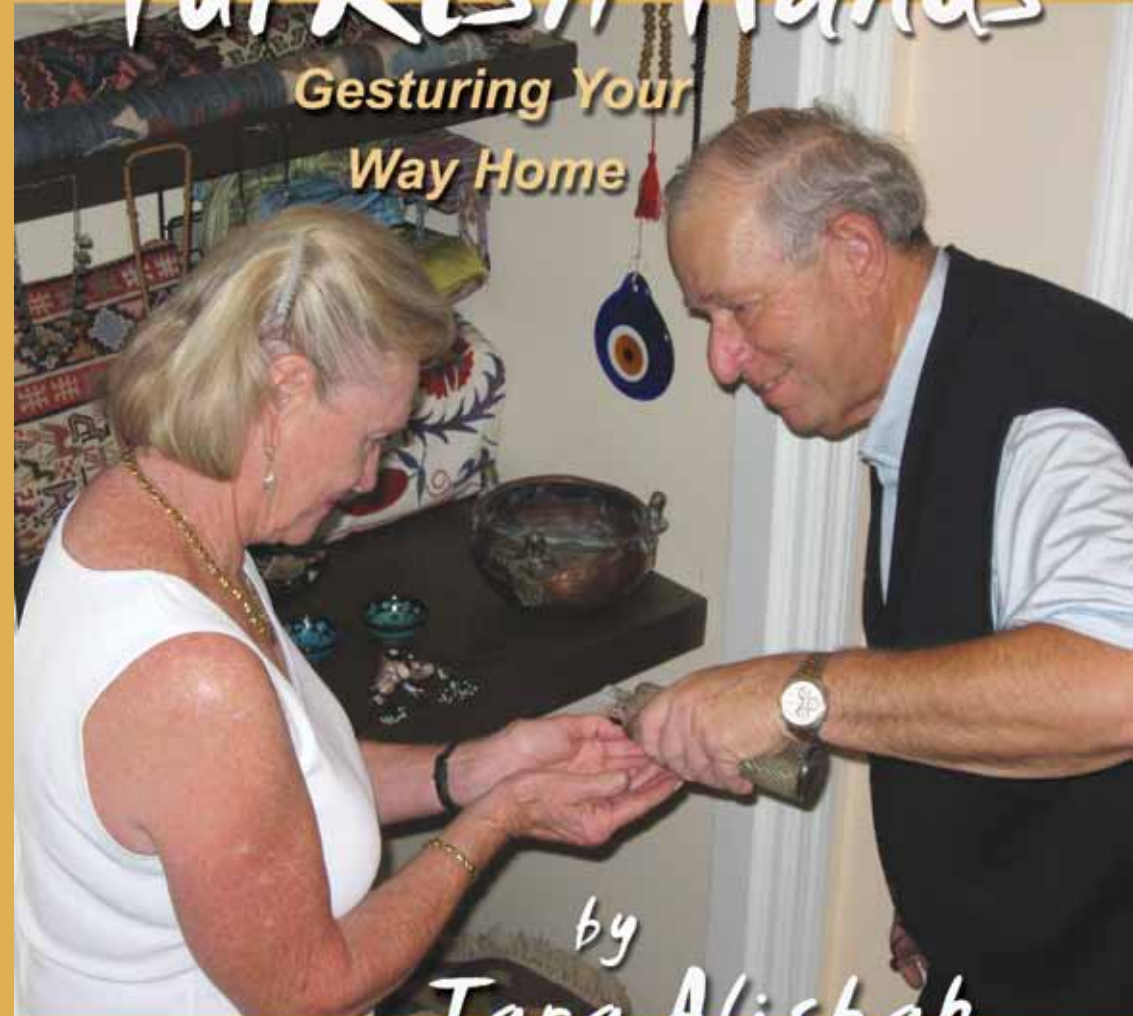




Turkish Hands

Gesturing Your
Way Home



by
Tara Alishbah

TURKISH HANDS
GESTURING YOUR WAY HOME
Book One: A Hand Guide For Tourists

\$15.99

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Dedicated to all the arms and hands and eyes that
have inspired me and continue to inspire me.

Aknowledgments

To my family and friends who posed for many of these pictures and the many kind strangers who allowed me to capture them on film.
Special thanks to my many editors, you know who you are, and Nameera Ahmed and Sam Hanks for making the book as pretty as it is.
And to my beautiful Turkey.

