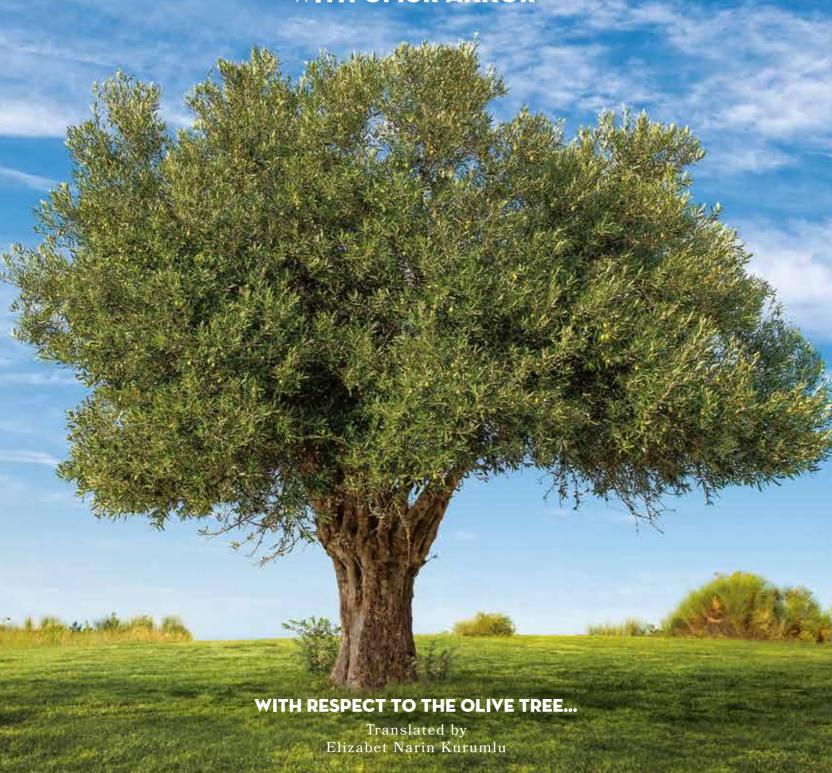


M. ÖMÜR AKKOR

# KOMİLİ TRAVEL BOOK OF FLAVORS II

WITH ÖMÜR AKKOR









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Translated by
Elizabet Narin Kurumlu

### Komili Travel Book of Flavors II with Ömür Akkor

#### **Author**

M. Ömür Akkor

#### **Translator**

Elizabet Narin Kurumlu

### Text Editing

SPU Ajans

#### Photography

Melek Kaya

Veysel Kaya

Semih Ural

M. Ömür Akkor

#### **Miniatures**

Sezen Okur Altıner

#### **Graphic Design**

Haluk Sönmezer



#### 1600 years ago,

In a fresh spring season in the Aegean,
In the calm coolness of the morning,
A story was about to unfold and last for centuries;
The story of an olive sapling, and an olive worker.

He planted his sapling in the fertile soil that he dug with his hands. He also said his prayers while pouring the life-line water out of the copper pitcher. Even if he was not aware, he was changing the world, too.

Many a storms, burans, wars and sovereigns passed away since then. But it is the only one that still stands; That solemn, lonely and hopeful olive tree.



This eternal olive tree, which passed on from Zarbalizade Fahri Bey to the family of Evliyazade Necati Bey in 1931, still continues to tell the story of olive and olive oil in Burhaniye's Taylıeli region in the fertile climate of the Aegean.

That is why when you dip a piece of bread into the olive oil you do not just taste its flavor, but also its memories, its recollections, its endurance against bitter colds, the feeling of the shivering hands collecting the olives in November, the heat of the sun rising on to the olive tree for centuries, the moon shimmering on its leaves at night during full moon, and the waves of fragrances billowing every time it blossoms, too.

When you dip a piece of bread into the olive oil you do not just taste its flavor, but also its secret in coping with 1600 years, its curative powers, the youth at the tips of its branches despite its 1600 year old body, the vitality and the fresh spring, too.

When you dip a piece of bread into the olive oil you get a cure, you get hope, and you get life!

What else do you want?



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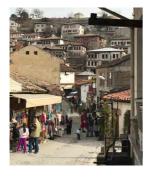
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## M. ÖMÜR AKKOR

He is a graduate of the University of Uludağ, Department of Economics. Currently, he is attending the University of Anatolia (Anadolu Üniversitesi), Department of Cultural Heritage and Tourism. He is teaching Anatolian Culinary History, Ottoman Cuisine and Turkish Culinary History classes at the University of Eastern Mediterranean (Doğu Akdeniz Üniversitesi), Department of Gastronomy.



The oldest excavation site in Turkey is Alacahöyük, where excavations have been carried out the last 105 years. He is part of the Alacahöyük excavation workshop team as a chef, and he has been re-creating 4000-year-old recipes. In this capacity, he happens to be a pioneer; the one-and-only culinary chef that is commissioned as part of a team of antiquities excavations.

He has traveled to 81 cities of Turkey within the last 14 years to carry out work on the cuisine of Turkey, and he has completed the so-called project, "250.000 kms for the Turkish Cuisine," which is still going on with a new adapted name: "350.000 kms for the Turkish Cuisine"

#### **Documentary Work**

His documentary film "A Life Lived as a Master: Ömür Akkor" has been broadcasted on TRT Documentary Channel.

#### **TV Programs**

He has two separate culinary TV shows, which are being broadcast on different channels of TRT; "Komşuda Pişer" ("Cooked at the Neighbor's Home"), which has been translated into five different languages, and "Keşf-i Lezzet" ("The Discovery of Taste"), which has reached 240 episodes, and exceeding.

He has directed the culinary parts of the TV programs "Deryalı Günler" ("Your Days with Derya") on Show TV Channel, and "Derya'nın Dünyası" ("Derya's World") on Kanaltürk TV Channel, which are being broadcast once a week for the last five seasons.

He has produced the TV programs "Bademiçi'nde Bir Ömür" ("Ömür in Bademiçi")² and "Ömür Akkor'la Hayatın Tadı" ("The Taste of Life with Ömür Akkor") for broadcast on Olay TV.

Another production he has created is "Güzel Bir Yer, Güzel Bir Tat" ("A Nice Place, a Nice Flavor") for Line TV.

#### **Publications and Articles**

He has written over two hundred articles relating to culinary culture, which has been published in local and national printed media.

His articles on culinary culture and travel have appeared in monthly publications such as Food in Life, Gourmet & Styling, Yolculuk (Journey), Uçuş Noktası (Flight Point), Olay Trend (Event Trend), Dergi Bursa (Magazine Bursa) and some other local magazines, and he is still contributing.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The author's first name "Ömür" translates to "Life" in English. Therefore, the title refers both to "Ömür in Bademiçi" and "A Life in Bademiçi".



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> "Komşuda Pişer" is a partial use of the expression, "Komşuda Pişer, Bize de Düşer", which translates into "If something is cooked at the neighbor's home, we will have our share of it." It points out to an old tradition and a cultural feature of the Turkish society; sharing.

#### Moreover...

He is a professional paragliding pilot. He has participated in World Cup Preparations, Championship of Turkey and various other competitions relating to this field. He is the founding captain of "Stratus Team" which is the first paragliding team of Bursa, and one of the founders of Bursa Paragliding Association (BUYAP).

He holds the 42nd place in the Cup of Turkey and the 110th in the World Cup Preparations.

He conducts and teaches at seminars and courses abroad on "Healthy Food", "Turkish Cuisine", "Culinary Culture" and "Anatolia's Oldest Dishes".



#### M. Ömür Akkor Books

The Cuisine of Bursa (Bursa Mutfağı)

The Cuisine of the Seljuks (Selçuklu Mutfağı)

(Gourmand Cookbook Awards,  $\bar{\text{B}}\textsc{est}$  Culinary History Book in the World, 2012)

Pleasant Aromas are Spreading out from the Kitchen (Mutfaktan Güzel Kokular Geliyor)

The very first cookbook of Turkey written in Braille alphabet for the visually impaired

(Best Fundraising and Charity Cook Book in the Europe, 2013)

The Old Taste of Anatolia (Anadolu'nun Eski Tadı)

Healthy No-Sugar Desserts (Sağlıklı Şekersiz Tatlılar)

Practical Recipes from the Turkish Cuisine (Türk Mutfağından Pratik Tarifler)

Recipes with Eggs from the Ottoman Times to Today (Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Yumurtalı Tarifler)

European Recipes with Eggs (Alafranga Yumurta Tarifleri)

Ottoman Cuisine (Osmanlı Mutfağı)

Happy Recipes with Ömür Akkor (Ömür Akkor'la Mutlu Tarifler) Recipes from Anatolia by Ömür Akkor (Ömür Akkor'dan Anadolu Tarifleri)

Spring of Taste at Breakfast (Kahvaltıda Lezzet Pınarı)

Tastes of Ramadan with Komili (Komili ile Ramazan Lezzetleri)

Anatolian Recipes (Anadolu Tarifleri)

Wildflower Tables (Kır Çiçeği Sofraları)

Early Period Islamic Cuisine (Erken Dönem İslam Mutfağı)

(Gourmand Cookbook Awards, Best World Cuisine in the World, 2015)

Komili Travel Book of Flavors I with Ömür Akkor

(Gourmand Cookbook Awards, Best Culinary Travel Book in the World, 2016)

#### M. Ömür Akkor Books Published Abroad

The Ottoman Cuisine

The Early Islamic Art Cuisine

**Best Egg Recipes** 

**Healthy Desserts** 

The Seljuk Cuisine

**Practical Recipes** 

The Ottoman Cuisine

Recetas de Hueva

Postres Saludables

Les Recettes a Base D'oeufs

Recettes de Dessert Sains

Naturlish Süss

Turkish Kochen

Anatolishe Küche

Gerichte aus der Türkischen und Internationalen Kuche (German

Cook Book for the Visually Impaired)

Healthy No-Sugar Desserts (Russian)

Recipes with Eggs (Russian)

Russian Cook Book fo the Visually Impaired (Russian)

The Ottoman Cuisine

The Early Islamic Art Cuisine

**Best Egg Recipes** 

**Healthy Desserts** 

The Seljuk Cuisine

Practical Recipes
The Ottoman Cuisine

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Cook Book fo the Visually Impaired)

Healthy No-Sugar Desserts (Russian)

Recipes with Eggs (Russian)

 $\textbf{Russian Cook Book fo the Visually Impaired} \ (\textbf{Russian})$ 







## **PREFACE**

81 cities, hundreds of districts, tens of thousands of kilometers...

Our country is so beautiful! Why don't you take a trip around it, too?

In Hakkari; fresh walnuts, strong long-brewed dark tea, and dried mulberries as a substitute for sugar to go with your tea.

A snowy bitter-cold morning in Erzurum.

Sunset in Beyşehir.

Antep's baklava, Urfa's hot pepper.

Kastamonu, Çorum and Gümüşhane, where I always feel at home.

The uplands of Rize, the butter of Konya, and the vineyards of Kilis.

Humble Anatolia whose teachings I admire more and more as time goes by.

The short book of the long journey; the second half of the Book of Travels.

Thanks a million in gratitude because I can write, because I can travel around it, and because I was born in this land.

Our country is so beautiful! Why don't you take a trip, too?

March 2018

M. Ömür Akkor







## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I still continue to write feeling the same enthusiasm I started with.

I cannot thank enough to:

the beloved Anatolian people,

the culture, respect, and prayers of this land,

the Komili Olive Oil Family who still walks with me sharing the same enthusiasm,

all my friends who have contributed,

Şevki Dilmaç and Cüneyt Aksoy who have given support when I neglected my work,

the Nature,

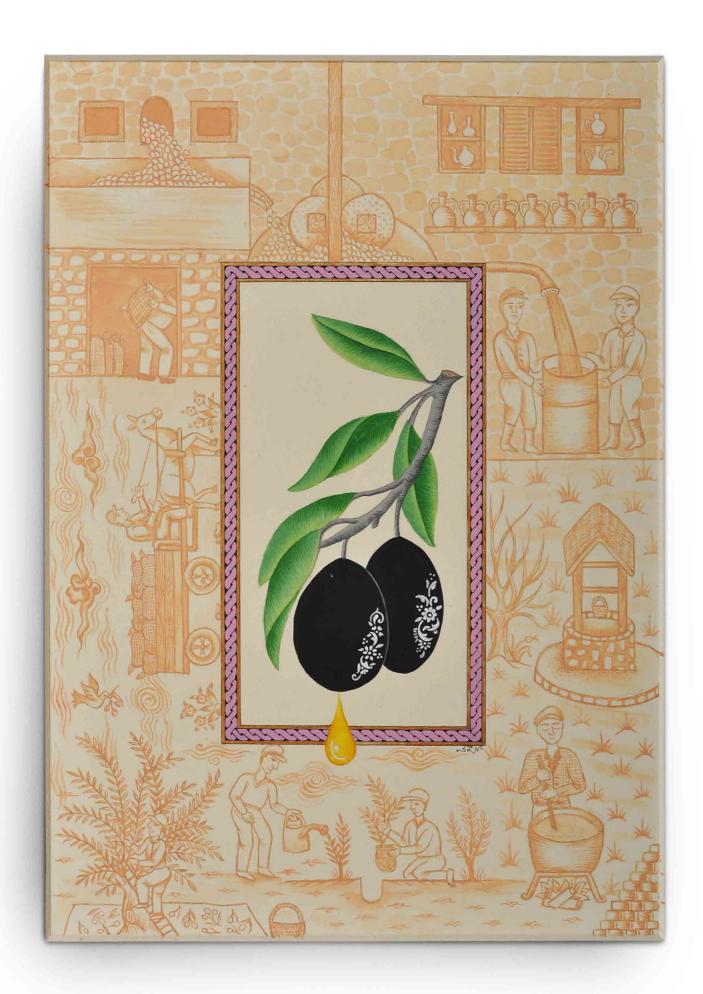
Semih, Melek, and Veysel for the photography,

Haluk Sönmezer who gave life to my book with his design,

and to the two families I have...

No matter what I write, and no matter how much I thank them, it is not enough.





## FROM EDREMİT TO AYVALIK

The Aegean winds of Kaz Dağları (Mount Ida), ample amount of oxygen, great weather, local farmers' markets, tasty dishes, and for sure, olive and olive oil...

That is the brief summary of the region from Edremit to Ayvalık.

This stretch might be the tastiest

48 kilometers of Turkey
where one feels really good.

In this writing and map I have indicated both the parts I like the most, and the best local farmers' markets. I hope you like them. The road is short but very tasty. Now, let us start our journey in Edremit.



#### Cumhuriyet Lokantası (Republic Restaurant) - 1910 / Edremit

The restaurant opened in 1910 as Ali Usta's<sup>3</sup> Place but changed its name after the proclamation of the Republic. There is not much to be said about Cumhuriyet Lokantası which has been serving at the same location since 1940. Both the meals and the tradesmanship are legendary!

How many restaurants have we heard about anyway in Turkey that has exceeded 100 years in existence? I would like to extend my sincere respects for all their efforts to Ali Gökaslan and his wife Nuran Hanım<sup>4</sup>, who are running their business together.

#### Kaymakam Çamı (Governor's Pine Tree) / Artur

Their menu consists of gözleme<sup>5</sup>, mantı<sup>6</sup> and çiğ börek<sup>7</sup>. All three are equally delicious, but the main attraction is its location and scenery. You will neither want the meal to be over nor visit this place for once only. Be assured; you will be returning to this place many times. Artur Holiday Complex is a gated community. Therefore, to get access to this restaurant, which is located in the premises of Artur, you need to tell the security guards at the gate that you have come to eat at this restaurant.

#### Zeytin Restoran (Olive Restaurant) / Artur

I do not know if you would think that I am giving preferential treatment to my mom, but those mezes do not need any such favoring... As you may have already guessed, this is my mother's restaurant. She is a retired teacher. This is the right address for a 'Mom's Breakfast' with fried cheeses and homemade jams or for legendary meals by the seaside watching spectacular sunsets. Once again, you need to mention that you are there for eating at the restaurant to gain access into the premises of Artur, which is located in Güvercin Koyu (The Bay of Pigeons).

