

COMMENTS ON TEACHER STUDY TOURS '10 – GROUP III

We arrived in Istanbul as a group of strangers but we are leaving as friends. What a fabulous journey! Without a doubt, this was the best trip I've ever taken as a teacher. My life has been enriched by an infusion of Turkish culture and history and I know my students will benefit as my experiences bring new life to my lesson plans.

Caroline Owen, Altaloma, CA, USA

I feel that this study tour has absolutely broadened my view of Turkish history and culture. I am excited to share what I have learned with my students, colleagues and community.

Mandy Bush, Corona, CA, USA

I remember reading on the TCF website under Teacher Comments regarding their summer study tour to Turkey what one teacher said. She said that the trip had been a life changing experience. Much to my delight, a Turkish Delight, I have had a similar "life-changing" experience and so much more. I feel like I have truly taken a magic carpet ride through an incredible history and culture. This is not a tourist's view of an interesting country by any means. Instead, this trip has not only positively affected my view of Turkey but it has profoundly altered my view of the world by providing me with sights and sounds and tastes and touches of a culture with so much to offer. Because this trip afforded me the chance to examine something in such great detail and, by so doing, find so much more, this experience has challenged me to look with new eyes at anything in great detail and to, also, find so much more. Thank you Turkey and thank you TCF!

Cheryle Markel, Costa Mesa, CA, USA

This teacher tour trip was truly amazing. It was a one in a lifetime experience. The sites/places, buildings, museums, music, art, food and the people were incredible! I feel blessed and honored to have been able to be a part of this year's 2010 teacher study tour. I know that because of this experience my unit on Turkey is going to be so much richer than previous units; I can't wait till I get to share Turkey with my students. If I could come back to Turkey or do this program I would take it in a heartbeat; there is no doubt in my mind about it. This trip was more than I could imagine. Turkey is the place to be! I will really miss Turkey. I will miss our tour guide (Orhan), our bus driver (Metin) and our helper (Gurcan); they made Turkey much more pleasant and interesting. This teacher study tour gave me a new perspective on Turkey. I always knew a little bit about Turkey growing up, but I never expected it to be this spectacular. I now feel like an expert on Turkey and am ready to share this with other teachers, my students and friends. We were treated like royalty. Everyone on this trip ensured that we were well taken care of. This really showed how hospitable and amazing Turkish people are.

Daisy Contreras, Rancho Cucamonga, CA, USA

There are many cultural bridges around the globe; ones that root themselves in diverse, rich lands and infuse themselves into a flavorful mix. The Turkish Cultural Foundation has led us across to the heart of all roots, here in Turkey. I never imagined the amount of knowledge that has been gifted to me through the tour. The treasures found here in the geography, intricate art, flavorful music, rich cuisine, and preservation of the history of so many civilizations is unbelievable. In our time, Turkey's modern state is so essential for Americans to come to understand. The belief in this program for teachers will be so impacting. The opportunity to spend this time with educators from around the

United States and being taught by such passionate coordinators and guides is ideal. I can't express enough thanks to TCF for their vision and having faith in us to carry on what we've been able to experience. The impact on all our students will be immense in creating tolerance, peace, and excitement toward learning all this region has to offer.

Nicki Young, Redlands, CA, USA

Beautiful country
Seeped in culture and kindness
Worth every lira!

I am honored to have been chosen for this experience. I have learned a great deal through this once in a lifetime opportunity. I absolutely cannot wait to return.

Nicole Dysart, Redlands, CA, USA

This program will not only create a better understanding of Turkey, but it will create better relations between our two countries! This life altering experience all began by attending a one-day seminar. The photos I have taken cannot capture the beauty and hospitality of the Turkish people.

Melania Mejia, Riverside, CA, USA

This has been an amazing experience. TCF has really taken care of us. Everywhere we have traveled to has been beautiful and seemingly without a hitch! Every day is a new adventure and an exciting experience. I love the diversity of Turkey – geographically and culturally. Having this experience will help me teach Modern World History – the rise of Turkey as a Republic and the religious/secular issues that Turkey is dealing with in their government and culture.

Kelly Moore, Temecula, CA, USA

Each talk and site visit was remarkable. With our completely packed itinerary, nothing seemed repetitive or unnecessary. Each and every story, talk, or discussion was well thought and presented. Orhan: Words cannot express how wonderful this man is for this work. All the things I mentioned in this questionnaire were enhanced as they were shared with this man. Time then spent in the hotel and on the town with him was outstanding. Orhan guided each moment of this trio. Always there with additional information, advice, and wonderful humor.

Jody LeFevers, Santa Fe, NM, USA

My Turkish study tour experience is one I will remember and cherish forever. It was an incredible journey into the ancient past and a delightful glimpse at modern day Turkey. What a fascinating country. It opened my eyes to the complexities and beauties of Turkey's people. From the bustling metropolis of Istanbul to the dusty roads of Cappadocia my head was spinning like the Dervish. What a wonderful opportunity for teachers. It was an honor to share an enchanting two weeks with fellow educators from around the country.

Kennan Girdner, Santa Fe, NM, USA

In my more than 30 years of teaching I've never been treated with such generosity and respect. The fine staff of the Turkish Cultural Foundation genuinely understands our potential and supports us in reaching it, for the sake of our students and the world. Now I ask myself "Why should we settle for less?"

