

## **COMMENTS ON TEACHER STUDY TOURS '10 – Group II**

It was wonderful. I have been abroad nine times and I do think this has been the best of all nine trips. The people were wonderful to us. The places we saw were spectacular! The food was good, the hotels excellent, and our guide. You might not ever know how much this trip meant to me. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

**Bobby Hill, AL, USA**

This was my first trip abroad and was unforgettable. The people here are warm and friendly. Even though language is a barrier, communication was still achieved. The country is beautiful in its diversity, from the hustle and bustle of the big city life in Istanbul, to the calm and slow life of the rural villages. Even though our history may be very different, we all share the same goals for our future: a better life for our coming generations. Even though we are thousands of miles apart, we can be close with the push of a few buttons. The insights this trip has given me will be passed on to my classes and I am honored to be given the opportunity to do so. Thank you TCF!

**Julia McCombs, Birmingham, AL, USA**

This has truly been one of the most educational and enriching educational experiences in 31 years of teaching. The unique geographical features and events will enhance many geography and science lessons- such as the erosion resulting in unique Cappadocian rock structures. The wonderful fine arts, history, and literature knowledge acquired are too extensive to name. These journeys will help many teachers reintroduce essential historical concepts- such as the impact of the Ottoman Empire- to all areas of the curriculum. Turkey's role is crucial worldwide so we teachers are fortunate to have this enlightening opportunity. We can begin to clarify so many misconceptions about Turkey. Every detail was planned and handled impeccably. The guides, drivers, and assistants were always professional and cheerful. I cannot imagine how the experience could have been more reinvigorating as well as comprehensive. The personal encounters (meeting people in schools and at TCF) and hands-on experiences (paper marbling, hiking in sites, archaeological digs, pottery, and rug making-particularly silk thread) truly brought the culture to life. **Georgia Miller, Mountain Brook, AL, USA**

This trip has been a revelation of knowledge of the diversity of a country and a people who have imprinted the history of our planet. Turks are a courageous, loving people who have embraced their history and have survived turmoil, and used their individual resources to move into the future. As I leave this beautiful country and people, I will savor their kindness, generosity, joy of life in my heart and mind as a special gift from the TCF. What a treasure and what a fabulous opportunity as an educator. I remain in awe and in love with Turkey.

**Nicki Linton, Pell City, AL, USA**

This study tour has truly been a once in a lifetime opportunity to begin to understand the complexity, richness, and diversity that can be found in Turkey. This tour was so many tours in one—a history tour in which the significance of the country in world religions and politics from pre-Biblical times on was explained and experienced. An art tour in which we got a chance to see beautiful works from more than a millennium ago and see current artisans working to keep those arts alive and creating beautiful work today. An eating tour with the most amazing food—delicious, abundant, fresh, and authentic to each region. I feel grateful that I was chosen for this trip. I cannot wait to share all that I have learned with other teachers in my district, and with friends and relatives. Everyone needs to come to Turkey at least once—and if they can, over and over again!

**Shari Bernstein, Silver Spring, MD, USA**

Turkey sings to my soul on so many different levels. Historically, who knew it had more Roman sites than Italy and more Greek sites than Greece? Culture! What an exciting mix of diversity! Here all roads meet it seems. Ancient civilizations still live among the towns and cities, it's a part of life, not regulated to history books or museums. Food! What great food! The infinite variety of fresh fruits and vegetables

from far and near, the combinations of spices and flavors leave me looking forward to the next meal. Geographically! What a geographical wonder Turkey is. Education! The school visits made me think of how much the American Educational System could benefit from the Turkish example. Turkey is way too wonderful for that!

**Fay Montelione, South Berwick, MN, USA**

By participating in this study tour, I have become a more empowered teacher. Through me, students will be able to experience the rich history and present greatness of Turkey. No longer, will I skip Turkish history because of my lack of knowledge. **Andrena Curtis, Charlotte, NC, USA**

Turkey has proved a true delight. Turkey really is comprised of so many “pieces”. The eras of migration, conquest, and assimilation has produced such a diverse, rich, layered place. This impression came to me so strongly as we examined the Catalhoyuk site. I realized that as we journey from city to city, we are shifting and sifting through so many myriad layers. I am only just beginning to understand what I have experienced. My wish is that my students will realize that Turkey is a delight.

**Catherine Allen, Greenville, NC, USA**

The Study Tour to Turkey has been a valuable opportunity for me as both an educator and an individual. From the mesmerizing dervishes to the surreal formations of Cappadocia, Turkey is a place of great beauty and continuous transformation. I am filled with ideas for lessons to share with my students. I have learned so much during my visit and hope to return someday.

**Holly Loranger, Mebane, NC, USA**

From the Blue Mosque of Istanbul to the fairy towers of Cappadocia, the Turkish Cultural Foundation provides a tour of breadth, insight, and education. This combined with the wit of our guide and a backdrop of ever changing scenery will allow me to take the culture of Turkey home with me to my classroom, civic organizations, community, and especially, many wonderful memories.

**Linda Seymour, Snowhill, NC, USA**

This is a trip that all teachers should have the opportunity to take. There is something here for all content areas- geography, history, science, music, art. Your perspective of Turkey will change and your lesson plans will never be the same. This trip is intense, but the education is wonderful. Things you only read about come alive and you can say to your students: “Yes, Cappadocia does look like that, I was there.” While we are now headed for home, the trip will forever be remembered fondly.

**Judy Perry, Center Ossipee, NH, USA**

T= touched by the willingness of the Turkish people to open their land to American teachers

U=understanding of the importance of cross cultural communication and commitment

R= reevaluating our preconceived notions about the Turkish country

K=keeping new friendships and alliances alive

E=everyone has broadened their horizons

Y=yet another reason why I teach!

