

Are you the type of traveller who sometimes offers to take people to the airport (or meet them when they arrive) just to experience the vicarious excitement of a journey that might have been yours? Fortunately Sydney's vibrant multicultural society also allows you to visit another country without leaving the ground. Such a destination is 'Little Turkey' in the western suburb of Auburn. As you approach the suburb you catch tantalising glimpses of slim, silver-topped minarets rising above the skyline. And when you reach the main shopping area you are greeted by signs that read "Auburn Town Centre – many cultures, one community."

Auburn's typical suburban streetscape of weatherboard cottages and fibro and brick red-tiled houses reflects its 19th and 20th century history. A recent addition, surrounded by raised rose gardens, is the beautiful Gallipoli Mosque. Initiated in 1986, it took 13 years to complete, with five artists from Turkey taking six months to handpaint the interior of the dome. This exquisite work includes gold Arabic calligraphy of words from the Koran and designs in colours of pale and dark blue, aqua and red on white, reminiscent of Ottoman Turkish tiles.

The Victorian buildings in Auburn Street house a diverse cultural mix of stores, but what sets this suburb apart is the large number of Turkish markets, butchers, bakehouses, cafés, cake and sweet shops, and the exceptional Afghan bakery.

Stop off for a tiny cup of thick, dark, sweet coffee or a glass of Turkish tea at the Mado Cafe, run by the charming Akif Karapinar. The antithesis of contemporary cafés, with their hard edges, shiny surfaces and high decibel noise levels, Mado is a place to stay, and stay. Sink into soft, upholstered seats, admire the lovely Turkish rugs set under glass table tops or the antique artefacts (elaborate brass urns, silver and copper pans, giant trays) lining the walls. Read a paper at leisure or chat and indulge in foods that still carry an influence from the opulent cooking of ancient Persia and the Ottoman Empire. Snack on *börek* (delicious stuffed savoury pastries), sweet pastries with nuts and honey, delectable milk sweets or intensely-flavoured fruit ices made with wild cherry and various berry purées imported from Turkey. Or try the amazing stretchy ice cream thickened with *salep* (a powder ground from the root of an orchid). You could continue through lunch and dinner trying more authentic meat, rice and vegetable dishes, but really you should go shopping.

Across the road is the bazaar-like Gima Market where, along with Turkish newspapers, gold-edged glasses, coffee pots and Vegemite, you will find the most beautiful Turkish jams made from fragrant rose petals, or from quince, fig and sour cherries. Shelves are lined with cans containing every type of *dolmas* (stuffed leaves and vegetables). There are freshly roasted nuts, varieties of olives, Greek and Turkish coffees, apple tea, green dried sultanas, cotton candy (like fairy floss), tiny deep-fried syrup-soaked pastries, fresh *peynir* (cheese), Turkish yoghurt and *ayran* (a delicious salty yoghurt drink). At the nearby Al Meer Market you'll also find a range of spices (including sumac) and several varieties of dates. The Arzum Market has shelves laden with a huge selection of preserved red pepper products, and it carries fruit syrups, dried white figs and mulberries, and 'necklaces' of tiny, pale green, dried okra.

All the delectable shortbread biscuits and sweets on display in the shopfront of the Menzil Bakehouse, owned by Nermin and Naim Gunduz, are carefully handmade. Passionate about quality, they source only the best ingredients, such as the



ABOVE, *sucuk* sausages at the Family Butchery. BELOW, varieties of preserved red pepper. 'Necklaces' of dried okra. OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT, traditional *manti* (meat-stuffed pastry) at the Mado Cafe. Making pide dough at the Menzil Bakehouse. A rack of freshly baked bread at Menzil. Bahattin Pektuzun making Turkish delight. Honeyed nuts at Gima Market. Boiled lollies at Real Turkish Delight. *Pastirma* at Auburn Halal Meats. CENTRE, Nermin Gunduz of Menzil.

