

Recommended Reading for the Botanical Tour to Turkey

The list includes a few of my long-time favorites... and there are many more...

--*Holly Chase*

NON-FICTION

(Some are out-of-print but are to be found in many public libraries)

The Ottoman Centuries by Lord Kinross (a.k.a Patrick Balfour)

This lucid history reads like an elegant novel, though neither PBS nor the BBC turned it into a 13-week program.

Portrait of a Turkish Family by Irfan Orga

An urban (& urbane) domestic chronicle of Istanbul in the first decades of the 20th century.

Everyday Life in Ottoman Turkey by Raphaela Lewis

Charming! Filled with notes on dress, folklore, food, & the cycle of popular celebrations in the lives of urban and rural Turks.

Turkish Tapestry: A Traveller's Portrait of Turkey

A collection of vignettes of the peoples, places, food, flora, fauna, and traditions of contemporary Turkey. A secular republic with a moderate Muslim culture and a legacy of legendary hospitality, Turkey is the only Mediterranean nation to retain no collective memory of a foreign occupation.

The Mediterranean in the Age of Philip II by Fernand Braudel (2 vols)

These are references I turn to again and again to remind me of the centuries of harmonious interchange between the "Countries of the Cross" and those of "The Crescent" and how interdependent the peoples of the Mediterranean have been.

Far too much for you to cram in before the tour begins on April 26th, there is a paperback edition and you might want to read them in an airport!

PLANTS

There aren't a lot of field guides for Turkey that are readily available in the US. Those online or in better bookshops tend to be quite costly. But one affordable book that I've long used is:

Flowers of the Mediterranean by Oleg Polunin (illustrated & thorough, but still portable!)

And Ketzal Levine gives **Buried Treasures...** her seal of approval:

Buried Treasures; Finding and Growing the World's Choicest Bulbs by Janis Ruksans

A true-life botanical thriller with fabulous photos by the Latvian bulb authority. It has chapters on the Caucasus, Central Asia, and Turkey.

I always enjoy an afternoon's ramble through stacks of the Classics-- much plant legend and tantalizing historical is to be found in translations of **Herodotus, Theophrastus, and Dioscorides.**

Try Googling "Plants of the Bible"... "Plants of the Mediterranean"... " Aegean Flora"... you'll get all sorts of scholarly stuff on university websites.

On the Aegean region and its human heritage--

The Iliad-- Homer

Our tour rambles will take us to Mt. Ida, from which the Greek gods watched the Trojan War on the plain below...

Birds Without Wings by Louis de Bernieres (who also wrote **Corelli's Mandolin**)

This lyrical novel provides both intimate and sweeping views of the multicultural communities of the Ottoman Empire that were decimated by social upheavals in the years bracketing the First World War. I have found no better portrait of the people of rural Anatolia than this masterful work. Its primary setting is the area around Fethiye, in SW Turkey.