

## TURKISH DELIGHT by [John Broadhurst](#).

The lines of this poem I am about to write  
Tell the story of the Broadhurst's Turkish Delight.

Half past five was the time we'd set  
And duly, after a rush, the deadline we met.  
Everything went fine, until  
We reached the top of Goodden's Hill.  
Mum let out an anguished call  
Which, sad to say, was the start of it all.  
"My contact lens' cleaner's not here."  
"We'd better go back for it then, I fear."  
Tony, by now, had climbed in the bath  
Well, it gave the lad a laugh.  
"See you in ten minutes," he sarcastically said  
As, once again on our way we sped.  
His prophecy came true alright,  
For home was barely out of sight,  
Chideock village, to be exact  
Was where we discovered that, in fact  
I had left my razor behind.  
By now the time factor was more in mind.  
But the prospect of having to wet shave  
Was far too grave.  
So back we went,  
Once more hell bent  
On retrieving this item; but we both agreed  
This had to be the last thing we would have to need.  
As well as feeling a proper shower,  
All this had wasted half an hour.  
So, much against the original plan,  
It was, foot down, and get there as fast you can.  
We were due at the airport at 20 past 8  
So we soon realised we were going to be late.

We found Gatwick Motors without any trouble,  
And transferred to South Terminal at the double.  
Arriving breathless at Monarch Airways check-in  
We were told we had left it to the very last min.,  
As the 'plane was boarding at Gate 31,  
Which meant no time for the usual 'duty free' fun.  
I'm beginning to think I must look like a security risk,  
Because I am always the one they pick on to frisk.

The flight went well  
As far as I could tell:  
The food was great  
If rather late.  
Five past twelve is hardly time for tea;  
But being so hungry, it didn't bother me.

Prawn cocktail, then beef, followed by apple pie  
Which was pretty good fare, I could not deny.  
We slept a little; but were glad to hear  
That the descent had started into Izmir.  
With passports stamped, visas bought and cases retrieved  
We left the airport, much relieved:  
Only for a porter to seize our trolley,  
Which lead to our first holiday folly.  
Arriving at the bus he asked for a tip,  
These begging Turks gave me the pip.  
I offered 50p, having no Turkish money:  
He didn't seem to think that funny.  
"Two Eeenlish pound," he said.  
I gave him one, and off he fled  
To some other sucker from abroad,  
Too green to challenge this native fraud.

At five o'clock, frail, tired and dreary  
With both of us feeling decidedly weary,  
We arrived, at last, at our chosen hotel;  
It was much too dark for us to tell  
In what sort of place we were to stay,  
For our long awaited holiday.  
We stayed at the Hotel Turkad  
For a 3 star, not at all bad.  
It was situated on Ladies Beach,  
So sand and sea were in easy reach.  
Another couple alighted with us  
We left the rest roasting on the bus.  
At Reception, one of the Turkish clan  
Produced the inevitable form for the other man.  
"You're a teacher," to him he said.  
His woman replied, "I'm a deputy head!"  
I kept quiet, while Mum filled in the form  
Not wishing to seem out of the norm.  
We took the lift to the fifth floor  
As our room was number 504  
It was huge, 12 feet by 24  
With the entrance and bathroom adding some more.  
A balcony overlooking the sea,  
A fridge, which at first seemed odd to me;  
But by the end of the following day  
We wouldn't have been without it, in any way;  
For, when you're hot, its extremely nice  
To have a drink as cold as ice.

The plumbing, it was rather odd  
Fitted, I assume by some Irish bod.  
It would seem reasonable to expect the red to be hot;  
Soon we found that it was not.  
Blue was hot, red was cold,  
A Turkish custom from of old.

I was relieved when the electric worked at all  
As, along with my razor, the plug came from the wall;  
And when the lift began to move  
The lights went out, which goes to prove  
That Turkish lighting, plumbing etc.,  
Could be, should be so much betterer!

