



# OzTours News

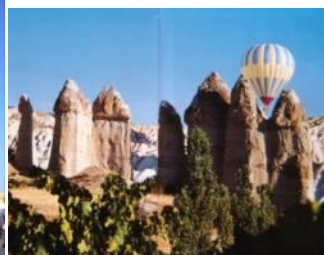
Newsletter of Ozturk Tours and Travel

Issue 22 WINTER 2012

(In association with Timeless Tours and Travel, Licence No. 2TA4343)

Web: [www.ozturk.com.au](http://www.ozturk.com.au)

Email: [tours@ozturk.com.au](mailto:tours@ozturk.com.au)



**OZTURK TOURS & TRAVEL** -home of personalised boutique tours!

## FRONT PAGE

## NEWS.....

### AUSSIE \$ RIDING HIGH.....

Unless you live on a desert island isolated from the modern world, you will know that the Australian dollar is riding high. At the time of writing, one AUD buys over **0.85** Euros, a record high, and well over **\$1.05** USD. This is obviously not good news for many sectors of the economy including manufacturing, domestic tourism and the export sector but, it is very good news for people travelling overseas. With the resources sector now coming off the boil, this state of affairs is unlikely to last and the Aussie will inevitably drop to more sustainable levels. So the message for people planning overseas trips is **DO IT SOON!!!**



*15<sup>th</sup> Century Iznik tiles in Topkapi Palace  
—not even our high Aussie \$ can buy!!!!*

### ....and OUR PRICES DOWN!!

The high Australian dollar is obviously reducing our costs as we pay our overseas suppliers in Euros or US dollars. We have decided to pass these cost savings to you, our valued clients, **by reducing our prices for 2013 tours** for a limited time. The reductions and the new prices are shown in the next column. You should note that the new prices are guaranteed if you book and pay 50% of the total tour price before 31 October 2012. We have found it necessary to impose this limitation as we have no way of knowing what will happen to exchange rates in the medium to long term.

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17-Day Grand Sultan*:	<b>\$400</b>	(from \$4,350)
10-Day Best of the Black Sea:	<b>\$300</b>	(from \$2,735)
11-Day Marvels of the East:	<b>\$300</b>	(from \$2,880)
10-Day Best of Russia:	<b>\$350</b>	(from \$3,575)
11-Day Ukraine Discovery:	<b>\$350</b>	(from \$3,375)
13-Day Great Silk Road:	<b>\$300</b>	(from \$3,150)
8-Day Allure of Azerbaijan:	<b>\$200</b>	(from \$2,350)
13-Day Treasures of Persia:	<b>\$300</b>	(from \$3,300)

( \* ) Our main and most popular tour.

Price reductions shown above are per couple. Reductions for a single person are half of the above amounts.

Phone: (02) **9144 3891**

Skype: (02) **8005 1022** (Toll free call) #

Fax: (02) **9144 1904**

Mobile: **0450 908 030** (Australia)

Email: [tours@ozturk.com.au](mailto:tours@ozturk.com.au)

Web: [www.ozturk.com.au](http://www.ozturk.com.au)

Postal Address:

**PO Box 535**

**WAHROONGA NSW 2076** Australia

Street Address:

**50/1389-1397 Pacific Hwy,**

**WARRAWEE NSW 2074** Australia

# Skype calls are charged at local call price.

Please contact us for details of all tours featured in this newsletter.

## SUPERIOR HOTEL IN ISTANBUL..

We have been using good, four-star hotels located in the historic old city in Istanbul for our tours. While we are happy with these hotels, some of their rooms are rather small. So for our future tours, we have decided to upgrade to a superior hotel with larger rooms and still with excellent customer service. The hotel we plan to use is **Eresin Crown** Sultanahmet. Its web site link is <http://www.eresin.com.tr/default-en.html>, so you can check it for yourselves.



*Exterior of Eresin Crown hotel*



*One of the guest rooms*



*Terrace restaurant overlooking the Marmara Sea*

**SPECIAL  
FEATURE**

**HOT-AIR  
BALLOONING....**

We have been re-running articles by **John Huxley** of the **Sydney Morning Herald** following his trip to Turkey with us some years ago. In Issue 21, we re-printed the article titled "**Sultans Delight**". In this issue, we re-print John's third and final article on ballooning in Cappadocia titled '**It's A Breeze**'.

## It's a breeze

**A balloon flight gives John Huxley the perfect view of the surreal landscape of Cappadocia.**

Loudspeakers from the mosque had given the world its wake-up call. The new day has dawned innocent as a dewdrop. And now, after a series of two-way radio messages, the release of a couple of test balloons and a brief dash across country, a favourable launch site for our flight has been found.

"It's no smoking. All first class. And everyone gets a window seat," our self-styled "lady driver", Englishwoman Kaili Kidner, says cheerfully, having supervised the inflation of the giant blue-and-yellow bubble and completed the safety briefing. "Time to go."



*A hot-air balloon drifts over the fantastic landscape of Cappadocia. Photo: John Huxley*

For those, like me, who feel dizzy in a thick pair of socks, it is an anxious time. But the lift-off is almost imperceptible. One moment we're anchored to the grass; the next there is a wheeze of gas, a tongue of fire, a warm glow on the cheeks and ... wow, we're airborne.

As the brochure says, we're at one with the wind - or, more accurately, with the breezes that for the next hour or two will waft us hither and thither, depending on our altitude. It is safe to look up, look out at other balloons making the dawn pilgrimage, and look down on a land like no other.