**Nancy Gagnon, North Fracestown, NH, USA**

Like a teacher gives their students knowledge, the Turkish Cultural Foundation has given me a love for Turkey. The vision of the Turkey Study Tour far outweighs its intended agenda. This is a trip that will not only impact my teaching in the classroom but will leave an everlasting imprint on my life. The massive itinerary of this study tour combines Turkish culture, history, society, and geography. What surprised me the most about Turkey was the impact of Ataturk in modern day life. The dream of his secular nation that will include all people continues to strive and prosper in modern Middle East today. As geography teacher the topography of Turkey is phenomenal. From the Mediterranean coastline, to the interior harvest land, Turkey exudes that it is a place for all interests. I am blessed with this experience to travel

to Turkey. It has been a gift beyond its expectations. What a memory, what an experience, I have been given. My gift in return will be to share all that I have learned to my friends, students, and family.

**Shannon Fernald, Portsmouth, NH, USA**

Turkey is an amazing country. It is as varied in its landscape as it is in its people and culture. To the Turkish Cultural Foundation, know how grateful I am for having been given this unbelievable experience. I thank you all from the bottom of my heart. I now consider myself an official ambassador of Turkey. I will share my experience every chance I get!

**Nancy Larkin, Cornwall, NY, USA**

I thought this study tour was an outstanding experience. It was top notch and ranks the best among study tours I have participated in. I appreciate the generosity of the Turkish Cultural Foundation. I know how we have struggled at the state level to get questions on Ataturk and Suleiman and the Ottomans on to the test. Because, these topics are not evenly covered around the states, it's not easy. I've gotten some ideas as a result of this study tour and I'm going to share them at State Ed. **Nancy Maguire, Cornwall, NY, USA**

I have learned so much about this country so far. The people are friendly and the landscape is tremendously breathtaking. I was exposed to culture and history and I truly have a strong sense of how the Turkish people endured progressed throughout generations. I feel lucky and I am prepared to spread my knowledge about Turkey and promote this country to anyone who is willing to take the opportunity to listen. I feel very at home here, especially, Istanbul.

**Mary Lee-Mehl, Hurley, NY, USA**

Overall, my first trip outside the USA has been a breathtaking and unbelievable experience. It has been an educational whirlwind tour through the history, culture, and modernity of Turkish life. I would never trade my experience for anything in the world. I wish I could stay longer and live in Turkey. My conceptions of Turkey were disproved as I learned Turkey is full of extraordinarily talented people who truly value their culture, art, and history. I am leaving this experience a different person and thanks to the Turkish Cultural Foundation, I am able to transfer much of this experience to my students. Thanks!

**Clinton Desouza, Poughkeepsie, NY, USA**

Turkey has changed me. Walking in the streets of Ephesus, Istanbul, and Iznik made Turkey enter into my soul. I will miss the smells of the Spice Bazaar, the sounds of the crashing Aegean waves, the tantalizing tastes of olives, hummus, and warm pitas and the textures of silk carpet underfoot. The sights of Turkey are burned into my memory—the detailed tiles of Topkapı Palace, the 86-carat diamond in the treasury, the multi-colored lanterns in the bazaar, the beautiful children, and the stunning sunsets! These are pictures that no KODAK film could ever reproduce. My heart is filled with the spirit of the Turkish people. Their kindness and generosity are paramount. Until this trip I was uninterested in gaining a depth of knowledge of this region. Now, I can't wait to get to the bookstore and delve into the recommended reading—and more! This trip has illuminated Turkey and I cannot wait to share the experience with others. I want all to see Turkey as the jewel it is! Thank you again for the opportunity of a lifetime!

**Robin Tyke, Export, PA, USA**

Turkey is magical, evolving, historical, struggling, and whimsical. This trip highlighted all of the pieces of Turkey: the layers of flavor and spice in the food, the mix of architecture in the cities, the blue of the Aegean and the Plains of the interior, and the street dogs tagged in the car and the old woman on the side of the road sharing her food with her three much loved dogs.

**Laura Brodie, Latrobe, PA, USA**

Wow! An overall impression of the TCF Study Tour...Fantastic and life changing. It has truly been an experience that has altered not only how I think about Turkey, but also how I will teach about it. The trip

has filled in so many experiential and knowledge-based gaps in my understanding of Turkey. The entire experience gets a “10” .... it was superb! This experience will be put to use in many educational and personal ways. Thank you!

**Tim Kunes, North Versailles, PA, USA**

This is the story of Turkey—an ancient and emerging civilization, integrating, absorbing each others customs and creating a synthesis more lasting than most of what life offers. There is no where that this is more evident than Turkey! Starting from the fragments of the past, a huge reality comes to the surface. What an amazing chance to study this process!

**Karen Gallimore, Alexandria, VA, USA**

Turkey is the DAIOPHGA of our history and civilization—whether the development of trade or the evolution of the concept of nation-states. Being in Turkey has brought alive the ideas of how cultures and history are all products of the interactions of peoples throughout time. So much of what went into the making of Western Civilization is alive still today in Turkey.

**Jim Wagner, Springfield, VA, USA**

My dream has come true, but Turkey is more beautiful than I imagined. The Turkish people are so gracious and hospitable. In describing Turkey, the word beauty comes to mind, but beauty that surpasses all levels. Turkey is a continuous discovery for an avid learner like me. This trip has changed me as a person and as a teacher. I hope that the wonders and mysteries of this land of my dreams continue to fill my imagination and may the rest of the world come to share these dreams.

**Ruth Wagner, Springfield, VA, USA**