I yawned  
As day dawned.  
If I'd been told before I came  
That from the window, down on the lane,  
I would see a donkey, followed by a camel:  
I'd have said, "What a load of flannel."  
But, sure enough, to my surprise  
There they were before my eyes.  
He came every morning to the hotel next door;  
I never did find out what he came for.

Mum felt too tired to face a meal;  
But I set about breakfast with my usual zeal:  
Cheese and fruit, bread and jam,  
Just the job for a hungry man.  
The coffee was of a different ilk  
Due largely to the fact that they don't have milk!

For lunch Mum found her favourite dish  
Was just a Turkish mixed sandwich.  
I found that my favourite thing  
Was called a Pizzarella King.  
So after sandwich and pizza at the hotel bar  
We sampled the beach which was not very far;  
Across the road, to tell the truth,  
We were ushered to wooden sun beds by a Turkish Youth.

A bus picked us up for the welcome meeting;  
Our courier, Jan, gave us a right royal greeting.  
She told us all what we should and shouldn't do  
And we were invited to book tours, if we wanted to.  
We decided we would try Ephesus  
Provided it was an airconditioned bus.

From the meeting we wandered out  
To see what Kusadasi was about.  
Most of the shops sold gold, T shirts or leather,  
There must have been hundreds altogether;  
But none of the items has a price  
So you have to seek for some advice  
From the men who continually hover around,  
Pouncing upon you like an eager hound;  
To try to entice you into their shop;  
You wonder how much their price will drop

If you go to walk away  
They make an offer to persuade you to stay  
And make a purchase, "Very cheap,"  
Quite frankly, at first, they made my blood creep,  
Till eventually I got the hang  
Of just ignoring this persistent gang.  
I only asked when I wanted to know  
The price of what they had on show.  
These shopkeepers call you wherever you go,  
Sadly the only word they know is 'Hello',

They use it to try to catch your attention  
When you ignore it I would not like to mention  
The language they use as you pass them by;  
Its Turkish alright, but I doubt its 'Bye bye!'

For our evening meal we returned to the hotel,  
Local food that went down well  
As by then we were both pretty peckish  
Ready to sample the best of Turkish.  
In the hotel this Turkish food  
I have to say was pretty good.  
A variety of salads from which to choose,  
With so many ingredients you couldn't lose.  
That was the starter, and then with the meat  
You took more salad, as a special treat.  
In between these two courses, soup was served;  
However, about the sweet, I'm a bit more reserved;  
For though they were tasty, this I would say  
They were syrup soaked cake; and the same the next day!  
However, truth to tell,  
We ate very well;  
And if it hadn't been for Mum's tum running riot,  
When we got home she'd have had to diet.

Day two dawned  
I still yawned.  
To visit a mosque was our intent  
To discover what the Muslim religion meant.  
We found when we arrived  
They had contrived  
To shut the door,  
And so once more  
We looked around at the Turkish fare,  
Purchasing tea and spices while we were there.  
As we went on our daily round  
We were often greeted by the sound  
Of the wailing Muslim call to prayer,  
A truly blood-curdling affair.  
We did try to see inside a mosque, but  
Once again, the door was shut.

We did discover that at a time of prayer  
The men sit alone, and the women elsewhere.  
When at last we peeped inside all we saw  
Was the back view of men kissing the floor.  
The Muslim women, it seems  
Beyond their simple dreams  
To have equal rights, or so it's said  
Yet the older one always covers her head:  
And what seems grossly unfair to me;  
While the women are working, the men just drink tea!

The transport in and around the town  
Which picks you up and drops you down,  
Whenever or wherever you hold out a hand.  
They're cheap, only costing a mere six grand!  
At home we would call them a minibus,  
The Turkish name for them is Dolmus,  
Which means stuffed in Turkish, and they usually were  
Full up with people; but they get you there.  
If you happen to miss one, you'll very soon find  
There'll be another one not far behind.  
There's no such thing as a proper bus stop,  
Just tell the driver and out you pop.