#### The Cheese Toast at Özgün Zeytinyağı Tesisleri (Özgün Olive Oil Processing Facility)

En route from Gömeç to Ayvalık, pass the first exit to Ayvalık. Continue for about one kilometer. You will see the facility on the left. The toast they make with Ayvalık tulum<sup>8</sup> cheese, field-grown tomatoes and extra virgin olive oil is to die for. I highly recommend a stop here. I would also like to remind not to leave without tasting its ayran<sup>9</sup> made with sheep yoghurt.

#### Paşalı Lokantası (Paşalı Restaurant) / Ayvalık

In my opinion, this is the most important tradesman's restaurant in Ayvalık serving only dishes cooked in oil olive. This restaurant is 15 years old, and it is the favorite of Ayvalık's tradesmen. İzzet Durko is the owner/chef. This is also the address for the legendary olive oil kalburabastı<sup>10</sup> that I had tasted during the Harvest Festival, which we have been organizing together with Komili Olive Oil Family the last two years. I highly recommend you to taste their dessert.

<sup>10 &</sup>quot;Kalburabasti" is a type of nut cookies soaked in syrup. The literal translation is "pressed in a sieve". Originally, a sieve was used in which the dough was pressed in to give a design on the top of the cookie dough.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> "Usta" translates to "master" or "craftsman". In Turkey, it is used for addressing a (usually male) person, indicating respect, and his level of mastery in his profession. It comes after the name of the person.

<sup>4 &</sup>quot;Hanum" is a word for addressing a female person, indicating respect. It is similar to Lady/Mrs./Ms., but in Turkish it comes after the name of the person.

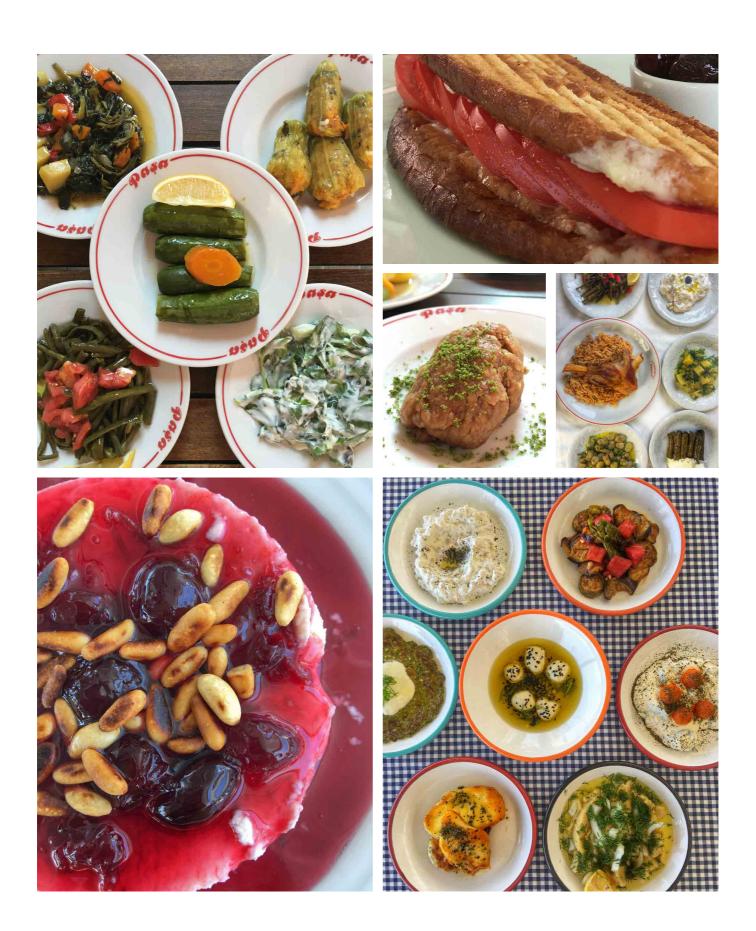
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> "Gözleme" is a traditional savory Turkish flatbread and pastry dish. The dough is usually unleavened, and made only with flour, salt and water, but gözleme can be made from yeast dough as well. The dough is rolled thin, then stuffed with various fillings, sealed as an envelop, and cooked over a convex griddle (sac).

<sup>6 &</sup>quot;Mantr" can be defined as simply as ground-meat-filled dumplings or ravioli. It comes in many different varieties and sizes. The filling and the size may vary, the recipe may change, but when you say manti, the first thing that comes to mind is a ball of thin dough filled with spicy ground meat, boiled in water, and served with garlicky yogurt and hot butter with red pepper powder or flakes, and tomato paste.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> "Börek" is a generic name for savory pastry baked in oven, or fried in olive oil. It comes with all kinds of alternative fillings. The most commonly used ones are cheese, meat, chicken, spinach, and potato. It is made by rolling out several very thin pastry dough pieces called yufka. These phyllo dough are layered in a large flat pan or tray with the fillings in the middle. This type is usually cooked in the oven. But, it can also be made into rolls, triangular, square or flower shapes, and fried in oil. "Çiğ börek" is a fried version. The filling is mainly ground meat, onions and spices. "Çiğ" literally translates into "raw" indicating to the fact that the filling is not precooked.

<sup>8 &</sup>quot;Tulum" is Brynza cheese made of sheep or goat milk, and cured in goatskir

<sup>9 &</sup>quot;Ayran" is a non-alcoholic drink made by diluting plain yoghurt with water and adding a little salt.





#### Güler Pastanesi (Güler Patisserie) - 1942 / Ayvalık

Home-style walnut baklava, lor<sup>11</sup> dessert, mastic cookies, lor baklava, gum mastic ice cream... What else would one want? This is a historic patisserie known in the Ayvalık area for their trademark desserts. I would like to especially mention that they bake their baklava in copper trays. Ask anyone in the market where their shop is; they will point out or give directions.

#### Bay Nihat (Mr. Nihat) / Cunda

I believe there is no one left who has not heard of him already. Always topping the lists for the best of Turkey... His mezes, the freshness, and the variety are superb! And the fish are seriously delicious. I can never forget the last steamed fish I ate there. I would also like to pinpoint that you must try their dessert made with fresh lor, sour cherry jam and pine nuts.

#### Ayna (Mirror) / Cunda

I don't think I can do justice in describing this restaurant. It seems so down to earth with its five or six tables, but it turns you into an addict with every single dish you taste here. I devour its fava<sup>12</sup> one plate after another. Its seafood pilav raises the bar sky high. I highly recommend reservations for the evening. One can hardly find a table in the evenings.

#### Two hotel suggestions / Cunda

Nisi Boutique Hotel and Sobe Hotel are among the best boutique hotels I have ever stayed anywhere in Turkey. Their design, the concept behind their creation, their gardens, their locality based philosophy are all fit for Ayvalık and Cunda.

#### Çamlık Koyu (Pine Grove Bay) / Ayvalık

Sunset panoramas from many parts of Ayvalık are great but it seems to be a bit better in this location. Once you sit on the wooden pier in front of the pine trees, it is so easy to leave all the worldly affairs behind. The calmness, the quietness and the scenery carry you away from this world. You want that moment to last for a thousand years, and you become mesmerized.



 $<sup>^{11}</sup>$  "Lor" is a crumbly type of cheese made with curd or whey.

<sup>12 &</sup>quot;Fava" is basically mashed broad beans



#### The Farmers' Markets

If you are in this area, you have to make sure to visit the farmers' markets, because you will always come across five of the names from this area in the list for the best farmers' markets of Turkey. Many producers, who come early in the morning from their villages, sell homemade yoghurt, cheese, breads, and böreks, and herbs and olives from their gardens. The tomatoes are legendary! Their lor, çökelek<sup>13</sup> and yoghurt will steal you away! Let me tell you only so much, and you choose the closest ones to you:

Edremit - Wednesday

Burhaniye - Monday

Karaağaç - Friday

Gömeç - Tuesday

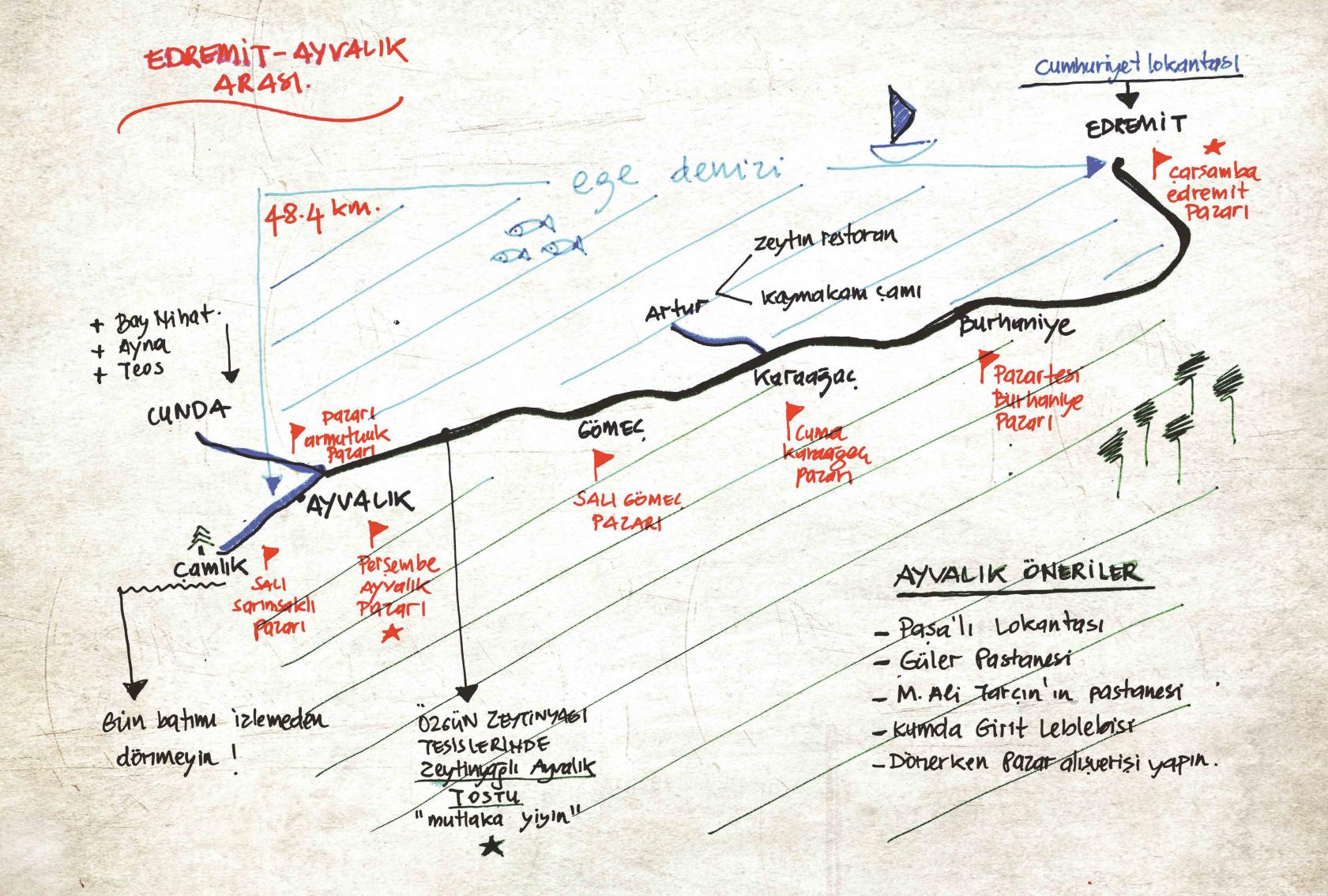
Ayvalık - Thursday (A true legend!)

Armutçuk - Sunday

Sarımsaklı - Tuesday

 $<sup>^{13}</sup>$  "Cökelek" is a kind of unsalted and light cheese made by boiling the whey left over from making feta cheese.







#### BAZLAMA<sup>14</sup> TOAST with OLIVE OIL

#### Ingredients

- · 2 bazlamas
- 200 grams kelle cheese15
- 6 table spoons of Komili
   Early Harvest Olive Oil
- · Home-made tomato paste
- · Greeneries for serving

- Cut the bazlama horizontally into two in the middle.
- Spread the Komili Early Harvest Olive Oil on top of each piece.
- Put the cheese on top of one piece, and turn the other piece upside down on the other.
- Toast them in the toast-machine.
- When the toasts are ready spread some tomato paste on top.
- Sprinkle some olive oil on top right before serving.

Where there is labor, there is flavor. Where there is olive oil, there is labor. Hence, if a dish has olive oil in it, there is the bitter cold of November, the shivering hands, and a dark-brewed field-tea in it. And this bazlama toast next to it...

<sup>15 &</sup>quot;Kelle cheese", otherwise known as Mihaliç cheese, is pretty salty, porous and hard. Depending on the season it can be produced with either cow or sheep milk.



<sup>14 &</sup>quot;Bazlama" is a round flatbread type. Bazlama is usually thicker (average 1-2 cms) and smaller (average 10-25 cms) than yufka which is very thin (but thicker than phyllo dough).



## **URLA**

#### What a Beauty!

Urla might be one of the most beautiful districts of the Aegean. Not only it is very green, but also quite well preserved and clean. Urla's fruits, vegetables and farmers' markets are so nice. And therefore, the dishes here are very delicious. I had stopped by in Urla a few times before, but this time I re-discover it with my close friends Güliz and Mehmet Canaydın, who reside here. The Canaydın Family, who spent their childhood here, decides to move here five years ago. And I am so glad they did! As they are both the natives of the area starting with the times of their grandparents, we can experience Urla in its true sense. We stroll everywhere; its farmers' markets, the other markets, and whatever else exists.

Malgaca is the oldest and most important of its market places. There are tradesmen of all kinds in and around it, but for me the most distinctive feature was the abundance of butcher shops, grocery stores and bakeries. All look wonderful, and seem to be the masters of their domains. You may want to start your Urla excursion here. Now, let me take you through the route we followed.



#### Ünal Kardeşler Katmeri (Katmer<sup>16</sup> at Ünal Brothers)

Obviously, the Urla katmer is a gastronomic phenomenon by itself. Who would have thought that I could have missed it! Mention katmer, and we all come to think of Antep's katmer, which is a dessert that comes with tons of pistachio, but from now on, mention katmer, and I will think of Urla katmer and breakfast. Some dough is rolled out thin. Local cheese, herbs and eggs are placed as a filling before the dough is wrapped like an envelop and sealed. It is fried on both sides, and served with ayran made with Urla yoghurt. This katmer alone deserves a trip to Urla. Ünal Kardeşler is located along the seaside. You can enjoy the katmer as part of your breakfast.

#### 7 Kardeşler Şambali<sup>17</sup> (Şambali at 7 Brothers)

This man of şambali, who has been standing next to his mobile street cart in the same spot for the last 58 years, is that kind of a man that would make you get up and go to Urla. I have been eating şambali with great pleasure for such a long time, but this one is something else! It is seriously delicious with its kaymak in the middle, cinnamon on top, and the somewhat thicker syrup dripping out. Don't miss out on this flavor when in Urla! They are on the street right in front of the pier.

#### **Baristocrat**

This is the latest work place Nurettin Karakundakoğlu —third generation in the family—have added to the family business that has been ongoing since 1954 as coffee machine producers. We are talking about Third Wave Coffee here.

So far, the family, who has been roasting their coffees in the very coffee roasting machine his grandfather had produced twenty-five years ago, is hosting the coffee lovers in their locations in İzmir and Urla. I cannot say I am an adamant coffee drinker, but since the time I drank the filter coffee here, every morning I start my day here. Their coffees, which they brew using one of the twelve different coffee beans based on the likings of their guests, are definitely unparalleled, aromatic and unique.

