

Turkey Video Collection

Ataturk, Founder of Modern Turkey

52 minutes

Along with rare archival footage there are commentaries from many experts. An interesting documentary tracing the rise of modern Turkey and discussing some of the reforms instituted by Ataturk.

Turkey's Sephardim: 500 years

Blue Flower Films, 1991

73 minutes, color

This video discusses the group of people known as the Sephardim: people of Jewish and Spanish heritage that are living in Turkey. Part 1: In Search for the Past (26 min), discusses the settlement of Jews in Turkey beginning in 1492 when they were expelled from Spain. Although the Jews were concentrated in Istanbul and Izmir, they settled in different parts of Turkey also and their influence is still evident today. The video discusses the contribution of the Jews to Turkish society, and the respect they gained. Ataturk once even claimed that they were the most faithful of all minorities. This video shows landmarks and other important Jewish sites in Turkey while interviewing several different individuals and families. Part 1 includes a discussion of a Jewish woman living alone in a city on the Aegean. Part 2: The Past Becomes the Present (32 min) focuses on the breaking of the peaceful coexistence of the Turks and Jews in Turkey. The video discusses the 1986 Arab terrorist attack on a Jewish synagogue in Turkey in which 22 out of 29 Jewish worshippers were killed. Although most Jews still remain optimistic about living in Turkey, this event seemed to change the idea of peaceful coexistence between the two groups. Part 2 also includes a focus on the technological advancements and contributions of the Jewish population in Turkey. The video concludes with Part 3: Life on the Islands (15 min), which contains footage and interviews with people living on Turkey's islands in the Aegean. Daily life is shown and explained, as well as gender roles of the island's inhabitants. The video gives a good historical background and picture of modern day life of the Jewish minority in Turkey.

Distant

DVD, 2002

This film is a deeply compassionate and frequently amusing study of quiet desperation. Watch closely and you'll recognize someone you know, or even yourself, and the quietest moments are the most enjoyably revealing. Divorced, 40-something photographer Mahmut and his distant relative Yusef, arrive in Istanbul looking for work, and quickly wear out their welcome.

Turtles Can Fly
DVD, 2005

Turtles Can Fly manages to be both heartbreaking and galvanizing in its depiction of young Iraqis waiting for the U.S. Army to roll over their village on the border of Turkey. A boy called Satellite, so called because he knows how to hook up a satellite dish, divides his time turning himself into a big operator--he commands a small army of children who search the fields for land mines they can sell to the U.N.--and wooing a pretty but haunted girl named Agrin whose brother has no arms but can see the future. Satellite's mixture of scheming and genuine compassion drives the movie forward; it's impossible not to become engrossed in his courage and ambition, even as the world crumbles around him.
