

Turkey

Horse Trekking



CAPPADOCIA. The name itself sounds exotic and filled with the promise of adventure.

Described as a cross between the Grand Canyon and a lunar landscape, this historic region of Anatolia in Turkey is rich with ancient wonders and, according to the locals, the best way to see and appreciate its unique beauty is on horseback.

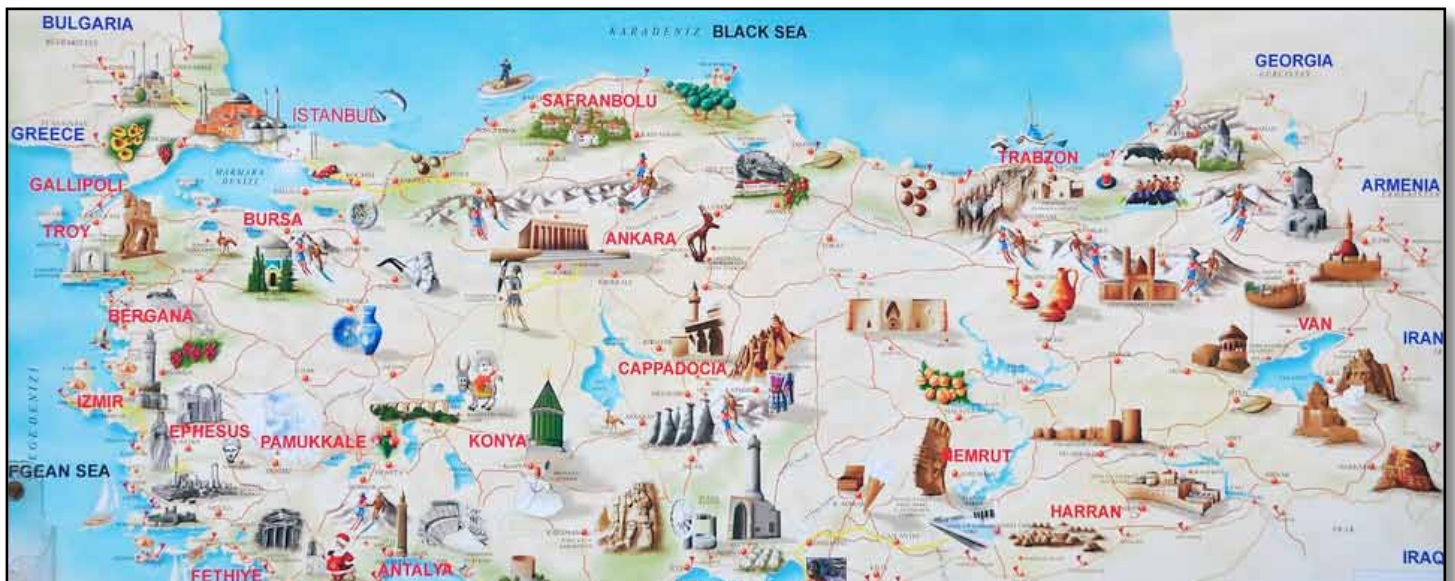
Victorian riders, Rhonda Petschel, Margaret Mooney and Sue Kirkegard can attest to that, they spent a

fortnight in Cappadocia following the Evliya Celebi Way along 14th century Ottoman roads through the Turkish mountains.

The route is named for a 16th century explorer who recorded Turkish life for the Sultan. Evliya Celebi's writings have survived to this day and the Turkish Government has brought history alive for visitors to rural Turkey by signposting his travels. The route is



Turkey has a chequered and violent history dating back through time. It has had many takeover bids - mostly due to it's strategic position and the waterways that link the Mediteranean to the Black Sea. The Dardanelles, once protected by the ancient city of Troy and fought over during WWI, and the Bospherous, surrounded by the sprawling city of Istanbul. These channels run into the Marmara Sea in between and split the great continents of Europe and Asia. The country is devastatingly beautiful in places, desolate moonscapes in others but all areas have a rich history from the time of the first known man.





around 650km long and takes about 25 days to complete, including rest days. However, there are treks available to suit every traveller, from a two hour sunset ride, two days, five or ten days

The Evliya Celebi Way is Turkey's first equestrian route and was opened to travellers in 2011, a year dedicated to celebrating Evliya Celebi's life and work.

The ladies were particularly fortunate to be accompanied on their journey by Dr Caroline Finkel, a British historian now resident in Turkey, who is an expert on Ottoman history and has recently co-authored a guidebook to the trail.

Rhonda, Margaret and Sue enjoyed a relaxed pace on their Turkish adventure. They clip clopped through villages where they were welcomed for 'chi' at the local teahouses and met eager sellers offering them tubs of pickles and tomato sauces or fresh peaches. Nights were spent around campfires with villagers or the local imam, and exploring the ancient cities of Iznik (Nicea), Bursa and Kutahya.

Each day the riders traversed mountain forests and farmland and splashed up river streams, meeting goatherds and farmers along the way. Rhonda says the horses were a great attraction to the locals so they often enjoyed the company of the shepherds, field workers, children and villagers. The people all knew of Evliya Celebi and were pleased to see the Australians taking an interest in their famous ancestor and the history of the region.

A highlight on the last day was following a track used by local herders from a remote mountain village of only eight families, to the river valley 300m below. Sue says the wildflowers in that valley were untouched by casual visitors.

All regular riders, Sue says the ladies found their Arab cross mount very responsive and they had a thoroughly enjoyable two weeks. "Aussies are inveterate trail riders and they would find the Turkish people so easy to get along with," she said. "We all enjoyed the chance to ride through and be immersed in such a different culture and time."

Continued with more photos



There is ancient history everywhere.

Caves and castles abound



The old and new ways merge in small towns in Turkey



Cappadocia