Like the Taj Mahal, the lost city of Machu Picchu and, for me, the Birmingham Road end of West Bromwich Albion football club, nothing quite prepares the traveller for the ancient kingdom of Cappadocia, in central Anatolia.

"Our eyes were astounded," wrote Father Guillaume de Jerphanion, a Jesuit scholar, who "rediscovered" the area while travelling through Turkey on horseback in 1907. "I remember those valleys in the searingly brilliant light, running through the most fantastic of all landscapes."

A century later, visitors are still astounded. Over thousands of years, flood, wind and rain have eroded successive layers of lava, creating a lunar countryside of plunging ravines, corrugated hills and surprisingly fertile plains, and fashioning the soft volcanic tuff into magical shapes.

They resemble phalluses and chimneys, mushroom columns and witches' castles, lighthouses, lunar cones and lumps of Swiss cheese, honeycombed, drilled full of holes. For many have been excavated - "as easily as chipping the flesh from a coconut", according to one expert - to provide homes, hotels, shops, churches and even dovecotes, whose resident pigeons produce guano, used as fertiliser on the fields to grow a cornucopia of fruit.

*Cont'd Page 8...*

# ESCORTED BOUTIQUE TOURS OF TURKEY

## GRAND SULTAN (17 Days/16 Nights)

- Our main and most popular tour

Designed for the first time visitor to Turkey, this tour is ideal for people who are normally independent travellers but who feel more comfortable in the company of a small group of like minded travellers. The tour is a journey of discovery of the many historical, cultural and natural sites in Turkey, including.

- o *fascinating and colourful Istanbul*
- o *the beautiful and moving battlefields of Gallipoli*
- o *legendary historical sites such as Troy, Ephesus and Perge*
- o *traditional villages and picturesque coves along the Turquoise Coast*
- o *the surreal landscapes and underground cities of Cappadocia.*

Tour features include:

- **Small groups** of 12 to 24 people with guaranteed personal attention.
- **Boutique hotels** with modern facilities or 4/5 star hotels.
- **Excellent timing** that takes advantage of the glorious climate in May/June and Sept./Oct.
- **Unrivalled inclusions** covering transfers, one domestic flight, two half-day cruises, most meals, special farewell dinner, all entrance fees and all tipping (including the guide and driver).



*The world renown Blue Mosque in Istanbul*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Tour dates:</b>
<b>2013:</b>	<b>10 May and 06 Sep</b>
<b>2014:</b>	<b>09 May and 05 Sep</b>

<b>Year</b>	<b>Tour prices:</b>
<b>2013:</b>	<b>From \$4,350</b>
<b>2014:</b>	<b>From \$4,550</b>

(See pages 11 & 12 for more details).

## BEST OF BLACK SEA

(10 Days / 9 Nights)



*Monastery perched on a mountain ledge near Trabzon*

With its rich culture and friendly people, the Black Sea Region of Turkey is a real gem. It is adorned with majestic mountains, lush forests and tea growing hills. It is well off the beaten track and you will be one of few Western visitors in the area.

We set off from Istanbul and visit **Safranbolu** where we see best-preserved examples of Ottoman architecture. We then go to **Amasya**, the charming riverside town that was once the capital of the Pontic Empire. During the Ottoman period, the town became the training ground for Ottoman crown princes. We head to the Black Sea coast that is adorned with charming towns and villages, deep valleys and fast running rivers, old monasteries perched on mountainsides. It is home to people with a sparkle in their eyes and a welcoming smile.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Tour dates:</b>	<b>Tour prices:</b>
<b>2013:</b>	<b>28 May</b>	<b>From \$2,735</b>
<b>2014:</b>	<b>27 May</b>	<b>From \$2,850</b>

(See pages 11 & 12 for more details).

## MARVELS OF THE EAST

(11 Days / 10 Nights)



*Stone heads and God statues of Mt Nemrut*

On this tour, we see Armenian and Georgian churches with exquisite stone reliefs, the awe inspiring **Mt Ararat**, the medieval site of **Hasankeyf**, the newly uncovered archaeological site of **Gobeklitepe** and more. On **Mt Nemrut**, we ponder over the stone heads and god statues of the pre-Roman king **Antiochus**. We marvel at centuries old castles, old Roman bridges and pass through the plains of Mesopotamia and the giant **Ataturk Dam** that tames the Euphrates River. Beehive houses of **Harran**, the Old Testament town of **Sanliurfa** and **Gaziantep Museum** housing the exquisite mosaics of **Zeugma** are amongst other fascinating sites of this culture rich region.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Tour dates:</b>	<b>Tour prices:</b>
<b>2013:</b>	<b>05 Jun</b>	<b>From \$2880</b>
<b>2014:</b>	<b>04 Jun</b>	<b>From \$3030</b>

(See pages 11 & 12 for more details).

**NOTE:** Best of the Black Sea & Marvels of the East tours are run back-to-back and can be combined.

## GUIDED TOURS OF TURKEY

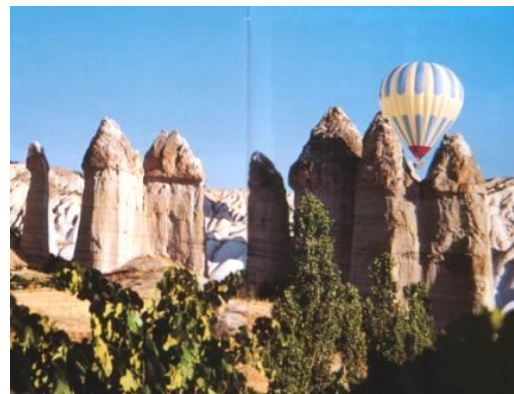
### ANATOLIAN HIGHLIGHTS (11 Days / 10 Nights)

This is a shortened and more economical version of our popular **Grand Sultan** tour. It is designed to enable travellers with limited time and/or budget to see highlights of Western Turkey. On this tour you will see all the main attractions of Western Turkey, including **Istanbul, Gallipoli, Ephesus, Pamukkale, Antalya** and, of course, **Cappadocia**. A professional English speaking local guide will be with the group during the entire tour.