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Pronunciation Guide

Most Turkish letters are pronounced as in English, with a few notable exceptions.

- A, a short 'a' as in 'star' or 'far' rather than 'apple'
- E, e 'eh' in 'send' or 'tell'
- İ, i [dotted i in both capital and lower case] like 'ee' in 'see' , but softer as in 'wit'
- I, ı [undotted i] vowel sound of the iou together in 'luscious'
- O, o same as the English 'phone'
- Ö, ö same as in German, or 'ur', as in 'fur'
- U, u 'oo', as in 'moo' or 'blue'
- Ü, ü same as in German, or French 'u' in 'tu'
- C, c pronounced `j' as in `jet' and Jimmy
- Ç, ç pronounced 'ch' as in 'chime'
- G, g hard as in 'go',
- Ğ, ğ this letter is the only silent one in Turkish--it tells you to elongate the vowel in front of it
- J, j like French `j', English `zh', or the 'z' in 'azure'
- Ş, ş 'sh' as in 'she'
- V, v a soft 'v' sound, half-way to 'w'

Turkish Hands: Gesturing Your Way Home

Book One: A Hand Guide For Tourists
Introduction

On a mountain trail in Ihlara Valley in Göreme, a handsome mountain goat of a man explained to my eight year old son the porousness of the rock, the geology of the valley, the need to take care on smooth stones... I couldn't hear him through the wind, but I could understand almost everything he said.

I was watching the phenomenon of Turkish Hands. The physicality of Turkish people is unmistakable and, without question, one of their most impressive features, at least to their more awkward Western cousins. Still, after four years in Turkey, it took me until that moment to realize how loaded their gestures actually are—each has a specific use and meaning, and if you know them, you almost don't need to know Turkish in order to get around.

There are, of course, other fiercely gesticulating cultures; excitable Italians, heated Spaniards... but their hand gestures are more like angry birds flitting around their stories. In the case of Turks, their hands tell it all: their helplessness, their anger, their faith, their favorite recipes, how big the fish they almost caught was, and how bad you're going to get it if you don't behave. This richness of body language could be a remnant of Silk Road passages when various cultures and languages rubbed up against each other and had to find a means to communicate outside of words, or it could be a creative way to fill a gap in Turkey's emotional language and its customary indirectness. Either way, it is a significant element of Turkish language and culture that needs to be understood by any serious student of the language

so you don't end up thinking that your neighbor was telling you how hot she was all those years when she was really letting you know she couldn't stand you (see Yaka Silkmek). This book contains over 40 hand gestures and the phrases that usually accompany them as well as the situations in which you might encounter them. It is meant to be instructive to foreigners and hilarious to Turks themselves. Turks will encounter themselves or their uncles or older sisters on every page, and revel in the richness of their body language, suddenly remembering another seven hand gestures they used as children... The book ends with a smattering of pages from the forthcoming books in the series which focus on the emotional hand language of Turks as well as their more technical gestures.

This book will prove helpful to tourists who will have noticed that they usually don't understand the answers they get to the questions in their phrase book. How many times have you seen a woman at the market lift her eyebrows to the sky and click her tongue when you asked her for out-of-season veggies, or a waiter tilt his head sideways and nod gently with a slow blink of his eyes, to say 'yes, we have the perfect table for you, quiet with a view of the Bosphorous (see Var / Yaparız Abi page).

Now you will know what all this means, and you will be better prepared for physical demonstrations that otherwise might chip away at your comfort zone: intense affection towards children like cheek pinching and kissing, hair patting, and general squeezing accompanied by the words " I could eat you;" men holding hands or walking arm in arm, touching each other's legs while chatting or leaning on each other; or you, the visitor, being held by the forearm and forcibly turned around to face the right way when you ask for directions. Allow yourself to ease into the grace of the moment, be touched by Turkish hands.

Dosdoğru

Keep Going Straight

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

"Dosdoğru." "Buradan dümdüz, dimdirek git. Hiçbir yere sapma."

English meaning:

You need to keep going straight. Don't make any turns. Follow the road...

Situations in which you might encounter Gesture:

- As a stranger asking for directions, you will see this whether or not that person has any real knowledge of your destination. There is something cultural about not wanting to disappoint you or feeling embarrassed about not knowing. Either way, the best policy is to ask three people and take the consensus.
- You may also see this gesture in the case of hitchhiking, both by drivers and hitchhikers themselves to show the way they are heading. Rather than being a question this means: "I am heading in this direction, you might want a lift / I want a lift."