The pool next door was free,  
So, after yet another brand of tea  
We settled down at the pool's edge  
Propping up the huge umbrella with a wedge.  
And there we spent the afternoon  
Until we were driven back to our room  
By the music, at full pitch.  
Tomorrow we will have to go to the beach!  
Turkish pop music is only wailing, at its best;  
I'd give them 'nil points' in any song contest.

We found the table tennis after our meal,  
And set about it with more zeal  
Than ability; we were not very good,  
We'd practice at home if only we could.  
On Monday morning proper tennis, we thought;  
But as no equipment we had brought  
We asked to borrow the hotel gear:  
They had plenty of rackets, but no ball, I fear.  
"Have a look in the grass," the manageress said  
It would have been easier to buy some instead  
For no ball we found  
So beachward bound,  
We decided we would spend the day  
Instead of playing games, in a leisurely way.  
We spent it lying in the sun,  
Not my idea of fun;

But Mum likes to lie and cook  
And I can always read my book,  
Or stroll along the beach to find  
What shells the sea has left behind,  
Or wander here and there  
Or stop a while and stare  
At sights, with sun oil smothered,  
Sights which would be much better covered.  
Turkey is on the Aegean coast  
The tide moves a metre at the most.  
The gentle waves just lap the shore,  
For peace and tranquillity, who could ask for more.

We had a 7 o'clock call for Ephesus  
To make quite sure we caught the 8.10 bus  
Which picked us up by the hotel gate,  
A mere twenty minutes late.  
The young Turkish guide called Ihson  
Took to the mike and our trip had begun;  
While standing at the front of the bus  
He told us the history of Ephesus;  
But before we were to see this Wonder of the World  
Yet another treasure he unfurled.  
For in days long gone  
The Virgin Mary had travelled with the Apostle John  
To a house high in the hills, all on its own  
Until quite recently unknown,  
Where Mary is said to have spent her last days,  
Now a place of pilgrimage and praise:  
A holy place  
Full of grace  
And peace for all to see,  
Where Mary lived in calm tranquillity.  
As we wound our way down the mountainside,  
Our Turkish guide, with obvious pride  
Told us of the wonders of this ancient city.  
He was knowledgeable, clear and really quite witty.  
The city itself, well, what can I say,  
It lived up to its billing in every way.  
It was easy to picture, in days of old,  
St. Paul, as the stories of Jesus he told.  
The marbled streets, the mosaics, the Library so grand,  
The pillars and temples so carefully planned;  
The very public, public loos  
The amphitheatres which must have heard cheers and boos.  
The main one had scaffolding on each wing  
Shattered by a concert given by 'Sting'!  
Before the city was built, the Romans took great pains  
To lay a most complicated system of drains.  
It was a bit disconcerting to think that this zone  
Is one of those that is earthquake prone.

Pieces of columns here and pillars there,  
Thrown by an earthquake just anywhere.  
Much is still strewn all over the place  
A lasting tribute to the Roman race.

From Ephesus, not far from the historic city  
The Temple of Artemis, Goddess of fertility.  
In Roman days, this monument to Heaven  
Had not one pillar, but one hundred and twenty seven.  
Now all that remains for visitors to see  
Is the one 19 metre pillar, the rest is history.  
Behind the ruins is the Basilica of St. John  
And a Byzantine Castle to feast your eyes upon.

Lunch in a Selcuk restaurant,  
Fifty two thousand lire, eat what you want.  
The Turkish money we very soon found  
Is practically worthless, 20,000 lire to the pound.  
On the other hand, it seems pretty fair  
That with fifty pounds you're a millionaire.  
In the shops we usually took Jan's advice  
And offered only half of the asking price.

While lunching, there were kittens all over the place,  
All thin, one scraggy with a war-torn face.  
One looked so bad it could not have been thinner  
So Mum gave it half her dinner.  
She threatened should we go there again  
She'd take plenty of Whiskas, the reason's quite plain.  
Their dogs seemed to wander day and night,  
Yet they play well together, not wanting to fight.