Main tour features include accommodation in clean and comfortable hotels, small groups of 10 to 30 people and a bi-lingual tour guide.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Tour dates:</u>	<u>Tour prices:</u>
<b>2013:</b>	<b>15 Jun</b>	<b>From \$2,850</b>
<b>2014:</b>	<b>14 Jun</b>	<b>From \$2,950</b>

(See pages 11 & 12 for more details).



*A magical scene from Cappadocia*

## PARTNER TOURS

**Timeless Tours and Travel** (Licence Number 2TA4343) are our travel agent partners and have been for the last 8 years. Run by a dedicated team including the ever enthusiastic director Tom Tescher and highly experienced consultant Holly (see photo), Timeless Tours are about to enter their **20th year** of successful operation. They have achieved this largely by offering tailor-made independent and group tours to many Mediterranean countries including **Spain, Portugal, Morocco, Iran, Oman, Dubai, Syria and Jordan** as well as Turkey. Please contact us or visit Timeless Tours website <http://www.timeless.com.au> for information.



As a full-service travel agency, **Timeless** offers a wide range of travel services including flights at competitive rates, cruises, travel insurance, tour bookings, etc. As they are a wholesaler, you can book their programs through your own travel agent, if you prefer.

## SHORT TOURS AND CRUISES



Arranged jointly with Timeless Tours & Travel (Lic. No. 2TA4343), our short tours and cruises include the following.

### ISTANBUL/GALLIPOLI

**(5 Days / 4 Nights)**

As well as visits to the historical sites in the old city such as St Sophia Museum, the Blue Mosque and Topkapi Palace, this short tour could include a two day excursion to Gallipoli. The tour can be operated with as few as 2 people and tour programme can be varied to suit individual requirements.

### CAPPADOCIA

**(4 Days / 3 Nights)**

This tour is dedicated to discovering the eerie lunar landscape of Cappadocia. During this tour, you visit the Open Air Museum of Goreme, explore the underground city of Kaymakli and see the many unusual rock formations in the region. Whilst in Cappadocia, hot air ballooning over the region's unique terrain is a must and those who have done it testify that it is one of life's rare experiences.

### EPHESUS/PAMUKKALE

**(4 Days / 3 Nights)**

The main sites visited during this tour are the well-known and the best preserved Greco-Roman city of Ephesus and the unique wonder of nature that is Pamukkale. Visits to other sites in the region such as the Virgin Mary's House near Ephesus and the ancient Roman city of **Aphrodisias** near Pamukkale may also be included depending on client wishes.

### GULET CRUISES

**(7 Days / 6 Nights)**

Cruising on board a **Gulet** on crystal clear, turquoise waters along lush, green coastline; visiting tranquil bays; you will know you have found paradise. You can enjoy this paradise with all-inclusive Mediterranean cruises. Choose between several cruises along the turquoise coast of Turkey or to the Greek Islands in the Aegean. Generally these cruises are run weekly from May to October.

# UKRAINE & RUSSIA TOURS

## UKRAINE DISCOVERY (11 Days / 10 Nights)

Ukraine is a country that rewards travellers with heartfelt hospitality, magnificent architecture and prominent historical sites. Main attractions of the capital **Kiev** include the 11th century **St Sophia Cathedral** with the country's greatest mosaics and frescoes, and the **Cave Monastery** complex on the banks of **Dnipro River**. The vibrant **Khreshchatyk** (the Champs Elysees of Kiev) is popular with the locals at weekends. We also visit the major port city of **Odessa** on the Black Sea coast and **Lviv** in Western Ukraine. Odessa's attractions include the famous '**Catacombs**', a series of underground tunnels and living quarters, and its famous Opera House.



*The magnificent Odessa Opera House*

Lviv is a charming, 'poetic' city that is steeped in legends both ancient and relatively new! In spite of its turbulent history and the Soviet era indifference, it retains its Ukrainian spirit and its delicate architecture so much so that it is included in the UNESCO World Heritage list.



*'Candy Girls' in Lviv*

Of course, no tour of Ukraine is complete without a visit to the **Crimean** cities of **Sevastopol**, the historical home of the Soviet Black Sea fleet, and the Black Sea resort town of **Yalta**. The main attraction in Yalta is, of course, the famous **Livadia Palace** where the Yalta Conference between the "**BIG Three**" wartime leaders was held from 4 to 11 February 1945.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Tour dates:</u>	<u>Tour prices:</u>
<b>2013:</b>	<b>05 June .....</b>	<b>From \$3,375</b>
<b>2014:</b>	<b>04 June .....</b>	<b>From \$3,500</b>

(See pages 11 & 12 for more details).

**NOTE: Ukraine Discovery and Best of Russia** tours are run back-to-back and can be combined.



*St Basil's Cathedral, the unmistakable symbol of Russia*



*Peterhof Palace near St Petersburg and its dazzling fountains*

## BEST OF RUSSIA (10 Days / 9 Nights)

Russia has a very colourful and rich history. Its cultural heritage is second to none. So, no serious traveller can afford not to include Russia in their list of 'must see' places. The tour starts in **Moscow** where you can see the fabled sites of the **Red Square**, **St Basil's Cathedral** and the **Kremlin**. We also take a cruise on Moscow River and explore the famous Moscow Metro. Some of the Metro Stations alone make this visit worthwhile.

