

And the story continues

After our extra night in the marina we were ready to leave at 7 am The wind had picked up but now from the SW so it was easier to get out of the berth :-)

Successfully got away and headed down to our favorite anchorage at Tuzla, amongst the tankers and not far from the little fishing harbour ..

It was now Friday so we thought we would recover and go to Istanbul on Monday to tackle the main police station !!!!!!!!!!

Over the weekend we reviewed what had happened in the last week and finally realized what the police had been trying to say !!!!!!!!!!

When we left Kusadasi in April we did a visa run to Samos by ferry and received a new 3 month visa on return to Turkey on the 22nd Even though we had left Istanbul and gone to Bulgaria and returned this visa was still current and had till the 21 July to run !!!!!!!!!!!!! That is why the police kept saying no problem you have a visa !!!!!!!!!! Just go to Headquarters before 21 July for a new one Easy !! So we now had a plan and how to approach the passport police !!!!!!!!!!

On Monday I was happy with where Silver Heels II was anchored and we took the dinghy to a quiet spot amongst the rocks and rubble and pulled it up on the beach and padlocked to some broken reinforced concrete and up the hill we walked The bus stop was not far (we had checked it out on Sunday as we went to the local market for fruit and vegies etc etc) The bus arrived almost immediately and we asked to be told when we arrived at the train station20 mins later we hopped off at Tuzla train station and a train arrived almost immediately :-) We even had a seat each :-)

One and half hours later we arrived at Hydarpasa/Kadikoy station (Asian side of Bosphorus) and headed for the ferry.... Once again ferry arrived immediately and we crossed the Bosphorus for about the 5th time I think we are locals now :-)off the ferry at Karakoy on the European side and onto a tram you guessed it immediately The tram winds up past all the tourist sites so was very full 30mins later we get off and had to walk a kilometre to the Metro station at this point I am feeling pretty good its only been a couple of hours since we left the dinghy :-) On to the metro train and off at the next station, the police station should be on the next block (We had 'google mapped' this the night before :-))

Now the Turkish police have been having a bit of trouble with the Kurds who keep trying to blow them up especially police and army etc so they are a bit touchy !!!!!!!!!!!!! Even in the heart of Istanbul even the police don't feel safe !!!!! At least a block from the Police centre there are armed police on every street corner and traffic is controlled in and out of nearby buildings, as we walk the last half a mile we can see the building (because it has the biggest Turkish flag we have ever seen !!!!!)

We enter the revolving door past the armed guards and are confronted by an airport style metal detector and x ray system once through I am asked if I have a camera inside my bag ... "Yes"

OK with some sign language (no english here) They will keep my camera and phone until I exit !!!!!!! OK ... There is a steady stream of people also trying to get in and as we go around the corner we see there is a queue !!!!! eventually we get to the counter ...show passports !!! What do you want !!!!! etc etc. We are directed across the court yard 1st floor A blockin A block heaps of people queuing for I don't know what but people with visas, passport photos etc etc and several windows with queues !!!!!!!!!!

We take the stairs and arrive at the 1st Floor another queue and a counter with two police and several man dressed in business suits etc standing behind the counter !!!!

"Inglize " I ask when its my turn "NO" says the police man except one of the young men in a suit says YES OK so we explain how the Tuzla Police have sent us here and what we want !!!!!!!! NO the policeman says you will need to make an appointment (After Translation) On the Internet !!!!!!

NO we don't want to do that !!!!!!! A young lady appears who speaks english " Can I help) Yes After she speaks with the policeman "No sorry I cant help have to go" AAHH I have an idea can the policeman call the Tuzla police and have a chat No he doesn't have a phone here do I have one ...Yes down at the xray machine !!!!!!!! Sorry You will have to get online and make an appointment !!!!! Turns out our friend who speaks english is from Turkish Airlines so doesn't have much sway with the policeman...

We head back down stairs to the mass of people ...What to do I tell Val to wait there and I go and get my phone ..Not as easy as it sounds but finally I get back with the phone so up to the 1st floor again ... In the queue again same man and same english speaker ... I will call Tuzla can the policeman talk to them I think he is getting frustrated takes our passports and heads into another room He's back and the translation is NO you have a current visa so come back in 9 days when it runs out after you have made an appointment !!!!!!!!

So nothing left to do but head back to the boat with our tail between our legs back onboard at 7 pm ... What a day !!!!!!!!

A check on the Internet ...Its in Turkish and basically is for people who want 3 year visas at only \$1000 each so forget that :-)

Now we know what happens now There are only two options .. Do a visa run before the 21st of July by plane to Cyprus or bus to Bulgaria Then what do you do with the boatput it in a marina !!!!!!! Expensive !! Only other option is to leave Turkey with the boat cancel our Transit log which we just spent a week getting and head for Greece !!!!!!!!

So here we are on our way to The DardanellesIts the 15th so should make it to Canakkale on the 19th and will try once more there to get a visa otherwise we check out and do all the Harbour Master , Customs and police in reverse and off to Greece...

Ahh the joys of cruising :-)