On almost all main thoroughfares  
Shoeshine boys would do running repairs,  
Or make your shoes shine  
And look in their prime:  
But then this facility is a must  
In a country with so much dust.  
A dear lady in our party felt sorry for one;  
We felt sorry for her before he'd done.  
We watched, in disbelief, the mess he made  
Trying to put a shine on shoes which were suede!

The local museum had statues galore,  
Most had their heads missing, some had even more  
Parts that had long been lost  
The sort of extremities that are bitten by frost!

On the way back we saw where carpets are made,  
It was government sponsored and definitely first grade.  
We sat round a tent woven with goat hair;  
I sat on a camel bag, there wasn't a chair.

The guide showed us the many different dyes,  
His inability to spin he did not try to disguise.  
We went into a room, with carpets full;  
Some made with cotton, some silk, but most wool.  
The little girls were sitting in comparative gloom,  
Hands skilfully moving across the loom.  
When weaving with silk, because it's so fine,  
They can only work for two hours at a time.  
The very young girls, busy at the loom  
Seemed to me to be not long from the womb.  
Perhaps the age rules in this part of Turkey  
Are not as tight as we think they should be.  
The last beautiful carpet, revealed with slight of hand,  
Would cost some lucky buyer a cool fifteen grand.  
Not the funny,  
But British money.  
It really had been a fascinating day  
An ideal method of passing the time away.

On much of the landscape where now it is green  
Large blocks of flats will soon be seen.  
The Turks are viewing the holiday trade  
As a way vast sums of money can be made.  
It will be increasingly hard to find  
A true example of the Turkish mankind.

The only way to try to look back  
Will be far away from the beaten track.  
Rediscovery of what we saw that day  
Is hampered by lack of means to pay  
For the archaeological exploration  
Which brings about such a transformation,  
Takes a lot from the public purse,  
Which in itself makes the Turks' lot worse.  
Only 30% of old Ephesus can so far be seen  
So we can only imagine what might have been.  
But one day they may see the prize  
As from the earth it all does arise.

One thing about Kusadasi you could hardly salute  
Was the part of town they nicknamed Beirut  
Named, quite obviously for its similarity  
To that other poverty stricken principality.  
There's vast new building everywhere it seems  
Most far beyond the average Turk's dreams.  
Perhaps, as I've said, they're for holiday flats;  
If that is the case one thing stands out, and that's  
They each look more like a mini multi-storey car park  
All cold and bare and empty and stark.  
When they build their houses there's one strange thing  
They don't seem to use any scaffolding.



To hold up the next storey  
Plain wooden poles in all their glory;  
Tree trunks, all cut to one length,  
They use lots of them to give enough strength.  
And that is how each house progresses,  
It must be enough for the strains and stresses.  
I'm just glad I don't have to stand below  
And watch these ugly houses grow.

At breakfast, next day, the waiter brought tea in due course,  
When I thanked him Mum thought his reply was "Up yours."  
He knew very little English, but he really tried;  
If anything ran out, "Tomorrow," he sighed.  
Which actually meant "Never",  
All rather clever.

We took the Dolmus to Soke market  
Its nearly as cheap as a magic carpet.  
Twelve miles for 50p,  
Seemed pretty fair to me.  
It was interesting to see the market in this old world place,  
And wonder at the story behind each dark brown face:  
But one thing quickly threw us in a rage  
Half starved, half feathered chickens packed in a cage.  
Some lay helpless, with a tether  
Holding their legs firmly together.  
It would have been lovely to capture the many busy sounds,  
And the colour and the movement, which everywhere abounds:  
Huge melons, like gaily coloured plastic balls  
Many other kinds of fruit on the multitude of stalls;  
Some of it was very, very cheap  
Piled on the stalls in an enormous heap.  
Giant cabbages, cauliflowers and even radishes,  
Every type of vegetable a Turkish lady wishes.  
All very much the same, yet somehow different from ours;  
Fruit and veg. in plenty, but we didn't see any flowers.  
Mum bought a basket for just over one pound,  
And a Turkish hand brush for sweeping the ground.

