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Turkey

Abstract

Suggested resources for the Penn Alumni Travel excursion to Turkey. See the Library Guide for this bibliography [here](#).

Keywords

turkey, bibliography, penn, alumni, travel, readings, guidebooks

Comments

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Alumni Travel Reading List

Turkey

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“Begin your journey in Istanbul, Turkey's cultural and spiritual heart. The city astonishes with its legendary Blue Mosque, Hagia Sofia, and Topkapi Palace, one of the world's richest museums. Then, travel south to the sacred World War I battlefield of Gallipoli, ferry across the Dardanelles to Troy, and explore the wealth of Greco-Roman ruins at ancient Pergamum. Spend a full day at Turkey's nonpareil classical city, Ephesus. Enjoy lunch in a local village before boarding a privately chartered gulet yacht. For four splendid days, cruise the exquisite Turquoise Coast, relaxing and discovering hidden sights, quaint fishing villages, and remote ruins. End your journey in the seaside resort Antalya, with a side trip to ancient Perge.” (From the Penn Alumni Travel page)

Suggested Resources

Online Portals to Turkey's Culture

Turkish Cultural Portal: <http://www.turkishculture.org/>

This site is maintained by the Turkish Cultural Foundation. It is your one stop site for cultural information on Turkey. It contains articles and pictures on just about any cultural topic—architecture, archeology, cuisine, music and performing arts, literature, and the visual arts, traditional arts and crafts, textiles, fine arts, ceramics, and carpets. The articles are clear and well written, and bibliographical references are usually provided, in case you want to seek out more information. The Portal also has links to other Turkish cultural websites maintained by the Turkish Cultural Foundation, such as the Turkish Music Portal, Turkish Cuisine, and the Culinary Arts Center.

Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism: http://www.kultur.gov.tr/?_Dil=2

Although rather dull visually, still worth checking out nonetheless. The most useful pages on this site are the City Guide, which provides a detailed description of a number of Turkish cities with a short historical sketch and a summary of each city's cultural attractions, and the Archeology page. This page provides interesting information about the antique cities of Turkey, many of which you will visit on your trip.

The Turkish Culinary Experience

Ilkin, Nur & Kaufman, Sheilah. *The Turkish Cookbook: Regional Recipes and Stories*. Interlink, 2012.

The words most often used to describe Turkish cuisine are simple and delicious, and the recipes contained in this book certainly match that description. Of course, bold flavors and a miscellany of spices must also be mentioned. This book includes recipes from various regions in Turkey which adds diversity to the dishes presented. There are common vegetable dishes, such as lentil pie or various stuffed eggplants and squash, but also seafood dishes from Turkey's coastal regions. The meats, predominately beef and lamb, are grilled as kebabs, but also prepared ground and stewed. There a number of recipes for phyllo-wrapped morsels of all sorts. With this book you will be able to sample the cuisine of all the stops on your tour of Turkey before you leave. The inclusion of stories about the food and the regions it hails from are an extra plus which make this book stand out.

Film

Climates (Klimler). Dir. Nuri Bilge Ceylan. Imaj, 2007

This visually beautiful and moving film begins with the main character, a middle-aged professor named Isa, and his younger wife, Bahar, on summer holiday at Kas on Turkey's Aegean coast. The setting moves to Istanbul in the fall, and then to the mountains of Eastern Turkey in the winter. As the seasons and landscapes change, so too do Isa's feelings for Bahar. The film observes the breakdown of their marriage and the impossibility of love with intense, slow images. It is a mixture of close-ups and landscape shots. The latter offer spectacular views of the diverse regions of Turkey in the changing seasons. The director is one of the most respected in Turkey, and has won much international acclaim.

Travel Guides

Lloyd, Seton. *Ancient Turkey: a Traveler's History of Anatolia*. Guild Publishing, 1989.

The Anatolian Peninsula of Turkey has always acted as a bridge between Europe and Asia, and the cultures that have grown and flourished there have always had cultural traits from both continents. It has been the homeland of many different civilizations over the ages of both European and Asian origin-- Hittite, Trojan, Greek, Hellenic, Persian, Roman, Byzantine, and finally Turkish, both Ottoman and modern. During your tour you will encounter all of these. This book will provide you with all the information you will need to understand the history of the many archeological sites you will visit. Along with chapters on the history of all of the ancient civilizations listed above, it includes a useful chronology of Anatolia's ancient history, and detailed map with both modern and ancient place names. The one drawback of this work is its age. Being published in 1989, it doesn't contain any information on recent discoveries, and the new 2013 edition doesn't correct this deficiency.

