

This Free E-Book is brought to you by Natural-Aging.com.

100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment
Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances
Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!

Istanbul, Turkey – Where Two Continents Meet

By Lori Guretzki

Istanbul, Turkey – Where Two Continents Meet

by: **Lori Guretzki**

Istanbul, situated along the shores of the Bosphorus Strait, is the only city in the world bridging two continents, Europe and Asia; it is as old as civilization itself and as modern as carrying cell phones.

My husband and I were very excited about vacationing in Istanbul. We flew with Lufthansa Airlines from Vancouver, B.C., stopping in Frankfurt, Germany to change planes and approximately 15 hours later, we were there.

The entrance requirement for Turkey was a Passport with an expiry date one month past our exit date, and a Visitor's Visa. The Visa can be purchased at the Ataturk Airport upon arriving in Istanbul. The cost is \$45.00 U.S. per person.

We were met at the airport by the Bell Hop from The Hotel Zurich, the hotel we had booked over the Internet. We became friends with the hotel's general manager, Mr. Turan islam, exchanging e-mail messages until we had agreed to \$50.00 U.S. per night. The rate included a full breakfast daily, all the services in the hotel and transportation from the airport to the hotel. The Bell Hop had arrived in a taxi to pick us up.

Riding along in the back of the taxi, we were somewhat apprehensive as to what we should expect next, we were at the mercy of the Turks. We couldn't speak the language and we weren't familiar with the currency or their customs. Well, we didn't need to worry; we were greeted with the very best in hospitality. A fruit bowl, a bottle of wine, an ample supply of bottled water and juice, and a hand written note from the general manager were all waiting for us upon arrival.

We were delighted with our room. We were on the 6th floor, a large room with huge windows that allowed us an unobstructed view of the Sea of Marmara and a large modern bathroom; hand soap, face cloths and tissues were not included. We were only steps from the hotel's pool, exercise room and the stairway to the Dining Room.

Istanbul, Turkey – Where Two Continents Meet

I was relieved to see that female tourists were not expected to cover their heads with the traditional scarf called basortusu, or wear the traditional long baggy trousers called salvar.

Finding our way around Istanbul was easy (a map helps if you remember to take one); transportation by taxi, bus or Tram was efficient and inexpensive and a life saver in the heat. Tickets for the Tram could be purchased at the kiosks located on street corners everywhere adjacent to the Tram stops. Istanbul's only train travelled only around the outside of the city. It was clean but old and slow. We rode the train once and met an English speaking doctor who was born in Toronto and has lived and worked in Istanbul for the last ten years.

We found ourselves lost many times so we would ask anyone on the street for directions; with a little sign language we always got the information we needed. I would recommend that upon venturing out, you take the card from your room with the hotel's name and address on it.

Public washrooms were not plentiful. When we did find one, a Turkish gentleman would be sitting outside the doorway for the equivalent of 25 cents he would give me two squares of toilet paper, that resembled sand paper. A good idea is to carry your own tissue.

I can't say enough about shopping in Istanbul. The Grand Covered Bazaar has over 4000 shops, selling everything from Turkish rugs to leather goods, beautifully embroidered linens and fine jewelry. It was not unusual to see a shop selling tourist trinkets located next to a shop selling fine silk fabrics. We wandered for hours up and down the many lanes and alleyways and still didn't see it all.

When we tired of shopping in the Bazaar, there were shops, boutiques and kiosks leading to the Bazaar and down every street. This was a shopper's paradise. It was rare to see women working in the shops though; men dominate the market place even in shops where only women's undergarments were sold.

The Turks are masters at bargaining so be prepared. Don't pay the price marked on the item or you will have insulted the shopkeeper. If we left home thinking the last thing we needed was a Turkish rug, think again. We would be invited into a shop, offered a cup of sweet apple tea, or black coffee served in a cute little demitasse cup, and the bargaining would begin. Don't be surprised if you go home with a rug, we did.

