

# I went for a tummy tuck on holiday

Jetting abroad for cosmetic surgery fulfilled a 30-year-long dream for coffee shop owner Christine Cinibulak, 54, from Colwyn Bay...

**L**ooking up at the departure board, watching for my flight to Turkey, I felt a surge of nerves and excitement all at the same time. My suitcase was crammed with everything I could possibly need for my 10-day trip abroad: sandals, sunglasses, some suntan lotion... I looked just like any other normal holidaymaker. But no one could guess I wasn't headed to the beach, but to a hospital instead.

After years of watching TV shows about cosmetic surgery, wondering if I'd ever be able to afford it, I was finally going to have the tummy tuck and facelift I wanted so much.

My stomach's needed work since my youngest son was born in 1984. I've always been a yo-yo dieter, reaching 17st and size 22 at my heaviest. But even at 12st my tummy stayed, hanging down like an apron and getting sweaty and banging against me as I walked upstairs. More recently, I'd also become conscious of my puffy double chin and the loose skin above my eyes.

## I was terrified

The idea of having an operation had never scared me – just the prices! It would cost around £15,000 in the UK so going abroad was the only option. I'd met my husband, Metin, in Turkey 12 years ago and I knew the hospitals there were wonderful so it seemed the obvious choice to me.

Though Metin always told me I was beautiful, he understood surgery was



Christine's husband Metin gave her his full support



Pregnancies and the increasing years had taken their toll

important to me and was very supportive. We found a company called RevitalizeinTurkey, which offered a 10 day all-inclusive trip, including surgery, for just £6,200. What's more, I'd have one-to-one care for 48 hours after the operation. I didn't have any doubts.

Metin and I had nothing when we married in 2003, but we'd both worked hard and the coffee shop we ran in Colwyn Bay was doing well. In March, we could finally afford the operation, so I phoned Revitalize and the UK representative booked my flight and surgery for the following week. After two days in hospital, in Izmir on the west coast, I'd recuperate in a villa. All I had to do was send some photos of myself.

I was terrified once I got there, but the surgeon was reassuring. 'I don't want to

know any of the gory details, I just want to look fresher,' I told him. He suggested also injecting fat into my upper lip and I agreed. Before I knew it, I was getting ready for eight hours of surgery.

Waking up later I felt groggy, but I remember the surgeon taking my hand and sliding it across my newly-flat tummy. 'Wow,' I managed to say. The next day I saw my swollen and

bruised face in the mirror. It didn't look like me, but I suppose you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs.

Two days later I was back at the villa, lounging beneath the lemon trees in the

*"I don't want to know the gory details," I said"*

sun as my face and body healed, a pile of books and magazines beside me.

## Recovery

One of the best things was the camaraderie with the other patients. There were five other ladies and we were always chatting in the garden or round the dining table, talking about our nose jobs and facelifts, and discussing what had brought us here.

If you were in a bit discomfort, you never had much time to dwell on it. I can't think of a better way to recover from surgery.

The villa was near such a wonderful stretch of beach and on my ninth day, I even managed to walk to the nearby supermarket and have a lovely lunch outside at a restaurant.

It had been a shock seeing my face after the operation, but as I recuperated my surprise turned to joy. It wasn't that I didn't look like myself anymore – I was just a better looking me.

## A new me

Most people usually get compliments on their tan when they get home, but I got a much more dramatic reaction. Some people haven't recognised me. In the shop where I used to work, I chased one former colleague with a trolley to see if she'd notice me,

Before



Christine wanted to smooth her chin and jaw line...

After



... and she's so pleased with the results of her facelift

*'Even my sex life has seen an improvement'*

but she just kept moving out the way. Most people come and tell me I look fantastic.

It turns out Metin was worried sick about me having surgery, but now he can't stop looking at me. I know exactly how he feels. A few months ago, I wouldn't look in the mirror. Now you can't keep me away from it.

The surgery took 7lb off my 5ft 3in frame, and at 11st 7lb and a size 14, I now love clothes that show off my shape.

Even my sex life has seen an improvement! I feel so much sexier and confident now my tummy isn't getting in the way of things. I'd go back for more surgery without hesitation. At 37, Metin's a little bit younger than I am, but now he calls me his 'toy girl'.

Having cosmetic surgery is a big decision and you have to be careful. There are plenty of scare stories, but I couldn't have been looked after any better. I take the view that something could go wrong in any hospital, in any country. It was very uncomfortable, but my goodness, the pain was worth it. ♦

♦ **For more information on surgery in Turkey, go to [revitalizeinturkey.com](http://revitalizeinturkey.com)**

Before



Christine used to feel her tummy overhang as she walked...

After



... now her tummy tuck has helped her lose 7lb in weight