#### Fırın VoUrla (VoUrla Bakery)

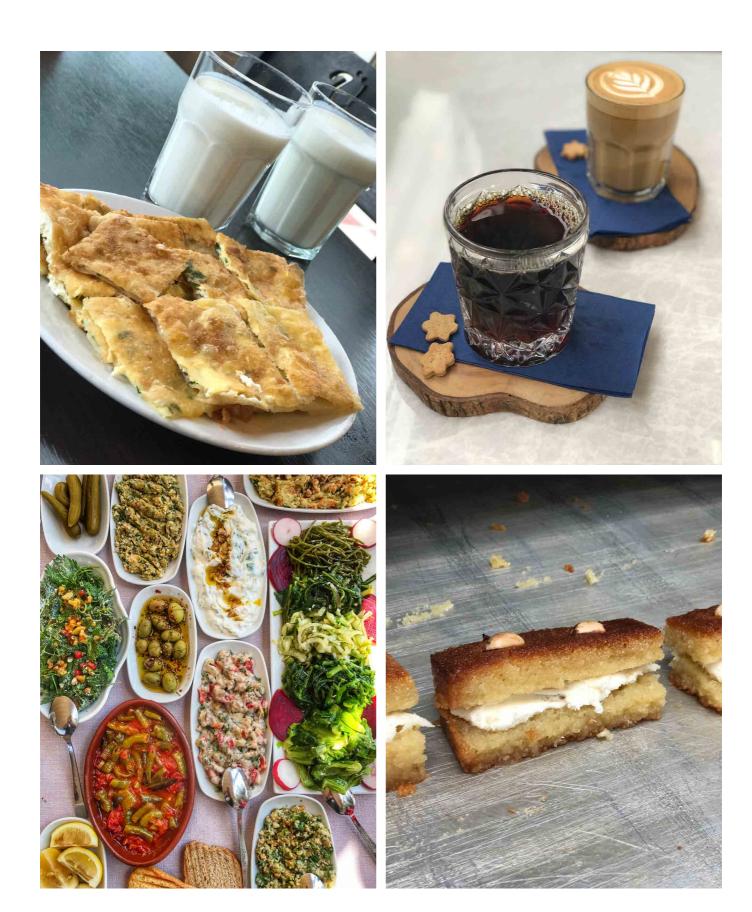
This is Özlem's beautiful bakery and restaurant. When the dishes, the desserts, and the place itself are equally good, how could one not truly enjoy? It is so beautiful here. In fact, it is a bit too beautiful. You simply do not want to leave.

Well, in fact, there is no hidden treasure. There is no menu either. The store is small, and everyone just leaves it Özlem to decide. We eat scrumptious salads and a hard-to-match lamb meat on orzo-mixed pilav. To top it all, we enjoyed some profiterol. Like I have said; whatever Özlem decides! She makes everything well. As long as you find a spot... Her desserts are specifically worth mentioning!

<sup>17 &</sup>quot;Şambali" is a dessert otherwise known as its name suggests: "Damascus Honey"; a kind of semolina cake soaked in syrup.



<sup>16 &</sup>quot;Katmer" is a crispy phyllo dough dessert, which contains pistachios and clotted cream in it, in its most traditional recipe. However, regional variations do exist. And as hereby, there are savory kinds, too. In its broadest sense, it stands for the style of making; a thin dough wrapped in a large square piece (like an envelop), with or without filling.





#### Akın'ın Yeri (Akın's Place)

Everything here is so fresh! So crunchy, so tasty! Not only the mezes, salads, and fish, but even the greeneries served next to the fish are so appetizing. We eat red mullet fried in olive oil served with garlicy yoghurt sauce. And I am so glad we are eating this! Akın's Place is in Özbek village.

#### Art Design Hotel

To stay in a historic house filled with many memories... That is what one feels while staying in here. It has been quite a while since I began paying attention to that characteristic of a place which makes you feel the locality of that particular place. Here, you feel that you are in the Aegean, somewhere close to the sea, in a village by the olive trees, but most importantly you feel joyous. I believe what makes this place so enjoyable is the fact that they recycled materials from old Urla, and used them while restoring this old Urla stone house. With a capacity of four rooms, in which a maximum of eight people can be accommodated, the hotel succeeds in making you feel at home.

#### Seyhan Kasabı (Seyhan Butcher House)

This might be the best butchery department and butcher shop I have come across. Everything is so fleshy. It all seems so tasty. And the workmanship shines out as first class. Everything in the menu is their own production; from the kokoreç<sup>18</sup> on wooden skewers to the various lamb meat, and from the hand made sucuks<sup>19</sup> to the fumeés.

#### Uzbaş Çiftliği (Uzbaş Farm)

This is actually a greenhouse and a botanical garden, but you get mesmerized even before going in there; on the road to reach there. Once inside, you can see a large variety of trees, plants and greeneries you can perhaps hardly see anywhere else in Turkey. They have a smashing collection with a wide spectrum ranging from thousand year old olive trees to rare plants. You can sign up for the informative tour in the garden. I am sure you will want to spend the entire day in here.

#### **Fish Auction**

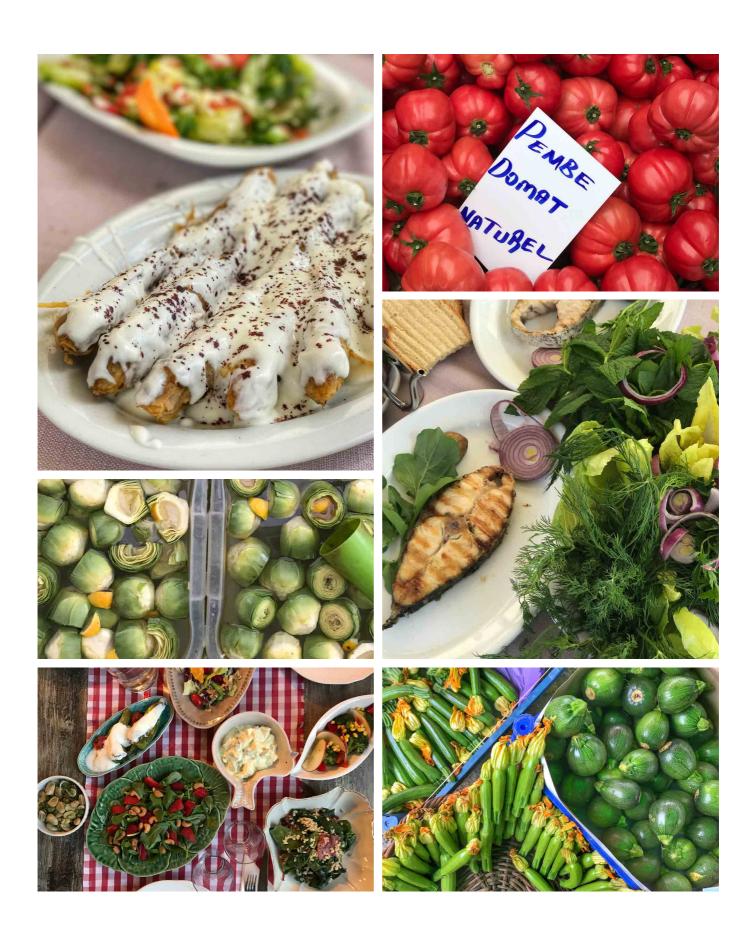
Every morning at 10:00am the Fish Auction starts at the Urla Pier. The freshest of the Aegean fish come here. This is where you can get the freshest fish for a good price. Do not miss this auction happening at such a civilized time! (Fish auctions are usually held at a very early hour in the mornings.) Not only fish but all kinds of sea creatures are sold here.

I can almost hear you asking,
"Who eats fish with
garlicy yoghurt?"
One can definitely eat it!
Without a doubt!
Simple as that!
This could be the best
fish restaurant of Turkey.
If you are in the vicinity,
I would say,
"Change your route and

make sure to eat here!"

<sup>18 &</sup>quot;Kokoreç" is basically lamb intestines, wrapped around sweetbreads on skewer and grilled horizontally over the charcoal fire.

<sup>19 &</sup>quot;Sucuk" is a dry, spicy sausage.









## FRIED RED MULLET WITH GARLICY YOGHURT SAUCE

#### Ingredients

- 1/2 kilogram red mullet
- 1 glass Komili Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 1 bowl yoghurt with smashed garlic in it
- Flour

- After dipping the fish in flour, fry them in Komili Extra Virgin Olive Oil.
- Lay the fried fish on a paper towel so that it can absorb the extra oil.
- After placing the fish in the service plate, pour the yoghurt sauce on it.
- Drizzle some olive oil and sumac on top, and serve.

#### Ingredients for the Dressing

- Komili Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- Sumac

I am always tempted to call this the red mullet dish 'mantı'.

I mean it is somewhat like an Aegean style 'mantı', isn't it?





## **SAFRANBOLU**

We just could not get enough of Safranbolu, which is one of the most scenic towns of Anatolia, and its markets, streets, wooden architecture, and history. We drove on a scenic road for about 100 kilometers in the cars we had rented at the Kastamonu Airport before reaching at the Yörük (Nomad) village. That is where the story began...

#### Yörük Köyü (Nomad Village)

This 600-year-old village is truly one of the most beautiful villages of Turkey. Yörük (Nomad) Village has 138 households. Each house is in rivalry with the others in meticulously created beauty. None of the houses face another one, and they are all decorated with the characteristics based on the Bektaşi beliefs. The houses have separate living quarters with low ceilings for winter time, and high ceilings for summer time. Each room in the house gets designed like a family home. The Yörük table that is named after the village, is very successful with its ayran, gözleme and award-winning baklavas. My favorite was the multi-cheese gözleme. I just did not want to stop strolling back and forth in the streets, and eating again and again in between.



#### **Mencilis Cave**

This cave is the 5th largest cave of Turkey with a length of 6 kilometers. The temperature in the cave, which is 15°C, remains unaltered throughout the year. The stalactites and the stalagmites, and the little lake inside the cave form a spectacular scene not to be missed. Yet, I have to mention the 200 steps one has to climb before reaching the entrance of the cave. The discovery of the remains of the Khorasan plaster inside the cave is quite important as it suggests that there was a settlement in here at one time.

#### The Crystal Glass Terrace

The Crystal Glass Terrace is the first of its kind in Turkey. It is located next to the Ince Kaya Aqueduct, and it offers a spectacular angle overlooking to the scenery of the Tokatlı Canyon. I suggest being there especially at sunset. I also have to stress the fact that the glass is safe to stand or walk on because it has a density of 750 kilogram per square meter.

#### Safranbolu Simidi (Safranbolu Simit<sup>20</sup>)

We simply could not have enough. There are three main differences from the standard simit: after being rolled, the dough is briefly cooked in boiling water, and unlike the standard simit, this one is not sweetened with sugar or grape molasses. The simits are not coated in sesame seeds either. These have a unique taste taking their place in the best simits list. It serves as a staple breakfast item next to cheese and tea once bought fresh at the bakeries in the mornings.

#### Safranbolu Dishes

I have added in this title only to give a little warning in fact. Safranbolu happens to be one of the best physically preserved towns of Turkey. The restaurants must specifically pay attention to this, too. As local tourists, when we come here, our expectation is not to find the dishes we can find anywhere else. To the contrary, what we expect is to be able to eat whatever exists specific to the area. As such, I only hope that they can be very careful in preserving the traditional.

#### Kılcıoğlu Pide<sup>21</sup>

A 41 year old Safranbolu pide establishment... The material, workmanship, tradesmanship, the pides, the ayran, and all the rest; everything is so good here.

This is where we had the best Safranbolu bükme<sup>22</sup>. We are totally in regret for having denied the store owner's offer for a take away. We will return as soon as possible to eat its bükme once again.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> "Bükme" is another type of pide. The cheese, meat, or vegetable is placed as a topping on a pide (like on a pizza) whereas they are used as a filling in a bükme (like in calzone). So, the main difference between a pide and a bükme is that the latter is closed with dough on the top.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> "Simit" is a circular loop-like bread, typically encrusted with sesame seeds or, less commonly, poppy, flax, or sunflower seeds. Simit's size, crunchiness, chewiness, and other characteristics vary from one region to another. The main ingredients are flour, water, yeast and salt for the dough, and grape molasses and seeds for the covering. It is the most common street food found all over Turkey.

<sup>21 &</sup>quot;Pide" or pita is usually round or oval-shaped flatbread. It can be referring to plain bread, or sometimes the bread topped with meat, cheese, or vegetables, cooked in a bakery oven.



#### Hacı Baba Lokantası (Hacı Baba Restaurant)

The restaurateur grandchildren of a grandfather who was a photographer... Hacı Erol Altınok is Safranbolu's first photographer. However, his first job was waiting tables in a restaurant in Florya. Then, he went on cruise ships. Later on, he returned to Safranbolu with his camera he had purchased abroad. Although he was dreaming of running a restaurant, he found himself to be the first photographer of Safranbolu. Having a lot of talent, he flourished in photography; his wonderful photographs found places in international exhibitions, and he forgat about having a restaurant until his grandchildren opened a restaurant named after him. Nowadays, the memory of Hacı Baba lives on at the restaurant. Their pides, dishes, pickles, and sherbets are pretty good...

#### İmren Hotel

Wherever you go in Safranbolu, you will come across with the name İmren. They have hotels, restaurants, and real good lokums (Turkish delights). Their hotel is one of the right addresses for accomodations. Both the overall traditional architectural features and the rooms are very successful. Once you take a few steps away from the hotel, which is located in the center of the Old City, you feel like you are in an Ottoman town dating back to centuries. I recommend you to enjoy the original Safranbolu dishes out of the kitchen of the hotel. Piruhi<sup>23</sup>, Rum<sup>24</sup> mantısı, keşli<sup>25</sup> erişte<sup>26</sup> with walnuts, wrapped grape leaves and pilav with safran are just a few to name...

#### Kadıoğlu Kuyu Kebabı (Kadıoğlu Well Kebap)

This is another restaurant where you can taste the traditional tastes of Safranbolu. Kadıoğlus have a hotel and couple of different restaurants where you can taste different kinds of dishes. Their restaurant adjacent to the main square in town prepares the famous kuyu (well) kebap, and that is where we headed for. Osman Şenol, who was born in 1944, is still up and running as the boss, but three generations from the same family are working together. The butter and honey that is served as the entreé is delicious. So are the Selçuk style zerde<sup>27</sup> with safran, and the kuyu kebabı.

#### Ümüt Lokantası (Ümüt Restaurant)

This is the restaurant that İbrahim Usta took over from his master. This year in March İbrahim Usta will be celebrating 40 years in the profession. His humble shop, his helping wife, his dishes, and his tradesmanship make an impression on us. Remembering how proud we are in the big cities as we consider ourselves to be the best, and how uninformed we are about the Anatolian masters such as İbrahim Usta and the veterans of the Turkish Cuisine, I blush with shame. We taste kelle söğüş (sheep's head cold cuts), döner, and sirkeli paça (trotters or lamb feet with vinegar) at Ümüt Lokantası, and all of them get thumbs up from us.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> "Zerde" is a Turkish dessert, a sort of sweet pudding from rice that is colored yellow with saffron. Traditionally, it is a festive dish popular at weddings, birth celebrations and during the first ten days of the sacred month of Muharram. Zerd derived from zard which in Persian language means yellow.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> "Piruhi" is a kind of mantı (similar to dumplings or ravioli).

<sup>24 &</sup>quot;Rums" are Turkish citizens of Greek ethnicity

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> "Keş" or kashk is made from drained yoghurt or drained sour milk by letting it dry after producing it. It can be made in a variety of forms, including rolled into balls, sliced into strips, and formed into chunks.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> "Erişte" may refer to the small-cut flat noodles themselves, or the prepared dish made with them. The dough is made from flour, eggs, water, salt (and sometimes milk). These ingredients are worked into a dough, which is rolled out, and cut in small flat pieces that are dried in the sun or an oven after dried for a day.





