

ANZAC Day at Gallipoli

By Chloe De Landgraft

Flew out to Istanbul early this morning with Turkish Airlines who were a full service airline and quite good compared to what I was expecting.

We were met by a Topdeck representative at the airport and also when we got to the hotel. We received information packs from them and had the rest of the day free before a group meet and greet later that night.

The next day we had a sightseeing tour of Istanbul and crossed the bridge that divides the European and Asian continents. We had free time to explore the Gold Soak and Spice Markets, both worth doing but you can get very lost hunting for bargains. The following day we did a walking tour of the city, visited the Blue Mosque and took a boat ride around Istanbul.

On Easter Sunday we packed up a small backpack of clothes, food and sleeping bags to head to Gallipoli for the ANZAC Day service. We spent the afternoon exploring a little coastal town before getting into the Gallipoli campsite. Space is extremely limited here and people rush to get a patch of grass to put their sleeping bag on (no tents allowed). As part of the Topdeck tour we were the 3rd group in out of hundreds and meant we could camp on the grass (many others had to spend the night on seats in the grandstand).

Not that you get any sleep! There are interviews, bands and movies playing all night to entertain you and help you reflect on the hard times that the soldiers endured. The dawn service started at 3am and afterwards I hiked the same tracks the ANZACs did 96 years ago to both the Australian and New Zealand services (about 10km up hill).

The services were very moving and being able to attend them is such a once in a lifetime experience and certainly worth putting on your list to do.



We drove back to Istanbul in the afternoon and were extremely worn out. My sister and I went to a Turkish Bath, which was quite interesting before hopping on the plane back to London.