



Turkish Delight

18 month old Louie Ferraro recounts his first "big adventure": a 17 day trip through the bizarre landscapes and friendly villages of central and southern Turkey





After months of research, Mummy and Daddy had finally decided on Turkey for my first "big adventure". They seemed a little apprehensive before we set off. People were telling them they were "very brave", but they relaxed a little when I started making friends at Istanbul airport.

They'd been told that the Turkish people love children so I was going to do my best not to dispel the myth! We were heading for a place called Ankara, but we had an hour between our flights at Istanbul. I think an hour is a long time, but it gave me the chance to gather together four biscuits, a chocolate bar, half an orange and a few sweets from two lovely ladies with scarves on their heads! Maybe this travel malarkey wasn't going to be too bad after all...

In Ankara, I thought the Museum of Anatolian Civilisations was quite boring, so

I went to sleep. Afterwards Mummy and Daddy said it was "fascinating"! The next day we took a big bus to a town called Goreme, in Cappadocia. This place was full of strange landscapes and funny rock formations, with houses and churches cut out of the rock.

I think my blond curls were quite an attraction – everywhere we went people wanted to kiss me and pinch my cheeks (quite hard sometimes, if I may say so!)



For the next couple of days Daddy carried me in the backpack through the valleys – we saw lots of weird rocks as well as birds, goats, cows, horses and tractors! There were lots of people gardening in the fields too.

At the end of each day we went back to the village and ate at a different restaurant every night. I would have been quite happy to go back to the first restaurant as the waiter gave me his necklace and took me into the kitchen to meet the chef. He made yummy food – grilled meats and

some surprisingly nice vegetables. Honey pastries were for pudding. Mmmm!

I think my blond curls were quite an attraction – everywhere we went people wanted to kiss me and pinch my cheeks (quite hard sometimes, if I may say so!) In one village, after a walk through the Ilhara Valley (it had a nice river and some rock churches which Mummy and Daddy liked, but I thought the burping frogs were best), five women, all with their heads covered by pretty scarves, invited us in to



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their house for tea! Once inside, and after quite a few minutes of Mummy and Daddy trying to make conversation (quite badly I might add, as their Turkish wasn't very good), one of the women brought out a huge plate filled with funny flat bread, cheese, olives, some green leafy stuff (yuk) and fresh yoghurt, as well as the obligatory glasses of "çay". They didn't have any chairs so we sat on the floor. I did *try* not to make too much mess... From Cappadocia we took another bus to the city of Konya. I fought hard not to fall asleep, but was unsuccessful. Turkey has a very sensible bus system - all the big buses stop at bus stations outside the city, from where we got little buses (which aren't half as comfortable!) into the city centre. I liked travelling on the big buses as lots of ladies gave me sweets.

Konya is where a man called Mevlana Rumi founded the "Whirling Dervishes". They pray

by twirling round and round and round - I got quite dizzy trying to copy them! We only spent one night there before moving on to the little town of Egirdir, which is next to a big lake and surrounded by mountains. We stayed in some nice people's house on a sort of island and a lady called Esna cooked us some yummy food. She sang Turkish songs and clapped and she was very impressed with my dancing!

From Egirdir we caught another big bus TO THE SEA! Yippee! - It was a place called Antalya and there were lots of reddy pink people speaking English - typical, just when I was getting the hang of Turkish! The next day a man drove us to a place called Termessos. At first it looked like a big pile of rocks, but Daddy assured me it was an ancient city. There was a big "theatre" with lovely views of the mountains, and I had great fun climbing on all the boulders.

It was good that we went early in the morning (I prefer to get up early these days) as by the time we had seen everything there were lots of people walking around.

That evening we went to a restaurant in Antalya and it had a big parrot in a cage! There were lots of old men on the table next to us who were busy drinking little glasses of what looked like water. They were very loud and started singing songs, so I showed them my dancing, and they liked that. I sat on one man's knee and we all sang songs and clapped. Then they invited Mummy and Daddy over and told them a poem – it was about lovely children, like me!

Our next (and last) stop was a town called Fethiye. Nearby there was a big gorge called "Saklikent". We, well, Mummy and Daddy actually (I was in the backpack), had to get our feet wet as we walked up the gorge. My Daddy's quite tall, but in places the water went up above his knees! It was amazing. The rock walls went up and up and up.



And then we had to fly home – boo!

Mummy and Daddy said Turkey was the best holiday they'd had in years. The people were very friendly, and I got lots of presents. As well as all the free food I was given, I think the final tally included two necklaces, three bracelets, a pen-knife (which Mummy and Daddy have to keep until I'm older) and a dinosaur shaped water pistol!

I wonder if they like children in Senegal?