After Moscow, we travel to **St Petersburg**, the 'Venice of the North'. Built on what was once a swampland, the city defies imagination. St Petersburg is a dynamic, modern city combining its unequalled architectural and cultural heritage with modern business and ritzy restaurant café culture. St Petersburg and the surrounding area are so rich in awe-inspiring sites that a week would not be enough to see them all. During the tour we will see the world famous **Hermitage Museum**, the magnificent **St Isaac's Cathedral** and many other sites. The tour also includes excursions to the dazzling **Peterhof** and **Pushkin** palaces and a canal cruise to marvel the city's unique architecture from a different perspective.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Tour dates:</u>	<u>Tour prices:</u>
<b>2013:</b>	<b>15 June .....</b>	<b>From \$3,575</b>
<b>2014:</b>	<b>14 June .....</b>	<b>From \$3,750</b>

(See pages 11 & 12 for more details).

**NOTE: Best of Russia and Ukraine Discovery** tours are run back-to-back and can be combined.

## CENTRAL ASIA TOURS

### THE GREAT SILK ROAD (13 Days / 12 Nights)

The **Silk Road**, the greatest land-based trading highway the world has ever seen, stretched all the way from **China**, through **Central Asia** to **Europe**. Countries traversed by this legendary route included Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and as Turkey. Names like **Ashkhabad**, **Bukhara**, **Samarkand** and **Tashkent** evoke intrigue and mystery of this fascinating region.

With fascinating **kales** (castles), exquisitely decorated **madrassas** (Islamic high educational institutions), towering minarets, colourful markets, these cities have a very rich architectural and cultural heritage. During the tour, we see all these intriguing centres. Our tour starts in Istanbul and ends in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, from where we fly back to Istanbul or to other ongoing destinations.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Tour dates:</u>	<u>Tour prices:</u>
<b>2013:</b>	<b>26 April .....</b>	<b>From \$3,150</b>
<b>2014:</b>	<b>25 April.....</b>	<b>From \$3,250</b>

(See pages 11 & 12 for more details).



Part of the Ragistan complex in Samarkand, Uzbekistan

## WESTERN ASIA TOURS

### TREASURES OF PERSIA (12 Days / 11 Nights)

**NEW**

If you can cast away the negative image portrayed by some Western countries and take a trip to Iran (formerly Persia), you will be richly rewarded by your experience. Beyond the stereotypes you'll experience a proud nation wanting to be seen for what it is, rather than what it is perceived to be. Whether you're travelling in cities like Esfahan, the Zagros Mountains of Central Iran or the deserts around Kerman, the real Iran will be revealed. At its core, you will discover a country of warm and fascinating people living within an ancient and sophisticated culture. Embrace Iran, and allow the Iranians to embrace you. You will find that *"it's the most priceless of experiences"*.



*Mosque*, the *Sheikh Lotfullah Mosque* and *Ali Qapu* Palace. We also visit the *Forty Column Palace* and the magnificent historical bridges over the River Zayandeh.

We also visit cities such as **Yazd**, **Kashan** and **Qom** where we will see how humans not only mastered the harsh conditions but also produced a rich and unique civilization in the middle of the desert.

*Photos: Part of the vast Naqsh-e Jahan Square in Isfahan (above), the second largest square in the world after Tiananmen Square in Beijing and the lion column capitals from the ancient city of Persepolis (right).*

<u>Year</u>	<u>Tour dates:</u>	<u>Tour prices:</u>
<b>2013:</b>	<b>08 October.....</b>	<b>From \$3,300</b>
<b>2014:</b>	<b>07 October .....</b>	<b>From \$3,450</b>

(See pages 11 & 12 for more details).



This tour is run back-to-back and can be combined with the **Allure of Azerbaijan** tour

## ALLURE OF AZERBAIJAN (7 Days / 6 Nights)

**NEW**

Azerbaijan is an enigma; it is an incredible tangle of contradictions and contrasts. The nation's cosmopolitan capital **Baku** is a dynamic boomtown where flashy limousines and mushrooming skyscrapers sweep around a picturesque UNESCO-listed old city. Yet only a few hours' drive away lies an entirely different world of timeless villages in the foothills of the soaring high Caucasus mountains.

On this tour, we will see attractions of contrasts in a country of contrasts. In Baku, we visit historic caravanserais, mosques, the palace of the **Shirvanshahs**, a carpet museum and the walled medieval city of "**Icheri Sheher**" with its narrow alleyways. We take an excursion to the **Absheron Peninsula**, visiting the **Zoroastrian Fire Temple** and **Yanardagh** (Burning Mountain) and **Gobustan** with its ancient petroglyphs.



One of the gates to the medieval city **Icheri Sheher**

In the Caucasus Mountains, where the dry landscape around Baku gives way to a densely forested mountain area, we visit the fascinating towns and villages. Here we see the **Juma Mosque**; **Yeddi Gumbaz**, the oldest church in the Caucasus dating from the first century; the Royal Summer Palace of the **Sheki Khans** with its magnificent frescoes and stained glass and **Sheki Museum and Fortress**. We stay in a beautifully restored Caravansary Hotel.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Tour dates:</u>	<u>Tour prices:</u>
<b>2013:</b>	<b>02 October</b> .....	From <b>\$2,350</b>
<b>2014:</b>	<b>01 October</b> .....	From <b>\$2,450</b>

(See pages 11 & 12 for more details).

