The Ege Eye

Issue 234

February 2024

"News for the Turkish coast since 2005"

Welcome to February

As we bid farewell to the wintery and chilly mornings and cosy evenings of January, let us welcome the sunny and bright days of February. Only joking, I am still freezing.

However, we do get some warmer days and Kusadasi has tourists all year round.

Kusadasi is a working city. Most of the shops are open and many of the restaurants. You can visit most of the local attractions and take day trips to Bodrum and Izmir.

We can say that February is the month of love and possibilities and if we are looking for some heat, we can bring some warmth to our hearts on Valentines Day.

Personally, I will be cuddling up to my cat.

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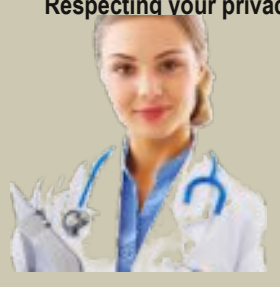

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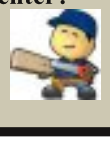

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Number of foreigners in Aydin Province

While a total of 10,206 foreigners with residence permits live in Aydın, one of Turkey's important cities and described as the cradle of democracy, the number of foreigners with residence permits decreased by 9 percent in the last year.

Aydın, which the famous historian Herodotus described as "the most beautiful earth under the sky" and which is the dream of many people to move to in the Aegean, is also among the preferences of foreign citizens.

Within the framework of the Aydın Provincial Directorate of Migration Management's data on foreigners under temporary protection and irregular and regular immigrants, foreign nationals from 118 different countries reside in Aydın. According to the data of December 31, 2022, the number of foreigners with residence permits was 11 thousand 234.

While there was a 9 percent decrease in the number of foreigners who received residence permits in approximately 1 year, a total of 1,028 foreign citizens lost their residence permits in Aydın. On the other hand, when we look at the data, according to the data of January 11, 2024, a total of 1 million 108 thousand 911 foreign citizens with residence permits live in Turkey.

When we look at the distribution of foreigners residing in Aydın by districts, it is learned that the highest number of foreign nationals live in Kuşadası, while when we look at the distribution of foreigners according to their nationalities, it is learned that the highest number of foreigners in the province are British citizens.
Source: https://www.sesgazetesi.com.tr/

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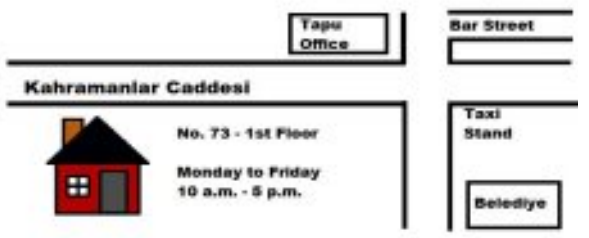

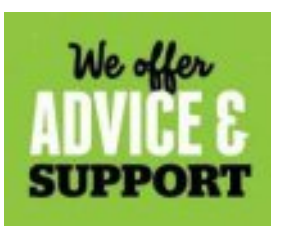

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Dervish traditions: Turkish Tombs I

Lisa Morrow

One the quirky features I love about Istanbul are tombs dedicated to dede or senior dervishes that turn up in the most unusual places. A dervish is a member of a Muslim religious order who has taken vows of poverty and austerity. Most often associated with the Sufi religious order, there are various orders of dervishes in Turkey, such as the Mevlevi or Whirling Dervishes as they are known to tourists, and the lesser known Nakşibendis and Bektaşi dervish groups. Almost all of them trace their origins back to specific Muslim saints and teachers. Their tombs are always pale mint green in colour and located in odd places, such as in the garden of an apartment block or right in the middle of a path. No matter how inconvenient the location, Turkish people believe it is bad luck to move them.

There are many such tombs in unexpected places in Istanbul, but I have two favourites. The first is probably the better known, because it is located amongst the railway lines of Haydarpaşa Railway Station. Built in 1909 on the Asian side of Istanbul by the Anatolian Railway, Haydarpaşa was the terminus for the Baghdad and Hedjaz railways. Two German architects, Otto Ritter and Helmut Conu, were hired to design the new building. They chose a Neo-classical structure, and German and Italian stonemasons crafted the embellishments on the facade of the terminal. A small German neighbourhood in the nearby Yeldeğirmeni quarter of Kadıköy was established to house the engineers and craftsmen who worked on the project.

Many Turks worked on the project too, and when plans were drawn up to lay the tracks a decision was made to move the tomb of Haydar Baba. Buharalı Haydar Dede, to give him his full name, was the head or sheik of a Nakşibendi lodge, and is believed to have died around 1700 AD. It's rumoured that the night before the work was due to start the supervisor of the works had a dream. Haydar Baba appeared before him and said it would make him uncomfortable if they moved his grave. Shaken but undeterred the supervisor shrugged off his unease and went back to work the next day. However the following night Haydar Baba came to the supervisor again and repeated his statement more forcefully this time, placing his hands around the supervisor's throat and squeezing tightly. Naturally afraid, the supervisor called a halt to the work and had the new lines laid on either side of the tomb, leaving Haydar Baba undisturbed.

Find out more about dervish traditions in the complete version of this essay in Inside Out In Istanbul: Making Sense of the City. And for more interesting stories by Lisa go to https://www.insideoutinistanbul.com/

English, Korean, Spanish songs popular in Turkey

According to the research, which examined 1,899 foreign songs according to language and genre, English songs are the most listened to after Turkish ones. They are followed by Korean and Spanish songs.

The Research on Foreign Music Listening Habits in Türkiye was conducted by eliminating the Turkish songs among more than 5,000 songs and using the remaining 1,899 songs. The research showed that nine out of 10 foreign songs listened to by Turkish listeners are in English.

Speaking about the research, Preply Europe Regional Manager Director Mustafa Ali Sivişoğlu said, “The music contents published by various platforms at the end of the year shed light on popular songs in Turkey, but they do not offer a comprehensive insight into foreign-language songs. The research shows that 92 percent of the most listened-to songs in a foreign language are in English. Despite this dominance of English, it is not surprising that Korean takes second place. Popular Korean TV series and the K-pop movement, which has become a trend all over the world lately, make Korean a popular language through the most listened to K-pop groups with strong fan bases such as BTS.”

Sivişoğlu stated that among the nearly 2,000 foreign songs examined in the research, languages such as Spanish, French, Hindi, Albanian, Arabic and Dutch also entered the list.

“We believe that dances performed with different songs on short video platforms may be behind the popularity of these languages. The fact that songs in languages such as Albanian and Hindi attract attention from all over the world helps these songs to be among the most listened-to songs on other platforms. We see that Turkey's most listened to foreign songs are produced in a total of 13 languages, which shows that Turkish listeners are willing to listen to universal notes even if they do not know their meaning,” he said.

Stating that they also studied the most popular foreign singers in Turkey to enrich the research, Sivişoğlu said, “On the list of the most popular foreign songs, we listed the artists with the most songs. Among the singers who appear on these lists with more than 15 songs, The Weeknd was the winner of the list with 55 songs. The Weeknd was followed by Ariana Grande. South Korea's BTS became the third most popular foreign artist in Turkey with 47 songs. When we look at worldwide data, we can say that Turkish listeners follow global trends closely with their interest in names such as The Weeknd and Ariana Grande.”

