



European  
Joint  
Support Unit

# Shopping/Services

Istanbul





## SHOPPING

You should assume that, as a general rule, if something is made or grown in Turkey it will be cheap but that imported goods may be as expensive as UK. Nonetheless, it is possible to buy most things in Istanbul, and Western European brands are increasingly easy to find. For day to day needs, shopping is easy, with a reasonable selection of supermarkets and several excellent weekly Turkish vegetable markets close by. Numerous modern, lavish shopping malls are springing up every month and are better than any in UK. All the familiar UK multiples are present, and the high end is too high end for most Servicemen! There are also a modest “soldiers’ Naafi” shop and a ‘liquor store’ on the base. For instant furnishing of forgotten items, there are two IKEA stores in Istanbul.

**Books.** Books in English are available in Istanbul but the choice is limited, and they can cost rather more than in the UK. Children’s books are harder to find. The internet is your friend here.

**Internet Shopping.** Internet shopping is possible in Turkey, but as noted elsewhere, the FCO places some restrictions on what can be sent through the mail system (see Chapter 8). You should certainly not expect the same freedom as you will have had in the UK or Germany.

## DOMESTIC SUPPLIES

Inevitably, many food items you would expect to see in the UK are unavailable in Istanbul, although the situation is improving all the time and, with a little imagination, substitutes can often be found. Items that can be difficult to acquire include:

**Food.** Pork anything (There are shops that sell pork products but expensively.)

Ready meals. The emphasis and expectation is on cooking from scratch – healthy, but tiresome not to have occasional respite.

Weetabix, Alpen and Shreddies. Although muesli, Corn Flakes, and ‘Choco Rice’ are available.

UK and French cheese. When you do find ‘foreign’ cheese it is very expensive.

‘Jars of Britishness’: e.g. pickles and chutneys, marmalade, Marmite, cranberry sauce, redcurrant jelly, horseradish sauce, mint sauce, gravy powder, stuffing, tins of custard powder. Most of these are now available in the local Macro Centre in Zekeriyaköy, but at a premium.

Fruit squash. Only fruit juice and cordials are available in liquid form – you can find squash in powdered or granulated form quite cheaply, though with a high sugar content.

Baking ingredients: glacé cherries, candied peel, marzipan, suet, mincemeat, golden syrup, treacle (maple syrup is available), gelatine.

Anything you specifically want for Christmas (including Christmas Crackers!)

**Toiletries.** Most toiletries seem to be readily available. However, if you have a need for specific makes, you may wish to bring a stock with you.

**Baby Items.** All necessary supplies for babies can be found in Istanbul, but if you have particular preferences, you may wish to bring a stock with you.



## LANGUAGE TRAINING

Turkish is a challenging language, rated 6 out of 7 on the difficulty scale by the Defence Language School. Since these are NATO posts the working language is English and hence GBR staff are not entitled to the full-time DSL courses, as e.g. the Defence Attachés are. However, each post has an authorised entitlement for Rosetta Stone training which can be organised through J7 EJSU once you have your assignment order. The situation regarding local language training for spouses is currently set at 20 hours, although obtaining this entitlement is somewhat elusive. In-theatre language training for officers and spouses appears (Sep 15) to be available for up to 3 hours per week, for 6 months, using a local tutor and paid for by the Defence Academy in UK. There are also occasional language courses run at the HQ. It is advisable that all personnel and families make every effort to pick up the basics of the language – greetings, numbers, and so on - as soon as they can.

## CLOTHING

### Uniform.

The standard working uniform for Army and RAF is MTP, or flying suits for those who are entitled. Summer months can be very hot, especially without air conditioning in the offices. All personnel should bring with them their scale of personal clothing including respirator and helmet, and any deployment kit which has now been issued and has been taken on to your clothing account. If deployed OOA, the UK NSE will requisition any additional deployment equipment through QM EJSU. Officers should bring Service Dress (SD)/No 2 Dress and at least one Mess Kit. Specific Service requirements are as follows:

#### a. Army.

Lightweight SD (No 4 Dress, for the Army) is required in the summer (including for representational duties). It can be ordered through your unit QM. Normal SD is required for winter wear.

#### b. Royal Air Force.

RAF officers are advised to bring sufficient uniform to last the tour as re-supply from the UK can be difficult. They will also be entitled to Warm Weather Clothing (see GAI 1022).

### Tailoring.

There is a Military Tailor on Camp who can sew on military name tapes, insignia, NRDC-T Badges, etc, at little cost. (But little else.)

### Civilian Clothes.

Winters can be cold and wet, with snow on occasions. Your duties may also take you to other parts of Europe, and to Eastern Turkey where the weather can be very wet and bitterly cold. Summers are hot and can be very humid. You should, therefore, pack a range of clothes to cover all eventualities. There is an abundance of cheap, casual clothing (sometimes of dubious quality) readily available in the clothing shops in Istanbul. For those who wish to make use of them, there are local dressmakers and tailors who are good and also cheap in comparison with the UK. Material is readily available locally.

### Shoes.

The quality of shoes is variable. Some women's shoes are very fashionable but are rarely available in sizes above 7, or in wide fittings. Men's large sizes (UK size 11 and above) are very hard to find