Motion is extending arm straight ahead so hand is a little higher than the forehead then making constant, slight, karate chop movements.

Çok Güzel Beautiful or Tasty

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

"Çok güzel." or "Leziz."

English meaning:

You look great; This looks great; This tastes great.

Situations in which you might encounter this Gesture:

This gesture is very common and very positive, and you'll find yourself using it every time you eat anything in Turkey. The gesture can also be made silently with the eyes carrying all your appreciation.

- At a restaurant being made to the chef, or to any chef in any home.
- To describe a beautiful face or outfit.
- When congratulating someone on their great new job, i.e. 'that job sounds fantastic, congratulations!'



Motion is puckering fingers together at chest height and shaking them slightly.

Otur

Have A Seat Here Next To Me

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

"Otur, otur."

English meaning:

Plant your butt right here. Have a seat next to me.

Situations in which you might encounter this Gesture:

- When someone has saved you a seat and they're letting you know they want you to come and sit next to them.
- When you enter a place where people know you and they're telling you they want you to plant yourself and chat for a while.



Motion is patting the air above a chair or any kind of seat.

Kaç Para? **How Much?**

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

"Kac para, ağabey?"

English meaning:

How much money are we talking about here? What's the price?

Situations in which you might encounter this Gesture:

- At any store in which prices are not posted, (which is most of them), and there is a distance separating you from the seller.
- Or, if the vendor is surrounded by bargaining tourists and the buyer wants to find out the non-tourist price without affecting the merchant's ambitions of charging more to the tourists.
- If a tourist makes this gesture to a Turk, the Turk is likely to laugh uncontrollably, so please do not hesitate to do so!



Motion is rubbing index finger against thumb and winking, with a little shake of the head.

Gel, Gel

Come, Come

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

"Gel, gel."

English meaning:

"Come here." Used with inferiors or children or anyone younger than you.

Situations in which you might encounter this Gesture:

- Common among Turks when they are addressing smaller children and want them to come closer. (Note, it is often a trick.) If the motion is accompanied by a vehement head nod and enticing smile and the words: "gel, gel, sana bir sürprizim var," or "come here, I have a surprise for you," and you don't see any box anywhere, then it's probably a big fat lie. That "surprise" is usually a hug or squeeze or even a pinch—Turks tend to pinch children out of great affection. Anyway, there are worse tricks in the world...
- Also used when the outcome is not so loving. Younger people will be called over like this for disciplining: a talking to or worse. If this is the case, the adult won't be smiling.
- Used by a person calling over someone they consider an inferior.



Motion is arm extended straight ahead, wrist flexed down and fingers wagging, often accompanied with a slight nod of the head, as in 'yah, I'm talking to you.'

Bu Da Geçer

This Too Shall Pass

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

This gesture is usually silent, though you could say "Salla gitsin," or "Bu da geçer."

English meaning:

This is not the first and it won't be the last; This too shall pass; We've seen this before and we'll see it again.

Situations in which you might encounter this Gesture:

This gesture is really the only one you need in order to understand the Turkish character, especially if you're coming from the more results-oriented, intensely driven and active citizenry of the West. It is almost like an awareness of the balance of nature and the crest and fall of the wave.

- For example, you are sick and tired of the ruling government party and their lies and you start to complain. Your friend is likely to make this gesture and say: "Anyway, a new government will take its place sooner or later."
- Or, as a mother is explaining her daughter's recent heartbreak to a neighbor, the neighbor might be seen making this gesture and saying: "Never mind, boyfriends come and go, another will take his place."



Motion is waving hand back and forth, left and right at chest height, slowly.

Hayır, Teşekkürler No Thank You

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

"Teşekkürler." Or "Sağolun."

English meaning:

"I am grateful for your offer and still I must decline." "Thank you, I'm all set."

Note: Holding the hand steady over the heart means simply: Thank you. (see "eyvallah" page 30).