Nancy Lee Marquis, Santa Fe, NM, USA

Orhan, our guide, was amazing. He seemed to come from the past, present and future of Turkey. I see him sitting as an advisor to the grand vizier in the sultan's court, singing revolutionary Turkish folk tales and attending Pink Floyd concerts on the Bosphorus. He is the most knowledgeable person I have ever met and quite funny. A stand up historian, truly, and he was most helpful. I remember losing my camera at a truck stop and Orhan was able to locate it, have it put on a bus and delivered to our next destination practically before we did. This would not have happened this way in the United States. The Turks are the most kind-hearted people I have met in all my travels. They are a very resilient, hardy and amusing nation. It seems that all that is good in people Turkey has been practicing for a long time.

Scott Hauenstein, Santa Fe, NM, USA

Thank you for providing this opportunity to visit your country. I am looking forward to sharing my experience with my family, students and fellow faculty members.

Heather McCord, Birdsboro, PA, USA

More Roman sites than Italy; more Greek sites than Greece; and a rich tapestry of diverse geographical and cultural experiences await those fortunate enough to travel through the land of Turkey. I am forever grateful to have had such an adventure.

Laura Zamperini, Lititz, PA, USA

The tour was amazing. It's hard to explain in writing... actually it's impossible to explain in writing the value of this tour. The culture, the history, the scenery, the sites, and the exemplary treatment by TCF were all fantastic. If you have the chance, put all of your reservations aside and jump in. You will be happily surprised you did.

Scott Snyder, Sinking Spring, PA, USA

Going to Turkey was like being the new kid at school... Unfamiliar and a bit scary, until I found out that it was a lot like where I came from.

Jacob W. Bosmoe, Aberdeen, SD, USA

Words and photos cannot do justice to the beauty and intrigue of Turkey. It is a must see experience.

Barbara Miller, Clearlake, SD, USA

Azure domes rise six
Bony fingers to the sky
Reaching for Allah

Exotic moonscape
Dervishes whirl in the dust

Blessings from Allah

Pink castle glows Rose
Sad Jesus surveys his loss
Now where do I go?

Plebeians sleep soundly
A denial rankles deep
The elite fly high

Kathy Keffeler, Rapid City, SD, USA

Hearing and learning about Turkey is like opening a book and reading a page, but traveling to and experiencing Turkey is like reading through the book on the edge of your seat. I have studied about and taught on Turkey, but traveling through Turkey has opened my eyes in new ways. I have been to Turkey and I have seen Turkey but I gave so much more to learn about this incredible country. The teacher study tour to Turkey is a once-in-a-lifetime experience that gives you a taste of this beautiful country, but leaves you hungry for more. The sights leave you speechless, the sounds of “merhaba” bring a smile to your face, the vibrant colors of the market paint a beautiful picture in your mind, the aromas and tastes of the cuisine fill you with joy, and the memories last a lifetime.

Brady Jay Olsen, Sioux Falls, SD, USA

I have never visited a country with such big hearts. The people of Turkey were wonderful.

Patti Ward-Maguire, Sioux Falls, SD, USA

Today I got a family heirloom. From its place of honor in my house, I can show how it reminds me that good things take time, and things of value last forever. Just like all the archeological sites we visited in Turkey. My heirloom also reminds me of the work ethic of the amazing Turkish people. Good things take time – a delicious meal, a great tour, and my Turkish rug. Things of value last forever – my memories of Turkey, the friendships I have made, and my new Turkish rug. Thank you for this gift.

Lynn Lagner, Watertoen, SD, USA

I never imagined what a rich array of beauty, history, and culture Turkey offers to the world. The variety of places we visited and explored – museums, mosques, artisan workshops, archeological sites among others – combined with the depth of information makes it difficult to decide what to teach about. I could truly create an entire unit, not just one lesson. We were so well taken of during the entire tour. All members of TCF worked hard to ensure our comfort and answer our questions. This trip was definitely one of a lifetime.

Barbara Vandeleur, Bainbridge Island, WA, USA

This study tour is an incredibly rich and diverse look at a country that is essential to understand in history and today’s world. The range of sites and experiences on this study tour was incredible, I feel like I’ve been here for two months, not two weeks! The TCF and Orhan will do everything in their power to make this trip safe, comfortable, delicious, interesting, fun, informative, and well rounded. I

gained such a deep knowledge and appreciation of Turkish culture and history from this study tour, and I know it will make an impact on my teaching in many ways.

Abby Drake, Seattle, WA, USA

I had an amazing time in Turkey. It's been an incredible journey with some truly amazing people, I felt like I was travelling in a caravan that transcended time and (will) have arrived at a destination with a more open mind and heart. The Turkish people have been so generous and I look forward to sharing Turkish culture wherever I go.

Jennifer Dunn, Seattle, WA, USA

I feel deeply grateful to the TCF for offering this experience. It was one of the richest adventures I have ever had in my life. As I prepare to leave Turkey and return to the US, I reflect on the numerous ways in which this country is the keystone that holds the East and West together. It's incredible to be in this convergence zone where Turks welcome travelers from all over the world to explore the richness and diversity of human civilization in this land. I leave Turkey feeling as though this country holds the key to the future of East-West relations, politically and culturally. I have loved witnessing the harmonious dichotomies of daily life here! As our guide, Orhan framed the journey through his remarkable lens that blended history, sociology, linguistics, geography and pop culture. He kept me intrigued, inspired, and entertained with his insight, charisma and humor.

Meera Patankar, Seattle, WA, USA