Seal, Jeremy. *A Fez of the Heart: travels around Turkey in search of a hat*. Harcourt Brace & Company, 1996.

In a few short years during the 1920s, Turkish leader, Ataturk, changed the country completely. In an effort to make the country more modern and Western, law, language, politics, religion, dress, even personal names were changed. The Arabic and Islamic elements of Turkish culture were purged as backward, benighted and un-Turkish. Even the alphabet was changed from an Arabic to a Western Roman one, and the spoken language was stripped of its Arabic and Persian elements. This had the effect of dragging Turkey into modernity almost overnight, and distancing it from its lengthy Ottoman past. It is an experience from which Turkish culture has never fully recovered, and it remains beset by contradictions. During an extended stay in the Mediterranean Turkish town of Side (near Antalya where you will stop on your tour), the author finds a fez in a tourist shop. Wearing the fez was declared illegal in Turkey by Ataturk in 1925, and is still a serious offence. But for tourists it is allowed. Seal became fascinated with the fez, and came to see it with its long, honorable past and present ban as a touchstone for contemporary Turkish culture and society. He undertook several journeys, which carried him through much of Turkey, in search of

the still living tradition of the cone-shaped hat, an embodiment of contemporary Turkey's contradictions—Western yet Asian, secular yet Islamic, and modern yet ancient.

The Ottoman Empire: Histories

Finkel, Caroline. *Osman's Dream: the story of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1923*. Basic Books, 2007.

Finkel's stated aim is to "provide for a general audience an up-to-date history of the whole chronological span of the Ottoman Empire and beyond." Her book starts with the appearance of the first and eponymous Ottoman leader, Osman, who led his tribe into Anatolia circa 1300. The dream in the title refers to a legendary nocturnal reverie during which Osman foresaw the creation of a great empire by his ancestors. Finkel traces the fulfillment of this dream as the Ottomans build an empire that stretches from the Balkans to Iran, from the Arabian Peninsula to North Africa and lasts almost 600 years. This empire was not just a political and military power, but developed a civilization among the grandest the world has known. This is the Ottoman Empire we read of in *Osman's Dream*. Finkel eschews the parade of salacious sultans, evil pashas, and hapless harem girls which usually inhabit general histories of the Ottoman Empire. Nor does she characterize the Ottoman Empire as "the Sick Man of Europe" or as an "Oriental despotism", calling these narrow foci "soundbites" which derive only from particular moments in the Empire's sweeping history. She makes use of the original sources to elucidate the processes which shaped the Empire, made it great, and made it decay. Despite the dates in the subtitle, Finkel's history actually covers the first few years of the Republic, ending in 1927. This was the year that Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the founder of the modern Turkish state, gave a great speech laying out his dream for the future of Turkey. Thus is Osman's dream passed on to the Turkish Republic. This rather hefty but enjoyable book will repay reading by giving you a thorough awareness of this heir to the Hellenic and Roman civilizations in Anatolia, the Ottoman Empire.

Erickson, Edward J. *Gallipoli: the Ottoman campaign*. Pen & Sword, 2010.

On April 25, 1915 a force composed of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) as well as smaller contingents of British and French troops landed on the Gallipoli Peninsula on the northern, European side of the Dardanelles Strait, across from the ruins of Troy. Their goal was to capture the peninsula and make it possible for the Allied fleet to breach the Strait and reach Istanbul and the Black Sea. Istanbul, "the Red Apple of Islam" seemed ripe for the picking. However, the Turkish resistance proved surprisingly stiff, and after 8 months of fighting and many casualties, the British and their allies abandoned the campaign. It was a disaster for the British, and the first time since the 17th century that the Turks were able to defeat a great European power. Usually the story of the Gallipoli campaign (the Turks call it Canakkale) is told from the British and ANZAC perspective. Erickson's is the first book to redress that imbalance. He uses many Turkish sources, and it is good to finally see the battle through Turkish eyes. In this operational level military history, Erickson describes in detail Ottoman Turkish planning, preparations for the assault, the organization of the Ottoman army, its combat operations, and the leadership and

determination of the Turkish officers, among whom was Mustafa Kemal, the man who, as Atatürk, would create and lead the Turkish republic. Gallipoli was Kemal's baptism of fire, his first rise to a national stage. After reading Erickson's book you'll

know how and why the Turks defeated the allied forces, something most books on the campaign gloss over. If you'd like to learn about allied operations, there is no better book to consult than Alan Moorehead's classic *Gallipoli* (New York : Harper Books, 1956). For those who don't like military history but would still like to know something about the campaign, there is also a fine film called *Gallipoli* (1981) by Australian director, Peter Weir, with Mel Gibson, which gets most of the facts right and is worth watching.

