

Saturday, Nov 7 (con't)

Final thoughts

And then it was over. It was time to say good bye to Mutlu and Muzo, our guide and driver. It was time to fly back to Istanbul and back home. It was an amazing tour through history. Turkey is a beautiful country, filled both with natural beauty and beauty of the people and beauty of history and civilization.

So as the sun set on our trip, here are some final notes on things we learned about Turkey:

- Military service mandatory for men. It used to be 15 months but now is 12 months.
- Dur means stop.
- There are 70 million people in Turkey. 90% are Muslim. Of those maybe 40% pray five times a day and of those 20% go to the mosque. The rest are secular
- Gas here is the most expensive in world at about \$2.00 per liter with 60% tax.
- A two bedroom apartment rents for about 1500 Turkish lira which is a lot of money for the Turks. That would be with the Sea view. To buy an apartment would be \$400,000. But most people rent.
- They are building a bridge from Izmir to Istanbul. Will take only 3.5 hours to drive but won't be ready until the end of 2016.
- High school is mandatory. To go to college you have to pass an exam but then it's free.
- For all the Jewish history in Turkey, currently there are only about 5000 Jews living in the whole country.
- Thank you in Turkish sounds like: Tea sugar a dream.

So, tea sugar a dream to our guides, Ramazan and Mutlu, our drivers and all the people we met along the way, those that smiled at us, those that allowed me to take their picture, those that were hospitable. We hope the future holds peace for the Mideast and Europe, and the world. We hope we can all experience each other's cultures freely and with love.