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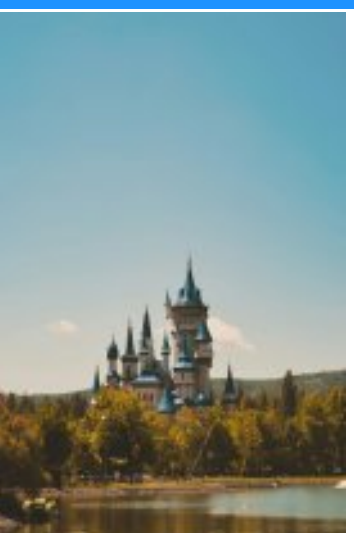
Turkey’s tourism revenues hit $54.3 billion last year



Turkey’s tourism revenues increased by 16.9 percent last year compared to 2022 to $54.3 billion, while foreign tourist arrivals rose more than 10 percent to 49.2 million, separate official data showed on Jan. 31.

Tourism revenues remained below the target of $55.6 billion, Treasury and Finance Minister Mehmet Şimşek commented.

“In line with the forecasts in the medium-term program, we expect the number of visitors to increase to 59.4 million and tourism revenue to $59.6 billion this year, as the tourism industry’s strong performance continues in 2024,” Şimşek wrote
.
While individual expenditures constituted $41 billion of the total tourism income, another $13.25 billion came from package tour expenditures, the Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK) said.

The average per capita expenditure of visiting tourists was $952 in 2023, up from $905 in the previous year. The average expenditure per night rose nearly 12 percent from 2022 to $99.

Tourists’ food expenditure increased by 33.2 percent compared to 2022, while the increase in accommodation expenditure was 27 percent.

International transport costs were up 22.2 percent, according to the TÜİK data. Transport expenditure inside Turkey rose by 11.9 percent.

Some 5 percent of tourists visited Turkey for shopping, according to the data. Visitors spent $6.45 billion on clothing and shows and another $1.49 billion on souvenirs.

In the final quarter of 2023, tourism revenues were up 6.8 percent from a year ago to amount to $12.7 billion.

Turkey’s tourism expenditure, on the other hand, leaped 65.3 percent last year from 2022 to $7.1 billion, TÜİK also said, noting that per capita average spending rose 8.5 percent to $639.
49 million foreign tourists.
Last year, 49.2 million foreign tourists visited Turkey, up 10.2 percent from 2022, separate data from the Tourism Ministry showed on Jan. 31.

Including Turkish citizens residing abroad, Turkey welcomed 56.7 million visitors.

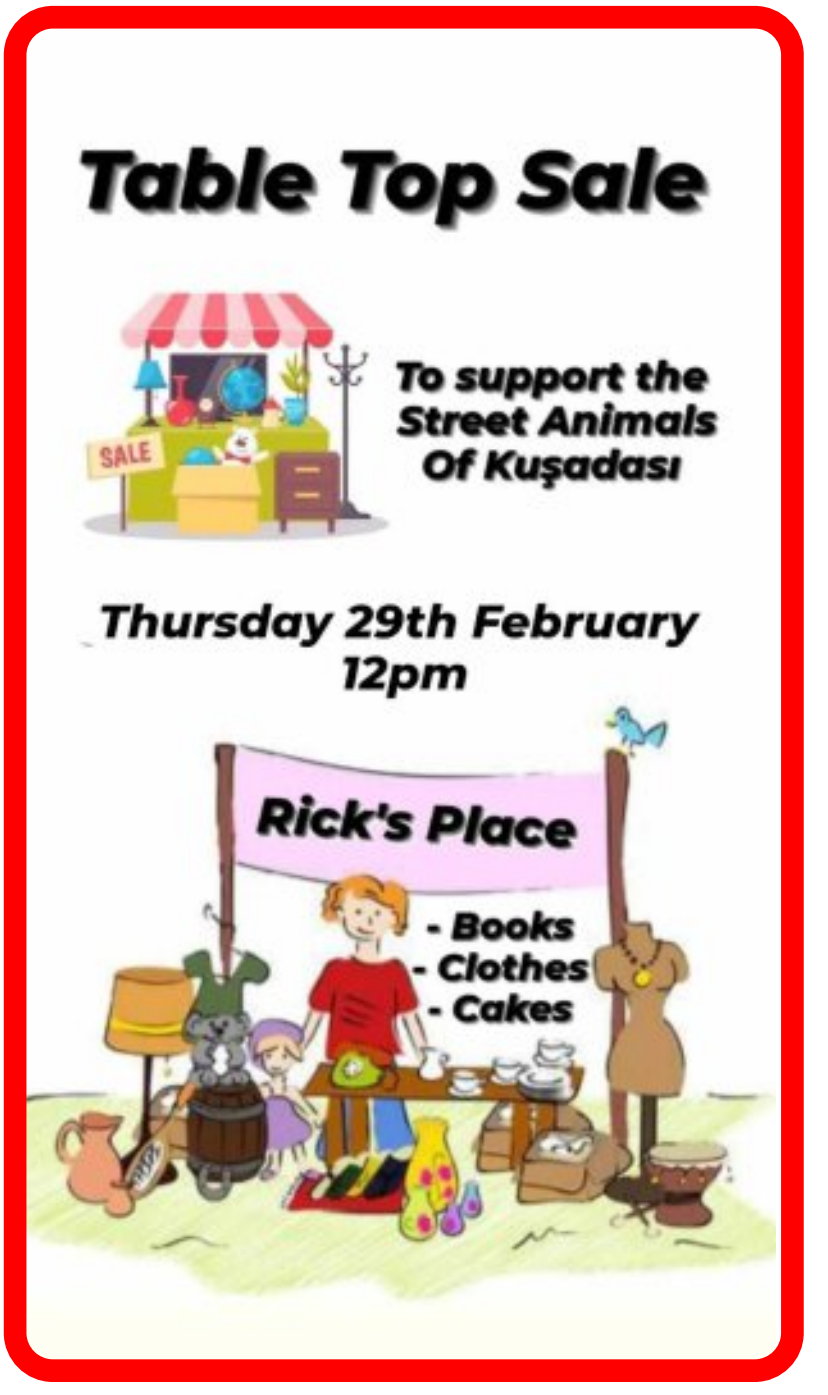
Russians and Germans constituted the largest groups of foreign holidaymakers.

In 2023, more than 6.3 million Russians visited the country, up from 5.23 million in 2022, while the number of German tourists increased from 5.7 million in 2022 to 6.2 million.

Tourist arrivals from the U.K. rose 13 percent to 3.8 million.

