

Kalkan – Boats and More

by brightonbitesize on November 9, 2011

The sea was a millpond early that morning – unbelievably blue and dotted with a few yachts slowly gliding across the bay.



It had just gone 7 am and was pleasantly warm.. The signs suggested that it was going to be hot, hot, hot.

That was the day we took to the high seas – well the bay of Kalkan, on the good ship Dilara, along with another 20 or so people, mainly Turkish, for a leisurely all day trip around the bay. This included a mud bath, lunch, swimming stops, more food, more swimming and a little tea and cake just to ensure we didn't go hungry... all for 40 Turkish lire. Omur, our constantly smiling, larger than life captain made sure we had a fantastic time – and didn't starve.



The harbour at Kalkan was busy at 10 am when we arrived to find the Dilara. A large and varied assortment of boats offered daily cruises and moonlight trips for public or private groups. We'd booked the day before and I suspect that is pretty essential, especially in high summer.

Like an overfilled bookcase the boats were squeezed together against the jetty for people to board and it seemed impossible that any boat could leave without walloping into its neighbours. But the rather beautiful little gulet next to our larger cruiser managed to manoeuvre its way out and within a few seconds there was no gap where it had been and once again the water lay still and calm. I guess doing this every day all through the summer season means the crews have this down to a fine art. Next to us now was the Sea Bella, which was crewed by Johnny Depp in his pirate attire, or so it seemed. Larger than most of the other boats, the Sea Bella visits beautiful Kapatras beach on its daily tour. Omur told me that it was often very choppy enroute to Kapatras and therefore most of the boats stuck to the bay.



Kalkan harbour is the focal point of this lovely town and it was great trying to pick out places we knew – generally eateries- as we drew away from the shore. There are apparently around 200 restaurants in Kalkan and many of them have rooftop terraces to eat on, which provide a view and a breeze on hot summer nights. I've yet to have a disappointing meal here and have several times come close to perfection...

But that's another story.

But for now it was bye bye Doy Doy (a favourite!) and hello deep blue Mediterranean.



We were welcomed on board with a glass of apple tea and quickly spread ourselves out on the sun deck. This never became crowded as people moved around – down below there were tables and chairs, along with food and drink, and there was another area for sunbathing at the front of the boat. It was going to be hot, so the canopy was much appreciated too.

Then suddenly rush hour in Kalkan harbour began as all the boats burst into life and started to leave for the open water – and within 5 minutes there we were, out on the deep as forever beautiful blue Mediterranean heading for Mouse and Snake Islands over a slightly choppy sea.

This was to be our first swimming stop and for me my first snorkel of the day. The islands were pretty barren but the rocks tumbled down into the sea and provided the sort of environment where I could imagine some strange exotic sea creatures hanging. However, the fish were keeping well out of my way sneaking between the rocks and diving into dark crevices.



And so back on the boat and across the bay we went, stopping next for a mudbath beauty treatment in a small cove, as you do. This mud apparently takes 10 years off your appearance – unlike some other sources where you only lose 4 years!

Then we tootled off again to another bay, another swim and lunch – which had been cooking on the boat since we'd left Kalkan. It was tasty, Turkish and plentiful, with at least 10 dishes

and the smiling Omur keeping a careful watch over us, plying us with drinks. Sadly, I didn't do the meal justice as my sea legs had buckled from under me as the boat rocked in the increasingly choppy seas – but my other half managed to finish mine off as well as his! After lunch we moved on to a beautiful calm bay, which we shared with a magnificent yacht that was docked for lunch. Part of the fun of this trip was being nosy and wondering who were these millionaires cruising around the bay with us.

By now everyone was leaping on and off the boat from the highest points and it was a truly wonderful hour or two spent in these crystal clear waters. They looked so shallow, but were really as deep as forever and the fish that had eluded me so well in the morning were floating around in abundance here: beautiful fluorescent fish and shoals of tiny little silver fish that all changed direction at the same second – how do they do that?

And Omur and the crew made sure we ate well. Melon, cherries, plums and other fruits were laid out for us and then tea, cake and biscuits!

We had visitors too. Enterprising locals appeared – some to sell their jewellery and friendship bracelets. Another boat appeared trailing inflatables for whizzy rides around the bay if we wished. It was all great fun.

Plus of course there was our wonderful sun deck to laze around on and, in my case, read the same page of a book at least 5 times and still not remember what it was about...



Finally home, after making some new Turkish and English friends; leaving the fish and the millionaires to their own devices as the sun went down over beautiful Kalkan bay.