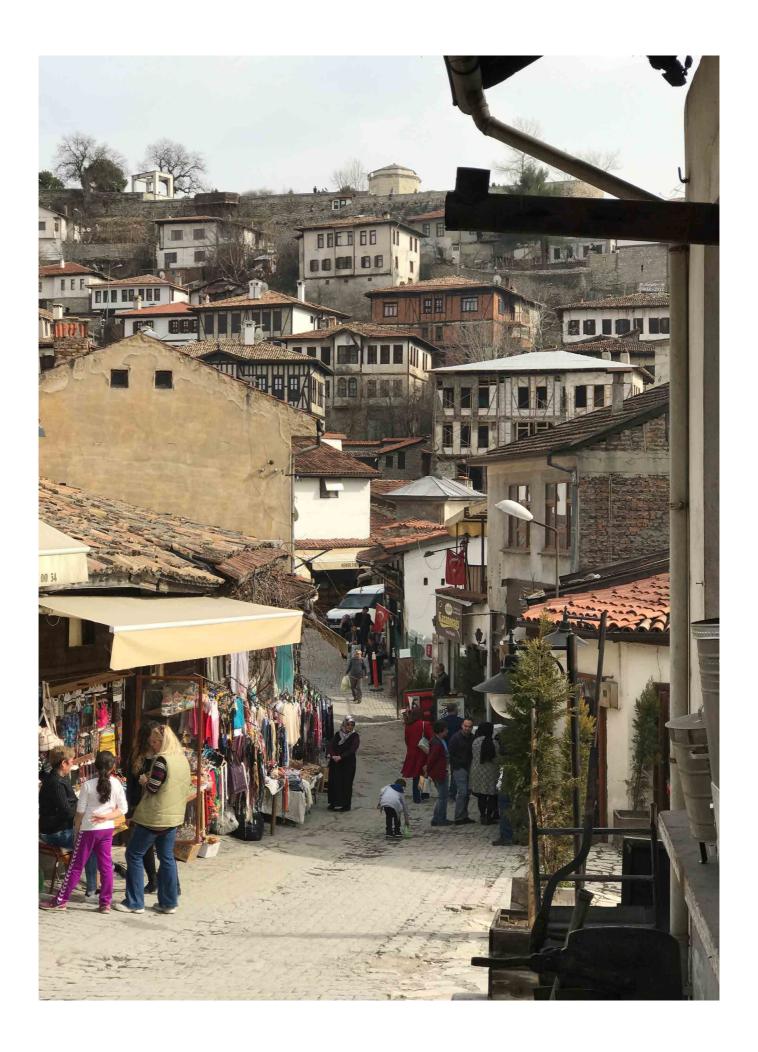












#### Thanks

I would like to thank the valued people of Safranbolu, who has hosted us with full wholeheartedness, and who has made us meet with our unmatched culture, our palatal delights, and our genuine people in Safranbolu, which is one of the most beautiful places of Anatolia, for their sincerity and hospitality.





#### GÖZLEME WITH OLIVE OIL AND HERBS

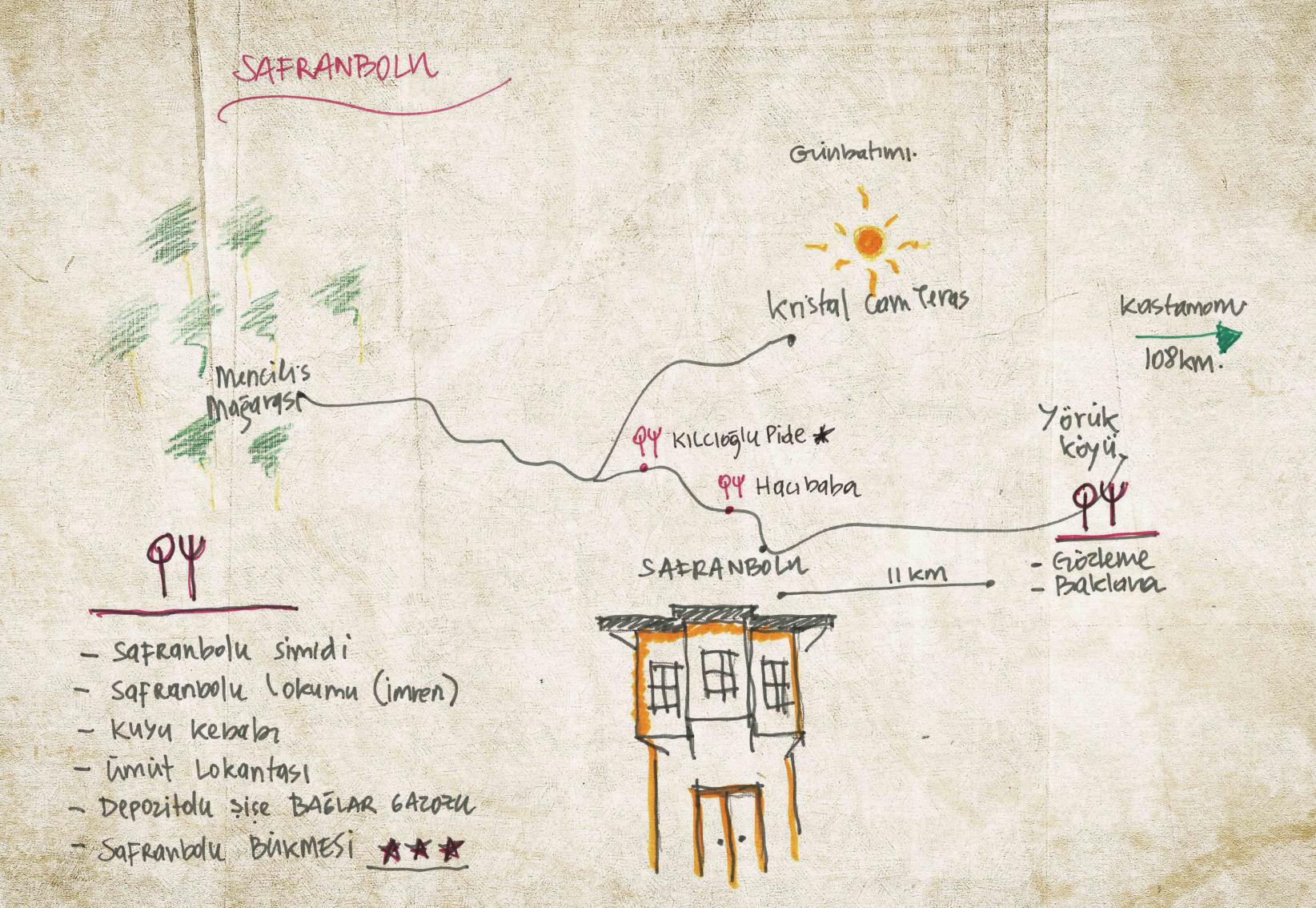
#### Ingredients

- 1/2 kilogram mixed local herbs (You could substitute with spring onions, fresh mint leaves, parsley, dill, etc...)
- Komili Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 4 big round phyllo dough pieces
- 4 eggs
- 1/2 bowl finely chopped village cheese
- 1/2 bowl lor cheese
- · Black pepper
- · Rock salt

- Mince the herbs finely.
- Pour some Komili Extra Virgin Olive Oil in a pan, and stir-fry the minced herbs lightly for a few minutes.
- Mix the cheese in, taste for saltiness. If the cheese are not salty, add some salt.
- Place the mixture in the middle of each phyllo dough.
- Break an egg in the middle of each piece.
- Brush some olive oil on a convex griddle or a pan.
- Cook both sides of the gözlemes on the griddle or pan, and serve.

We traveled into Safranbolu via the Yörük (Nomad) Village. Everything was as it used to be in this 600-year-old village. The traditions, the dishes, the people...









# THE GASTRONOMICAL ATLAS of CYPRUS

With its unmatched beloved students, its weather, and water, Cyprus is an unparalleled place for me where I feel at my best; and where I lecture with great enthusiasm every Wednesday at the University of Eastern Mediterranean (Doğu Akdeniz Üniversitesi), Department of Gastronomy. Cyprus; our fellow land, whose people, students and dishes I love so much.

And since this is the case, the most frequently asked question to me is "What do you eat when you go to Cyprus?" In this piece of writing, I truly want to take you on an unbelievable gastronomic journey. With its vegetables, fruits, cheeses, yoghurts, peksimets<sup>28</sup>, breads, and çöreks<sup>29</sup> Cyprus, in one word, is a "legend."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> "Çörek" is a round loaf of bread in its most broad sense. However, the word encompasses a whole range of different types. It can be savory or sweet, round or braided, small or big, and with a variety of spice additions. If you want to specify that the çörek belongs to, or comes from a certain place, the word çöreği followed by the name of the city (or person) it comes from is used: Istanbul



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> "Peksimet" is a type of cake-rusk.

#### GAZİ MAGUSA (FAMAGUSTA)

#### Drabez

This is a little family restaurant in Mutluyaka. Their dishes truly reflect the Cypriotic cuisine. The fresh artichoke, celery, lime and other raw vegetables served as an entreé are enough by themselves to justify a trip here. Besides, you do not need to choose from a menu. Just sit at the table, and they will serve you.

#### Garavolli

This is another true Cypriotic restaurant in Kilitkaya village. Let me tell briefly what we ate here; tahan (thick tahini sauce), gappar (pickled capers), ayrelli (wild asparagus), gafgarit (artichoke), humus, broad beans with vinegar, village yoghurt, çakızdes olives, —You must try çakızdes while in Cyprus!— fresh hellim (halloumi) cheese, nor (a milk product similar to lor of Turkey), garavolli (snails), gavcar mushrooms, rabbit with vinegar and onions, potato croquettes, şinollu bitta (bread with hackberries) and sourdough village bread. What else would one want?

#### Arkin Palm Beach Hotel

This is one of the most beautiful hotels in Cyprus. It is right next to Maraş, which is a prohibited zone, and it offers a spectacular panorama. In my opinion, the most important feature of a hotel is its capability in making you feel the characteristics of the region it belongs to. That is what you feel in here. You feel that you are on an island in the Mediterranean, and specifically on Cyprus. The hotel's chef Gökhan Mutlu is one of the most important and valuable chefs on the island. I highly recommend this hotel for accommodations and culinary experiences.



For me the best thing about Cyprus is its "beloved" students.







#### LEFKOŞA (NICOSIA)

#### Büyük Han (The Great Inn)

This building had been ordered to be built by Muzaffer Pasha in 1572, one year after the Ottomans conquered Cyprus. Nowadays, the Inn houses small shops and handicrafts galleries. Do not skip Ahmet Dayi's<sup>30</sup> place while strolling in this place. He is famous for his sütlaç (rice pudding) and sulu muhallebi (water pudding).

Eski Konak (Old Mansion), Mektepbaşı and Ömerli restaurants are the other important addresses in Lefkoşa for traditional Cypriotic cuisine.

#### Sabır Köfte (Patience Meatball Restaurant)

This is a perfect restaurant for eating meatballs inside the historic castle. There is one condition though: you need to be patient as its name suggests! Its decor is pretty interesting, too. I suggest that you call in advance and order on the phone. Otherwise, you might end up waiting for a long period of time.

<sup>30 &</sup>quot;Dayr" translates into "maternal uncle". In Turkey, it is used for addressing a male person, indicating respect. It comes after the name of the person. It does not necessarily mean that the person is your real uncle. "Amca" (paternal uncle) and "dayr" may be used interchangeably depending on the region, but dayr is slightly more colloquial, and amca somewhat stresses the age difference more.



#### Kardeşler Fırını (Brothers Bakery)

This bakery is located in Ağırdağ village of Lefkoşa, which is along the road to Girne (Kyrenia). You can find fresh village bread here twice a day: at 5:30am and 2:00pm. Other delicious products of the bakery are village çörek, village hellim cheese and peksimet. I suggest a definite stop here if it is on your route.

#### **GİRNE (KYRENIA)**

#### Bellapais Garden Hotel

This is the other best hotel of Cyprus. The hotel is located in a garden of bougainvilleas, and lemon and orange trees on the skirts of an 800-year-old monastery. Almost all the rooms are well hidden in between and behind the trees. It is an unforgettable hotel with breathtaking scenery.

Owner/Chef Selim Yeşilpınar is one of the best chefs of the traditional Cypriotic cuisine. Leave the hotel on one side, its cuisine alone makes this place well worth a visit. You will enjoy an abundant Cypriotic experience here with its weather, scenery, dishes, ambiance and everything else!

#### Niyazi's

This restaurant has couple of branches in different locations. They serve delicious traditional Cypriotic dishes. Their Cypriotic mezes and kebaps particular to Cyprus must be savored.

#### The House

An old Cypriotic house... The ground floor serves as an art gallery. Its melting marble stairs, a unique decoration in each of its rooms, and tables made with olive tree wood makes it a must-see place. The paintings on the walls and the fantastic dishes of the café, which is formed of different rooms, carry you away to far places. Ayhan Aşcıoğlu's coordination in the kitchen truly deserves a big applause. It is such a successful venue that it can be turned into world-wide franchise.



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Komili Travel Book of Flavors II with Ömür Akkor

LEFKE (LEFKA)

Start off from Girne heading for Lefke. En route, make sure to visit the 1974 Museum

on the Yavuz Landing Beach. Lefke is equally famous as the orange depot for the

island, and for its strawberries. If you are around Lefke between January and April,

which is the strawberry harvest time, you can enjoy the scent of strawberries in the air

next to the nature and the colors. You can collect oranges from any tree in the gardens

along the roads. No one will chase you. To the contrary, they will be happy. Argoya

Bakery at the Doğancı Junction and Aspava in Yedidalga, Lefke are the important

flavor points of this area.

KARPAZ (KARPASS)

This is the area at the tip of the island. There is not much settlement here. This area

is a true gem of a nature reserve with its spectacular geography, legendary sandy

beaches, rock formations, donkeys, and caretta caretta sea turtles. Make sure to swim

in this spectacular corner; the eastern-most part of the island. If you prefer, you may

turn your vacation into a more memorable trip by camping in a tent while here.

FARMERS' MARKETS OF CYPRUS

Güzelyurt - Saturday (until noon)

Girne - Wednesday

Magusa - Thursday

DON'T LEAVE CYPRUS WITHOUT TASTING THESE:

Kleftiko Kebabı (Thief's Kebap) is prepared in the villages every Sunday.

The best hellim cheese brand is "Talat Bey ve Oğulları" (Mr. Talat & Sons). It is a

legend! It is traditional, unsalty, and has mint leaves in it.

Taste the walnut, bitter orange, white eggplant, bergamot, and various other types of

macun (paste) —similar to a marmalade—, but make sure to mix the thick syrup of the

walnut macun with tahini.

Molahiya with lamb meat (a traditional Cypriotic dish), pickled celery, gullumbra (a

type of turnip), various varieties of lemons, Bulla (the legendary Cypriotic bread), bread

with olives and hellim cheese, and citlembikli gevrek (shortcakes with hackberries).

Do not forget the lime-lemonade of the Bellapais Garden!

Komili







#### Drink humus soup!

Fresh artichokes come out in December. Make sure to taste them uncooked with some lemon juice.

Try to find fresh gafgariti, which is a wild type of artichoke about the size of a soda bottle crown cap. If you cannot find it fresh, then search for the pickled one.

In the fresh ayrelli (wild asparagus) season, make sure to taste eggs with ayrelli at breakfast.

You cannot stop eating the bidda padadez (potatoes with bread). It is prepared by putting potato croquettes, French fries, and grilled hellim cheese on a lavaş<sup>31</sup> bread, and making it into a wrap.

Galyandro (kişniş or coriander), garlic, and çakızdes olives in olive oil are serious matters in Cyprus.

Peach Kebap, samarella<sup>32</sup>, pirohu<sup>33</sup>, sufla and tens of other dishes are only a few of the other numerous reasons to visit Cyprus.