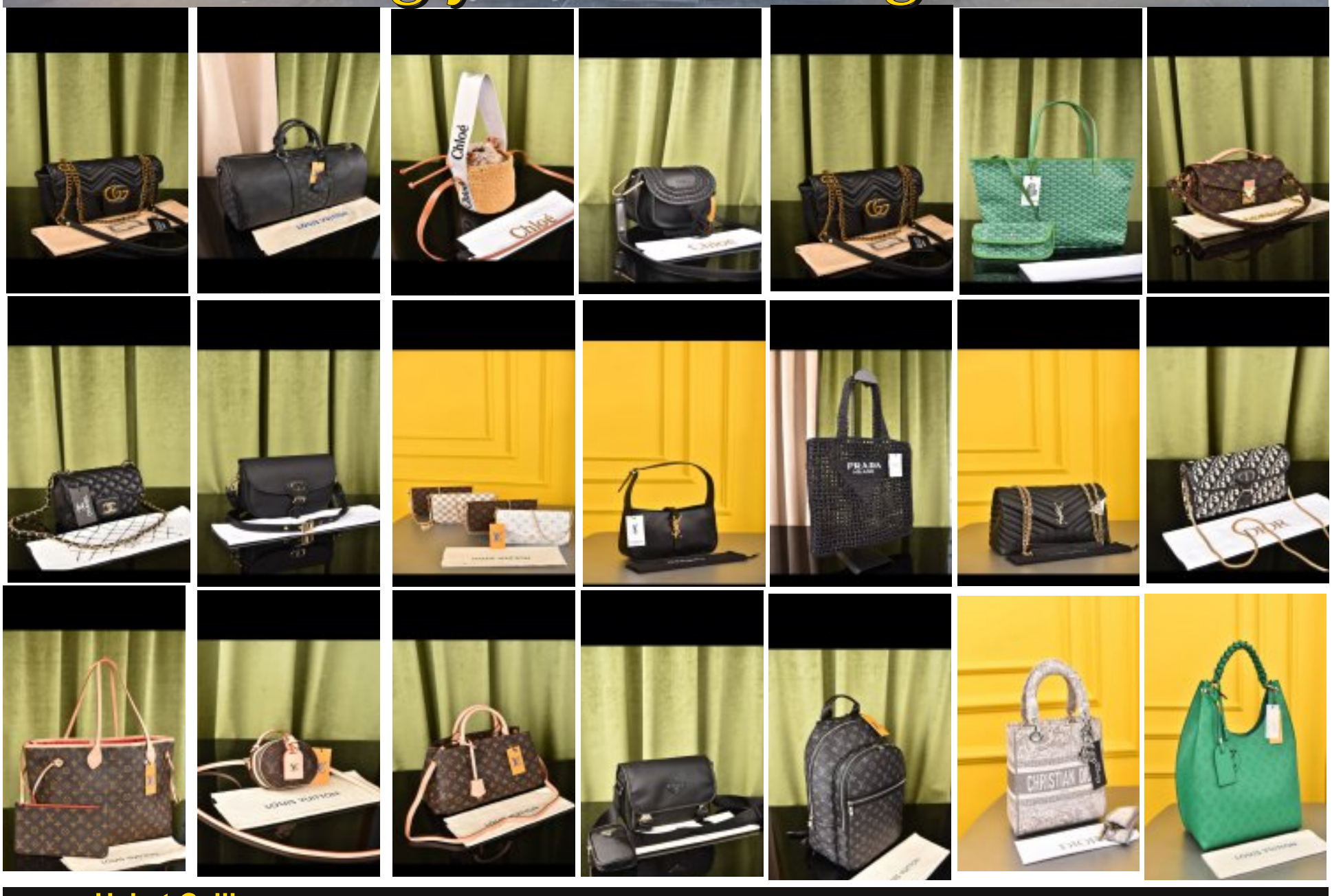
Despite the ongoing war, the number of Ukrainians visiting Turkey increased by more than 23 percent compared to 2022 to 839,729. In 2021, more than 2 million Ukrainians vacationed in the country.
Turkey also welcomed 2.89 million Bulgarian nationals and 2.5 million Iranian tourists last year. Bulgarians mostly visit the Turkish provinces near the common border for shopping.

Source: Hurriyet Daily News: https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/



ROMA R DELUXE

Bag yourself a bargain



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The Economy

Credit card debt breaks a record in 2023

In 2023, when loans were curbed, the emphasis in individual borrowing shifted to credit cards. Citizens' credit card debt increased 2.5 times last year, exceeding 1 trillion TL and reaching a record level.

With high inflation and the increasing cost of living, citizens found the solution in credit cards. The increasing usage rate was also reflected in debt data.

After the election, the new economic management tightened monetary policy. With high interest rates and some tightening steps, loan usage decreased. However, decreasing loans were replaced by credit cards.

2.5X INCREASE IN CARD DEBT

According to data from the Banking Regulation and Supervision Agency (BDDK), credit card debt rose to a record level in 2023. The total amount of credit card debt, which was 446 billion lira in 2022, increased 2.5 times and exceeded 1.1 trillion lira by the end of 2023.

CONSUMER CREDITS DECREASED

Despite the increase in card debts, the decrease in consumer loans attracted attention.

During this period, consumer loans shrank by 12 percent.

In BRSA's 2023 data, the expansion in vehicle loans stands out.

Opposite loans increased by 93 percent in 2023.

HOUSING LOANS ARE AT STOPPING POINT

In the same year, housing loans virtually came to a halt. Housing loans grew by only 22 percent throughout the year. When adjusted for inflation, this rate means a contraction of 26 percent.

When the 2023 debt report card is examined, the total debt of individual loans and cards reaches 2.7 trillion lira. Source: Aydin Post

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Warning to those who send money with IBAN

Experts warned citizens who make payments to businesses via IBAN. It was stated that one may unknowingly be a party to crimes such as money laundering and tax evasion.

Especially many tradesmen, from hairdressers to clothing stores, prefer to receive payments directly via IBAN in order to avoid credit card commissions.

However, TÜKONFED member and lawyer Saadet Kartı emphasizes that this method may increase the risk of intermediating crimes such as money laundering or drug trafficking.

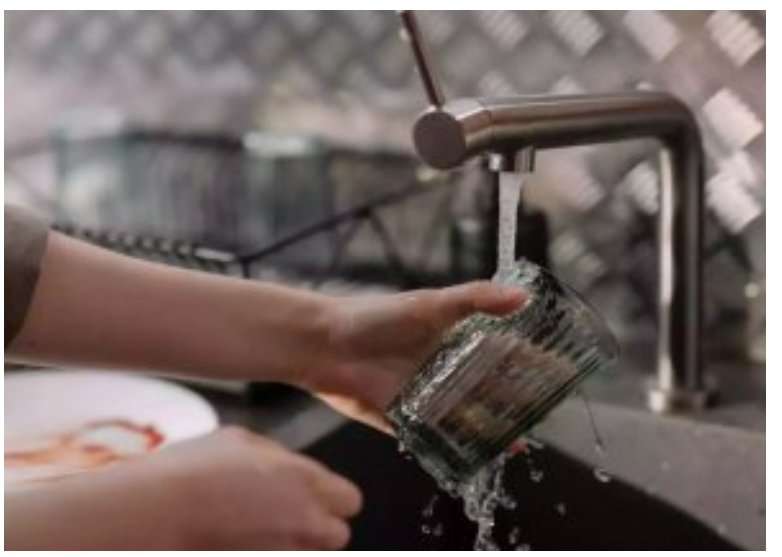
For example, money distributed to thousands of people can be put into the system through businesses, and if you send money to the IBAN of the business, you may be accused as an actor in this process, he warns.

Kartı emphasizes that one should be careful when making IBAN payments for online shopping and states that the risk of fraud is high.

It also states that payments made via IBAN do not increase the consumer's credit scores, as in card transactions, and therefore consumer benefits may not be available.