Situations in which you might encounter this Gesture:

- Anytime anyone is offered anything, and that is almost all the time in Turkey. This gesture covers the heart because the heart is where gratitude and appreciation reside. It is a beautiful way of saying "no" to any offer.
- When you want to decline the many, many offers you will receive to enter and look at merchandise in front of a carpet shop, for example, this is a good way to say no thanks; plus, they'll be impressed.
- Often by people passing in front of restaurants. They are letting the man whose job is to lure them inside for a meal know that they are not interested. Restaurants that employ this type of vocal and persistent advertiser are often located in a row of other restaurants and this gesture saves a lot of explaining, door after door.



Motion is patting hand to chest twice in quick succession: can add a slight bow of the head and raising of the eyes.

Kalsın

This Time I Really Mean No Thanks

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

"Sağolun." "Istemem."

English meaning:

No thank you, I don't want it.

Situations in which you might encounter this Gesture:

- Generally seen in relation to food.
- Often used in a restaurant to an overzealous waiter who is coming to refresh your tea glass for the 4th time.
- You really won't see this gesture very often because it implies an adamant refusal and Turks have a really hard time making those. It is so adamant, in fact, that it requires a hand blocking you from the person offering. If you've ever walked on a crowded city street in Turkey, you'll know that "personal space" is a concept Turks think was recently introduced on Facebook, not a need that people have. If you don't get bumped or jostled at least once on your daily excursion, you may want to go home and check what you stepped in. Blocking someone from offering their hospitality needs to be a pretty serious case.



Motion is extending a hand up as if to block the proffered item.

Yok

No or None

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

"Yok." Or merely a tongue clicking sound.

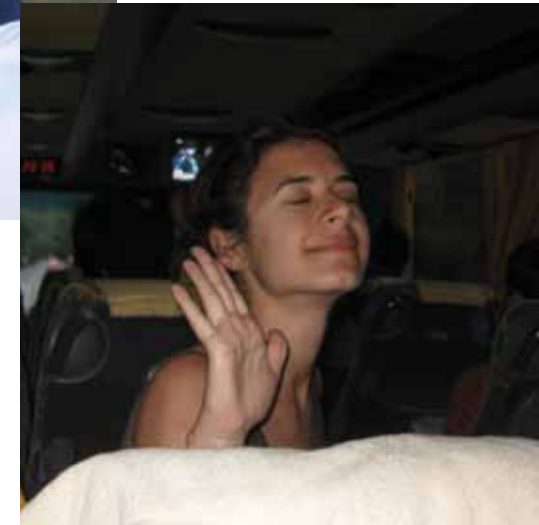
English meaning:

"No, we don't have any." Or "No, I don't want any."

Situations in which you might encounter this Gesture:

This is the definitive Turkish gesture, even without the accompanying hand. The hand can be added for extra vehemence.

- Used all the time and everywhere because "no" is hard to say but easy to show for Turks.
- At the vegetable bazaar when you ask the vendor for out of season vegetables.
- At a friend's house when someone is offered a second piece of cake.
- By a mother to her daughter as she steps out of a dressing room in a very unbecoming outfit.



Motion is raising eyebrows and tilting head slightly back. Also done with raised hand: "I don't want any."

Naber? What's Up?

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

"Naber?"

English meaning:

What's up? What's going on?

Situations in which you might encounter this Gesture:

If you use this gesture while in Turkey, they'll think you've lived there for years!

- Used among friends who either don't have time to talk or who see each other almost every day. For example, students who see each other each morning at school will use this gesture as more of a greeting than an actual question. The answer might be the simple hand over the heart as in "Eyvallah."



Motion is holding palm open with pointer finger and thumb extended and a shake of the head and wink of the eye. As you can see, each person has their own personal touch.

Çoktan Gitti

That's Long Gone

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

"oohhuhh"

English meaning:

Ohhh boy, that happened long ago, i.e. missing an opportunity or occasion.

Situations in which you might encounter this Gesture:

- When you're asking about the only connecting bus this week to the village you're trying to visit. Know that you better make yourself comfortable for the next six days; the bus passed by hours ago.
- When applying for a job that has long since been filled: the person taking your resume is likely to use it.



Motion is waving wrist in a small circle several times in a row, possibly accompanied by a whistle.

Bir Dakika

Hang On One Minute

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

"Bir dakika." (Pronounced quickly as "bidakka"). In the case of the number one: "Bir tane."

English meaning:

Hold on just a second. Wait a minute. Note: This gesture also means the number "one."