## Last Word on the Great Cypriotic Cuisine

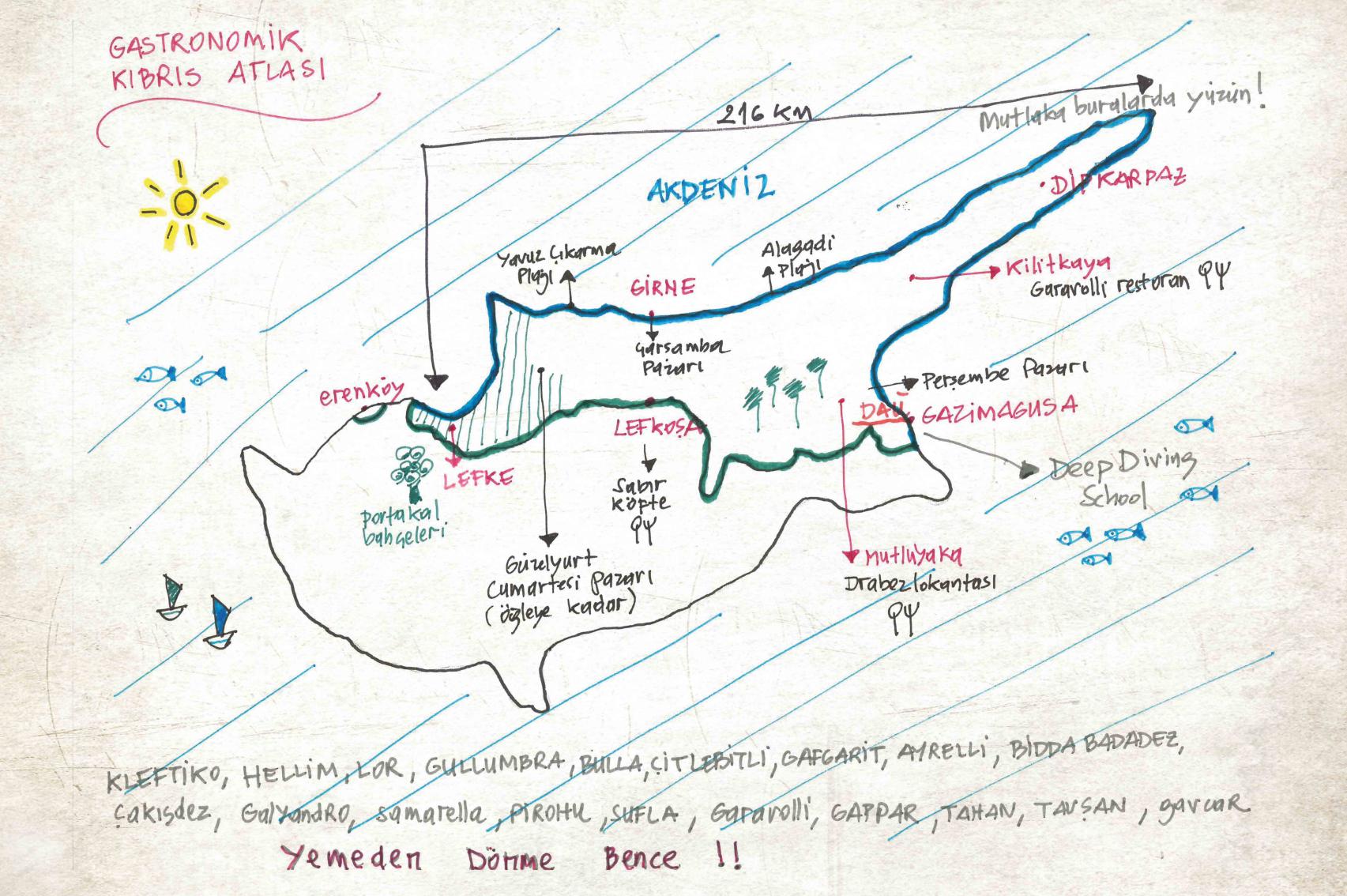
Yes, I am thinking you might have been truly surprised after reading this piece of writing. In fact, you might have even said, "How come I didn't know that Cyprus had so much to offer?" I believe Cyprus is a fantastic country, who protects its culture and cuisine including its dishes, vegetables and breads. I would like to thank sincerely —but thank a lot to my most valued teachers, my students whom I profoundly love, and their dear families. all of whom have made me feel at home at all times, for introducing this beautiful country to me, making me experience it first hand. and presenting its tastes.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> "Pirohu" is the Cypriotic version of Turkish mantı (similar to dumplings or ravioli).



<sup>31 &</sup>quot;Lavas" is a round or oval-shaped, soft, thin unleavened flatbread cooked in an oven or tandır.

<sup>32 &</sup>quot;Samarella" or "tsamarella" is a traditional Cypriotic meze made with goat thigh, the leanest and most valued cut of the animal. The dried meat is heavily salted, flavored with oregano, and has a pleasant, gamey flavor.





### ÇAKIZDES

#### Ingredients

- 2 bowls green olives
- 1 glass Komili Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 1 tablespoon coriander seeds
- 4 cloves garlic
- 1 thinly sliced lemon

- Pound the coriander seeds in a mortar so that the aroma comes out more.
- Smash the garlic leaving it in big pieces.
- Mix all the ingredients and serve.

If you ask me to narrow down my description of culinary Cyprus into one word (or maybe two), I would say çakızdes, and hellim!





## KAYSERİLERİN KAYSERİ<sup>34</sup>

Kayseri, Sarız is where my mother comes from. Although I cannot visit it as frequently as I wish, I try to take a trip there whenever I can. This time, I am going to my mother's homeland—which I have missed dearly—for your sake. Now, let me begin telling you what I feasted on in Kayseri where I spent almost 24 hours.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> "Kayser" or "kaysar" in Arabic or Ottoman, is a derivation from the Roman title "caesar" or its Greek version "kaisar". The present day city of Kayseri had several different names throughout history. The city was named Kaisareia in 17 A.D. in honor of the Cappadocian King of the Roman Empire. Over time the name derived into its present form: Kayseri in the Turkish language. Therefore, the title "KAYSERİLERİN KAYSERİ" may translate as either CAESAR OF THE CAESARS or CAESAR OF KAYSERİ, the city.



#### Baba Oğul Sucuk Evi (Father & Son Sucuk House)

Our first stop in Kayseri is Baba Oğul located at the entrance of Organize Sanayi (The Organized Industrial Zone). Here we devour our eggs with old-school fermented sucuk and pastrami. The Kayseri katmer, böreks and çöreks add on to the rejuvenation.

#### Gürkan Kasabı, Mehmet / Sancaklar Fırını, Zafer

There it is! A great gastronomical partnership... If a bakery and a butcher's shop is next to each other, none can beat them in tastiness. This is exactly the case here. We get in line to taste our Kayseri style pide with ground meat. First, Butcher Mehmet prepares the ground meat filling for our pide. He grinds the meat fresh, and mixes it with a small portion of vegetables, and some spices. He does not overwhelm the flavor of the meat with vegetables and spices. Besides, all of his meat on display looks good and delicious. Then, he sends the prepared filling to Zafer Usta. He cooks it for us. The rest is no secret: we eat it with great appetite! In the meantime, Butcher Mehmet tells us that he will be preparing tava<sup>35</sup> for the evening. We tell him to save our share for take-out so that we can pick it at 6:00pm to take with us to the vineyard. This is an absolute address that has to be in your Kayseri list. It is easy to find; the Eski Sanayi Sitesi (The Old Industrial Zone).

#### Kebapçı Şakir (Şakir, the Kebap Cook)

Kebapçı Şakir has been making sac<sup>36</sup> kebabı since 1926. I visit the restaurant, which has been taken over by the fourth generation, with my close friend Sedat Kantarcı. He summarizes the situation by saying, "My grandpa ate here. My dad ate here. And I am eating here, too!" Real fatty lamb meat, tomatoes and hot green peppers cooked on the griddle serve as a truly superb lunch! To top it all, the kadayıf<sup>37</sup> with tahini served after the sac kebap blows our mind.

#### Tahinli Kadayıf (Kadayıf with Tahini)

This matter of kadayıf with tahini is a serious subject for me, because I just love both tahini and kadayıf. And when they come together, it turns into a masterpiece for me. I highly recommend the kadayıf with tahini at Ağaçaltı Lokantası, which I had visited during my previous visits to Kayseri, located at Oto Sanayi Sitesi (The Automobile Industrial Zone).

It is not only the best dessert a mere 4 liras can buy, but also one of the best desserts I have ever eaten. Go to Kayseri to eat this! I cannot help emphasizing the effect of the Tarsus tahini on the kadayıf. SIMPLY AMAZING!!!

#### Bağdat Pöç<sup>38</sup> (Bagdat Pöç)

This is another frequently visited restaurant by the locals. It is not possible to explain the flavor and tastiness of this dish which originated in Iraq. The pöç, which gets cooked for 17 hours in the stone oven, is served with the pilav that is cooked with the broth of the boiled pöç. It is as simple as that. However, I think that is the most difficult part. This is the style of cooking I admire the most; creating the most unbelievable taste through an extremely simple method. That is what they do best in here. Let me note it on the same token: "You must eat the so called çorba (soup), which is simply the broth of the boiled pöç, before you die!"

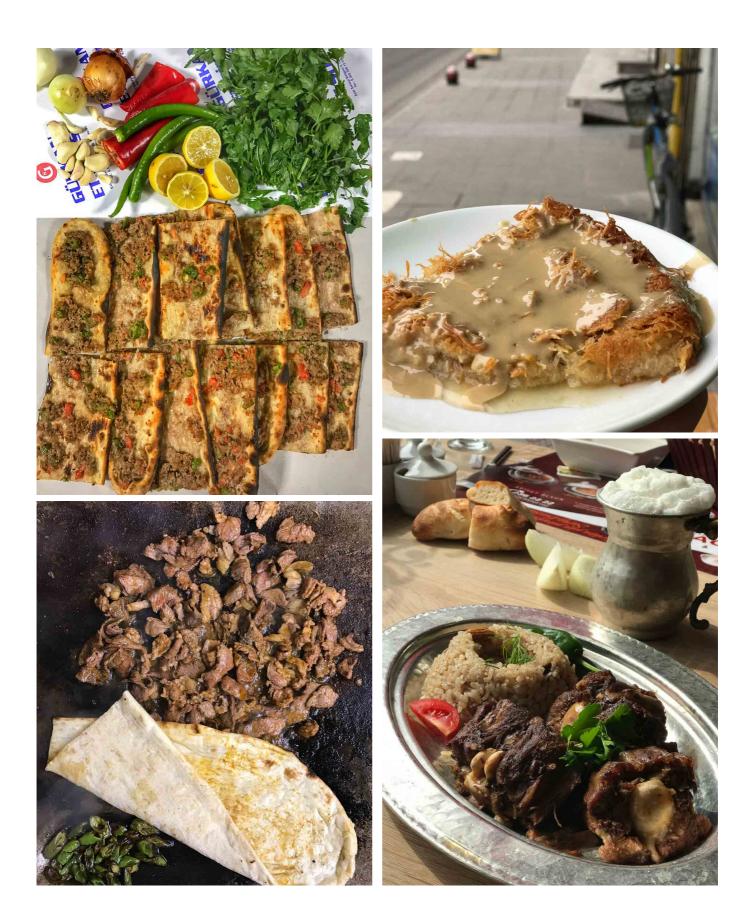


<sup>35 &</sup>quot;Tava" is the name of a kitchen utensil: large, flat, concave or convex disc-shaped pan made from metal, usually sheet iron, cast iron, sheet steel or aluminium. However, in many regions in Turkey, it is used as the generic name for certain type of cooking, and as the name of the dish itself.

<sup>36 &</sup>quot;Sac" is the convex sheet-metal griddle or cooking tray.

<sup>37 &</sup>quot;Kadayıf" is finely shredded phyllo dough which is used in desserts. It is also the name of the dessert itself. It has a pistachio filling, and gets soaked in thick syrup (sherbet).

<sup>38 &</sup>quot;Pöç" is the tail of the calf.





We finish almost
a full coil of sucuk,
which they prepare
by filling the meat,
garlic, and spices mix
into real intestinal
casing,
without even cooking
them,
and by stuffing the slices
in bread.
Go figure what would
have happened
if they were cooked!

#### Saray Kelle (Saray Sheep's Head Restaurant)

It is a Kayseri tradition to eat kelle (sheep's head) at the kelle restaurants in the market. The kelle, which is cooked over a long period of time in the stone oven, is served half or full size depending on your appetite. Sometimes half a soup ladle of the broth it creates while getting boiled is added on with the serving. However, the majority of the Kayseri locals eat it without the broth, and with onions and bread. The restaurant in the market has proven itself good over and over again every time I visit it. The taste is consistent. I consider eating kelle in Kayseri as an important ritual of the gastronomical aspect of the Turkish cuisine. You must fulfill this ritual!

#### Merkez Gıda (Central Food)

When someone mentions Kayseri's Merkez Gıda, you need to stop for a minute and show some respect! Merkez Gıda, which is located in the courtyard of Cami-i Kebir (The Grand Mosque), has actually only four square meters of an area. They sell manda kaymağı (clotted cream from buffalo) and honey collected from the villages around Kayseri. You need to get in line at the Çukur Fırın (Çukur Bakery) to get your bread first. Then, you proceed to Merkez Gıda for the honey and the kaymak (clotted cream). This is another Kayseri ritual that is especially popular during the Ramadan. However, you need to face up to the line, endure the wait and the congestion of people.

#### Karamavuşlar

The district of Hacılar on the skirts of Mount Erciyes is the right address for authentic sucuk. The sucuk and pastrami of Karamavuşlar are prepared using the oldest traditional methods. Their production facility is on the skirts of Mount Erciyes, and that provides the unique weather for the drying process. We finish almost a full coil of sucuk, which they prepare by filling the meat, garlic, and spices mix into real intestinal casing, without even cooking them, and by stuffing the slices in bread. Go figure what would have happened if they were cooked!

#### BAĞ KAYSERİSİ (THE KAYSERİ OF THE VINEYARDS)

Now, it is time for an ordinary day in a Kayseri vineyard. I had received an email message from Murat Arık long time ago. There was a photograph attached to the message in which there was a copper tray laden with flatbread, which was topped with cubes of lamb meat roasted in butter ghee over charcoal fire, and bulgur pilav cooked with vegetables in a casserole. A short note was attached: "We eat this without using forks and knives." We did the same. We tore pieces from the flatbread on the edges of the tray, and scooped the pilav wrapping in the bread pieces. I have to mention that there were times when I came to Kayseri only for this ritual.

Sure enough, this was not all we ate! Kayseri yağlaması<sup>39</sup>, wrapped vine leaves prepared with Erkilet fallout vine leaves —which is the best of Turkey—, lamb shank roasted in oven, nevzine<sup>40</sup>, which was prepared in the genuine style by Sedat Kantarcı's mother, and all the others... Why not find Murat Ağabey<sup>41</sup> and have him make you experience a vineyard evening, too? That is all I have to say!

<sup>41 &</sup>quot;Ağabey" translates into "brother". In Turkey, it is used for addressing a male person, indicating respect. It comes after the name of the person. It does not necessarily mean that the person is your real brother.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> "Yağlama" is prepared with a special tortilla like bread, lavaş. The lavaş breads are stacked in layers on top of each other, with a filling of cooked ground meat, onions and tomatoes between each layer. Once stacked on top of another, it is cut in four pieces and served with garlic yoghurt.

<sup>40 &</sup>quot;Nevzine" is a Turkish dessert made with tahini, grape molasses, and walnuts. It is a regional specialty of the Kayseri province. It is usually served during the Ramadan and on holidays













#### NEW AGE KAYSERİ

#### Çemen's Gurme (Çemen's Gourmet)

The Başyazıcı family has a supermarket where they have collected all the products of the region and have them packed with the same standards. They also have a restaurant where you can taste these products. Their sarmas (wrapped vine leaves) are the smallest ever; I have never seen such small ones anywhere else in the world! You know what they say about the Kayseri mantısı? That 40 pieces must fit into one spoon! Well, very similar idea; these come in such a size that maybe 10 of them can fit on a fork! They are so delicious that you can easily gulp down forty of them just in the tasting phase. The family's legendary pastramis are also sold here. You must try the various types in their collection. I call it a collection, because you will not believe the variety.

#### Vanilla Chocolate

I can be considered as a native of Kayseri. Had someone told me that one day I would be writing about a chocolate shop in Kayseri, I would have dismissed the idea completely. But people with a story always win. And the three young men in this shop do have one. Their education, world view, and vision for the future are proof of their success. Chocolate making is really difficult. Their display, which they prepare fresh everyday, is on par with world standards. The freshness, the crispiness, and fillings are really very good. I highly recommend you to allow some time for this shop.





### İNCİ HANIM SU BÖREĞİ (İNCİ HANIM'S WATER BOREK)

#### Ingredients

#### For the dough

- · 2 glasses flour
- 2 eggs
- 4 tablespoons Komili Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- · Enough water and rock salt

#### For the filling

- 2 boiled potatoes
- 1/2 onion
- 1 tablespoon red pepper paste
- Komili Extra Virgin Olive Oil

- Knead the dough, and let it rest for 30 minutes.
- While the dough is resting, chop the onions, and stir-fry them in Komili Extra Virgin Olive Oil.
- After a few minutes, add in the pepper paste and the boiled potatoes. Mix it all until it turns into a paste. Turn off the stove.
- When the dough is ready, roll it using some flour to help for non-stickiness.
   Cut big square pieces out of it, and put some filling in the middle.
- Cover the filling with identical square pieces of the dough.
- Boil these square pieces in salted water for 5 minutes. Then, drain them.
- Chop the garlic cloves finely, and sauteé them in olive oil in a deep pan.
- Add the pepper paste and the drained pieces of the dough into the pan.
   Sauteé them together.
- Sprinkle Komili Early Harvest Olive Oil on top before serving.

