

# Turkish festival sure to delight



**ADRIENNE  
ASCAH**  
URBAN LIFE

It's a Turkish tradition to greet strangers at your door as "guests from God."

"Anybody who comes and asks for help, it's our burden to be sure that they are OK," said Mustafa Sezer, president of the Canadian Turkish Heritage Foundation. "It's our cultural burden to offer what we have."

Turkish hospitality ex-

tends to Ottawa's annual Turkish Festival, taking place from Friday to Sunday in Confederation Park at Elgin St. at Laurier Ave.

The Turkish Canadian community in Ottawa is small, estimated at 3,000 people, but it's a community determined to share its culture with the rest of the city.

"We like to express that we're part of Ottawa's community and we are very happy to be here," Sezer said. "We like to share what we have."

Opening ceremonies will be held on Friday at the Ottawa Police Headquarters at 474 Elgin St., at 3 p.m. with

the festival grounds open from 3 to 9 p.m. on Friday and from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

Now in its third year, the festival boasts free admission and entertainment ranging from Turkish folk dancers, Turkish and Canadian musicians and singers, the Whirling Dervish of Rumi, art demonstrations and kids' attractions including an inflatable village, games, face painting and cotton candy.

As with all our cultural festivals, the food is also a big attraction.

Visitors can sample old favourites like shish kebabs



and baklava while also trying gozleme, a Turkish pancake, manti, a Turkish ravioli and authentic Turkish Delight, a handmade candy reportedly enjoyed by Picasso, Napoleon and Winston Churchill.

People looking for a caffeine fix can take a break from their Starbucks or Tim Horton's habit and sip Turk-

ish coffee and teas, served in traditional cups, while relaxing in the Turkish Oriental corner, outfitted with Turkish rugs, pillows, handicrafts, art and jewelry.

Putting it all together means long hours for volunteers.

"We have more than 100 volunteers from age seven to 70," Sezer said. "Everybody works hard to accomplish a community goal."

— Adrienne Ascah appears Tuesdays and Wednesdays in 24 hours. Send your comments or column ideas to [Adrienne.Ascah@sunmedia.ca](mailto:Adrienne.Ascah@sunmedia.ca)