

10 MUST- KNOW TURKISH IDIOMS FOR BEGINNERS

Learning some common Turkish idioms is so important to be able to understand Turkish people and to sound like a native when you're speaking.

1 – Nazar Değmesin

The first idiom on our list is **“Nazar Değmesin,”** which literally translates to *“don't let the evil eye touch you.”*

In Turkish culture, the evil eye, or **“nazar”** is believed to bring misfortune or bad luck. That's why many people in Türkiye decorate their homes with evil eye beads or they wear evil eye jewelry to protect themselves.

The closest English idiom to **“Nazar Değmesin,”** would be *“Knock on Wood.”*

So, when can you use **“Nazar Değmesin”**

You can use it to protect someone from misfortune after praising them.

Eviniz çok güzel, nazar değmesin.
(Your house is so beautiful, knock on wood.)



2 – Bal Dök Yala

Our next idiom is a bit funny, it is **“Bal Dök Yala,”** which literally means *“Pour Honey and Lick.”* It is used to describe something spotlessly clean.

It is similar to English saying *“So clean you could eat off the floors.”*

Let's say you just cleaned your kitchen, and you want to brag about how clean it is.

Mutfağı tertemiz yaptım, bal dök yala.
(I made the kitchen spotless, so you could eat off the floors.)



3 – Aşağı Tükürsem Sakal, Yukarı Tükürsem Bıyık

The idiom **“Aşağı tükürsem sakal, yukarı tükürsem bıyık”** is very common, and it translates to *“If I spit down, there’s a beard; if I spit up, there’s a mustache.”*

So, this is the perfect idiom to use if you’re stuck between two bad options. It means that *“All options are bad”* or *“You’re damned if you do and damned if you don’t”*.

**Ne yapacağımı bilmiyorum, aşağı tükürsem sakal
yukarı tükürsem bıyık.**

(Your house is so beautiful, knock on wood.)



4 – Kafaya Takmak

Another common idiom that Turkish people use a lot is **“Kafaya Takmak.”**

You know, sometimes you just can’t stop thinking about something, it’s always in your mind and you can’t concentrate on anything else. That’s when you can use **“Kafaya Takmak.”**

O diziye kafayı taktım.

(I am obsessed with that series.)



It can also be used when someone’s making a big deal out of something or taking it way too seriously.

Borcu kafana takma, yarın bankaya gidip hallederiz.

*(Don’t worry about the debt, we’ll go to the bank tomorrow
and sort it out)*



5 – Ne Olur Ne Olmaz

This idiom is perfect for people who want to be prepared for any unexpected situations in life.

“Ne Olur Ne Olmaz” means *“Just in Case”* or *“To be on the safe side.”*

Let’s say you’re about to leave the house, the weather looks nice, but there might be rain later in the day, you’re not sure. You can say:



**Çantamıza şemsiye
koyalım ne olur ne olmaz.**
(Let’s put an umbrella in our
bag, just in case.)



And one reminder here, native speakers mostly drop the “e” from “ne”s and they just say “N’ olur n’ olmaz” instead of “Ne olur ne olmaz” okay? N’ olur n’ olmaz.

6 – Numara Yapmak

This is an idiom that you can use if someone is trying to trick you.

“Numara Yapmak” means *“To pretend,” “To fake”* or *“To play a trick.”* Let’s say your little brother is pretending to be sick so he doesn’t go to school.

Numara yapıyor, aslında hasta değil.
(He’s faking it, he’s actually not sick)



7 – Maydanoz Olma

One of my favorite idioms in Turkish is **“Maydanoz Olma.”**

“Maydanoz Olma” means *“Don’t be a parsley.”* The meaning of this idiom is to mind your own business, and *“Not stick your nose into everything.”* Imagine that you’re talking to your friend about a very important issue, and someone else is trying to get involved even though he has nothing to do with that issue and shouldn’t be involved.

Maydanoz olma, bu seni ilgilendirmez.
(Don’t stick your nose, this doesn’t interest you.)



8 – Sağını Süpürge Etmek

This is an idiom that's mostly used for moms in Turkish. The literal meaning is *"To turn one's hair into a broom."*

It's used to describe when someone is going out of their way to help someone. It is like saying they're putting their heart and soul into it. They're putting so much effort that they even use their hair as a broom.

Annem bizi büyütmek için saçını süpürge etti.
(My mother turned her hair into a broom to raise us.)



9 – Gözü Arkada Kalmak

You can use this when you leave someone or something behind but you're still worried about them. Its literal meaning is *"To leave one's eye behind."*

Gözün arkada kalmasın, ben bakıyorum çocuklara.
(Don't worry, I am looking after the children.)



10 – İple Çekmek

Our last phrase is **"İple Çekmek,"** which translates into *"Pulling with the string"* and it is used to emphasize just how much someone is looking forward to something!

Annemin geleceği günü iple çekiyorum, çok heyecanlıyım.
(I am pulling with the string to the day my mother comes, I'm very excited.)