#### For the sauce

- 4 cloves garlic
- 8 tablespoons Komili Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 2 tablespoons sweet red pepper paste

#### For boiling

- · 8 glasses water
- 1 dessert spoon rock salt

#### For the topping

· Komili Early Harvest Olive Oil

My grandmother İnci Hanım was Circassian, and this was most apparent through her cooking. We always ate this delicious 'mantı' she used to prepare thinking that it was 'su böreği.'







## MAGICAL MARDIN

Mardin has remained for a long time as the most beautiful city I have ever seen. It was a completely different and enchanting city with its texture, scents, sounds, visuals, oldness, locality, stone houses, flat roofs, castles, weather, water, soil, the Mesopotamian plains extending to eternity, sunrise and sunset, and beloved people. We did not encounter any security issues.

Moreover, we felt completely secure and at peace. It has turned into a place to be visited over and over again, where we feel at home, with its people whom made us feel like family, sisters and brothers, or relatives.



#### The Old City

You will never get fed up with walking through the beautiful streets of Mardin, where you will feel the joy of being in Mardin. Your view over Mesopotamia will follow you everywhere. All the mosques, madrasas<sup>42</sup>, and streets are so beautiful that you will not be able to take your eyes off of them. The vista you will be looking at while approaching the city on your way from the airport is so particular and memorable.

#### The Old Market

When you walk the main artery of the Old City, you come to see mostly the touristic Mardin, but when you step down to the smaller parallel street down the main street, you come across with the daily life and tradesmen of Mardin. For a very colorful tour filled with great flavors I highly recommend strolling through these markets. You will end up shopping, and enjoying the true taste of Mardin.

#### Cercis Murat Konağı Restaurant

Ebru and Fatih are the best couple I have met in relation to food. Their dishes, their effort in trying to promote the place where they were born and fed, and their friendship are like nobody's. We make our plans with them as soon as we step into Mardin. The kaymak served with rose sherbet, eggs with pekmez (grape molasses), and sucuk with coriander stole us away. Their restaurant, the way they serve, their dishes; in short, everything they had and did was so special. The pilav with eggplant we had for dinner was to die for. And the music they play in the restaurant makes you feel that you are part of the place. In other words, this place incorporates you fully into Mardin with its ambience. Eating here is a must!

#### **Almond Candy**

One of the sweetest items to remind you of Mardin is the almond candy that the storekeepers keep offering you as you pass by their stores. You cannot have enough of them. The candy coating on the almonds is thin and crunchy, and this makes Mardin's almond candy among the best I have eaten so far. Even if you cannot come to Mardin, it is well worth having some shipped. A special tip: it goes so well with tea!

#### Cöreks and Breads

Mardin's best feature might be its bakeries. Each of the bakeries aligned along the main street of Old Mardin is emitting a different scent of çörek. If you walk on the street in the evening, around the time when people are leaving their offices, you will have your ample share of these scents. After leaving Mardin, for weeks I enjoyed my çöreks which invoked the scents and tastes of Mardin.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> "Madrasa" is the Arabic word for any type of educational institution, secular or religious, whether for elementary instruction or higher learning. After 1923, when the Turkish Republic was founded, madrasas have been abolished. The buildings remain as historic monuments.















#### Yusuf Usta's Restaurant

This is where you can discover what Mardin kebabi is about. It is truly the best ground meat kebap I have ever eaten. Yusuf Usta's kebap is enough by itself to visit Mardin. He minces the meat with a cleaver; and puts it on the skewer; and grills it customized to his clients' liking. When the kebap gets served with salad, piyaz<sup>43</sup>, and ayran, it turns into a feast.

I am a big fan of kebap made with ground meat. I go to Adana five times a year just to eat that. Now, it looks like the route will change to Mardin.

#### Kahiye

Upon hearing that the most delicious kahiye is prepared by Şehmuz Usta at the Erdoba Hotel's kitchen, we find ourselves there. He puts some fresh Mardin cheese on a very thinly rolled baklava dough, and makes it into an envelop. After brushing lots of butter on it, he bakes it in the oven. He pours some sherbet on it right out of the oven. He serves it after decorating with some pistachios or hazelnuts. Kahiye is very very delicious and it is one of the staple desserts in the Mardin cuisine. When you make your hotel reservation, keep this fact in mind.

# Deyrulzafaran Manastırı (The Monastery of Deyr-ul Zafaran<sup>44</sup>)

Located at a short distance from Old Mardin, this monastery dates back to the Middle Ages. Saffron flowers were used in its building materials. Hence, the name Zafaran... They are especially famous for their tea and corek with saffron served on their wide terrace overlooking the Mesopotamian plains. While sipping your tea surrounded by the olive groves you can feel that time has stopped here. You can even feel yourself living in the times when the monastery was built because it stands all by itself in that beautiful landscape. And I am so glad that it does!

# Zinciriye Madrasa

This magical structure was built in 1385. It is truly unique with its big fluted domes, its location overlooking to the view of the Mesopotamian plains, and its depictions of birth, life and death representing human life. To catch a glimpse of the spectacular panorama it offers above Mardin, you can either go inside and up the stairs to the roof, or go around the building to the back at an upper level.

# Kiliçe

Kiliçe is the name of the çörek served to the participants immediately after a funeral service. It is said that kiliçe is served in memory of a life that has been lived, and which has ended. The ingredients—salt, sugar, mahlep<sup>45</sup>, and cinnamon—represent the fact that we all have different flavors in life, which can be sweet or sour.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> "Mahlep, mahleb, mahlab, mahalepi, or mayleb is an aromatic spice made from the seeds of a species of cherry, Prunus mahaleb or St. Lucy cherry. The cherry stones are cracked to extract the seed kernel, which is about 5 mm in diameter, soft and chewy on extraction. The seed kernel is ground to a powder before use. It has a strong and very particular scent.



<sup>43 &</sup>quot;Piyaz" is a cold white bean salad or meze with onions (optional), tomatoes, and olive oil. Every region has its own version, but it is commonly served with kebaps.

<sup>44</sup> The Arabic words "Devr-ul Zafaran" translates into The Monastery of Saffron.

# Mardin Bulgur

Wheat and wheat products are another important item in Mardin. I just could not have enough of the bulgur dishes I tasted in this region. From the pilav to the içli köfte<sup>46</sup>, everything made with bulgur is so delicious. Besides, Mardin's bulgur will soon take its place among the geographically marked products list. Act now to get your bulgur from here in order to increase the tastiness of the dishes from your own kitchen.

#### **Derik Olives**

Derik olives and the olive oil made from Derik olives are characteristic of Mardin. I specifically admire and enjoy the olive oils from Gaziantep, Nizip, Kilis, and Hatay because they have a somewhat predominant taste, a little stronger aroma, and a better shade of color. Derik olive oil has gotten its place as one of the most delicious oils in this category. Don't forget to add in some olive oil into your order for bulgur.

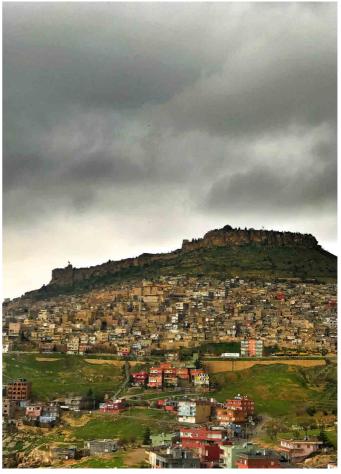
# Traveling around the country

I always say, "What good is it to travel the world if you are not traveling in your own country?" You need to travel around your country, and you need to travel to every inch of it. The country is me, and I am the country. Go to Mardin! Leave all of your prejudice aside! And come to this beautiful country! You need this, I am confident about it!

<sup>46 &</sup>quot;İçli köfte" translates into 'stuffed meatballs', but actually the meat is in the stuffed part. It is more accurate to say these are bulgur shells stuffed with meat. The shells can be in the form of balls or conical shapes made from a mix of fine bulgur, (in certain regions potato), and spices. Favorite fillings include ground beef or lamb combined with ground nuts like pistachios, walnuts, or pine nuts along with spices. They are cooked either by boiling (in water alone or in a tomato and water base) or by frying.













# KİLİÇE WITH OLIVE OIL

# Ingredients

- 1 kg flour
- 125 ml Komili Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 360 g granulated sugar
- 200 g milk
- 40 g leavening
- 10 g baking powder
- 5 g sodium carbonate
- 8 g cinnamon
- 8 g allspice
- 1 g mahlep
- 1 g fennel seeds
- 5 g powdered vanilla
- 3 g ground black pepper
- 1 g cloves
- · A dash of rock salt

# For the top

- Komili Extra Virgin Olive
   Oil
- Egg yolk
- · Sesame seeds
- · Black seeds (nigella)

- Put Komili Extra Virgin Olive Oil, milk, sugar, and all the spices in a cooking
  pot. Turn on the stove. This will make the spices become more distinct and
  pungent.
- When the milk is heated turn the stove off. Add in the remaining ingredients. Mix with an electric food mixer on slow cycle for 25 minutes.
- Pick pieces from the dough, shape them, and let them rest.
- Mix the eggs and olive oil, and brush them on top of the pieces.
- Sprinkle some sesame and nigella seeds.
- Cook in pre-heated oven at 180°C for at least 30 minutes.

Kiliçe is the name of the 'çörek' served to the participants immediately after a funeral service. It is said that 'kiliçe' is served in memory of a life that has been lived, and which has ended. The ingredients—salt, sugar, mahlep, and cinnamon—represent all the flavors in life.





# ANKARA FOOD & BEVERAGE GUIDE

I have always liked Ankara. I have been visiting Ankara all the time since my years at the university. However, this year, I have almost turned into being an Ankara resident. I spend a total of almost one week within a month. And since that is the case, I felt obliged to prepare a guide for you. I will pay attention to choosing the latest and the oldest establishments alike. In the meantime, I need to pinpoint that the bar for Ankara's food and beverage scene is quite high.



# The famous Kayseri Tepsi (Tray) Mantı

This is really where I like eating frequently. There are two different kinds of Tepsi (Tray) Mantı: one with potatoes and one with ground meat. I always end up easily finishing one portion of each. Their first branch is in Birlik Mahallesi, but there is also their newer branch located behind a mall; Kent Park AVM. It takes 20 minutes to arrive here, but only 2 minutes to sweep up the plates. However, the taste remains on your palate much longer.

# Çiçek Lokantası (Çiçek (Flower) Restaurant)

The name suggests it all! This restaurant is really flower-like! It is very clean and nice. It is one of the most distinguished representatives of the Turkish cuisine not only in Ankara, but Turkey-wide. Besides their newer roadside branch along the Eskişehir Freeway, their half-a-century-old branch is in Ulus. The latter one is one of the signature locations for offal lovers in Ankara, and it is open 24 hours a day.

The Ankara tava<sup>47</sup> they make here is one the best I have tasted so far. Stuffed dried figs cooked in olive oil is a legend! The compost they make with pomegranate flowers based on their own recipe is their signature dish, and it is a true success! The restaurant was opened by Hakkı Tabak from Beypazarı in 1968 together with his usta. Nowadays, the restaurant is managed and run by the 3rd generation.

# Boğaziçi Lokantası (Boğaziçi Restaurant)

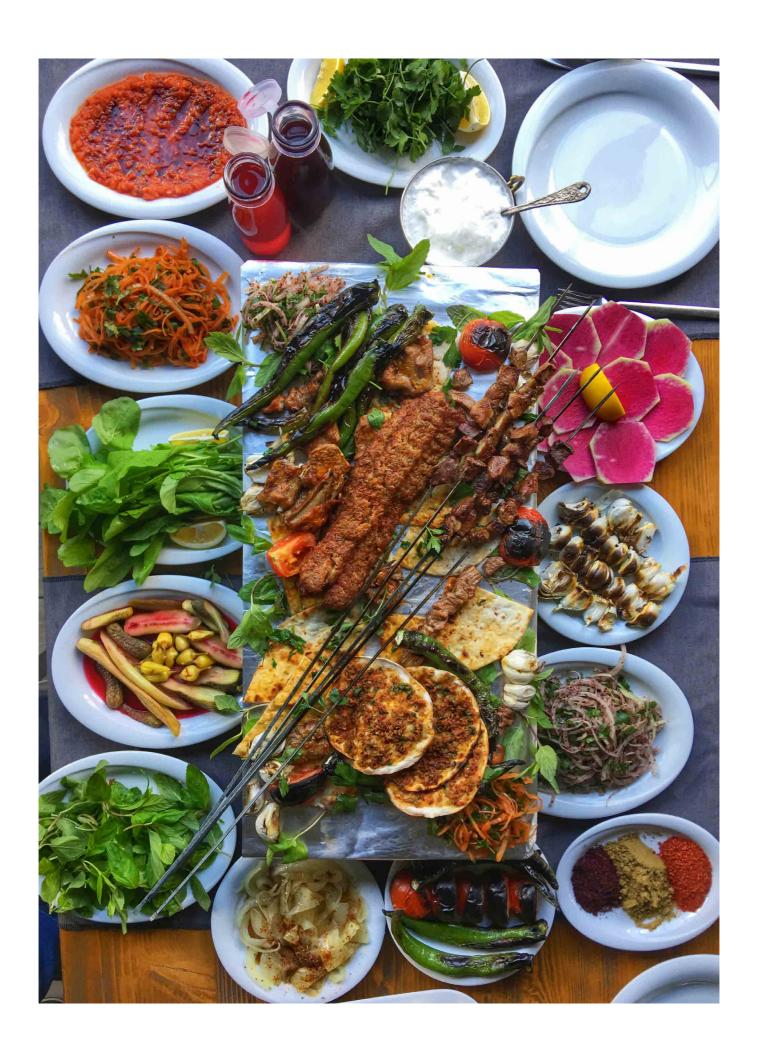
Food cooked over a Dutch oven turns out very delicious. Just like the dishes at Boğaziçi Restaurant... This 60-year-old legendary establishment is one of the oldest in Ulus. Their pumpkin dessert is counted among the best ten desserts of Turkey. All of their dishes are also very good. You can consider the recipe for each dish as the official recipe of Turkish cuisine. They are accurate, authentic, not altered, and preserved. I was informed that the grandfather of the family, Mehmet Recai Boyacıoğlu, had learned the profession at the legendary Pandelli Lokantası. Nowadays, the restaurant is managed by the third generation.

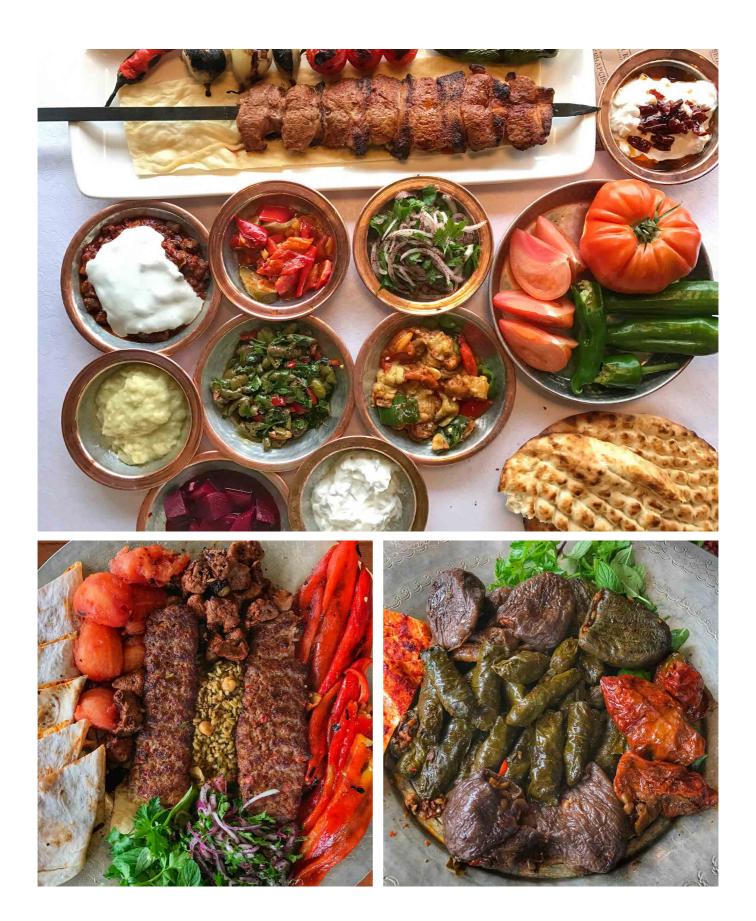
#### Carmelo's

The slogan of Carmelo's is, "Eat good stuff 7 days a week!" Their menu is full of good food indeed: Eggs with salted yoghurt, sourdough bread topped with fresh lor cheese and tomatoes, most delicious salads, dishes with black rice, and so much more... The most inspirational item in their desserts menu is definitely the "chocolate soup." It is unforgettable! If you want to eat "good stuff" at any time of the day, this has got to be your address!