This tour is run back-to-back and can be combined with the **Treasures of Persia** tour

## SYRIA/JORDAN (14 Days / 13 Nights)

**NEW**

Syria is a modern, efficient and a proud nation with an administration that is becoming more liberal and outward looking by the day. Contrary to what some western powers wish the world to think, Syrians are friendly and hospitable people and visitors are richly rewarded by their travel experiences in Syria.

Despite much modernisation, Syria has not lost sight of its past. The ancient cities of **Damascus**, **Aleppo**, **Bosra** and **Palmyra** are all listed on UNESCO's World Heritage list. Attractions in Syria include **St Simeon Ebla**, **Bara**, **Hama**, **Crac des Chevaliers**, **Apamea** (See photo on left) and **Palmyra**.



Palmyra is one of the world's most splendid historical sites. Its intriguing history, profusion of colonnades and temple remains, in a mesmerising desert oasis setting, is nothing short of stunning. Mighty Crusader castles, labyrinthine medieval **souqs** (markets), charming jewel-like **Damascene** houses and sacred **Umayyad** mosques are other treats on offer.

While it has fewer sites of note, Jordan is also a rewarding destination. On the Jordan leg of the tour, we visit the capital **Amman** and **Jerash**, one of the most beautifully preserved Greco-Roman cities, as well as the sites of **Madaba** and **Mt Nebo**. **Petra** is of course the jewel in the Jordan tourism crown and no trip to Jordan would be complete without a visit to **Petra**. Reached through a narrow and deep gorge, the **Siq** is one of the most awesome sights imaginable.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Tour dates:</u>	<u>Tour prices:</u>
<b>2013:</b>	<b>07 April</b> .....	POA
<b>2014:</b>	<b>06 April</b> .....	POA

(See pages 11 & 12 for more details).

### IMPORTANT NOTE:

Due to the unsettled situation in Syria, this tour has been suspended indefinitely.

This tour, when operating, may be combined with the **Great Silk Road** tour.

## It's A Breeze *(Cont'd from Page 2)*

Adding to the surreal, extraterrestrial feel to the place are the dreamy colours: not just sandy khaki but mustard yellow, russet brown, creamy white and candy pink, depending on the temperature at which the lava set and the time of the day.

Kidner, who maintains radio contact with her fiancé and fellow pilot, Lars, through the trip, says Cappadocia is the greatest place in the world to go ballooning. "The topography is a pilot's dream. Weather conditions are almost always perfect and, so far at least, there are no restrictions on where we can fly." Basically, the direction depends on the wind, the height and the pilot.

One minute we're drifting along at up to 800 metres, looking down on storks and swifts and bee-eaters, and at fields laid out like tablecloths decorated with Aboriginal dot patterns. Here they have been created by the straight lines of crops, circling footsteps of farmers and snaky meanderings of small mammals.

The next, Kidner announces "Let's go pick some poppies" and we're falling to below sea-level, to just a few metres above the hollowed ground, skimming the mulberry trees, dropping into the troglodytes' front yards.

There is so much to see. Over there in the distance is snow-capped Mt Erciyes, at almost 4000 metres the third largest in Anatolia. Down there the ghost village of Cavusin, whose population of 500 or so had to move out after a landslide in the 1960s. The church is still accessible by rope ladder.

And there, directly below, is the main tourist centre of Goreme, with its Shoe String Pension, its Flintstone Cave Bar, its carpet stores, internet cafes and, thankfully, digital camera shops. Somehow, despite the visitor invasion, many times the 2500 population, the town still slumbers: carpets, racks of postcards and guidebooks are left out at night.

All too soon the \$240 trip is over. "Uh, oh, we may be in for a giggly landing," warns Kidner as, far below, the company's ground crew drive and faithful dog Becks runs into position to capture and tether the balloon.

Her fears are unfounded (or perhaps that should be ungrounded): softly the basket is dropped directly on the trailer. The only giggles come from the traditional, celebratory breakfast glasses of champagne. Cheers.

AFTER floating around on the air streams there is still much for us

to see on the ground, in the ground and under the ground. Rivers high, mountains deep.

The ruined citadel of Uchisar, set upon another crumbling volcanic outcrop, is worth the steep climb, for the exercise, needed after lashings of the fresh local cuisine, for the views and for the mini-market offering dirt-cheap lava souvenirs.

Worth a more protracted look - enforced sometimes by the large number of visiting schoolchildren - is Goreme's renowned Open Air Museum, an extensive religious campus comprising chapels, churches and convents gouged out of the rock.

Many are so small that only a few people are allowed in at one time. Even then, the congregation has to cling to the walls to allow enough natural light in through the doorway to illuminate stunning - albeit cryptic, often damaged - frescoes.

One of the most interesting is the so-called Snake Chapel, celebrating St Onuphrius, an Egyptian hermit who reputedly believed in the superiority of a lonely life away from communities and spent much of his life in the desert eating dates and plants.

Not far away is one of the most prestigious and probably expensive carpet outlets in the region. Like shops selling leather goods, stalls festooned with pashminas and grand bazaars such as Chatswood Chase, a carpet factory is somewhere I'd not normally be seen dead. But Gallery Anatolia at least puts on a slick floor show, dishing out apple tea, tossing priceless carpets about with a flick of the wrist as though they were venomous snakes and explaining to visitors how to make sure they get a good deal (the number of double-knots per square metre is a useful guide).