Art and Music

Turkey's music is as diverse and beautiful as the country itself. There is a modern form of classical music, whose heritage goes back to Ottoman times. Turkish versions of traditional Middle Eastern instruments are used, such as the oud and the dulcimer-like kanun. It can be either vocal or instrumental, and improvisation plays a part along with a composed score.

Some incredible vocal performances by late Ottoman classical singers can be heard on the *Gazeller* disc (*Gazeller: Ottoman-Turkish vocal improvisations in 78 rpm records*, Kalan, 1997).

The bardic folk tradition which originally was part of tribal culture is still alive in Turkey. The saz or Turkish long-necked lute is the primary instrument. You can hear this hypnotic music on the *Ashiklar* disc (*Ashiklar: Those who are in love, Folk music of Turkey*, Golden Horn Records, 1999). If it intrigues you, seek out something by its foremost proponent, Asik Veysel.

The Turks have long been attuned to musical trends in the West, and are adept at adapting them. The *Geçmişten günümüze tangolarımız* CD features tangos worthy of Astor Piazzolla (*Geçmişten günümüze tangolarımız*. Istanbul Kalan 2000).

In the late 1960s and 70s the Turks developed their own take on rock music, blending it with Anatolian folk music and instruments. Mogollar and Baris Manco are two of the best artists. Check out the *Hava Nargile* CD for a guided tour of the classic Turkish rock scene (*Hava Nargile: Turkish rock music, 1966-1975*, Bacchus Archives, 2001).

In keeping with their position between East and West, the Turks have also borrowed from Arab music, creating a style called Arabesque. It mixes the beats and instruments of modern Arab popular music with Turkish vocals. Two of this style's greatest proponents are Orhan Gencebey and Zeki Muren (*Zeki Muren.Kayıtlari 1955-1963*, Kalan, 2003). Muren was a huge star, who wore puffed up hair and spangled suits a la Liberace. He did much to encourage the acceptance of homosexuality in Turkish society.

Sewell, Brian. *South from Ephesus: an escape from the tyranny of Western art*. Gibson Square Books, 1989.

Sewell is an art critic and columnist. For years he had tirelessly sought out all kinds of Western art, Renaissance, baroque, modern, whatever, in the museums, galleries, palaces and churches of Europe. In 1975, tired of the endless parade of Western art, he sought out Turkey, believing that it would be a place where there would be few opportunities to see meaningful art. What he found was quite different. Everywhere he looked there was art in the Hellenic, Roman, Byzantine and Islamic styles, and he found that this art moved him in ways that the Western art he had seen before did not. He realized too that the art he found in Turkey was as much a part of the Western tradition as the art he had criss-crossed Europe to see. As he says, "It seems to me now that there is no corner of Turkey that is not part of European history and culture, no site or monument that throws no light towards the West." This book is definitive proof. Sewell began going to Turkey three or four times a year, visiting every part of the country. This book is based on his early trips to Aegean Turkey, and weaves together the European and Asian cultural and historical strands of the ancient cities he visited into one multi-colored, uniquely Turkish tapestry. *South from Ephesus* is part memoir, part art history, part travelogue.

Fiction

Tanpinar, Ahmet Hamdi. *A Mind at Peace*. Archipelago Books, 2008.

Tanpinar (1901-1962) is one of the most important figures in the history of Turkish literature. His work is suffused with the dislocation felt by a people "suspended between two lives", as the Turks were after the creation of the Republic in 1923 when modern Western culture and values was summarily imposed upon them by the new regime of Ataturk. *A Mind at Peace* (1949), Tanpinar's first novel, describes the vast, complicated world of Istanbul just before the outbreak of World War II, and the book shares those qualities. Istanbul is an ancient city with a rich history stretching ages into the past. Everywhere you look there are reminders of it. Reading Tanpinar's novel will not only chart the zeitgeist of modern Turkey, but it will add a modern resonance to your experience of Istanbul as well. Turkey's Nobel Prize Laureate, Orhan Pamuk has called *A Mind at Peace*, "the greatest novel ever written about Istanbul."

Pamuk, Orhan. *Istanbul*. Transl. Maureen Freely. Knopf, 2005.

Pamuk himself has had a life-long relationship with the city. It has informed many of his books, but none more so than this one, which is part memoir, part travelogue. This book will give the reader a feel for the life of the contemporary city with all its intertwined modern and ancient currents.