Situations in which you might encounter this Gesture:

- When someone interrupts you in the middle of an explanation or bout of defensiveness.
- Conversely, when you want to interrupt someone you can make this gesture.
- When you're in the middle of something and someone is trying to get your attention. It tells them to hang on and wait a bit.



Motion is pointer finger held up, but in the opposite direction to the American gesture.

Nazar Değmesin

Knock On Wood

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

"Nazar değmesin." Or "Şeytan kulağına kurşun." Or "Allah Korusun."

English:

(Literal), "May the Devil's ear fill with lead." Or "God Protect."

(Figurative), "Knock on wood."

You use this gesture (a) when you don't want something to happen, like rain at a wedding, or (b) when you want to protect something that is already going well.

Situations in which you might encounter this Gesture:

- When your business (or relationship or school) is going really well and you are telling someone about it, you would make this gesture as insurance against jinxing your good fortune.
- When a parent is talking about a really good student who didn't used to be so good. This gesture serves to protect the situation from an unfortunate reversal. Same goes with someone who was ill but is now better.



Motion is two steps: 1. pull on ear lobe with a kissing sound and 2. rap knuckle of pointer or middle finger against a wood surface.

Eyvallah

I Am Grateful

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

"Eyvallah."

English:

Thank you very much. You are very kind.

Situations in which you might encounter this Gesture:

This is a gesture of gratitude, from the heart. Anyone who has spent time in a Muslim country has seen this gesture, so while it is not specific to Turkey, it is the quintessential short-hand Turkish.

- Used among men almost exclusively and implies deep gratitude.
- May be seen in answer to the question: How are you?
- When you are invited to dinner at a friend's house and arrive at the door with a gift and the host says "you shouldn't have, it's just a dinner..." You might say "you are our dearest friends and we wanted to show you our appreciation." The host would make this gesture to show how much this sentiment means to him.



Motion is hand over heart and a small bow. Also done 2 handed

Kolonya Beklerken

Receiving Turkish Lemon Cologne

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

"Kolonya alırmısınız?"

English meaning:

"Would you like some lemon cologne?"

Situations in which you might encounter this Gesture:

- After visiting or purchasing from a shop, the vendor will offer you some on your way out and you will make this gesture as soon as you see the bottle being proffered. If you like the smell of lemon and a slight stinging of the eyes, accept it gratefully because it's darn refreshing.
- After any meal in a public restaurant and frequently in private homes, though less often among the 'aristocracy.'
- After using any public toilet, particularly the kind where you purchase a square of napkin before you go in—which is still most of them.
- After drinking Turkish coffee. Turkish coffee is always served with a glass of water, and almost always followed by an offer of lemon cologne.
- On any of the private bus companies used to travel between cities in Turkey. You will be offered lemon cologne and Coca Cola several times during the trip.



Motion is cupping hands as if to catch water to drink, rubbing them together and applying to neck and face with relish.

İçecek Bir Şey İster misiniz? Would You Like Something To Drink?

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

"İçecek bir şey ister misiniz?"

English meaning:

Are you thirsty? Would you like something to drink?

Situations in which you might encounter this Gesture:

This gesture was created especially for tourists in Turkey. Since hospitality is a crucial part of the culture, and eating and drinking are used as markers in the day, Turks had to find a way to communicate these things to foreigners.

- Used to ask travelers if they are thirsty so the host can fulfill his deepest need of nourishing the guest/visitor.



Motion is making a fist and extending thumb towards lips.

Herkese ... **... All Around**

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

"Herkese çay." Or: "Bunları toplar mısınız? Yeni servis lazım."

English meaning:

You are speaking on behalf of everyone at the table, as in: 'tea all around'; or: 'clear off all these dishes and bring clean ones.'

Situations in which you might encounter this Gesture:

- In restaurants when someone is acting as the host and motioning to the waiter to fulfill certain duties like remove the service plates or bring everyone a tea.
- Any time someone wants to silently tell the relevant authority to bring a round of something: a round of paperwork for the whole family from the government clerk; a round of drinks; a round of clean plates, etc.



Motion involves catching the eye of the waiter, usually, and whirling the hand around at the wrist .

Kullağını Tersten Göstermek **Taking The Indirect Route**

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

"Kullağını tersten göstermek."

English:

Not taking or seeing the most direct or simplest route.

Lliteral: Showing your ear the roundabout way.

Situations in which you might encounter this Gesture:

This gesture is included to help you appreciate the Turkish sense of humor as it laughs at itself.

