



(S//SI//REL) SID Around the World: Walking the Streets of Turkey

FROM: [REDACTED]
(S//SI//REL) Special US Liaison Advisor, Turkey (SUSLAT)
Run Date: 02/12/2007

(S//SI//REL) [REDACTED] is an NSAer working in Ankara, Turkey. He gives us a feel for what it is like to live there...

(U) Troy, King Midas, the Gordion Knot, Byzantium, St. Paul and the churches of Asia, Constantinople, the Ottoman empire, the Crusades, Gallipoli -- all of these places and people describe Turkey. Today's Turkey embodies all of these things both ancient and modern and more -- it represents the gateway and bridge between Europe and Asia, between the "first world" of Western Europe and the "third world" of the Near East.

(U) There are a lot of things I can say about living in Turkey: it's a country that has European traffic standards but routinely ignores them; the Turks have a world-class cuisine but you can only get about 4 or 5 different dishes in 90 percent of Turkish restaurants; and it is a world-class shopping venue with unique works of Islamic art alongside cheap knockoff imports from Pakistan and India.

(U) Despite these seeming contradictions, (or perhaps because of them) Turkey is a terrific place to live overseas. Turkey exists solely because the Turkish people keep it going. Turkish drivers may honk at you for stopping at a red light (and thus keeping them from running the red light) but they'll also form 5 lanes of traffic on a road that is only marked for 2 lanes, if that's the only way all the cars can go forward. (After driving in Ankara, anyone can handle DC rush hour traffic in their sleep.)



*(U) Valens Aquaduct in Istanbul, built in the 4th century AD
(viewed from a bridge over the Golden Horn)*

(U) As I mentioned, Turkey has a world-class cuisine, even though probably 90 percent of Turkish restaurants offer no more than 4 or 5 traditional turkish dishes: kofte (meatball); pide or lahmacun (cracker crust pizza); manti (ravioli in liquid yoghurt), gozleme or borek (cheese or meat wraps), and kebab (grilled meat and vegetables.) But the fruit and vegetables are truly fresh, readily available in season, and cheap; the bread is always fresh and it's real bread -- not the chemically preserved commercial product common in the US.

(U) I'd almost forgotten what real vine-ripened tomatoes or watermelon tasted like, until I arrived in Turkey. The citrus fruit is so fresh that you can keep it only for a day or two before it rots. The fruits and vegetables are so cheap in season that the vendors are almost giving it away on weekends -- the produce is picked ripe that day and if it isn't sold, it won't keep long enough to try to sell the next day.



**SERIES:
(U) SID Around the
World '06 - '07**

1. [SID Around the World : Sugar Grove, West Virginia](#)
2. [SID Around the World : Living in Thailand -- A Single's Perspective](#)
3. [SID Around the World : A Glimpse of Utah](#)
4. [SID Around the World : Misawa and Tokyo](#)
5. [SID Around the World : Colorado Springs](#)
6. [SID Around the World : Life in... Central Maryland??](#)
7. [SID Around the World : Walking the Streets of Turkey](#)
8. [SID Around the World : Jumping Into Yorkshire's Village Life with Both Feet](#)

(U) But besides great food, Turkey offers some of the best shopping for world-class handicrafts: procelain, ceramic, copper, and handwoven textiles, including legendary Anatolian carpets and kilims. Islamic art in a variety of media is produced in Turkey for sale, and many of these pieces are produced using unique Turkish techniques such as "ebru," the Turkish art of watercolor painting.



(U) Hagia Sophia, in Istanbul, built in the 6th century AD

(U) There's a reason why everyone from wealthy Britons and Germans to the Russian mafia buy vacation properties and second homes in Turkey; come to Turkey and see for yourself!

"(U//FOUO) SIDtoday articles may not be republished or reposted outside NSANet without the consent of S0121 ([DL sid comms](#))."

DYNAMIC PAGE -- HIGHEST POSSIBLE CLASSIFICATION IS
TOP SECRET // SI / TK // REL TO USA AUS CAN GBR NZL
DERIVED FROM: NSA/CSSM 1-52, DATED 08 JAN 2007 DECLASSIFY ON: 20320108