The host, Hakan Ozturk, is a very funny man. But be warned: he is also a shrewd businessman. When he says, "bolt the doors" behind a coach party of tourists he may be joking - but only because those wishing to escape with their wallets intact wouldn't be able to see the doors for the salesmen.

Far less scary, though still scary, is Kaymakli, one of about 40 deep underground cities to have been identified in Cappadocia. Burrowing down darkened tunnels into its maze of rooms, to which several thousand inhabitants would retreat when unwanted visitors appeared, almost beats ballooning.

The tunnels are not as low nor as narrow as those at Cu Chi in Vietnam, which have been widened to accommodate big Western bums. But they are snug, they slope downwards and, as guides painstakingly explain, because they permit only one-way traffic (red arrows down, blue arrows up), are not for the claustrophobic.

Give it a go, though, for a glimpse of the real life down under. Kaymakli has eight levels, of which five are open to the public, comprising dormitories, storerooms, kitchens, conference halls, wine presses, stables, wells and ventilation ducts.

In among it all are countless windows - well, holes in the wall - dead-ends and entry points that could be simply blocked off by large keystones. One is left to imagine where long-stay residents went to the bathroom or buried their dead.

One thing is known about the occupants. According to the guides, they had rotten teeth. No, they hadn't discovered sugar. The local rock implements with which they prepared meals had been crumbling into their food, where it was chewed down heartily.

Just shows: Cappadocia rock may look good enough to eat, but it isn't.

**Destination:** Cappadocia

### Getting there

There is plenty of choice: regular flights from Istanbul and Ankara into Kayseri and Nevsehir, the two local airports; trains to Kayseri and Nigde; and, cheapest of the lot, overnight and daytime buses from Istanbul and Ankara respectively.

### When to go

High summer can be very hot and the winter can be

very cold, though the snow can turn Cappadocia into a wonderland.

### Staying there

In Goreme and surrounding towns there is a wide range of accommodation, from expensive, exquisitely decorated cave suites (up to \$335 a night) to camp sites.

### Getting about

Local buses criss-cross the area. Companies offering balloon trips pick up from hotels, etc. Tours can be booked on the spot, though they become crowded in peak periods.

### Tours

The writer travelled with Ozturk Tours, PO Box 535, Wahroonga, NSW 2076. Phone 02 9144 3891 or see [www.ozturk.com.au](http://www.ozturk.com.au).

## TRAVELLERS TALES

## FEEDBACK FROM PAST CLIENTS.....

**Ozturk Tours** have been running tours to Turkey since 2001 and other countries since 2006. Many people have experienced the magic of touring with us during this time. Because they find our tours truly fascinating, they write cards, emails and letters to express their appreciation. Below is a selection of feedback from some of our recent fellow travellers.

Dear Hamit,

Well, we are well & truly home & catching up with all the usual mundane chores. Thank you for a truly memorable trip & well informed commentaries. And don't worry, the accommodation was good & when there were hiccups, they were either funny or too minor to be fussed about.

Hoping we meet again on a future holiday,

Fond regards.

Janet & John Ryan NSW May 2012

*Hi Hamit,*

*Thank you so much for the photos. I have taken a lot of scenery but not very many of people so was great to have your photos to add to mine.*

*We enjoyed the rest of our holiday very much and arrived home safely last week.*

*We will certainly be looking at your tours for the future and recommending the tour we did to others.*

*Cheers*

*Dawn Bridges NSW May 2012*

Many thanks, Hamit, for the photos and an excellent tour, which I'm sure we all enjoyed and would recommend to anyone considering a trip to Turkey. Janet and I travelled on to Croatia and Slovenia for a nine day bus tour which was much larger (47 people), but was also well organised with a good guide and met our expectations. Hopefully we can meet up again. We wish you every success.

David and Janet NSW May 2012

### Super Guides!!!

Hi Hamit

Many thanks for the photos---- they are great.

All back to normal here--glad all the rain we have had is over for a while.

We both really enjoyed the trip and have been telling everyone what a great place Turkey is to visit.

Cheers

*Yours truly with tour guide – 'Super Guides' as Kate and bill dubbed us!!!*

Kate and Bill NSW May 2012



Hi Hamit

Thanks for two great tours which lived up to my expectations entirely. Several unexpected bonuses added to my list of enjoyable memories. The large numbers of beautiful Russian ladies were a delight to the eye. The opening night at the opera in Odessa was nothing less than fantastic and will never fade from my memory.

The Ukraine was special in its independence but close connection to Russia. My special Ukraine memory (apart from the opera) was to see the Light Brigade's 'Valley of Death' at Balaclava.

Barry NSW July 2011.

Hi Hamit

We absolutely loved the tour and Turkey. We have told everyone about it and they have been fascinated at the diversity of things we did and the places we stayed. I think a few will put Turkey on their must visit list. Like us initially not many people realize the famous sites of the Roman and Greek empires are actually in Turkey.

Your tour was exceptionally well organized with the right attention to detail without being tied down to every minute of the day.

We look forward to still receiving your newsletters on up and coming tours about that part of the world. I am keen to see the 'Stans' at some point before too long.

Look forward to keeping in touch and if you are up in Queensland do let us know. You are very welcome to visit and stay in our cottage. Take care

Lissie QLD June 2011

### Our trip to Iran

As I mentioned on the phone, our trip was terrific. So a big thank you to you and your colleagues at Arg-E-Jadid (*Our operators in Iran*). Our guides and drivers were all very good. I don't think I would change the itinerary; hotels were all fine.