- On a bus headed for the Kaçkar Mountains in Turkey's Black Sea region upon seeing the only advertisement for a restaurant on a highway with no turnaround for miles writing: 'our restaurant is 5 kilometers back on the right.'



Motion is grabbing ear with the opposite hand, arm wrapped around the back of the head; the long route.

Yavaşla

Hailing A Taxi or Keep Your Voice Down

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

"Yavaş konuş." "Dur." "Hızını kes." "Yavaşla."

English meaning:

Motion used to hail a taxi, or to tell someone to talk more quietly, or to slow down (their speech or their car)...

Situations in which you might encounter this Gesture:

- On any street corner where someone is hailing a taxi.
- By a man to calm his friend who is clearly getting upset with someone, meaning "take it easy, calm down."
- To tell people to keep their voices down, for example in a school when the kids get excited and forget that there are other people around trying to concentrate, the teacher would make this gesture to them.



Motion is similar to "sit, sit," patting the air at waist level.

At Bir Sakal

Any Amount Will Do

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

"At bir sakal."

English meaning:

Any amount will do. Or: Pay whatever you can. Literally: "throw me a beard."

Situations in which you might encounter this Gesture:

This gesture is used among good friends or business associates, so you are not likely to be on the receiving end of it. Still, you might see it pass between two people who suddenly end up paying a different price than you do, especially in a busy shopping district.

- When a buddy comes into a friend's shop and picks out a few small things to purchase and the owner refuses his money. The dialogue might go something like this: "Forget about it," and the friend answers: "Come on, how much?" and the owner makes the gesture saying: "At bir sakal." The friend may leave a tiny amount, less than the merchandise would sell for, or, in appreciation for the friendship, might end up leaving more than it's worth. The implication is that among friends, money is an offering rather than a duty.
- When an acquaintance is going to help you out professionally but doesn't want to do it totally pro bono, he would make this gesture meaning: just pay a token.



Motion is rubbing the chin as if rubbing a beard.

Şöyle Böyle

So So

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

"Şöyle böyle."

English:

So, so.

Situations in which you might encounter this Gesture:

- When asked you how you are.
- When asked how your vacation went.
- When asked how you did on an exam.
- When asked whether or not you speak Turkish...



Motion is tilting hand side to side

Çay İçerken Drinking Tea

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

This is a silent gesture.

English meaning:

It's simply a movement.

Situations in which you might encounter this Gesture:

This is how you drink Turkish tea from those lovely and ubiquitous hourglass shaped tea glasses in order to avoid burning your fingers and mouth. You will skim the first few sips off the top, slurping them in, to avoid burning your tongue, too.

- Anytime anyone is drinking tea, which is almost constantly.



Motion is holding the tea glass with fingers wrapped around the rim, away from the mouth.

Tıklım Tıklım

Very Crowded

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

"Tıklım tıklım." "Anne Baba günü." "Kaynıyordu."

English meaning:

Very crowded, squished like sardines. Literally: "Mom and dad's day!"
"It was boiling with people."

Situations in which you might encounter this gesture:

- To describe the bus you just arrived on where people outnumbered chairs two to one.
- To describe the Wednesday fruit and vegetable pazar where you couldn't even see the vegetables for the people.
- Warning: If someone makes this gesture to you when you're asking directions, that should be your cue NOT to take the road they're talking about.



Motion is two parts: 1) bringing fingers together, 2) opening and closing again several times.

Yavaştan Sıvışayım

I'm Getting Out Of Here

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

"Yavaştan sıvışayım." "Ben gidiyorum." "Ben kaçıyorum."

English meaning:

I'm going to sneak out of here and hopefully no one will notice.

Situations in which you might encounter this Gesture:

- When you are in a tour group and realize the guide is someone you dumped in 11th grade. You do this to your friends so they understand you need to sneak out before he sees you.
- When "geveze teze" (chatter box aunt) is coming your way at the family reunion and you need to let your mom know that you're making a narrow escape from endless chatter.



Motion is 2 parts: touching karate chop point of hand to chest with fingers facing up towards chin, then slightly shaking that hand to the side, indicating the direction you plan to escape.

Aradan Götürmek To Pick-Pocket

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

This gesture is usually silent, but may be accompanied by a meaningful look.

English meaning:

Beware of pick-pockets around here.

