



11th Annual CHICAGO TURKISH FESTIVAL

May 31 - June 1, 2013
Pioneer Court, Chicago

ABOUT THE CHICAGO TURKISH FESTIVAL

The Annual Chicago Turkish Festival continues its success in entertaining its visitors and introducing Turkish heritage and hospitality to the culturally diverse community of Chicago and the Midwest. The festival has been held in the heart of downtown Chicago at Daley Plaza across from the City Hall since its debut in 2003. Reinventing itself each year, the Chicago Turkish Festival has become a model and an inspiration for many ethnic groups in Chicago and was declared as "the richest and best organized ethnic festival" by the City of Chicago.

This document explains how the festival came about, how preparations are carried out, how performing groups are selected and how the festival is funded. Should you have questions that are not covered by the answers below, you can email us at info@chicagoturkishfestival.org

How did the idea of organizing a festival come about?

Back in 2003, the Turkish-American community in Chicago had been planning a cultural activity geared towards promoting Turkish heritage and culture for some time. This activity could have been a "Turkish Week" celebrated at different venues, a "Turkish Parade" on the streets like the annual New York City parade, or a week long festival in a central location in Chicago. Thanks to the great efforts of the Turkish Consul General of Chicago, his excellency Naci Koru and the president of the Turkish-American Cultural Alliances, Mehmet Celebi at the time, after several meetings with the City of Chicago, the Daley Plaza became the ground to hold the annual Chicago Turkish Festival. The first festival was promptly planned and successfully held between September 15 -17, 2003.



Location of Turkiye on the Globe



**M.K.Ataturk
Founder of the Turkish
Republic**

What is the purpose of the Chicago Turkish Festival?

The purpose of the Chicago Turkish Festival is to introduce Turkish heritage and hospitality with its art, culture, and cuisine to our American friends. Therefore, instead of a parade, a week-long activity at a prime location was decided to be more effective in promoting Turkey and Turkish heritage. The positive feedback, praise and warm welcome we received confirms how correct the decision was, and we are grateful to Chicago for the opportunity.

When and where is the festival held?

The Chicago Turkish Festival has been held in the heart of downtown Chicago at the Daley Plaza across from City Hall since its debut in 2003. The First Chicago Turkish Festival was held for 3 days, but due to popular demand, the Second Chicago Turkish Festival was held for 6 days. Since 2005, the festival has been planned and held for 4 days starting on a Wednesday and ending on Saturday. Every year the Festival turns into a real "Turkish Fiesta" with the opening and closing ceremonies with the participation of thousands of in- and out-of-town Americans pouring to visit. This year we had the opportunity to hold the festival at Pioneer Court on Michigan Avenue which will be the first cultural event of this scope at this location. The festival will be held for two days on Friday, May 31 and Saturday, June 1, and there will be an opening Cocktail Gala on Pioneer Court in the evening of Thursday, May 30th.

Approximately how many people visit the festival?

Since the festival is held at the heart of downtown Chicago, tens of thousands of visitors get to enjoy the festival daily. The festival area gets very crowded especially during the lunch hours when various cultural and art performances take place. Based on the statistics of the pedestrian traffic at the Daley Plaza and City Hall, it is estimated that over 100,000 people visit the festival grounds annually.

The interest of the American and Turkish media in our festival continued increasingly every year, and numerous representatives of media aired the memorable activities on their channels. You can view the coverage of the Chicago Turkish Festival under "Media Coverage" on our website.

Who organizes the Chicago Turkish Festival?

Our festival is organized by the Turkish American community, with the support of the Turkish Consulate General of Chicago. The Turkish-American Cultural Alliance (TACA) and the Festival Committee carry on the majority of the responsibilities of coordinating the festival efforts.

The Festival Organizing Committee holds its initial meeting in January of each year, and during this meeting the Committee decides on the theme of that year's festival, elect a Committee Chair(s), and immediately form sub-committees to begin the preparations for the festival. While the Festival Organizing Committee continues holding its meetings once a month at the Turkish Consulate General, different sub-committees meet more frequently until the festival begins depending on their duties and responsibilities. Prior to and during the festival, these daily duties and responsibilities of the festival are carried out by hundreds of generous and dedicated volunteers. We owe the success of our festival to their selfless contributions.



Pamukkale, Denizli

The Festival preparations could be enjoyable yet very challenging and exhausting due to the fast-pace and demanding responsibilities and work required for the festival. The committee president(s) especially has strenuous and important responsibilities and this position was successfully held by Bora Esenler (2003), Burcu Agar (2004, 2010), Yucel Olcer (2005), Hatice Dinc (2006, 2009), Sevil Kutay (2007), Hasan Yavas (2008), Kemal Ozer and Ilgaz Ulger (2009), Sehnaz Engur and Baris Tasdelen (2010), Naile Berna Kovuk & Hatice Dinc (2011), Sevil Kutay & Hayati Turan (2012), Sevil Kutay & Sehnaz Engur (2013) since the festival began in 2003.

Who performs and participates at the festival?



The majority of groups performing at the festival come from Turkey by invitation. The Fashion show, folklore dancers, Ottoman Military Marching Band (Mehter) and the Whirling Dervishes make up the main performing groups at the festival.

Visitors also watch, learn, and enjoy live demonstrations of carpet weaving , calligraphy, paper marbling, ceramic art, shadow theatre, etc. All performed by Turkish artists. The number of participants and exhibitors both from Turkey and the U.S. grows each year. Since the aim of the festival is to promote Turkish culture and art, we

require the applicants to display items that will serve this purpose and fit within that category only.

Please refer to the “Participate” section of our web site or email us at: info@chicagoturkishfestival.org for participation information and agreements.

Who covers the cost of the festival?

The Festival budget is allocated to promoting, advertising, and organizing the festival, setting up the festival ground and exhibits, and bringing and hosting numerous cultural and art groups locally and from Turkey. We receive contributions from our official sponsors, exhibitors, participants, individual friends of the festival, as well as the Turkish Cultural Promotion Fund.

How can one become a sponsor of the festival?

There are four different levels of sponsorships for supporting the Chicago Turkish Festival. Additionally, it is possible to sponsor festival as a “Friend of the Festival” or as a “Service/Product Sponsor”.

Please refer to the “Sponsor Us” section of our web site or email us at: info@chicagoturkishfestival.org for further information and sponsorship agreement.



Zeus Temple

If you would like to get further information about the festival, see the participants, sponsors and photos from previous festivals you can visit our website at www.chicagoturkishfestival.org.