



## A Turkish delight, but not as you know it!

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**A**fter a trip to Turkey last year to sample the delights of Cappadocia from the confines of a bus and on foot, I felt rather envious of the freedom



offered to those ambling through the fairy chimneys and stunning scenery on beautiful Arabian mounts. So much was my envy I decided to find more information on 'how to'.

Turkey may not be the first destination on your agenda when booking a horseback holiday however the historically rich country provides an enchanting retreat from the predictable package holidays. Hidden beneath the touristy surface is a cultural sanctuary that offers horse riders powerful scenery, unforgettable sights, welcoming hospitality and above all, a true equestrian adventure! Olwen Law of In The Saddle tells us more about

Turkey's hidden delight...

Situated in Central Anatolia, in the middle of the country, Cappadocia is visually unique and famous for the underlying geology. Travelling to this fascinating area allows you to unveil some of the mystery behind the unique fairy chimneys, secret underground towns and spectacular Christian churches carved out of rock, making it a haven for equestrians and geologists alike. For the adventurists, there are few fences in Cappadocia, which gives you the freedom to ride almost anywhere!

The name Cappadocia comes from the phrase 'the land of the beautiful horses' and visitors to the

region can fully expect their trip to live up to the name. There is a wonderful collection of flora and fauna to peruse from the back of one of the sure-footed, yet forward going horses and the mountainous and rocky terrain will challenge your riding abilities. The horses in Turkey are predominantly pure Arabians, Anatolian-Arab crosses and Akhal-Teke crosses which are all forward going and used to climbing mountains, going down steep slopes and offering a little speed when it is asked for.

Whether you like home comforts and a touch of luxury, or are prepared to embrace nature and camp, Cappadocia offers a range of different means of viewing the spectacular region.

Ideal for the rider who wishes to experience Turkish lifestyle with an outdoor adventure, the 8-night Cappadocia Fairy Chimney Ride begins in the historic town of Cavusin and combines four nights of camping under the beautiful Turkish skies with four nights of home comforts in a hotel. Explore local towns and hidden caves, amble in between the impressive rock formations and peruse native wildlife, all whilst putting the turmoil of everyday life into perspective. Visit tiny fishing villages, ride through breathtaking valleys, apricot groves and lakes. Stop for lunch in quaint historical taverns and enjoy delicious local delicacies, while embracing the native culture.

If you aren't interested in embracing the great outdoors the 6-night Cappadocia Highlights trip enables you to experience all the excitement of a Turkish adventure without the alfresco living! The enlivening excursion takes you through fairy chimneys, tranquil valleys and allows you to visit the underground cities.

Enjoy gastronomic meals in local restaurants, celebrate true Turkish nightlife and enjoy leisurely trips to the local shops where you can buy beautiful carpets, jewellery and pottery.

Cappadocia is unique and offers travellers a welcome respite from everyday life. From riding through the distinctive rock chimneys that have evolved over many years due to the erosion of hard volcanic rock overlying a much softer layer to seeing Pigeon Valley where thousands of natural dovecotes are carved into the cliffs – it is even said that the pigeon droppings are responsible for Cappadocia's reputation for producing the best fruit in the whole of Turkey! Escape by drifting off high into the tranquil

*“The horses love to gallop or “run” as our guide Ercican said, which is great fun and thrilling!”*

skies in a Hot Air Balloon, which offers a different view over the impressive scenery and gives a welcome retreat from the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

Above all, while the landscape is awe-inspiring and the riding spectacular, ultimately it is the very kind and hospitable people that you will meet and interact with each day that make this destination so remarkable. ▶