I bought some glasses for the apple tea,  
Together with saucers to balance on your knee.  
The price he asked for six, was 50,000 lire,  
For four I paid 24 thou., it should have been much dearer.  
In the fish end of the market there was little choice,  
But all the vendors were in good voice  
As they constantly threw water over their wares.  
The smell was decidedly fishy, but then who cares.  
It certainly was most enthralling to have seen  
This unique part of Turkey, as for centuries it has been:  
For I'm sure, although there have been some things new,  
Much of what we saw is what they always used to do.

I've mentioned the plumbing, but really feel I oughta,  
Say a few words about their hot water.  
The heating system looks primitive at first sight;  
It consists of two tanks on the roof, so well it might;  
But on closer inspection  
They use the sun's reflection.  
So the panels facing towards the sun  
Provide sufficient hot water for everyone.  
Whilst talking of plumbing I feel I should say  
Of something which puzzled us from the first day.  
Protruding over the toilet was a tiny little pipe  
We learned it was meant your bottom for to wipe.  
It's strange what they do in these foreign lands,  
For the toilet paper, is just for drying your hands!

On the Tuesday the coach for our trip came late;  
For Pumakkale 'twas early, so we didn't have to wait.  
It turned out to be one of our better days,  
Varied and unusual in many ways.  
We had wondered if 150 miles by coach would be too far;  
But it still seemed preferable to hiring a car.  
Three hours in a coach can sometimes be  
A bit of a bore; but we stopped for tea,  
And for an hour our professional guide  
Gave us a history of Turkey, with obvious pride  
In what they've achieved since 1923  
When K. Ataturk, the revolutionary  
Became leader of this vast varied state,  
Introducing laws which completely altered its fate.  
The land is rich and gives a plentiful yield;  
We stopped at the roadside by a cotton field.  
The plants all grew in a very fine loam,  
I collected some pieces to bring back home.  
One thing, on returning, was rather rotten,  
I found I'd left my lovely samples of cotton  
On the back shelf of the bus.  
It made me want to fume and cuss.

In the villages the houses are tightly packed  
And the bales of cotton are roughly stacked.  
Some of the houses have glass bottles on top  
Held up with cement, so they cannot drop.  
They signify there are unwed daughters inside,  
And are only broken when each becomes a bride.

Another stop to feel the hot springs  
Which healing properties supposedly brings.  
They come directly from the centre of the earth.  
If they could be sold, who knows what they'd be worth.  
The guide informed us our lunch he'd booked,  
Meat kebabs especially cooked.

An ideal place for us to dine,  
And drink a glass of buckshee wine.

At Pamukkale we had two hours on our own,  
So first we made our way to more relics of Rome.  
For after our coach ride,  
There on the hillside;  
A giant amphitheatre, almost complete,  
Where once the proud Roman would take his seat,  
Along with 15,000 other souls,  
To watch the actors play their roles.  
From a distance it had seemed quite small;  
But once inside this roofless hall,  
The sheer enormity  
And uniformity  
Of the rows and rows of seats  
For watching gladiatorial feats;  
Made us marvel at it all.  
The Roman equivalent of a music hall.  
Once again around the outside  
Pillars and columns had been cast aside  
As though they were building bricks.  
I expect more earthquakes had been up to their tricks!

As we left this momentous of places  
We were offered a stone head with two faces.  
The vendor was old and came up to try  
To sell us this relic of days gone by.  
He started at 300,000 lire,  
Had it been real it would have been much dearer.  
He asked, I walked away  
He then suggested less to pay;  
Till at length we agreed at 110,  
But we became suspicious, so gave it back again,  
Which we later discovered was the right decision to make  
'Cause at that price, it could only have been a fake.  
So back down the path, somewhat sad,  
Fake or not it's what we'd like to have had.

