trumps the Bible. For example, the Koran states that the greatest lie is that Jesus was the Son of God. Muslims believe that Jesus had no father because Allah is one and has always been. Thus he cannot have a son.



We visited the Antalya Museum which was full of statues of the gods and emperors. The statue of the left of Hercules is unique in that it is an original, not a replica and half was stolen and thereafter recovered from a US museum. On the right the sepulcher depicts the 12 Herculean tasks assigned to him.



As we approach our village at which we stayed in a local home, we saw this similar village in the distance from the mountain. The houses are made from wood and mud with very thick walls.

This tree is so old and so large that we had to stretch the nine of us to get our arms around it. We had tea with our host where the men congregate.



We visited the local school but it has far more space than students. Accordingly, the facility is used to teach vocational skills like weaving and other lady's crafts. While

we waited for our home cooked dinner to be prepared we helped by sorting grape leaves.



Left, our hosts and their daughter. After dinner we sat in the living room, introduced ourselves and talked about our lives at home. Selah translated. Our host was very interested in US income taxation and particularly, how the government got people to pay their taxes.



### June 23, 2012

Whirling Dervishes. We visited the Mevlana Museum which showed the mystical Sufi order of the Mevlevi, commonly known as

the whirling dervishes. This Muslim sect practices an ecstatic ritual dance which emphasizes their heart-felt understanding of the world in motion. As whirling is apparent in the solar system as well as the internal composition of an atom, so they believe that they should whirl to be in accord with the universe. That evening we visited this caravan inn, now their worship center to observe the religious ritual.





**June 24, 2012 – Cappadocia**  
This was probably the highlight of our tour of Turkey because the scenery is so unique. “Fairy chimneys” made of volcanic material look like they were crafted. People lived in caves carved into the material and our hot air balloon experience made

this the most memorable part of the trip.







We visited a pottery workshop where we were treated to a musical number to put us in the mood to shop. This man demonstrated the throwing of a wine decanter similar to the one appearing next.

The painter then painstakingly continues the craftsmanship. Thousands of expensive items were available for our purchase.



We visited an underground church and community. The Christians were persecuted until the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century and thus needed these secure facilities.



**June 25, 2011** Not snow but salt! We traveled to Ankara, the capital, to drop off those who were not continuing with us and stopped at Turkey's largest salt lake.

Our next stop was the Ataturk Museum in Ankara. This tribute to the "George Washington" of modern Turkey was filled with his clothing, weapons, Presidential paraphernalia and scenes depicting Turkey's Independence War.



Shown in the foreground is Fred from our group without whose photos, much of this journal would not exist. If there was something that could possibly be photographed, Fred took its picture. Yet Fred was never in the way. A great guy.







We had a chance to pass by the Parliament on our way to the airport. The government of Turkey has made great strides in the advancement of this country, making it one of the best developed economies in the world and a leader in the Near and Middle East.

Ataturk's major accomplishments following World War II and the War of Independence were to Europeanize the government, economy, written language and even the days of the week. He established a "secular" government, completely independent of the clergy in contrast to the Middle East countries where the Muslim religion controls the government and the law in many respects. He abolished Sharia law replacing it with the European system of an independent judiciary. He replaced the Arabic script with our familiar Latin letters, using the Latin sounds to replicate the Turkish sounds in the new writings. This greatly improved the ability of Europeans (as well as all other cultures) to visit and deal with Turkey, as well as the ability for Turks to travel and do commerce abroad. The most challenging aspect in my eye was the change from the Muslim holy day of Friday to the Christian holy day of Sunday. In Saudi Arabia where I've visited, Thursday corresponds to Saturday, the day when people are off work shopping, relaxing and doing house work and Friday is the holy day when all go to the mosque to pray. In Turkey, workers may get an hour and a half for lunch on Friday so that they can pray but its back to work thereafter leading many to fail to attend the prayer service. Can you imagine the same situation in the US? No longer will we work on Thursday nor Friday but we work on Saturday and Sunday instead. In Saudi Arabia, we covered this by having our church services on Friday morning. Turkey did not make this adjustment.



**June 26, 2012** We now fly to Eastern Turkey, the land of Abraham and Isaac. We land in Sanliurfa, formerly known as Urfa and before that as Ur, about 25 miles from Harran. On the left are ruins from ancient Harran. On the right, a representative "bee hive" home used today.



We dressed up in garb of the area to for this picture and I bought a new garment to replace the one I got in Saudi Arabia that is now outgrown.





Following our visit of the house, we had tea and met these Turkish high school students who were excited to try out their English on us. American travelers are not common to this area of Turkey.

Biblical scholars are uncertain where Ur was. The Bible says,

Gen 11:31 Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot (Haran's son), and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and they set out together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan. But when they came to Haran, they settled there.

The Chaldeans occupied the area we know refer to as Iraq and there was once a city named Ur there. (The city is now abandoned.) The Chaldeans never occupied Ur of southeast Turkey. On the other hand, the Chaldeans did not occupy Ur in Iraq until much later (about 900 B.C.), certainly not at the time Abram lived there. But what makes me think that Turkey's Ur was the spot is that "they set out from Ur to ... Canaan", stopping at Haran. Canaan is south of Iraq's Ur and Haran is more than 700 miles north. One can't possibly come to Haran on the way to Canaan. On the other hand, Haran is indeed on the way to Canaan, about 25 miles south of Turkey's Ur, on the way to Canaan. Accordingly, I'm ready to go with the Qoran version and celebrate Abram's birth here.



One of the highlights of this area was our trip to the Syrian border. We stopped to talk with the Turkish customs agents, saw people and refugees crossing the border and the land mined area between the two countries. Just a few days ago, Syria shot down a Turkish, unarmed, surveillance aircraft, killing the two crew members. The shooting was intentional however misadvised. Syria is reserved in its apologies. Thus, the border was somewhat tense the day of our visit. Thereafter, Turkey has moved in its forces to retaliate in the event of another "mistake." The conditions continue to worsen between the two countries.



We return to Urfa to explore the Arab quarter including this cave of Abraham's birth. No town is complete without its grand bazaar. In the bazaar, beside all the



jewelry and such the are housewares and blacksmiths fabricating their wares.



**June 27, 2012** The Euphrates River actually begins in the mountains of Turkey, the cradle of civilization, perhaps. It is more well

known in Iran where it and the Tigris are closer together. The Turks got this idea that they could build a dam across the river and make lots of electric power, moderate the flooding and the dry days and made a doosy of a lake behind the dam. As I looked, I said to myself, we could never do this, if the environmentalists didn't stop it, surely the ministry of culture would as miles of ancient lands and ruins would be covered by the lake.



At Mt. Nimrut, the king made these statues of himself and the gods so that he would always be remembered. He also had this big pile of gravel brought up to preserve his tomb.



We could walk or ride up the mountain, Judy and I took the donkey which was fun. We walked down. We then took a short-cut across the Euphrates by taking the ferry.



**June 29, 2011** – The Gaziantep Mosaic Museum has amazingly well preserved and restored mosaics from ancient times. These pictures of gods were found in fountains and floors of the houses in the area that would shortly be overwhelmed by the flooding of the river due to the dams. It is amazing that these were buried so

long yet came out so well.



**June 30, 2012** Another delightful event was our Turkish shave and haircut. Selah, Fred and I let our beards grow for a few days in preparation for this fantastic experience. In the US, barbers don't do shaves anymore so this was a special treat. The price was right also, in fact the barber did so well that we had him do our haircut and shampoo as well. The full price, 20 TL or about \$11 which included tea.

All in all, a great trip!