For this reason, experts remind people who have bank accounts to be careful to avoid such payment methods.

Istanbul's water consumption hits peak in 2023



The year 2023 has gone down as the year with the highest water consumption in Istanbul's history.

Istanbul Municipality subsidiary General Directorate of Istanbul Water and Sewerage Administration (İSKİ) provided a total of 1.117 billion cubic meters of water to the city in 2023, breaking water consumption records.

According to İSKİ data, 841,959,000 cubic meters of the water used in the city was supplied from regulators and 275,000,104 cubic meters were supplied from dams.

During the year, 440,000,532 cubic meters of water was transferred from the Anatolian side to the European side, where the total water consumption was 737,938,000 cubic meters.

The number of subscribers to İSKİ has also increased. While İSKİ served 6,819,930 people in 2022, this figure rose to 6,891,231 in 2023.

The share of the European side in total water use was 66.06 percent, while the share of its Anatolian counterpart was 33.94 percent.

While 1,103,672,069 cubic meters of water was used in 2022, 2023 was the year with most water consumed in the city's history.

A total of 1,117,064,116 cubic meters of water was used during the year. Water consumption was the highest of all time on July 27, 2023, with 3,568,056 cubic meters. Meanwhile, with 2,524,736 cubic meters, the lowest water consumption of the year took place on April 23, 2023.

Over the summer, Istanbul faced a water crisis due to drought; water levels in three of the 10 dams that supply water to the city dropped dangerously, by nearly 3 percent. Some of the dams had completely dried up.
Source and Image Hurriyet Daily News

You will find more Turkish news in English by going to the following link… hurriyetdailynews.com/

Increase in subscription fees from Netflix!

Netflix Turkey made a surprise increase in subscription fees. Here are the new prices…

Netflix, the online TV series and movie viewing platform , has started 2024 fast.

Netflix, the digital broadcasting platform with millions of subscribers around the world, has increased its subscription fees in Turkey.

At Netflix, which made a surprise increase in subscription fees, the cheapest package was 119.99 TL, while the highest price was updated to 229.99 TL.

Netflix offers three different packages to its users and their subscription fees are as follows:

Basic: 119.99 TL
Standard: 176.99 TL
Special: 229.99 TL

The old prices were as follows:

Basic: 99.99 TL
Standard: 149.99 TL
Special: 199.99 TL

Source: Aydin Post

Love is in the Air
A Valentine's Day (Lovers) in Turkey

The most romantic day of the year (Valentine's Day) is coming very soon. Lovers begin to think about how to spend this day, what gifts to present.

Valentine's is a relatively new concept here in Turkey. It has only been celebrated in the last 25 years and you will find that this is generally in large cities and coastal areas.

Advertising and clever marketing has been the chief reason that this day has appealed to mainly females in Turkey and the world.

Here in Turkey, you will see restaurants, malls and street shops adorning their windows with decorations (especially red). Many restaurants will offer special Valentine's cuisine and for flower shops this is probably when they reach their highest sales.

Hundreds of couples chose Valentine's Day to tie the knot across Turkey, while some romantics took the opportunity to pop the big question.

Wherever you are, I wish you all a Happy Valentines Day.

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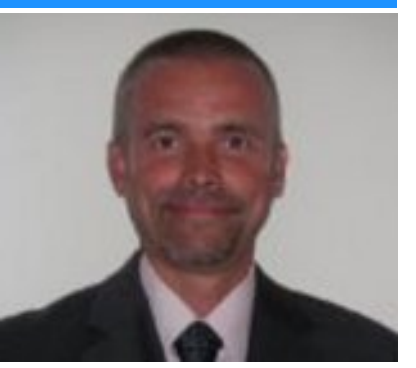
How Turkey's famous meatballs found their way to Sweden – in 1714

Klaus Jurgens



As our dear readers will be well aware of all things Swedish and Sweden are currently a hot pick in the world of Turkish media; this article is however not about current affairs. What inspired it instead was the immense interest over here in Turkey into daily life up there in the Nordics, and equally a heightened interest into Turkish day-to-day life up there.

Your friendly columnist experienced this himself on a number of occasions having recently travelled to that fine country for work and staying in the context of a feel-good contribution wanted to share with you a somewhat surprising issue, and at the same time a topic putting a smile on people's faces. Here we go - is it true that Sweden's traditional - some would even say national – dish of Köttbullar originated exactly here in Türkiye?

Funny enough – initially it was the Turks both here and for example in Stockholm who spoke with me who agreed and what amazed me the most was that regardless of professional background and once the subject matter came up everyone seemed to be on the same side of past events. In a foodie nutshell – it previously had never occurred to me that exactly this topic is duly enshrined in local folklore and supposedly official history alike; my idea was when in Sweden nothing better than to indulge in tasty Köttbullar and when in Türkiye enjoy fabulous Köfte, that was it. By the way, Köttbullar is somewhat difficult to pronounce as the 'K' is no K; this is your homework then, please google the link to the correct online pronunciation.

Let us now briefly engage in a little bit of investigative journalism. Who broke the news? A wider audience not limited to Sweden or Turkey, respectively, was alerted to the debate on 1 May 2018 when the BBC's Kris Bramwell and Dilay Yalcin headlined 'Swedish meatball admission: they're Turkish'. They referred to a social media post by the Swedish government which read 'Swedish meatballs are actually based on a recipe King Charles XII brought home from Turkey (Türkiye; own addition) in the early 18th century. Let's stick to the facts!' The BBC summed up what had been apparently a widely debated agenda item amongst the Turkish audience now making head-waves overseas, too. BBC finally cited Annie Mattson as quoted by Anadolu Agency – a researcher at Sweden's Uppsala University - who said King Charles XII also brought coffee beans and stuffed cabbage.

Hence and as the Swedish government wrote in 2018, we better stick to the facts. And fact is that King Charles XII had lost against Russia during the Great Northern War and had to take refuge elsewhere and came to the Ottoman Empire in the year 1709. Fact is too that some 1000 men accompanied him. He stayed for five years in a place what is now near Moldova (Bender) and later on in Edirne. All his expenses were initially willingly met by the Ottoman state budget; however, eventually he ran out of favours and accumulated huge debts with local tradespeople. In 1714 he finally returned in order to stay at the Swedish helm on location and not far away. For those of you who wish to dig deeper into his life a very good source is 'https://www.britannica.com/biography/Charles-XII/Years-in-Turkey-1709-14'.

There are of course two potential versions – the King himself brought the recipe, or some of his accompanying local men hailing from the Ottoman empire who of course had been eating Köfte long before King Charles XII set foot onto Ottoman territory. But as the Swedish government happily admitted their favourite dish came from Türkiye together with the King why not go along with that?

Another fact is Köttbullar are as delicious as our Köfte although they differ quite a bit in how they are made and served. First, the Swedish version usually contains a combination of pork and beef. You would place some lingonberry jam or sauce next to the meatballs which up there are truly balls, so they look different, too. For a family of four one would prepare around 30 of those meatballs which are not that big at all. To add a bit of spice pressed cucumber should be on your plate and of course another absolutely vital ingredient – mashed or another form of potatoes, respectively. My verdict – mashed does the job better.