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> "Tava" is the name of a kitchen utensil: large, flat, concave or convex disc-shaped pan made from metal, usually sheet iron, cast iron, sheet steel or aluminium. However, in many regions in Turkey, it is used as the generic name for certain type of cooking, and as the name of the dish itself.









# Dayı'nın Yeri (Uncle's Place)

I think his success comes not only because his kebaps are so good, but also because he serves them with greeneries and grilled vegetables surpassing Adana in variety. Another characteristic differentiating this restaurant is the fact that Şahin Usta visits the tables where customers are seated. He peels cooked garlic cloves, and prepares liver wraps for his customers directly on their tables. He caters personally to his guests. Because each kebap comes after another one is served, in other words; waits for its turn, he manages to serve them hot from the oven, and juicy, making them ultimately delicious.

# Tirilye Balıkçısı (Tirilye Fish Restaurant)

Certain articles mention this restaurant as the best fish restaurant in Turkey. It is quite ironic that the best fish restaurant is in Ankara. As the owner of the restaurant Süreyya Bey definitely fulfills his job superbly! He has every characteristic (and plus) of a restaurant owner and manager should have. He writes articles and books besides the TV programs he makes. All of it together make his restaurant simply the best in Ankara. I need to underline the fact that next to the traditional fish dishes they are also very successful in making their own interpretations.

# Şehir Kebapçısı (The City Kebap House)

This is the latest addition to Ankara's restaurant scene. Its opening has been long-awaited —for many months if not years— due to the fact that Şehmuz Acar is the owner/chef behind its creation. As a meat specialist, the chef's signature touches can be observed on both the traditional Turkish meat and kebap dishes and the international meat dishes. It seems like Şehir Kebapçısı, which is the end result of a 24-month meticulous preparation work including the menu covering everything from starters to desserts, will be the official kebap house of Ankara.

# Bonelli Fırınları (Bonelli Bakeries)

They are based in Ankara as a bread production facility. They make a ton of breads. You can find their breads in one of their 100 branches or at any branch of Çağdaş Markets scattered around Ankara. They have Anatolian breads series, sourdough bread collection, gözlemes made with hand-rolled yufka dough, Ankara simit with butter, and sweet pastries made with tahini. All are legendary! I consider Bonelli bread, butter and tea together to be the best threesome of an Ankara breakfast.







# Sadık Usta

Sadık Usta is a professor of meat, and it is an exceedingly well-deserved title for him. It is not only because of his kebaps that he was proclaimed as 'the professor of meat', but also because of the dried vegetable dolmas—the best I have ever eaten—which are so delicious with just the right amount of peppery piquancy. Keep in mind though; you need to call and reserve your share of the dolmas one day in advance. Their various types of salads and piyaz are equally delicious as their meats. One of the best kebap addresses in Ankara...

"I consider
Marlinda as
the first and the
best representative
of ethnic cuisine
in Turkey."

# Marlinda

I really like it here. I consider Marlinda as the first and the best representative of ethnic cuisine in Turkey. The menu, which is a conglomeration of Anatolian, Middle Eastern, and Mediterranean cuisines, has such delicious delicacies as humus, falafel, liver with butter, mücver<sup>48</sup>, tirit<sup>49</sup>, and tandır<sup>50</sup> as well as hallmark Marlinda drinks such as purple basil sherbet, fizzy soft drinks, and coffee with tahini. The desserts section of the menu is equally enticing. The pumpkin dessert slow-cooked in thick chestnut syrup is especially good. My other favorites are the cookies with dried plums, dates and cream of chocolate. There is plenty of choice for eating here at any time of the day. However, for Sunday breakfasts, which are extremely popular, reservations are essential.

<sup>50 &</sup>quot;Tandur" is a traditional clay wood-burning oven, either in or above the ground, or lately also built at a higher level. Sometimes it may specify the food item that is cooked indicating where it was cooked in. (tandur bread, tandur meat, etc...)



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> "Mücver" is a fritter or pattie made mainly from grated zucchini. They are typically fried in olive oil and their batter often includes a mixture of eggs, onion, dill, flour, and sometimes potatoes or feta cheese. They are similar to small potato pancakes.

<sup>49 &</sup>quot;Tirit" is a meal prepared to avoid wasting dry bread. It is prepared with the broth of offals, dry bread, black pepper powder and onion. In certain recipes cheese and/or yoghurt is added.

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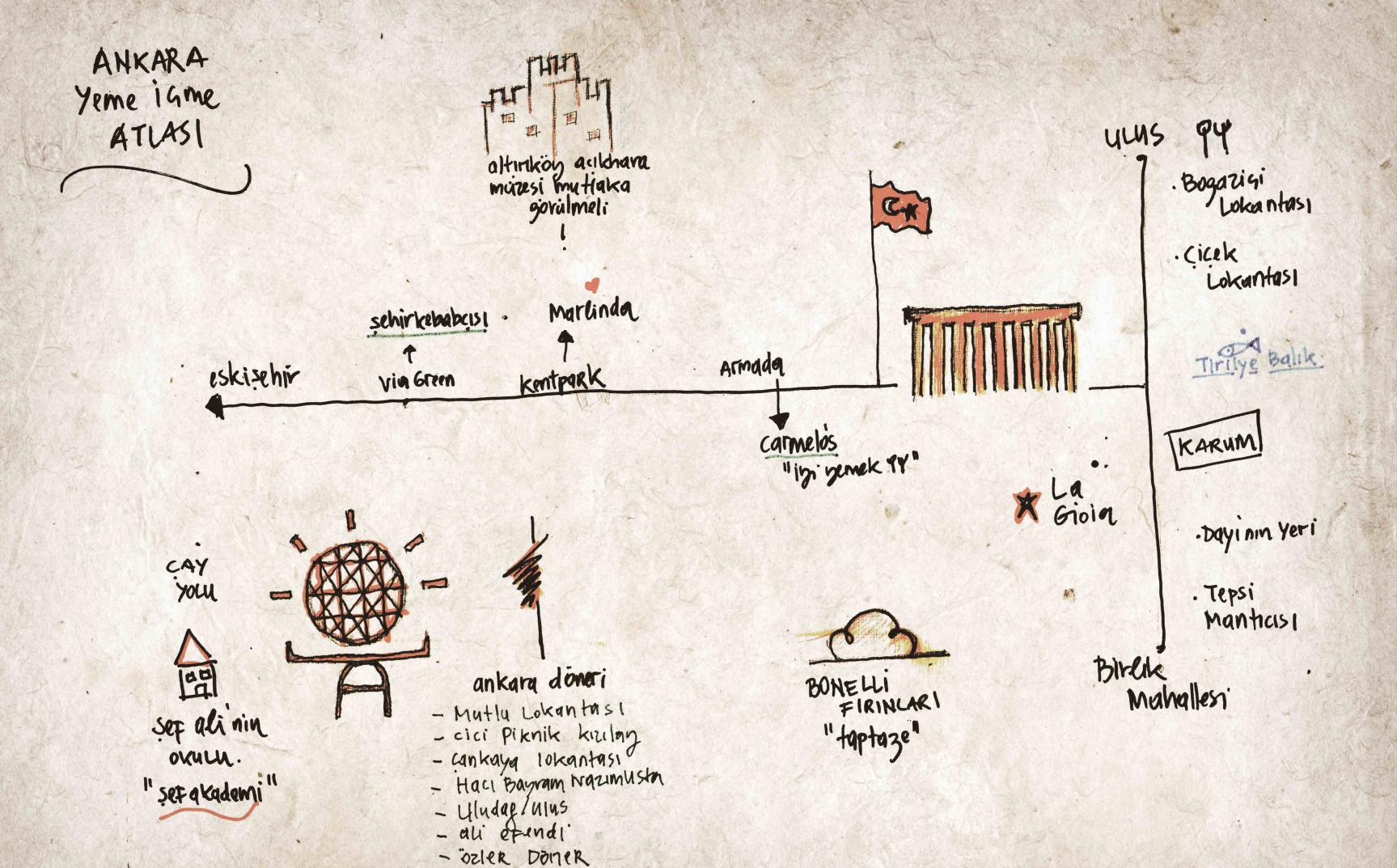
Here is a small compilation of where to find the best döner in Ankara (not necessarily in order of liking):

Mutlu Lokantası
Cici Piknik
Çankaya Lokantası
Hacı Bayram Nazım Usta
Uludağ Lokantası
Ali Efendi
Özler Döner

# Altınköy Open Air Museum

I consider this museum as one of the best ethnography museums of Turkey. Several actual size wooden houses and mosques collected from all around Anatolia are on display here in a park like area that is spread out on 70 thousand square meters. As you stroll around you can come across with ladies making tomato or pepper paste, gözleme, or bazlama. Traditional handicrafts are also on display. The collection of copper plates, jugs, and pots is very successful. If you want an Anatolia-in-a-Nutshell tour on the weekend with your family, this is where you need to come.







Ermenek Heaven on Earth

# **ERMENEK**

Heaven on Earth

If they ask me "Have you seen Heaven on Earth?"

I would say, "Yes, I have seen Ermenek!"

One wants to seal his eyes here; no need to see any other place! The same is true for its dishes, too. It may be the best location of the world with the best meals in the world.



They are still preparing wood fires in the gardens, and cooking all kinds of pastry,

bread, and 'yufka' on the 'sac'
placed over the fire,
using recipes and methods
that have not changed
over the centuries.

A piece of 'sac bread' and 'ayran'

is more than enough to consider

the cuisine of Ermenek as the jewel in the crown.

I had been consoling myself with the photographs of Ermenek for a long period of time. I have finally made it to Ermenek thanks to the second volume of the Komili Book of Travels. Perched at an altitude of 1,360 meters right in the middle of the Taurus Mountains dividing Central Anatolia and the Mediterranean, Ermenek is like a bird's nest. It is one special piece of our country with the emerald color of the dam lake, the scent of the pine forests of the Taurus Mountains, and the old houses, that has to be seen.

The itinerary for this journey was planned by two of my close friends; Mustafa Büyükkafalı and Ali Yaldız. We ate something almost every hour, and did not leave an inch of soil that we did not step on. The lunch table prepared by the Ermenek Municipality exclusively for us was especially unforgettable. On this token, I would like to thank everyone so much.

Now, let us proceed with the fabulous, yet so plain, cuisine of Ermenek beyond any description. The first thing I have to mention is this: People of Ermenek still use the oldest cooking techniques. Hence, the dishes are really tasty. They are still preparing wood fires in the gardens, and cooking all kinds of pastry, bread, and yufka on the sac placed over the fire, using recipes and methods that have not changed over the centuries. A piece of sac bread and ayran is more than enough to consider the cuisine of Ermenek as the jewel in the crown. If you put some butter and goat cheese right out of its goat skin into the bread, it becomes even more fascinating. But that is yet another story...

# Tarhana Başı

We just could not have enough of this! We ate it in the morning, at lunch, in the afternoon with some tea, and at any other time of the day; all different kinds of it... Fine bulgur and boiled potatoes are kneaded together. After some visceral fat and spices are added in, the mixture is made into patties, which gets cooked over sac. You have to try this delicious food!

# Kavurmalı Topalak<sup>51</sup>

I cannot even possibly begin to describe how delicious ground meat kavurma<sup>52</sup> in warm sac bread can be. When the kavurma they use is home-made, and the bread is right off the griddle, you easily lose track of how many you eat.

#### Mas Böreği (Mung Beans Börek)

This is one of the most delicious böreks I have ever eaten. We make piyaz, soup and other meals from maş (mung beans) in Gaziantep, but the maş börek is really good, too, thanks to the hardworking Ermenek women.

# Ermenek Dolması

This is one of my favorite recipes. So delicious! Easy to make, too! It is called a dolma, but actually it is more like a pilav. Once the full-fat ground meat gets kneaded with fine bulgur, lots of spices, and especially purple basil, it gets dumped in boiling water with butter. Some zucchini, eggplant, and green peppers which are diced into big pieces are added on the top. Once it is cooked, it gets served with home-made Ermenek vinegar and ayran. And not to forget; some pickles...

<sup>52 &</sup>quot;Kavurma" is a generic term used for sautéed or fried meats. It also refers to the method of dry-frying (rendering down the fat and juice) to preserve the meat for consumption in winter time.



<sup>51 &</sup>quot;Topalaks" are round patties. Boiled and smashed potatoes, fine bulgur, chopped onions, chopped parsley, and basil are mixed and made into patties that are fried in olive oil. Hereby, they are referring to bazlama bread. They are probably called so because of their round shape.









# Pekmezli Ekmek Kadayıfı (Bread Kadayıf with Grape Molasses)

To start with, some yufka bread is prepared using Ermenek wheat flour, and cooked over sac. Then, they get cut into very thin strips just like kadayıf. Next step is to put butter on them and cook. A sherbet prepared with grape molasses as a topping... It gets recorded as a recipe I have not come across anywhere else in Anatolia.

# Darı Kapaması (Corn Flour Bazlama)

These are basically bazlamas made with corn flour, but with everything else in them: spinach, ground meat, cheese, you name it... Sure enough, they get cooked on sac over wood fire. We washed them down with some tea in the garden in late afternoon. You should enjoy this ceremony, too!

# Ermenek Batırması

This is an Ermenek legend; an Anatolian legend; a masterpiece of the Turkish cuisine; and one of the main reasons why I came to Ermenek. There are three kinds: with walnuts, with Ermenek tomatoes, which is called deli batırık<sup>53</sup> (crazy batırık), and the kind with meat, which is made just like çiğ köfte<sup>54</sup>. Batırık gets served with blanched fresh vine leaves and white cabbage leaves, pickles, and various greeneries. I finished three plates of it! If you cannot make it to Ermenek, make acquaintance with someone—who can cook—from Ermenek right away, and get yourself invited to his/her home to taste this.

#### Toros Helva<sup>55</sup>

This is a pretty famous brand from Ermenek. I suggest you learn the specific timing of warm helva making so that you can try some of the famous Ermenek helva with grape molasses while it is fresh and warm. You can hardly find any other dessert in the world to substitute this. They do ship this delicious helva to anywhere in Turkey. Even if you cannot go there, make sure to get some.

# Zeyve Yörem Lokantası (Zeyve Yörem Restaurant)

Zeyve is a water town; there is running water everywhere. The joy of eating here is totally different, but having breakfast at Yörem Restaurant surrounded with waterfalls is another level of enjoyment. Töymekenli<sup>56</sup> börek fresh out of stone oven, keş salad, goat cheese served in goat skin, yellow keş and raw keş are the must-tries during breakfast. I have to stress that this is one of the best breakfast points in Turkey.

 $<sup>^{56}</sup>$  "Töymeken" is the local name for commonly known "semiz otu", or purslane.



<sup>53 &</sup>quot;Baturik" or "baturna" is many times a very juicy salad, almost like a dipping sauce, but sometimes it is made into a patty form. The ingredients change a lot from one region to another, but bulgur and onions are usually the main items.

<sup>54 &</sup>quot;Çiğ köfte" translates into "raw meatball". Traditionally, the main ingredients are bulgur, finely ground raw meat (mostly lamb), tomato and pepper paste, herbs and lots of spices. The key is to 'cook' the raw meat by kneading long enough with hot spicy powdered or flaked red pepper (or isot in certain regions like Urfa). Lately, especially in restaurants, vegan kinds are also served.

