

Subject: Week 69 Learnings from Turkey
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Dear All

I visited Turkey this week and covered Istanbul, Ankara, Soke and Bursa cities

I also visited the Home Textile fair in Istanbul. I have been to Turkey a few times in the past both for Unilever and Nokia. Here are some things about Turkey that will surprise you:

1. Istanbul is home to the oldest and largest mall in the world – The Grand Bazaar, started in 1455, has 3000 shops and occupies 61 streets. 100 million consumers visit the Grand bazaar every year! Turkey has a strong education system, some of the sciences and engineering colleges go back to the 14 th century. Turkey also had a successful military college.
2. Turkey has many heritage cities and monuments, e.g. Troy, as in famous for Helen of Troy is a city now called Anatolia. Turkey is the 6 th most visited country Turkey has invested significantly in infrastructure over the last decade. It took me one hour 40 minutes to cover a distance of 175 kms by car.
3. Istanbul has just built the largest airport in the world, this airport is two weeks old. Turkish airlines has about 286 planes and aims to make Istanbul a rival hub to Frankfurt, Paris , Amsterdam and London over the next decade. Turkish Airlines is offering a one day free stopover in a four star hotel if you fly economy to the US, South America or Europe and a 2 day five star hotel free stopover. European airports tried their best to stop this massive airport.
4. There is a debate on whether Tulips started in Turkey or in Holland!
5. The Turkish industry comprises many small family run companies – who thrive on Innovation, technology upgradation and process. Their manufacturing leans on German methods. Turkey has a customs union with the European Union and hence benefits immensely from that.
6. Turkey is a big tea and coffee drinking market. Turkey has the highest per capita consumption of tea in the world.
7. The evil eye is the largest selling souvenir from Turkey.
8. Turkey is like India, half their population is below the age of 30.
9. Turks did not have a surname till 1934 when it became mandatory for them to have one. 100 years ago, Turkish women could divorce their husbands if they didn't provide them enough coffee to drink!!
10. The business here works on Trust and food is a big glue between business meetings. Gifts are common practice in all meetings. All our customers were disappointed that I didn't accept the small gifts they had for me, but they understood and appreciated the principle.

Feedback welcome

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