Also worth visiting was the Spice Market. Before entering the huge partially covered areas, the smell of cinnamon, mint and thyme greeted us at the door. Upon entering, I was hypnotized by the beautiful brilliant reds, oranges and yellows of every spice and herb imaginable. They were displayed in large jute sacks neatly stacked on the floor at the entrance to each little shop or in glass containers on shelves that lined the walls of the shops. The aroma of coffee beans, bulk tea and fresh baked goods made our mouths water. Be sure to purchase Saffron and pure Vanilla while you are there, the prices were reasonable and makes for wonderful gifts for family and friends back home.

There are many tours available in Istanbul and they offer English speaking guides. She Tours picked us up at our hotel and brought us back at no extra cost. The first stop on our tour was the beautiful Beylerbeyi Palace on the Asiatic shore of the Bosphorus Strait. It was the summer residence of the

Istanbul, Turkey – Where Two Continents Meet

Ottoman Sultans, built in 1865 and is now a Museum for the public. As we entered the Palace, we were given plastic boots to cover our shoes, our purses were searched and we went through a metal detector before starting our tour. Continuing on, we crossed The Bosphorus Toll Bridge linking Europe and Asia and then stopped at Camlica Hill, the highest point in Istanbul. The view of the city was breathtaking. This tour lasted five hours, cost \$30.00 U.S. each and was well worth the money. She Tours offer many tours, one to fit every interest and time schedule. The larger hotels are happy to arrange the tours for you.

We didn't need a tour guide to visit The Museum of Hagia Sophia or "Divine Wisdom" that was built in the 6th century or, The Blue Mosque named for the blue tiles covering its interior walls and built in the 17th century. The Blue Mosque is the only mosque in the world with six minarets and is the most beautiful and grand mosque in Istanbul.

We also visited The Beyazit Mosque the oldest mosque in Istanbul; the entrance fee was \$2.00 U.S. per person however we found out later it should have been free admission. This mosque was the only one where we had to remove our shoes, and I was given a scarf to cover my hair. The scarf smelled musty and wasn't terribly clean.

The Turks are purists in their culinary tastes so food wasn't smothered in sauces and very little herbs or spices were used in the dishes we tried. The seafood was local and tasted fresh and was usually served with boiled rice; it was very tasty. A favorite meal of the locals was a Kebap; a large roll of mutton or beef cooked slowly on a vertical skewer in front of a heating element. When we ordered a Kebap, we could watch as it was shaved from the roll and served on an open bun. We didn't need anything with it, it was very tasty all by itself.

The evening meals could be compared to an evening of entertainment. We were wine and dined for hours in air conditioned restaurants or outside on the patios and we would leave full and feeling like we had made new friends.

Breakfast was not a popular meal in Istanbul. If your hotel doesn't offer it, be prepared, restaurants don't open for business until late in the morning. We were fortunate to be staying in a hotel that offered a large variety of fresh breakfast items every morning; items like sweet buns, yogurt, cereal, hot soups and scrambled or boiled eggs. Their morning drink was the ever popular Tang orange juice.

The water in Istanbul was safe to drink but not wanting to take chances, we purchased our own bottled water very cheap (5 liters for the equivalent of 90 cents).

Every evening we would watch from our hotel window as vendors pushed their carts up and down the streets, offering stuffed mussels, meatballs made from barley, and pancakes filled with raw meat, as well as other carts loaded with every kind of fresh garden vegetable and locally picked nuts. And, not to be overlooked, Istanbul does have a MacDonal'd's Restaurant for those who want to try Turkish hamburgers, french-fries and ice cream.

We never found a Laundromat anywhere in the city. With the use of sign language and lots of laughter, the maid in our hotel understood that we needed to do some laundry. She took it with her

Istanbul, Turkey – Where Two Continents Meet

and brought it back the next day, ironed and hanging on hangars or folded very neatly. We used the service twice and the cost was \$100.00 U.S. I would recommend purchasing clean clothes as you need them; Turkish made clothing was very inexpensive to buy, and fun to shop for.

