

## PRINCE ISLANDS CAMPING TOUR

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### PREPARATIONS

We have been planning Prince Islands tour for some time. Due to transportation problems and unfavorable weather conditions the tour had been postponed twice. At last when the tour date was decided, it coincided with the annual Bosphorus swimming race. Some of the members preferred to join daily tour organized by Alper to cross the Bosphorus Strait.

The Island tour team was Jamshed, Senem, Nicole, Kim and me Sedat. For the first time the Turkish members were in minority in a Bodeka tour. We proudly made an international tour consisted of Danish, American, Pakistani and Turkish members.

As usual I started tour preparations having a big breakfast in Tahir Usta's place near boathouse Paşabahçe. As rest of the team arrived we loaded the kayaks and all the gear to the truck. We set off to Caddebostan where we decided to launch towards the Islands.

### CADDEBOSTAN – BOSTANCI

As the truck left for Caddebostan. I asked fellow paddlers about the way there. Jamshed has been living in Istanbul for 16 years. He and Nicole said they know the way to Caddebostan. But I thought Nicole was new to Istanbul so I did not take her opinion into account for my dismay. It turned out that Nicole was right about the meeting point with the truck but we had to drive a long way. At last with directions given by Nicole we found the truck and launch point by Caddebostan beach.

### ON WATER AT LAST

After unloading truck we carried kayaks and gear to the sandy beach and packed kayaks with camping gear, food and water.



The itinerary of the first day was Burgazada (lunch break) and Sivriada 15 km paddling. We started paddling from Caddebostan. Weather was calm but very hot, there was no yachts due to lack of wind.



## **BURGAZADA**

Approximately 1,5 hours later we reached Burgazada. It was really hot and we were getting hungry. We landed on a fisherman dock and had a conversation with the fishermen there. Hearing about our plans to paddle to Sivriada they were appalled and declared that it is impossible for us to paddle there because of the strong currents.

We left fishermen and while we were walking to the restaurants I told Kim about their comments. Kim was concerned and told that Sivriada was far and we might not reach there. Senem had paddled Sivriada last year in worse weather conditions so she did not take heed of fishermen's comments. She was positive that we would reach Sivriada easily. Jamshed and Nicole did not seem to worry but I and Kim were a little bit concerned about Senem's judgements.

We had a nice lunch and returned kayaks to set off to Sivriada.

## **PADDLE TOWARDS SIVRIADA**

We started paddling to North east towards Sivriada rounding Burgazada at 1500 pm. The north of the Burgazada was unhabited and beautiful. There were groups of people swimming and having fun on the beaches.

When Sivriada appeared on our sight it looked very far. But Senem was positive in 1,5 hours of paddling we will land on the island so we followed her. The sea condition was good but we didn't seem to approach Sivriada while the island we left seemed to fade out of sight on the contrary ☺

## **SIVRIADA – SWIMMING AND CAMP SITE SEARCH**

As Senem said we reached Sivriada in estimated time with no difficulty and tried to decide where to land. We entered the little harbour where a dozen of sail and motor yachts were anchored.



We pulled the kayaks shore from the low dock and walked around to discover the little island. People from the yachts seemed to be amazed by us coming all the way with kayaks. Senem showed us a wooded quiet place for camp they used last year but Kim strongly disagreed declaring that place is “pee place” and not good to be a camp site ☺ All of us were irritated but we had to persuade Senem and find an alternate better camp site. We started to discover east side of the island away from the crowded harbour area and found a fantastic camp site by the shore. We managed to persuade Senem, put kayaks in a safe place and started to unload kayaks to set up camp.



After we set up tents we decided to swim with the last day lights in the harbour where people from the boats were already enjoying the sea. The sea was good and refreshing after the hot day. It turned out that Nicky was afraid of jellyfish and she was screaming when one got close or touched her. We tried to convince her that these were very stupid jellyfish with absolutely no harm but she was obviously traumatized by a film scene with a box jellyfish ☺ After swimming a good half an hour we returned campsite to prepare dinner.

## **DINNER AND BEER THIEVES**

The sky was getting dark and we were hungry. To cook the sausage we needed fire so we collected some dry branches and started a little fire. We had brought some beer along and Kim suggested that we put them in the sea to cool them. I put them on the shallow water but later when I looked they were gone. I was mad and Kim was sipping his beer with a cunning smile on his face. Anyways failing beer cooling business I looked other ways and tasted some good wine offered by a friendly yacht owner who came to visit our camp site from the harbour.

Since I am from Adana I had no difficulty to set up barbeque fire. We cooked the sausage and made some salad. As the day turned into night the city lights of Istanbul in the distance appeared. 15 million people seemed so far away from our peaceful spot.



## **BUG INVASION**

We had our dinner, wine and talked happily around the camp fire. Someone discovered the place was invaded by some slow moving sunflower seed size bugs. They were not climbing on us or anything just walking around the place in great numbers. We decided to carry the food to the kayak hatches. After returning camp site from harbour we retired to our bugfree tents for some sleep.

## **PACKING UP AND LEAVING SIVRIADA**

In the morning we found out all the bugs seemed to have left the place. We started breakfast preparations. Everybody took out what she brought and we made a very nice breakfast table as you can see below 😊 We made tea and coffee quickly with the gas stove that Kim donated to the club. Thank you Kim 😊



After breakfast we packed tents and loaded kayaks. In spite of the bugs the camp site was comfortable and had great views.

The second day itinerary was Sivriada – Kinaliada (lunch break) and Caddebostan. We started to paddle towards Kinaliada the island in the middle of the route.

The weather was hot and there was no breeze to cool us a little bit. The distance seemed a lot again but we kept on paddling.



## **KINALIADA**

After 1,5 hours of paddling to approached to the North shores of the Kinaliada. I spotted a nice quiet beach spot and paddled towards and others followed me too. We had much needed cool drinks and

lunch. We liked the beach a lot and prolonged our stay to 1,5 hours getting ready for the last 2 hours of paddling back where we started.



After the pleasant lunch break in Kinaliada we started again. The city appeared in front of us with all the buildings and stressing crowds.



As we got closer to the shore we tried to figure out the exact spot we set off to meet the truck. Nicky spotted the beach and we paddled towards now crowded landing spot. We paddled fast and were earlier than our estimated time so we celebrated ourselves with big icecreams. We loaded kayaks back on truck and happily left this over-crowded place.

Overall it was a great tour and we promised to come back to islands before cold season...