The image added is aimed at illustrating how it might be served; not to make any undue PR but we should mention the location of where this photo was taken, at the Radisson Blu Waterfront in Stockholm, by myself.

Same as with Turkish Köfte one will find it on almost all good menus but of course not in a Chinese or Italian restaurant. It can be 'posh' as in a hotel or 'take away' as in a self-service cafeteria, think IKEA. But no matter where we come across Swedish meatballs the recipe and key ingredients should remain identical.

Enough of writing about meatballs, feeling peckish already or perhaps even real hungry only thinking about either dish. The debate about where the northern variety originally came from underlines nevertheless something else and something quite important: food is a bridge builder, food unites cultures, food is to be enjoyed and we must always remember food is something to be thankful for. Maybe one of these days a future story pops up, this time which kind of Swedish food item found its way across borders and across continents?

Enjoy the pre-season in our wonderful resort!

LATEST UPDATE PERTAINING TO OWNERS / LANDLORDS & SHORT TERM RENTING (Martin Redman)

1/2/2024

Today being 1st February 2024, one month since the new 'AirB&B' rule came into force , owners or their acting agents can no longer continue under the GIYKIMBIL / KBS system to rent their property for short term letting & all owners must now register under the new system for their official Rental Permit.

As can often be the case the information stated in a couple of Turkish newspapers 10 days ago came to nothing & as of this morning no 12 month postponement to obtain the Permit has been announced by the Turkish Supreme Court in their official publication, who according to the papers the Tourism Board were applying to. The only exception was regarding 'illegal builds' which cover properties built on agricultural land & do not have the word 'residential property' stated on the Tapu. For these renting will be granted until 31/12/2024 without a Permit.

So now it's to be assumed the postponement will not be forthcoming & owners wishing to rent their properties for short term lets need to move onwards & upwards to obtain their Rental Permit.

To this end all the known information including the new regulation in full & requirements to bring the rental property up to spec. to rent, along with long list of helpful Q&A's & the link to register for the Permit via the e devlet website can be found in the first section [#1] of the Rental File via this link.. https://goo.gl/uhhxvX

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Link to the Surgery files website Index screen.. https://docmartinssurgeryforexpatsinturkeyblog.wordpress....

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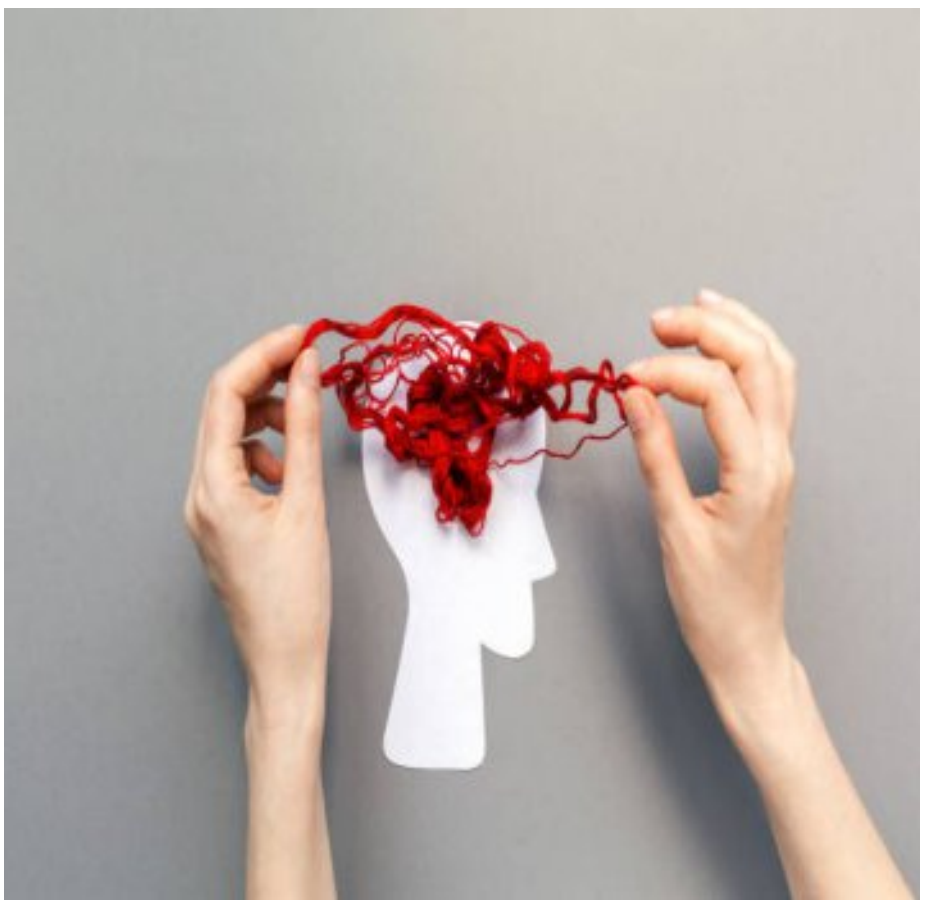
‘2023 sees most appointments to psychology-related departments’

The year 2023 has witnessed a striking trend in appointments to psychologists and psychiatrists in Türkiye, reflecting a collective response to challenging times, such as the devastating earthquakes witnessed last year and ongoing economic hardships.



DoktorTakvimi, the most widely used private health appointment booking application in Türkiye, shared its data for 2023. According to the data, the top three cities with the most doctor appointments in 2023 were Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir, while the three branches with the most appointments on the platform were psychology, gynecology and obstetrics, and psychiatry, respectively.

From the COVID-19 pandemic to the earthquakes on Feb. 6 last year, the adversities experienced have increased stress levels that are difficult to cope with. Speaking to private broadcaster Habertürk, Esra Güven, a member of the Turkish Psychologists Association, stated that the country was going through collective trauma.

"We have experienced difficulties and traumas as a country, we have suffered losses, we have experienced the feeling of helplessness very deeply. Various other problems, lack of motivation, and questioning the meaning of life can be factors. There may be disasters, terrorist incidents, acts of violence, economic hardships, all of these create collective effects as well as individual effects."

"We experience collective traumas because it damages our sense of security, and it affects so many people. It spreads very widely in waves because the mechanism of impact is not only with those who are affected at the primary level," Güven explained. Source: Hurriyet Daily News hurriyetdailynews.com/

Health News

Sharing from Minister of Health Koca regarding upper respiratory tract infections

Minister of Health Fahrettin Koca said, "Infections with flu symptoms should be taken seriously in patients with suppressed immune systems and in people who are in the risk group due to reasons such as age."

In his post on his social media account, Minister Koca stated that we are in a period when complaints such as upper respiratory tract infections, flu and cold are increasing.

Stating that most of their illnesses are caused by viruses and that they are cured with rest and symptomatic treatment, Koca said, "However, infections with flu symptoms should be taken seriously in patients with suppressed immune systems and in people who are in the risk group due to reasons such as age."

Minister Koca's post also included the statements of Ankara Bilkent City Hospital Coordinator Chief Physician Aziz Ahmet Surel.

Surel noted that there is a seasonal density in the hospital due to upper respiratory tract diseases, as every year, but since it is an expected density, the hospital capacity can handle this.