We also visited a few other places not on our itinerary by ourselves, or with locals, that we think are worth including. In Shiraz a local lad took us into the Aramgah -E- Shah-E - Cheragh shrine and the huge Azadi Park was a wonderful place to watch Iranian families on a public holiday. We loved walking around at night – particularly in Shiraz, when everyone seemed to be out and about.

We enjoyed Shiraz and Yazd but Esfahan was, as you predicted, the highlight. The square, the mosques and palaces make it a world-class place. We were glad you had saved it for the end of our trip.



*Part of the vast Naqsh-e Rostam Square with Imam Mosque in the background*

The best part of our trip was meeting so many lovely people. Both Tim and I have travelled extensively but we have never been to a country where so many local people come and say 'hello', 'welcome', 'where are you from?', 'thank you for coming to Iran'. A great experience – thank you Tom\* for arranging it so well.

Colin & Tim NSW March 2011

**NOTE:** The tour that Colin & Tim did is similar to our *'Treasures of Persia'* tour.

Dear Hamit

Many thanks for emailing the group photos and those of me weaving, potting - or at least pretending to! We thoroughly enjoyed the itinerary and organisation of the trip and really appreciate the extras you provided such as the fabulous places to eat and places off the usual tourist routes.



We both certainly learnt a lot during our travels in Turkey and Jordan. .... thank you for making our trip through Turkey such a fantastic experience. We both agree that we could not have enjoyed it in the same way with another group or doing it on our own.

Margaret & Richard, NSW Sept 2010

NOTE: Photo above shows a 'Cave' hotel room in Cappadocia. Photo by Hamit Ozturk

Dear Hamit

*I hope that you are still enjoying some R&R after our trip and your travel to Iran. I have enthusiastically been spreading the word about **Ozturk Boutique Tours** as it really was a fantastic journey and I really enjoyed every minute.*

*I was forever mindful about holding up the group and I do thank you most sincerely for the assistance which you personally provided to enable me to carry on. Your organisational skills are superb and advice re 'daily forward planning' a tremendous asset. I would love to join you in a further tour, but will just have to assess the health levels prior to making a commitment.*

*Again, my grateful thanks for an amazing lifetime experience. Best regards*

Jill NSW Sept 2010

Hi Hamit,

I cannot thank you enough for providing us with such a wonderful well planned, interesting and highly organized trip around Turkey. I felt you had thought of everything --not only finding the great places we visited but for all the little details-- whether it was fitting in with people, or providing stamps --you had thought of everything and I certainly will be recommending it to my friends.

Libby NSW May 2010

# TOUR SCHEDULE for 2013 and 2014

## GRAND SULTAN (17 Days/16 Nts)

Year	Date (Start date)	Code	Group size	Price (AUD) (See Note 2)	Single Supp	Notes
2013	10 May	GS130510	21 – 24	\$4,350	\$800	OPEN for bookings
	06 Sept	GS130906	15 – 20 10 – 14	\$4,500 # \$4,650		
2014	09 May	GS140509	21 – 24	\$4,550	\$850	OPEN for expressions of interest
	05 Sept	GS140905	15 – 20 10 – 14	\$4,700 # \$4,850		

## BEST OF THE BLACK SEA (10 Days/9 Nts)

Year	Date (Start date)	Code	Group size	Price (AUD) (See Note 2)	Single Supp	Notes
2013	28 May	BS130528	15 – 20	\$2,735	\$450	OPEN for bookings
			10 – 14 8 – 9	\$2,810 # \$2,890		
2014	27 May	BS140527	15 – 20	\$2,850	\$475	OPEN for expressions of interest
			10 – 14 8 – 9	\$2,920 # \$2,995		

## MARVELS OF THE EAST (11 Days/10 Nts)

Year	Date (Start date)	Code	Group size	Price (AUD) (See Note 2)	Single Supp	Notes
2013	05 June	ME130605	15 – 20	\$2,880	\$450	OPEN for bookings
			10 – 14 8 – 9	\$2,980 # \$3,040		
2014	04 June	ME140604	15 – 20	\$3,030	\$475	OPEN for expressions of interest
			10 – 14 8 – 9	\$3,130 # \$3,195		

## ANATOLIAN HIGHLIGHTS (11 Days/10 Nts)

Year	Date (Start date)	Code	Group size	Price (AUD) (See Note 2)	Single Supp	Notes
2013	15 June	AH130615	21– 30	\$2,850	\$450	OPEN for bookings
			10 – 20	\$2,950 #		
2014	14 June	AH140614	21– 30	\$2,950	\$475	OPEN for expressions of interest
			10 – 20	\$3,050 #		

## THE GREAT SILK ROAD (13 Days/12 Nts)

Year	Date (Start date)	Code	Group size	Price (AUD) (See Note 2)	Single Supp	Notes
2013	26 April	SR130426	15 – 20	\$3,150	\$475	OPEN for bookings Mary optional excursion \$295
			10 – 14 8 – 9	\$3,300 # \$3,450		
2014	25 April	SR 140425	15 – 20	\$3,250	\$495	OPEN for expressions of interest
			10 – 14 8 – 9	\$3,400 # \$3,550		

**UKRAINE DISCOVERY (11 Days/10 Nts)**

Year	Date (Start date)	Code	Group size	Price (AUD) (See Note 2)	Single Supp	Notes
2013	05 June	UD130605	15 – 20 10 – 14 8 – 9	\$3,375 \$3,525 # \$3,675	\$950	OPEN for bookings
2014	04 June	UD140604	15 – 20 10 – 14 8 – 9	\$3,500 \$3,650 # \$3,800	\$995	OPEN for expressions of interest

