

A VISITORS REFLECTION ON KIZKALESİ *By Claire Durkin*

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KIZKALESİ (KUHZKA-LEH-SEE) IS SITUATED RIGHT ON THE EDGE OF THE MEDITERRANIAN SEA ON THE SOUTHERN COAST OF TURKEY.

Kizkalesi means "Maiden's Castle", a romantic name dreamt up to go with the legend of a King, who having been told by a fortune teller that his only beloved daughter would be killed while she was still young, built the beautiful and ethereal castle to hide and protect her from danger. He couldn't have known that death would come in the shape of a snake, so sadly, despite his best efforts, the fortune teller's prophecy came true and that was that.

There is another castle along the eastern end of the beach called Korykos, so Kizkalesi is a two castle town. There are enormous chunks of antiquated ruins lying around which makes it appear more like an open-air museum. One of the other reasons that this small, likeable town is so popular, is that it just happens to have the longest beach in Turkey which is also the loveliest in the area and that's to say nothing of the fact that a medieval fortress- the eponymous Kizkalesi which appears to be floating, is 200 meters out to sea.

To get a closer look at the castle, if you have the energy and nerve you can swim to it. Other ways of getting there are to hop on a little boat, paddle a paddle boat or fly by parasail.

Kizkalesi is also right on the D400 highway which allows excellent access to the many sight-seeing opportunities.

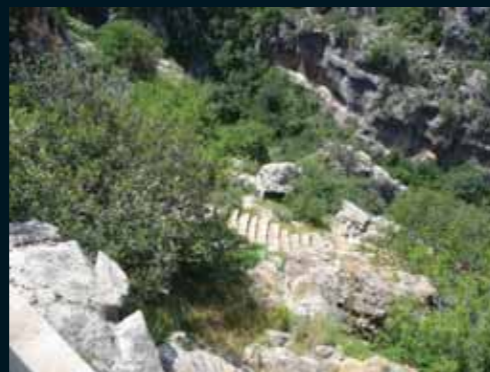
There are plenty of pensions and hotels in the area. I stayed at Barbarossa Club and Hotel which is run by the wonderful Huriet.....www.barbarossahotel.com. It's rambling garden, which is littered with nightly illuminated pieces of roman pillar, leads on to the beach. This also brings easy, direct access to the town with all its tempting restaurants, souvenirs, leather handbags etc. The Hotel is very clean and has all the usual amenities, mini-bar etc and is the right place for you if you are up for some pampering. There is also a lovely big pool for swimmers and a baby pool. As well as all this, when you stay here you will have access to all the seaside activities that are laid on for both adults and children who enjoy keeping busy; healthy, fun

pursuits to make everyone happy, on a safe, clean beach.

I had an audience with Necati Kale who has been Kizkalesi's mayor for the last five years and a member of the political party for 16 years. He is determined to get Kizkalesi firmly on the tourist map. He is doing this by promoting Kizkalesi with it's charming castle and the intriguing surrounding areas that are steeped in Roman and Byzantine history. There are big plans simmering for a local air field and improvements in the infrastructure. Already the Swedes, Belgians and Americans are taking advantage of the market for purchasing holiday homes. Not so much the British, and all because they don't know about it. Brits travelling to Kizkalesi will need to fly from Heathrow or Stansted to Istanbul and then catch a domestic flight to Adana. After that it's just a 1 and a half hour car ride and here

you are in this wonderful place. Now is the perfect time to purchase property here for whatever your reasons. Sterling is holding up very well with the Turkish Lira and local pricing makes it a very attractive business incentive.

I did see some villas in the making, Villa Turkuaz and Kizkalesi, and I was impressed by the lovely big rooms and the positioning of the villas on a hill side with jaw-dropping views across the coast to Maiden Castle. They come in various configurations of bedroom and bathroom numbers and sizes. The balconies in the summer will be absolutely fantastic with the views and cool breezes to rescue you from the intense Mediterranean midday heat. The barbecues are built in as standard. There will also be a children's park, restful gardens, tennis courts, swimming pools, basket ball area



Clockwise from top left: Captions

and car park. The property developer Mehmet...www.turkuazvillalari.com has designed and built these with an eye for style and practicality.

Around Kizkalesi are many ruins and tombs and reliefs of Roman warriors and their wives and children are cut into the perilous cliff faces. There are temples, amphitheatres, ravines and caves. They are everywhere. I went to the famous Asthma Cave where the air is of a quality that is said to help relieve this condition. I was too busy worrying about falling down the rusty, spiral staircase descending in to the dark belly of the cave, to be bothered about the air quality.

About 3km east of Kizkalesi are the extensive but badly ruined remains of ancient Elaiussa-Sebaste, a city with foundations dating back to the early Roman period and perhaps even to Hittite era. About 8.5 km east of Kizkalesi is the ancient city of Kanytelis and the first structure you see is a Hellenistic Tower, which was built by the son of a priest-king in Olba to honour Zeus. It became the location for a Zeus –worshipping cult. I also went to Kanhdivane which means “place of madness”. It is a 90 m deep chasm where criminals were thrown to their deaths. It resembles the Pit of Hell site north of Narlikuyu. The Pit of Hell can only be viewed from a small platform above and is said to be the spot where Zeus imprisoned the hundred-headed monster Typhon after defeating him in battle. Well done to him. I thought I'd try my fingers-in- the-mouth wolf whistle up there to catch an echo. It worked and was ideal compensation for the terror suffered while



looking through scrunched up eyes over into the ravine.

Did you know that in the Aegean region, which is usually known for textiles, the automotive industry, spare parts and cooking oil, and camel wrestling is also very popular. In this case it is hardly a blood sport like fox hunting, bull fighting or cock fighting. The camels are fully grown, bulked-up bulls to make them appear intimidating to their opponents. Two wrestlers are taken into the ring and then a young cow camel is led in to get them excited. This is apparent by the milky, foamy, gooey stuff drooling from their mouths and noses. I suppose she must find this attractive otherwise why bother? Then the wrestling begins which consists of the camels leaning on each other until one of them falls over or runs away. So there you are.

I was taken to several restaurants during my visit and each time the food was simply delicious. Seabass so fresh I'm sure it winked at me, unless that was the effect of the raki.



Raki is a clear aniseed based drink to which you add water to taste. It seemed so clean tasting and innocent.

But beware because smoking in restaurants is still very popular in Turkey.

... On Sunday morning we had breakfast on a hillside in a sturdy tent sitting on cushions while the wind whipped the sides and roof and the sun beat down outside. The varied and unusual offerings just kept on coming and were wonderful. Heaps of crunchy, tasty salads, cheeses, meats and spicy peppers, hot breads, eggs cooked in different ways, the list goes on. All of these delicacies were prepared in a small, very hot kitchen with modest facilities. It was very impressive and we enjoyed it so much that we did it again.

On our last evening in Kizkalesi we had a simple supper in the Barbarossa Club and Hotel and then went round the block to the pub. Huriyet, who runs the hotel, was there with her boyfriend, who also runs a hotel on the beach.

Mehmet the property developer was there, a German man who happened to already be sitting at the table and of course, the lovely Seda Aslan, of Seda Consulting,

www.sedaconsulting.co.uk who is responsible for all of this. We were then joined by some strangers who were German and Swedish. I was the only English person there and as the evening wore on we were getting on famously. I don't know what we were talking about or if the Raki was responsible for any of it, but I do know that it was memorable and very enjoyable.

That's the joy about going to new places; you never know who you are going to meet or what memories you will take away with you.