Surel stated that there is no increase in the number of patients applying to emergency services when looking at the annual average, and that when looked at proportionally, there is an increase in the number of patients coming with complaints of upper respiratory tract infection in the patient distribution.

Surel stated that most of these patients recovered with symptomatic treatment and rest, but that these infections should be taken seriously in some people over a certain age or whose immune system is suppressed.

Turkey ranks first in cigarettes smoked:

Turkey has emerged as the leading nation globally for the highest number of cigarettes smoked, earning the disconcerting distinction with 17.1 cigarettes per capita per day, according to a European Union (EU) Statistics Office report.

Turkey ranks first in the world with 17.1 cigarettes per capita per day, followed by its neighbour Greece with 15.7 cigarettes, while this rate is 15.5 in Israel, 15.5 in Japan and 15.4 in Austria, the report said.

Meanwhile, a "Tobacco Control Plan 2018-2023" report highlights that at least one out of every four people in the total population aged 15 years and above in Turkey smokes. According to this ratio, nearly 20 million people in the country are regular smokers.

This sobering statistic sheds light on the pervasive smoking culture in the country and emphasizes the importance of promoting a healthier lifestyle to society.

Around 2 billion people worldwide are addicted to cigarettes and other tobacco products. While trends show smoking to be on the decline globally, electronic cigarettes and vapes, advertised as an alternative to smoking regular cigarettes, are on the rise, especially among those of younger ages.

Experts warn that the chemicals in electronic cigarettes, which are perceived to be less harmful than cigarettes, are at least as harmful as those found in cigarette smoke and advise quitting rather than seeking different methods to stop smoking.

Consequently, the World Health Organization (WHO) has called for urgent action to control the use of electronic cigarettes in order to minimize harm to public health. Source: Hurriyet Daily News

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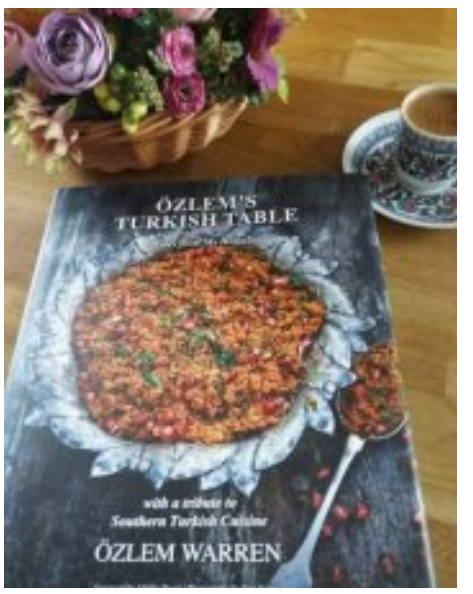
Directions: If you are a first-time visitor to Kusadasi you would go under the arch towards the seafront. Ask anyone and they will tell you where the arch is. Walk until you come to Turk Telekom on the right side. Take the next right into the old town and the shop is about 10 metres on the right.

Power of legumes (beans, chickpeas, lentils), bulgur, whole grains

Ozlem Warren

Legumes, whole grains, bulgur are an important part of Turkish diet, and I am a huge fan of them. They are packed with goodness, convenient and great value. At times like this, always keep dried or canned version of legumes. I also love the nutty flavour of bulgur; it is wholesome and so versatile. Here are some ideas for you to turn them into delicious, nutritious meals:



Spicy bulgur and lentil soup – Ezo Gelin Corbasi

Soups have a special place in Turkish cuisine and the meals mostly start with them. In Anatolia, it is very common to have soup to start the day, especially in winter. This spicy lentil soup is one of my favourites; rich in fibre and protein, very delicious and easy to make. It is also a great example of how we add flavour to our dishes through spices. Named after the bride “Ezo” who managed to impress her in-laws with this heartwarming soup, this soup is so delicious and simple to make that you will want to make it all the time! It also freezes very well, so I recommend making a big batch and freeze some for a heart and soul warming lunch or supper.

Note: Red pepper paste, biber salcasi, adds a wonderful, rich flavour to the soup. You can make your own red pepper paste, biber salcasi, with my recipe here (https://ozlemsturkishtable.com/2010/04/turkish-hot-pepper-paste-biber-salcasi/). If you prefer not to use red pepper paste, you can increase the amount of tomato paste to 5 tablespoons and the pul biber or red pepper flakes to 3 teaspoons or even more, depending on how spicy you would like.

Ezo Gelin Corba and many other hearty soups and authentic, wholesome Turkish recipes are included at my cookery book, Ozlem’s Turkish Table, Recipes from My Homeland, Signed copies are now 20 % OFF at this link https://www.gbpublishing.co.uk/product-page/ozlem-s-turkish-table-hardback for a limited time and delivered worldwide including the US and Canada.

Serves 6

Preparation time – 15 minutes Cooking time – 40 minutes

290 gr/1 cup split red lentils, rinsed and drained
1 onion, finely chopped
45 ml / 3 tablespoons coarse bulgur wheat, rinsed and drained
1.75 litres / 7 1/2 cups water
60 ml / 4 tablespoons tomato paste
15ml/ 1 tablespoon Turkish hot red pepper paste, biber salcasi
30ml /2 tablespoons olive oil
15ml/1 tablespoon dried mint
Juice of 1 lemon
To Serve:
10 ml / 2 tsp dried mint
5 ml / 1 tsp pul biber, red pepper flakes / paprika flakes
2 tbsp olive oil
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
Lemon wedges to serve

Heat the olive oil in a heavy, medium-sized pot and stir in the onions. Cook over a medium heat for about 4 minutes, stirring often, this will soften the onions. Add the lentils and the water. Cover and bring the pot to the boil. Cook over a medium to low heat for about 25 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Stir in the bulgur, tomato paste, red pepper paste and dried mint, season with salt and ground black pepper. Cover and cook for another 15 minutes, until the bulgur is cooked. Add some more water if the soup appears to be too thick. Pour in the lemon juice and mix well.

To serve, pour 2 tbsp olive oil in a small pan and stir in the dried mint and pul biber / red pepper flakes. Stir and gently cook over a low heat for about 40 seconds. Pour in this sauce into the soup and combine well.
Serve hot with lemon wedges by the side.

Top 10 bucket list for Türkiye

by Leyla Yvonne Ergil

From skiing to soaring in the sky to visiting ancient sites, there are a lot of adventures to be had in this spectacular country and the start of a new year is an opportune time to write up a bucket list of experiences in Turkey.

Turkey is the perfect place to cross adventures off your bucket list, offering a wide range of interesting spots to visit and unmatchable activities to explore.

Skiing in Turkey

Skiing is fun, is what I have been told repeatedly, and it is something I have always wanted to try. Luckily, Türkiye has a lot of different skiing experiences, from Uludağ, the country's most visited skiing resort town in Bursa, to Kartalkaya in Rize and Palandöken in Erzurum, each offers a distinct experience on the slopes. While Uludağ is the most accessible with the largest selection of accommodation, Palandöken has the best slopes for serious skiers and spectacular scenery, with the more laid-back Rize competing for the best views and doubling as an opportunity to discover the Black Sea region.