Pamukkale is famous for its cotton castle and lake;  
From a distance it looks like a great iced cake.  
We came all this way so we felt we should  
Bath in the cascading therapeutic waters, if we could  
So off to the changing rooms  
To put on bathing costumes.  
Then, keeping strictly to the rules  
We took off our clothes and bathed in the pools.  
We sat beneath the thermal springs,  
Near enough to guard our things.  
The warm water splashed in our faces  
As we gazed across the gleaming white terraces.

I could have stayed under the falls for hours  
Taking advantage of its healing powers.  
But there is one thing on which you can depend,  
All good things must come to an end.  
We sat in the sun to get ourselves dry,  
And gently let the minutes pass by  
Until it was time to go  
And leave this landscape of lookalike snow.

We saw so many things which will not be forgotten,  
From horse drawn ploughs, to the women picking cotton.  
Roasting a lamb by the busy roadside,  
Bottles on a roof, advertising a bride:  
Men in coffee bars, the call to pray,  
All sights and sounds of a Turkish day.

On the very last day poor Mum she felt bad,  
Stricken down by something she'd had.  
Whether Delhi belly or Turkish trot  
All I know is, she felt so grot.  
She tried the market, but had to go back  
As she only felt like putting her head on the sack  
I did the shopping and wandered about,  
Mum went to sleep while I was out.  
It was a double shame, as we'd saved for our last day  
A trip to a Turkish bath, before we went away.  
The full treatment would have been just right  
Before we embarked on our homeward flight.  
Mum was so glad when it was time to go,  
But how she got home I'll never know.

Friday 29th October was the Republic Day,  
Celebrated in many a different way.  
Schoolchildren marched behind a band,  
Everywhere there were flags of the land.  
It was supposed to be a National holiday;  
But, they all need the money, so open they'll stay.

Parties were held to celebrate  
The 70th birthday of the Turkish state.

Before Ataturk brought peace to this land  
It seems they were a marauding band.  
He sent them out to till the fields,  
And then, as well as the annual yields,  
After ten years of crops they had grown  
The land they'd farmed would become their own.  
The fields were tilled by a horse drawn plough;  
But on our travels, we saw hardly one cow.  
Which probably explains why in coffee and tea  
Milk is a comparative rarity.

Although the land is fertile and grows good crops  
We saw very few flowers in gardens or shops:

But then there was probably a plausible reason  
We were there in the wrong 'blooming' season.

Our command of the language I'm afraid was nil,  
If we'd had to manage without English we'd be there still.  
Apparently, it is Latin based,  
About which I feel a bit shame-faced;  
But perhaps I'm not quite such a fool  
'Cause it's a long time since I left school.

We did find out they use 29 letters  
Apart from that at language they're our betters.

Inspirations is the travel firm's name,  
And inspired they are in the travel game.  
As far as we're concerned, they were great  
And we may well use them on some future date.

Apparently in Winter Turkey has plenty of rain,  
Which they accept quite readily, it's not a pain.  
Then in May  
Almost a particular day,  
The rain stops and out comes the sun,  
Heralding another Summer's begun.  
While we were there  
The weather set fair.  
There was some cloud, but the sun won through,  
And most of the time the sky was clear and blue.

There's only one thing that I'd change  
The flight times I would rearrange.  
Night-time travel, however 'Inspired'  
Leaves a lot to be desired.  
Many different things from a holiday we all seek,  
Perhaps being a millionaire for a week,  
Or visiting historic places,  
Or merely seeing different faces.  
Experiencing the sounds and sights,  
Learning a country's wrong and rights;  
Going on trips, sitting in the sun.  
All these make a holiday fun.  
I think we got the mixture about right  
On our varied, fascinating TURKISH DELIGHT.