**BEST OF RUSSIA (10 Days/ 9 Nts)**

Year	Date (Start date)	Code	Group size	Price (AUD) (See Note 2)	Single Supp	Notes
2013	15 June	BR130615	15 – 20 10 – 14 8 – 9	\$3,575 \$3,725 # \$3,875	\$1050	OPEN for bookings
2014	14 June	BR140614	15 – 20 10 – 14 8 – 9	\$3,750 \$3,895 # \$4,050	\$1100	OPEN for expressions of interest

**ALLURE OF AZERBAIJAN (7 Days/ 6 Nts)**

Year	Date (Start date)	Code	Group size	Price (AUD) (See Note 2)	Single Supp	Notes
2013	02 Oct	AA131002	15 – 20 10 – 14 8 – 9	\$2,350 \$2,450 # \$2,550	\$425	OPEN for bookings
2014	1 Oct	AA141001	15 – 20 10 – 14 8 – 9	\$2,450 \$2,550 # \$2,650	\$450	OPEN for expressions of interest

**TREASURES OF PERSIA (12 Days/ 11 Nts)**

Year	Date (Start date)	Code	Group size	Price (AUD) (See Note 2)	Single Supp	Notes
2013	08 Oct	TP 131008	15 – 20 10 – 14 8 – 9	\$3,300 \$3,450 # \$3,600	\$750	OPEN for bookings
2014	07 Oct	TP 141007	15 – 20 10 – 14 8 – 9	\$3,450 \$3,600 # \$3,750	\$795	OPEN for expressions of interest

**IMPORTANT NOTES:**

- 1) Prices vary depending on group size. Tour deposit is 10% of the tour price marked #. Please see the full tour itineraries or contact us for more information.
- 2) Tour prices are based on exchange rates prevailing in August 2012 and are subject to change. The above **prices are guaranteed until 31 October and on payment of 50% of tour prices marked with (#).**
- 3) The tour pairs **BS/ME**, **BR/UD** and **AA/TP** (first two letters of the tour code) are available as one combined tour as they are run back-to-back. Please see the tour itineraries or contact us for full details including prices.
- 4) The Syria/Jordan tour is being organised and promoted jointly with **Timeless Tours and Travel**, (Licence Number 2TA4343), our travel agent partner in Sydney. This tour is suspended indefinitely.

# INFORMATION FORM

You receive this newsletter as you have either been on or expressed an interest in one or more of our tours. You may use this form to:

- A) **Request information** about our future tours, including full tour itineraries (Complete **PART 1** only).
- B) **Change the way** you receive the newsletter. For example, if you would like to receive it **by email** instead of by postal mail or vice versa; or if you wish to **start** or **stop** receiving it (Complete **PART 2** only)

***NOTE:** If you have received the newsletter by email, then you may print this page, complete it and send, fax or email it to us. See bottom of the page for our contact details.*

## PART 1 – INFORMATION REQUEST (Please circle your selection, including year).

I am interested in the following tour(s) for **2013 / 2014** and would like to receive full details.

**Grand Sultan (Turkey)** - 17 Days/16 Nights

**Best of the Black Sea (Turkey)**

- 10 Days/9 Nights

**Marvels of the East (Turkey)**

- 11 Days/10 Nights

**Anatolian Highlights tour (Turkey)**

- 13 Days/12 Nights

**Short Tours of Turkey**

- Usually 3 to 5 days.

**Great Silk Road tour (Central Asia)**

- 13 Days/12 Nights

**Best of Russia** - 10 Days/9 Nights

**Ukraine Discovery** - 11 Days/10 Nights

**Syria and Jordan** - 14 Days/13 Nights **\*NEW\***

**Allure of Azerbaijan** - 7 Days/6 Nights **\*NEW\***

**Treasures of Persia** - 12 Days/11 Nights **\*NEW\***

## PART 2 - NEWSLETTER REQUEST (Complete this part **ONLY** if you have not done so before **OR** if you have changed your email/postal address in the last 12 months. Please tick **ONE** box only).

- ☐ I receive PRINT version of the newsletter but would like to receive the EMAIL version in the future and make a small but important contribution to saving the planet. (Please provide your email address below).
- ☐ Please send me the PRINT version (I **don't have** an email address / I **prefer** the print version).
- ☐ I do not receive the newsletter now but would like to receive the PRINT version / the EMAIL version in the future. (Please provide your postal/email address below, as appropriate)
- ☐ I do not wish to receive future issues of 'OzTours News' newsletter. Please remove my name from your mailing list (*We will miss you!!*).

## MY CONTACT DETAILS

Please provide your contact details below to ensure that we have recorded your wishes correctly and you receive the information you have requested.

Title:..... Given Name(s): ..... Surname: .....

Phone No: ..... Fax No: ..... Mobile: .....

Address: .....

City/Suburb: ..... State: ..... Postcode: .....

Email address: ..... Date: .....

**OZTURK TOURS & TRAVEL (ABN 94 044 617 315)**

*Specialising in Boutique Tours to Turkey, Russia, Ukraine, Iran, Azerbaijan, Central Asia and Syria/Jordan.*

Phone: 02 **9144 3891** Fax: 02 **9144 1904** Mobile: **+61450 908 030** (Aust)

Email: **[tours@ozturk.com.au](mailto:tours@ozturk.com.au)** Website: **[www.ozturk.com.au](http://www.ozturk.com.au)**

Postal Address: PO Box 535, Wahroonga NSW 2076 Australia.