Thermal springs relaxation

While Turkey has a lot of thermal spring sources throughout the country and regions dotted with hotels that double as spas in towns such as Yalova, Bursa and Gure, the thermal springs in Pamukkale and Sultaniye are each a notedly unique experience. Now, Pamukkale I have visited and would certainly recommend others also check it off their bucket list as bathing in the white "cotton castle" terraced pools of thermal springs and the Artemis Pool are once-in-a-lifetime experiences due to their otherworldly backdrop. Next on my list, however, is the Sultaniye Thermal Springs, another natural spa experience set along the beautiful scenery of Köyçeğiz Lake with a large mud bath and thermal spring pools capped with their signature green domes. Reachable by boat or vehicle, a trip to this spot is on my bucket list for spring when the crowds are less and the weather is cooler, making soaking in the hot sulfur-rich pools a welcome experience.

Ancient wonder of Göbeklitepe

Göbeklitepe is an archaeological site in southeastern Türkiye and is recognized as one of the world's oldest known temple complexes. Exploring its well-preserved ancient structures and marveling at the intricate carvings and pillars dating back to around 9600 B.C. is definitely on my bucket list. While Göbeklitepe is in Şanlıurfa, which is reachable by plane from most destinations, some tours combine a trip to the archeological site with a visit to Mardin.

Hot-air balloon ride in Cappadocia

Experiencing the magical landscape of Cappadocia from a hot air balloon is definitely at the top of the list for many who have a bucket list for Turkey. Drifting above the fairy chimneys, rock formations and cave dwellings as the sun rises, I am sure it will be breathtaking.

An aerial view of hot air balloons at sunrise, Goreme, Cappadocia, Türkiye. (Getty Images Photo)

Equestrian experience

Horseback riding among the surreal landscape of Cappadocia and the Göreme Open-Air Museum, a UNESCO World Heritage site, will truly be a unique experience – a number of horseback riding establishments, such as the Dalton Brothers Ranch. Combining a hot-air balloon ride and a horseback riding adventure while exploring the rock-cut churches and monasteries in Göreme, a UNESCO World Heritage site, is one of those unique, otherworldly experiences.

Top 10 bucket list for Türkiye

Paragliding in Ölüdeniz

Taking off from the Babadağ Mountain and paragliding over the stunning Blue Lagoon of Ölüdeniz is an adrenaline-filled bucket list adventure for Turkey. With a fear of heights, I plan to work up to the adventure by visiting the beach to watch where people land and see their experience and riding the cable car up to the top ofTaking off from the Babadağ Mountain and paragliding over the stunning Blue Lagoon of Ölüdeniz is an adrenaline-filled bucket list adventure for Turkey. With a fear of heights, I plan to work up to the adventure by visiting the beach to watch where people land and see their experience and riding the cable car up to the top ofbadağ to check out the views beforehand.

Whirling dervish ceremony

Witnessing a whirling dervish ritual of spinning as a spiritual practice is definitely on my bucket list. While it is possible to watch whirling dervishes perform at the Galata Mevlevi House in Istanbul. A once-in-a-lifetime experience would be to attend a ceremony in Konya, the very spot where Sufism was born and where the death of mystic and poet Rumi, who is also buried there, is celebrated for his union with God. The commemoration takes place in the form of a festival in mid-December.

Walk the Lycian Way

The U.S. has the Appalachian Trail, Spain has the Camino de Santiago and Türkiye has the Lycian Way, which is another bucket list item for this lifetime. Take a week or more off to truly enjoy hiking this historical and picturesque route along the hilly coastline of Fethiye. I plan to visit towns such as Faralya and Kekova, stay in bed and enjoy a great breakfast.

Alaçatı herb festival

Every year in April, the picturesque and touristic town of Alaçatı kicks off the season with a huge festival devoted to the wild greens of the region. Referred to in Turkish as the Alaçatı Ot Festival, the streets are lined with stands offering tastes of different preparations of the herbs, with cooking demonstrations and competitions taking place on the sidelines. Spring is an excellent time of year to enjoy this upscale holiday resort town that draws in foodies from all over the country to participate in the festivities.

Kayaking

Turkey has several lakes in which to kayak, which in Turkish is called "canoeing." Kayaking is a fun and relaxing way to be at one with the water. In addition to kayaking clubs in Istanbul, there are a few great spots to kayak along the southern coast, which are namely the Azmak River in Akyaka's Akçapınar and the river in Marmaris' Bördübet. But the ultimate goal is to work myself up to a trip to the Yedigöller, a region with seven lakes and spectacular scenery in the Black Sea region's Bolu. Source: Daily Sabah

Supporting local charities

By Karen Froggatt

ARK – Building on strong foundations

As many readers will be aware, Ann and Alan Kennedy have retired from the Board of ARK (Animal Rescue Kusadasi). Ann has been the charity's President since its formation in 2018, creating the well-known and well-respected organisation we know today. I'm aware that there have certainly been some challenging times in those six years, including sometimes having to worry about whether income would cover expenditure and desperately trying to avoid ever having to turn away a sick animal. With lots of hard work, imagination and commitment that was thankfully avoided and thousands of Kusadasi's street animals (often in life or death situations) were helped by ARK.

Karen Froggatt (President)

I initially became involved in ARK as a supporter and joined the ARK Committee in 2022, before becoming Vice-President in early 2023. I've been a lifelong supporter of many animal charities and soon became absorbed in ARK's mission. I first came to Turkey thirty years ago and was shocked by the number of street animals and the challenges they faced. Though many were lucky to be helped by kind human beings, most didn't have a regular food supply or shelter, were constantly reproducing and had nowhere to turn when they were sick or injured. The animals in the more rural parts of Kusadasi were in an even worse position than those in built-up areas. It was in this space that ARK (and its fellow charity Paws & Claws) were born.

The situation in recent years has much improved, not least due to the Belediye's investment in its animal shelter (the Barinak), the purchasing of two animal ambulances and the recent creation of a cat neutering centre in the Marina area, which was equipped by a donation from ARK. Omer Gunel, Mayor of Kusadasi, clearly understands the importance of caring for street animals and is keen to have regular dialogue with ARK, following our initial meeting with him a few months ago.

However, there's still lots to do. Street animals are the norm in Turkey and will always need help. Unlike in most European countries, homeless animals aren't euthanised when homes can't be found for them and the volume of them is clearly more than can be handled by the Municipality alone. Mass neutering is essential, feeding and shelter (particularly in winter) will always be a challenge, and animals' illness and injuries will always present challenges.

As a result of Ann and Alan's retirement, an extraordinary general meeting (EGM) of ARK members was held on Saturday 20 January, at which the main business was to elect a new Board and Committee members – all voluntary positions. I'm very privileged to have been elected as President and will do my utmost to ensure that ARK survives and thrives. My fellow Board and Committee members are an extremely committed group, with lots of ideas. We had our first meeting directly after the EGM and we're meeting again very soon to develop our future plans.