Istanbul is the largest city in the Republic of Turkey. It has a population of more than nine million people and can have as many as eight million tourists visiting at one time. It's main religion is Muslim; five times during the day and night, at precise times, we would hear the call to prayer from the various mosques. In the beginning, especially when we were awakened in the night, we would hear wailing echoing through the city, however after a few days and after we knew where the sounds were coming from, we became accustomed to it and actually listened for it.

The currency is the Turkish Lire. There were many banks in Istanbul; the most popular being the Yapi Kredi Bank where we could exchange our money or if the banks were closed, we had no problem using the many ATMs situated around the city.

Tipping was not the norm but just like at home, when we were given good service, we felt they had earned a tip. In our hotel, by the time we were leaving for home, we had trained the staff to accept our tips; they had definitely earned them.

This holiday was an amazing experience. I have barely touched on the many interesting places we visited. It wasn't necessary to know the history, the language, customs or currency before embarking on this trip to Istanbul. We were made to feel welcome by everyone and the language barrier, only a

minor inconvenience. I would be amiss if I didn't mention that at times there was the odd hint of terrorism but nothing that affected us in any way nor would it stop us from returning to Istanbul.

As we were loading our luggage into the taxi to take us back to the Atutark Airport for our journey home, the staff on duty and the ones not working at The Hotel Zurich that evening came out to bid us a fond farewell and safe trip. Has that ever happened in any other country? I know we have never experienced it, and it was such a wonderful feeling to know we were accepted, respected and considered their friends.

If you are looking for an exotic holiday destination, with friendly, hospitable people, an ideal climate and beautiful scenery or if you want to explore a city filled with Ancient sites and ruins mixed with increasing modernization, or how about just a fabulous shopping holiday well, Istanbul is the destination for you.

Lori Guretzki lives in Abbotsford, B.C. with her husband of 23 years. She works in the office of a large high school in Abbotsford and has a home based business called Lori's Canine Creations that she started 4 years ago. She also shares the love of traveling with her husband and together they have visited such places as Peru, Singapore, Malaysia, Aruba, West Indies and many, many more.

Lori's latest accomplishment is her book, *The Reluctant Traveller*, an amusing and entertaining day by day diary of the trials and tribulations of holidaying in Peru, South America, a country she new nothing about. Her book is in the process of being published and will be available soon through the Internet.

Lori's husband is also a recent published author.

Lori's future plans include retiring from her full time job within 2 years; continuing with Lori's Canine Creation and traveling with her husband.

Exclusive Travel Turkey

By jasmin Dogan

Exclusive Travel Turkey by jasmin Dogan

Turkey hotels, hotels in Turkey, country turkey, travelling turkey, turchia, car

rental, bodrum hotels, cappadocia hotels, cappadocia tours, istanbul, istanbul hotels, turquia, tyrkiet, ankara hotels, belek hotels, caicco turchia, croceria turchia, flight to turkey, fuga fine times, gay travel turkey, holidays turkey, hotels istanbul, hotels turkey, istambul turkey, istanbul car rental, izmir hotels, izmir, kushadasi, kapadokya, marmaris hotels, maramaris, ritz carlton istanbul, rent a car, pamukkale, country of turkey, smyrna, smirne, sultanahmet, ticket turkey, toruko, tour operator, tour turkey, tourism in turkey, travel istanbul, travel turkey, troy, turka, turca, turkei, turkey, flights, turkey tourist information, turkey tours, turkia, turkije hotel, turkey, turkish, tyrkiet rejser, viaje turquia, dalaman, fethiye, bodrum, ankara, pamukkale, istanbul, istambul, estambol, turkish airlines, thy, kemer marina, kushadasi, bosphorus istanbul, travel agency turkey, travel agent turkey, tour operator istanbul, turkije hotels, turkey accommodation, istanbul city guide, tour turkey.

None

Related Content:

Read more Content at

Related Products:

: A genuine resource center for Quality Ebooks and Softwares



This Free E-Book has been brought to you by Natural-Aging.com.

[100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment](#)
Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances
Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!