Situations in which you might encounter this Gesture:

- On a public bus or in any crowded place. A kindly Turk is telling you, the tourist, to be vigilant with your purse or wallet.
- In a government office to the bureaucrat who is insisting that you need more documentation. You might make this gesture and ask if there isn't some other possible solution?



Turning the hand at the wrist near the hip, slowly closing into a fist

Küçük Mü, Büyük Mü? Little Or Big Tea Glass?

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

"Küçük mü? Büyük mü?"

English meaning:

Small or big? i.e. Do you want it in the small Turkish tea glass or the larger one?

Situations in which you might encounter this Gesture:

- When visiting a carpet or leather shop, for example
- After a nice meal when hospitality dictates that you will be brought a glass of tea (or Turkish coffee).

p.s. The gentleman pictured here is employed by the neighborhood tea maker and delivers tea when an order is placed over the phone. He'll also stop by later to pick up the glasses.



Motion is indicating a size with your thumb and second fingers, first small, then opening bigger.

Şöyle Alayım Sizi This Way Please

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

"Buyrunuz." "Şöyle alayım sizi."

English meaning:

"Right this way." "Yes, I have that."

Could also be: 'Go ahead of me please.'

Situations in which you might encounter this Gesture:

This gesture is the essential Turkish gesture of welcome. It is one of respect and service.

- By the maître'd in a restaurant,
- By a shopkeeper welcoming you in,
- By a doctor ushering you into his office etc.



Motion is hand extended out in front, palm open and a slight tilt of the head.

Var; Yaparız Abi

Yes, That Can Be Arranged

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

"Buyrunuz." "Var." "Yaparız abi."

English meaning:

Yes, we have that. We shall accommodate you. As you wish. We can arrange that for you.

Situations in which you might encounter this Gesture:

- When asking if the cook can make your döner kebab without any meat, only veggies. After a quick, perplexed look, you will see the chef make this gesture, meaning: that can be arranged.
- At the fruit and vegetable stand if you ask for an in season vegetable.
- At the Covered Bazaar when you ask a shopkeeper if he has mini chess sets made of marble.
- When asking a building contractor for almost anything: tile work as it was done in 15th century mosques for your new kitchen... He will tell you to relax and wait for your new kitchen whether or not he has ever seen such tile work or even done any serious tiling.



Motion is a slow blinking of the eyes and slight nod and tilt of the head.

Aferin

Good Job

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

"Aferin."

English meaning:

"Good job, I'm proud of you." Sign of empathy, pride, praise.

Situations in which you might encounter this Gesture:

- At the local bakkal (corner store and also the man who runs it) where you practice your newly learned Turkish. The owner is showing you his pride in your efforts.
- By a member of your Turkish fan club when you tell them how well you bargained at the covered bazaar.
- Often by parents to show pride in their children, and if they don't, they should!



Motion is patting someone on the shoulder.

Koydum Gotcha

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

"Ohhhh canıma deđdi." "Kapak olsun." "Koydum."

English meaning:

"I showed you, or him or them..."

Used by the winner of a competition, or after getting back at somebody, or after succeeding in spite of the failure predicted by someone else.

Situations in which you might encounter this Gesture:

- When your Uncle Mehmet tells you that you won't amount to anything, for example, and then you do! You would do this to Uncle Mehmet, either to his face, or in your expensive new living room all by yourself meaning "I showed you!"
- When your husband leaves you for another woman and breaks your heart and you introduce that other woman to an irresistible young man whom she leaves your ex-husband for. Sweet revenge.
- When you win at a board game, or cards, and are not displaying great sportsmanship.



Motion is lowering open hand over closed fist, in slow motion.

Eyvah

Oh No!

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

Eyvah!

English meaning:

Oh boy! I forgot something important.

Situations in which you might encounter this Gesture:

- When something important has been forgotten and suddenly realized, like matches at a campout.
- When your guide in Turkey has forgotten all of your passports in a drawer in the hotel room.



Motion is slapping forehead with palm

Çocukla Dolaşmak

Holding Hands With A Child

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

This is simply the way children are lead.

English meaning:

Protectiveness and expectations of bad behavior.

Situations in which you might encounter this Gesture:

Coming from a Western background where children are given many freedoms and opportunities to learn from their mistakes and make their own choices (ideally), you definitely notice the way children are led around by the wrist in Turkey. Turks seem to suspect their children could run away at any moment or lack the ability to understand the dangers of speeding cars.

