

TODAY'S ZAMAN

Turkish festival hosts thousands of Canadians, Turks

The Canadian Turkish Heritage Foundation saw record-breaking participation at its fourth Ottawa Turkish Festival, which 25,000 people attended this year.

When the Ottawa Turkish Festival was opened on Monday, a giant 12-meter Turkish flag was erected in front of the Ottawa Police Department. At the reception at the Ottawa municipal building, Canadian Transportation Minister John Baird said Turks contribute much to Canadian culture and he pointed out that his assistant is of Turkish origin.



Even the 2,500 Turks living in the region were surprised by the record levels of participation this year. Ottawa Mayor Larry O'Brien, who wore a Turkish caftan, was also present at the festival at Confederation Park. He indicated that he loves Turkish coffee, which is "stronger than Starbucks."

Yavuz Zeybek, who spoke on behalf of the Canadian Turkish Heritage Foundation, said the festival attracts more and more people every year. "There are three separate festivals in town, and none of them attracts this many people," he said.

Canadian festival-goers were active in dancing and participating in many activities at the festival. Among them was Wale Adesanya, who is married to a Turkish woman living in Canada for 31 years. He said he was very excited about the festival and his first visit to Turkey in the coming months.

Another participant, Wayne Douglas, a retired military serviceman, said he visited Turkey three years ago with his wife. He added that he makes Turkish coffee at home in the special coffee pot that he brought from Turkey.

Activities at the festival included ebru, or paper marbling, calligraphy and pottery making. There was also a video presentation of Turkey in English and Turkish. Gourmet choices included stuffed vine leaves and baklava. One volunteer said they sold about 2,000 cups of Turkish coffee. The event was covered by local television stations.

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