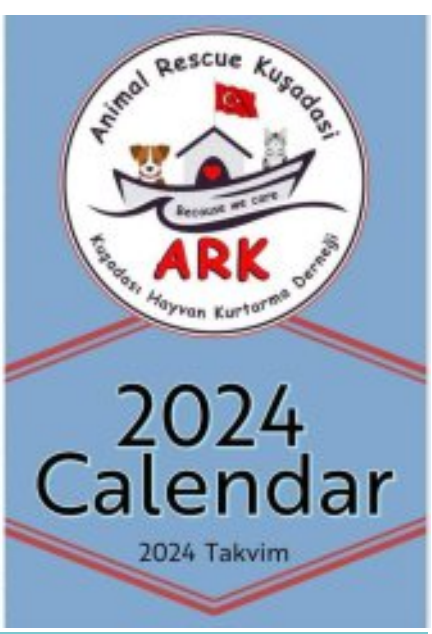
Supporting local charities

The new team is follows:

Fisun Parsons – Board member & Vice-President
Jane Moulding – Board member & Secretary/Vet Liaison
Mary Sayers – Board member & Treasurer
Shawn Parsons – Board member and IT/Donor Relations
Arda Akyuz
Nurdan Altindag
Liz Byrne
Susan Dasdan
Fahriye Et
Mutlu Et
Linda Grace
Jessica Kucukgunduz
Mandy Jones
Corinne Oakes
Tracy Soper.

As I've found since becoming involved in ARK, forming and running such an organisation (a 'dernek') is extremely demanding in Turkey, possibly more so than in the UK which I'm used to. A particular challenge is attracting (and retaining) 16 people to be members of the Committee, each of whom is required to be checked and approved by the District Governor's Office. Of these, 5 are elected to the Board and are the ones who are legally responsible and accountable for the organisation's affairs. Five other members of the Committee are required to oversee the Board members and another three members of the Committee are appointed to be internal auditors, being required to produce reports annually, in addition to which the District Governor's Office conducts audits. Accountability and legal compliance are the order of the day, which is entirely appropriate, though means there's always lots to do and lots to learn!

I look forward to working alongside my fellow ARK Committee members (and other active supporters) and to making an even bigger difference to the lives of our street animals. We'll definitely be producing regular reports and thank Ege Eye for publishing them. Onwards and upwards!



We still have our ARK 2024 calendars for sale. You can call into the offices of The Ege Eye and pick one up or click on the image in the newsletter to find out where you can purchase them.

How Kusadasi’s new city square will look when completed

Our Lütfi Suyolcu City Square and Living Center project will soon be at the service of our citizens with 38 shops, 2-storey 311 car parking, amphitheatre for 500 people, children's playground and walking areas.

The Environment

Turning scraps into gold: Istanbul tackles organic waste

A new law in France has brought the discussion of best practices for waste management in Istanbul to the agenda.

The law, which came into force as of Jan. 1, made it compulsory for citizens to compost food and plant waste.

Accordingly, organic waste will be collected in plastic garbage bins or collection points distributed by municipalities and converted into compost or biogas.

According to 2021 data, the amount of food thrown away annually in Türkiye is approximately 93 kilograms per person.

Istanbul alone generates 18,000 tons of household waste daily, 44.2 percent of which is organic waste.

The transformation of organic waste, which constitutes about one-third of household waste, by separating it at its source benefits both the environment and the economy. However, separation of organic waste at source is not a common practice apart from a few exceptions in Türkiye.

The task of collecting and sorting waste from households and workplaces falls on district municipalities.

Filiz Kara, deputy director of the Istanbul Municipality Waste Management Branch, said that most organic waste is generated by businesses such as restaurants and hotels rather than households.

"With the protocol we signed two years ago, we took on the task of collecting food waste from businesses in Istanbul. We produce soil-improving compost from this organic waste and use it in the landscaping of parks and gardens."

Waste collected and sorted by district municipalities in Istanbul is brought to transfer stations. From there, they are taken to recycling facilities by Istanbul Municipality's garbage trucks.

After resorting, the remaining waste is directed to landfills and incineration plants. Here, 1,300,000 megawatt hours of electricity is generated annually from the methane gas and combustion heat released during the decomposition process of organic waste.

This amount is equivalent to the annual electricity needs of 2.5 million people.

There are also best practices implemented by some district municipalities within the scope of Zero Waste management.

On Tuesdays and Fridays, the Üsküdar Municipality collects packaging waste consisting of glass, metal, plastic and paper, in addition to household waste to be recycled. The income generated from recycling the waste is used for social benefits for those in need, such as food, clothing, fuel, food aid and other materials for students.

Another example is the Beykoz Municipality, which converts biodegradable waste into compost with manual composting machines installed in its social facilities.

A project by Başakşehir Municipality allows recycling waste collected from housing estates and complexes to be converted into points through a mobile application where users can earn various gifts.

Within the scope of Fatih Municipality's project, those who bring their recyclable waste (packaging, waste oil, electronic waste) to a mobile waste centre in the last week of each month earn points and can also buy food for pets.

The Zeytinburnu Municipality has come up with "Z cards," to which the municipality loads points in return for the separated waste from households. The cardholders can use their card to shop at contracted markets. Source: Hurriyet Daily News

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Scientists raise concerns over unclean water in quake zone

Following investigations in the aftermath of the Kahramanmaraş-centered earthquakes that rattled 11 provinces, a team of scientists has found that water supplies were deemed unfit for consumption in some areas, prompting urgent attention to the need for water treatment units.

Following investigations in the aftermath of the Kahramanmaraş-centered earthquakes that rattled 11 provinces, a team of scientists has found that water supplies were deemed unfit for consumption in some areas, prompting urgent attention to the need for water treatment units.

The earthquakes that struck on Feb. 6, 2023, affected a vast geography, and caused great destruction, including water networks.

A group of scientists from Dokuz Eylül University (DEU) traveled to the region last week to conduct investigations.

Water networks were repaired after the earthquake. However, due to the ongoing earthquakes, turbid and muddy water can still flow from time to time. This water should not be utilized. The World Health Organization advises that the turbidity rate in drinking water should not be above 5 NTU.

"The measurements we took showed this value between 10 and 50 in some places. We also saw this value drop to a normal level in the measurements we took a few days later. We cannot always take water samples in the wells we have identified as sources. Either the groundwater has been withdrawn or displaced. In order to reach scientific results, these sources need to be monitored for a long time," Professor Azize Ayol from DEU's Department of Environmental Engineering stated.

Drawing attention to the need for treatment units in the region, Ayol said, "Access to clean water in the regions may take a long time. There are areas where these water treatment units need to be installed urgently. I believe water purification systems should be made widespread, especially in disaster areas."

Ayol also shared that DEU’s water treatment units started operating in the disaster zone immediately after the earthquakes and that there were currently seven of them in the region. Source: Hurriyet Daily News

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If you are calling, texting or WhatsApping any of the above Turkish numbers from outside Turkey please add 009 to the beginning of the number.

You can contact our volunteers any time from Monday to Friday between 10 am and 5 pm (Turkish time)

For out-of-hours emergencies call 0256 612 3207, or our UK number 0207 078 7443 or our Ireland number 01 657 1475 or call, SMS or WhatsApp 05066 620 185 – 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

We also would appreciate if you could do the same for our Ege Eye Facebook group.
https://tinyurl.com/5n6vrjd2

One last request, The Ege Eye is a public group. You do not have to join to view our articles. I would be grateful if you would join and pm me your email address so that you can receive our regular monthly newsletter. Send your email to lucy@theegeeye.com or inbox me on messenger.

Regards Lucy

THE EGE EYE
"News for the Turkish coast since 2005"

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When you are applying for your residence permit, please bring a Turkish mobile phone with you.