- When crossing the street.
- When riding a public bus, as if the child can't balance without you tugging on them.
- When entering or leaving a building etc.



Motion is holding the child's wrist, not hand

Öp Elimi Öp

Come On, Kiss My Hand

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

Öp Elimi.

English meaning:

Kiss my hand!

Situations in which you might encounter this Gesture:

- Young people kissing their elder family members' hands, especially during religious holidays.
- Adults wishing to show respect to their elders, both relatives and others they wish to honor.
- When someone is demanding it because they've completely missed the boat on how the gesture is meaningful because it is a sign of voluntary respect.



Forced: Motion is extending hand up in general direction of someone's face

Respectful: Motion is two part: 1) kissing back of your elder's hand or simply raising it to the chin and 2) raising it to your forehead

Ben Yokum

Tell Them I'm Not Here

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

A whispered "Ben yokum."

English meaning:

Tell them I'm not here. Literally, I'm not here.

Situations in which you might encounter this Gesture:

- When an unwanted person is calling the house to speak to you and your daughter answers the phone.
- When your boss is looking for the best person to clean out the file cabinet.
- This gesture might be equal to the finger across the throat in the States.



Motion is two part: 1) tapping the chest 2) raising one or both hands into the air, palms facing forward as in the gesture "istemiyorum" and possibly waving them from side to side.

A Smattering From The Upcoming Books:

- **What They're Really Feeling**
- **A Pinch Of Turkey: Measures
And Sundry**

From: What They're Really Feeling

Dayılanmak

Macho Aggressiveness

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

"Ne yapıyorsun kardeşim?!" "Belanı mı arıyorsun?" "Deli misin ne?"
"Almayayım paçanı aşağı."

English meaning:

"What the Hell are you doing buddy?" "Are you nuts or what?" "Watch yourself! If I come over there, I'm likely to do something really bad."
Gesture to scare or threaten.

Situations in which you might encounter this Gesture:

- In a traffic jam: a man may get out of his car if he finds you at fault in a frustrating driving experience and make a pose like this: be careful, he's mad!
- If a guy catches another man looking at his girlfriend, he is likely to throw his shoulders back and walk up to him menacingly like this.



The motion varies from man to man, but generally the shoulders are a bit back and one arm is up and extended, as if questioning, offering one last chance for sanity. NOTE: Generally you won't see a woman making this gesture, but it just so happens that some of them are very good at imitating it.

From: What They're Really Feeling

Yaka Silkmek

I Can't Stand This...

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

"İlallah!" "Aman Aman" "Yakamdan düş."

English meaning:

God! I can't stand that guy. Or I can't stand that thing/situation etc.
Literally: fall off my shirt collar!

Situations in which you might encounter this Gesture:

They're not telling you they're hot!

- Your classmate, who is kind of cute, starts calling you twice a day to tell you how much he likes you. By the 7th day and 20th call, you would certainly make this gesture upon hearing the phone ring. Your feeling would be this: "Ughhh, I'm sick of this guy and his phoning. I wish he'd just get lost."
- You get in an accident, break your arm, can't work because of it, start to experience money worries, and then a hurricane is forecast. You would make this gesture for all the bad luck following you around.



Motion is pulling on shirt collar or front of shirt as if hot

From: A Pinch Of Turkey: Measures And Sundry

Yarım Half

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

"Yarım"

English meaning:

Half

Situations in which you might encounter this Gesture:

- At the Pastane (bakery), asking for half a loaf of bread.
- At the grocery store asking for half a kilo of olives.
- At a friend's house responding to the question "How much cake do you want?" The meaning would be half a piece.



Motion is flicking thumb against index finger once or twice.

From: A Pinch Of Turkey: Measures And Sundry

Şu Kadar This Long

Words that usually accompany the Gesture:

"Şu kadar."

English meaning:

A unit of measure, commonly used to describe fish size.

Situations in which you might encounter this Gesture:

- Someone showing you the length of the fish they purportedly caught!
- Someone showing you the length of the snake they saw before they climbed up on the roof which is where they are talking to you from.



Motion is raising one arm, bent at elbow with index finger extended while other index finger designates a point on raised arm.

TURKISH HANDS

GESTURING YOUR WAY HOME

Book One: A Hand Guide For Tourists

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