<sup>55 &</sup>quot;Helva" may refer to any of the following groups of sweets in Turkey.

<sup>1.</sup> The dessert type made with a starch base, sugar, butter and other ingredients like nuts and flavorings. Another class within this class is the helvas made with flour or semolina with or without milk addition while sautéing.

<sup>2.</sup> The confectionary type made with sesame nut butter (better known as tahini) and sugar. It is sold in blocks and sliced or cut into cubes to serve. It has a soft, crumbly, slightly crystalline texture. It often has other additions like nuts, dried fruits or cocoa inside. The one in mention hereby falls into this category, but with two main ingredients: tahini and grape molasses.

<sup>3.</sup> The paste type which is usually prepared by pounding or crushing nuts, and a softer ingredient to hold it together.













#### Ermenek Heaven on Earth

#### Other stuff we ate

Arabaşı soup with dough, walnut baklava cooked in olive oil, su böreği, sac böreği, goat tulum cheese in goat's skin, goat meat preserved in brine, fresh pollen, honey, Ermenek walnuts and dried grapes, flour helva, ayran tarhanası<sup>57</sup> soup, sulu diri aşı<sup>58</sup>, grape molasses helva with olive oil, leavened topalak, warm helva, crazy börek... and many more...

Most of these dishes were prepared by Zehra Anne<sup>59</sup>, Hatice Anne, and Sedve Nine<sup>60</sup>; and of course, by other hard-working women of Ermenek for the feast sponsored by the Ermenek Municipality. We would like to extend our respects to all while kissing their hands.<sup>61</sup>

# The matter of Turkish Language

Karamanoğlu Mehmet Bey enacted an imperial decree in the Balgusan village of Ermenek on May 13, 1277 announcing that his chiefdom's language was officially Turkish. That is why every year on the 13<sup>th</sup> of May Ermenek celebrates the Turkish Language Festival.

"Şimden gerü hiç gimesne divanda, dergahta, bergahta ve dahi heryerde Türk dilinden özge söz söylemeye..." "From now on, no one will speak any language but Turkish in the court, the dervish lodges, the palace and everywhere else!"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> In Turkey, for people who follow the traditions, hand-kissing is a common way to greet or thank older people of both genders, primarily the closest relatives (both parents, grandparents, and uncles or aunts) and teachers. In its most traditional method, after kissing the hand, the greeter will draw the hand to his/her own forehead. It is considered as a sign of respect for the elderly.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> "Tarhana" is a sun-dried food ingredient, based on a fermented mixture of grain and yoghurt (and vegetables and spices depending on the region) or fermented milk. Dry tarhana many times has a texture of coarse, uneven crumbs, and it is most commonly made into a thick soup with water, stock, or milk whereas it is sometimes consumed as a snack in certain parts.

<sup>58 &</sup>quot;Sulu diri aşı" is a kind of soup sometimes called as "lepe" soup. The main ingredients are onions, tomatoes and bulgur.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> "Anne" translates into "mother". In Turkey, it is used for addressing a female person you do not necessarily know or are related to, indicating respect and friendliness. It comes after the name of the person. It does not necessarily mean that the person is your real mother.

<sup>60 &</sup>quot;Nine" translates into "grandma". In Turkey, it is used for addressing a quite old female person you do not necessarily know or are related to, indicating respect. It comes after the name of the person. It does not necessarily mean that the person is your real grandma.

# Nadire Canyon

This canyon must be high on your bucket list for places to be seen in the world. Riding through a turquoise colored lake you descend down into the valleys of the Taurus Mountains. Having completed an approximately 26 kilometers journey, you end up in an unbelievable canyon. It is worth coming here even only for the boat ride. This canyon carries you away from the rest of the world and all your worries, making you contemplate and comprehend the value of the moment and nature.

# Ermenek Selçuklu Hotel

This is a thermal hotel overlooking to a beautiful scenery of Ermenek. Having breakfast or relaxing in the afternoon in its garden is priceless. You can taste the entire Ermenek cuisine here with the condition that you call in advance and make reservations. Besides, the sac böreks they cook in the mornings are not to be missed.

# The Road

There are two alternative routes to follow to get to Ermenek. You could either fly into Konya Airport or Alanya Gazipaşa Airport. Then, you need to follow one of the two alternative roads in a car. The distance from Konya is 200 kilometers, and from Alanya it is 150 kilometers. No matter which road you take you will be driving through spectacular scenery. Therefore, I suggest you plan accordingly, and take the journey during day time.

Ermenek is not one of those places where one visit is enough. I am pretty sure you will turn into a hopeless Ermenek admirer once you wash down some 'batırık' with Ermenek water. One has to see every season in Ermenek. I am particularly curious about fall in Ermenek, and the food preparations they make for the winter. Just as I have already said; you will want to come back here again and again.

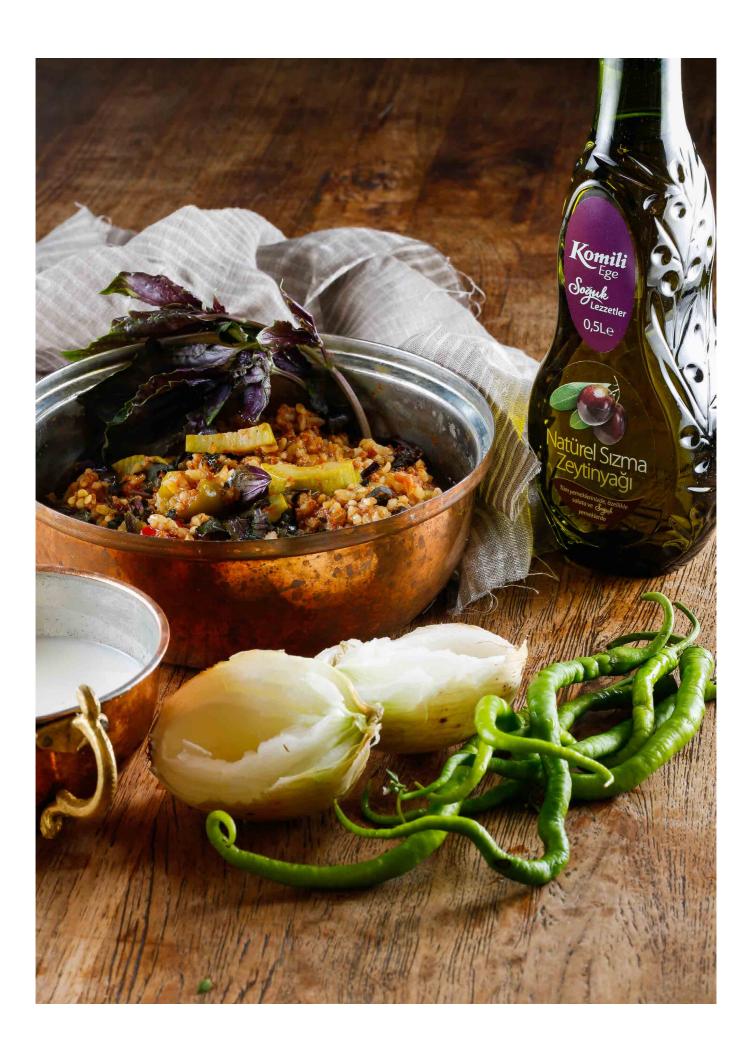












#### Ermenek Heaven on Earth

# **ERMENEK DOLMA**

# Ingredients

- 500 g ground meat
- · 2 glasses bulgur
- 1/2 glass Komili Extra
   Virgin Olive Oil
- · 4 glasses water
- 1 onion
- 2 Ermenek tomatoes
- 4 green peppers
- 2 eggplants
- 2 zucchinis
- 1/2 bunch purple basil
- · Black pepper
- · Rock salt

- Boil the water. Add in half of the Komili Extra Virgin Olive Oil, and salt.
- While the water is boiling, in a separate bowl, mix the finely chopped onion, purple basil, ground meat, and grated Ermenek tomatoes.
- Add in the bulgur, black pepper and salt, and mix all well.
- Cut the remaining vegetables as you like, and put them aside.
- Using the mixture with the meat, make balls that could fit into your palm.

  Put the balls into the boiling water.
- · Add in the vegetables, and lower the heat.
- Cook over low heat for about 30 minutes, or until the water runs out. Let it rest.
- On the other side, put the remaining olive oil in a pan, and heat it. Pour over the dolma.
- If you prefer, you can sprinkle extra purple basil on top at this phase.
- Once the Ermenek dolma is rested, it is best served with green peppers, ayran and yufka bread.

I believe that Ermenek has a leading rank among all the places in Anatolia that uses bulgur—the most magical product of Anatolia—in so many different dishes, and with so much success in making them so delicious. And once some good quality olive oil is drizzled over the dolmas, it becomes a masterpiece.





# 48 HOURS IN THRACE FOOD & BEVERAGE GUIDE

We had started the journey with köfte<sup>62</sup> in our minds. However, our course deviated along the way. As we were hopping from one köfte restaurant to another, we found ourselves tasting sheep yoghurts, four-year-aged Kırklareli cheeses, Hayrabolu desserts, cheese desserts, and all the other food. Hence, our intended köfte guide turned into a guide for Thrace.

We worked for weeks to prepare this guide. I need to highlight that I had three traveling companions with me; three köfte experts: Ilkay Kurnazoğlu, my mate from the university, and my close friends Görkem Onal and Onur Kıra. All three are Thracians to the core; all three are traveling the world for culinary experiences; and all three are experts in matters of köfte and the region of Thrace. Not to forget the famous Instagram guru @Gurukafa (skull)! We shared food with him many times during the trip. We visited 27 points in 3 days, and we put on 3 kilograms each. Do we regret it? Not at all! We recommend you to set off right away, too!

<sup>62 &</sup>quot;Köfte" literally translates into meatball, but sometimes it is used for other ingredients (without the inclusion of any meat at all) made into a ball or any other patty shape. The western and north-western parts of the region of Thrace is famous for its köftes made with meat.



I have to mention Mustafa Yaman and his family in particular. Mr. Yaman used to be the Mayor of Kırklareli. Later on, he got appointed to Mardin in the same position. They have been very influential in updating our route by calling and checking on us almost every hour as we kept on moving. They directed us to several unbelievable points we could not have possibly found on our own. We would like to thank Mr. Mustafa Yaman, and his daughter Elif Yaman, who is a true hunter of local flavors, for all their contributions for both the Mardin and Kırklareli sections.

Now, let us embark together on our super-gastronomic trip that we managed to fit in two days...

# Day 1

#### Doyuran Köftecisi / Turgutbey Village

This restaurant was inherited by Aysel Doyuran and his son Samet from her deceased husband, and his father respectively. In this 25-year-old restaurant, the mother prepares the mezes and salads, and the son makes the köftes. The mother even makes their own mayonnaise from scratch; and the same goes to the pickles, tomato paste, and yoghurts; all made by her! Their köftes have hardly anything else other than meat and salt in it. They are fresh, plump, and delicious.

# Aloş Kasap Izgara (Aloş Butcher Grill) / Lüleburgaz

After spending decades by the Lüleburgaz Intercity Bus Terminal selling right out of his street cart, he decides to move into an actual store when the old terminal gets replaced with a new building. However, it does not work out in the store. Observing this, the head of the Municipality of Lüleburgaz, says "You create value for Lüleburgaz. You are precious. We will allow you to put your cart in the street next to the terminal like it used to be." Since then, this success story continues to live on; and we are talking 20 years here! Not only the köfte, the sweetbread, the lamb shish,—and even the tea—but all he serves is equally delicious. I would not hesitate to take a bus trip at night to Lüleburgaz just to devour the tastes out of this small street cart!

# Park Et Lokantası (Park Meat Restaurant) / Lüleburgaz

This is not only one of the best restaurants in Lüleburgaz but in the entire region. Their soup alone constitutes a good enough reason for traveling all the way to the restaurant. Their dishes cooked in olive oil as well as other dishes, which can be considered the recipe book of the Turkish cuisine, and their desserts are all very good.













Food & Beverage Guide

Ömür Pastanesi (Ömür Patisserie)/ Lüleburgaz

A 70-year-old Anatolian legend! It stands out with its breakfast; a piece of whole feta cheese, olives, butter

and honey accompanied by bread, or if you prefer, plain buttered börek. The alternatives for drinks are tea

or hot milk. Having breakfast at this patisserie is a Lüleburgaz tradition. We end up paying a ridiculously

low price of 14,50 TL for breakfast for two. Keep in mind that the quality of everything we ate was just

great! I have to say the quality price index for breakfast here was the best ever!

Gürkaşlar Süt Ürünleri (Gürkaşlar Dairy Products)/ Kırklareli

One of the best cheeses of Turkey can be found in this shop. A trip to Kırklareli may well be justified simply

because of this cheese. Just before lunch time we have our second breakfast here with four-year-aged

Kırklareli cheese, black olives, and a delicious sheep yoghurt. You have to try their cheese that they deliver

to all corners of Turkey. This is one of the most precious products of the Turkish gastronomical world.

Address: Kasaplar Arası, Kırklareli Telephone: +90 288 214 1708

Süzülmüş Kardeşler (Süzülmüş Brothers) / Kırklareli

Another legendary location for cheese! They sell cow and sheep cheeses both of which are one-year-aged,

and both are very delicious. Their yoghurt is talk of the town all around Thrace. Ask anyone in this vicinity

what to eat, and the first answer you will get is, "Don't forget to eat sheep's yoghurt from Süzülmüş

Kardeşler!" They have couple of branches, one being in Kasaplar Arası.

Address: Kasaplar Arası, Kırklareli Telephone: +90 288 214 4592

Tatsan Helva / Kırklareli

Salih Usta, who used be very famous in and around Skopje, eventually decides to settle in Kırklareli. He

takes the last name Kadaifçi (The Kadayıf Maker) because of his profession which he loves. Over time he

adds more mastery and more fame to his already existing mastery and fame. Whatever you taste or buy

in his store, including the Kavala cookies, summer helva with walnuts, semolina helva, and marzipan, you

will have tasted or bought simply the best and most delicious of its kind.

Dibek Kahvesi (Mortar Coffee) / Kırklareli

Leave the helva store, and enter the second alley to the right. You will find Dibek Kahvesi waiting for you

on the right after 50 meters. In fact, it has been waiting there the last 142 years! Coffee beans get roasted

over wood fire in a Kara Fırın<sup>63</sup> (Black Oven). Then, they get pounded into powder with an iron pestle in a

stone mortar. If you want your share of Kırklareli culture and history, you need to drink this coffee which

has been consumed by landlords, pashas, members of the parliaments, presidents and sultans for almost

two hundred years. Bon appetit already!

63 Wood-fired ovens, also known as wood ovens, are ovens that use wood fuel for cooking. There are two types of wood-fired ovens: "Kara Fırın: Black Oven" and "Beyaz Fırın: White Oven". Black ovens are heated by burning wood in a chamber. Food is cooked in that same chamber while the fire is still going, or in the heated chamber after the fire and coals have been swept out. White ovens are heated by heat transfer from a separate combustion chamber and flue-gas path. Thus, the oven remains "white", or clean from ash. While the traditional wood-fired oven is a masonry oven, such ovens can also be built out of adobe, cob or cast iron.

# Ayan Kardeşler (Ayan Brothers) / Kırklareli

This restaurant, which is located in central Kırklareli, serves the köftes four at a time. As a result, you always eat your köftes warm without giving them the chance to get cold on your plate. This way, they also ensure that the köftes burst with juice. This is the best address for a köfte stop after strolling through the market and doing some shopping.

# Beetroot Molasses / Poyralı Village

While passing through Poyralı village, we stop by the stands along the left and right of the road to taste and buy the beetroot molasses that are made by the ladies of the village. The beets, which are fed by the local spring waters, get collected during harvest time, and their pulp gets separated by the help of wooden smashing machines at designated pekmezhanes (molasses production houses). Once the pulp and the juice of the beets are separated, the juice gets cooked for 14 hours over wood fire. Then, this gets filtered three times before letting it cool down so that it can be bottled. Do not pass through Poyralı without buying some of this molasses.

# Yayla Kasabı (Yayla (Uplands) Butcher Shop) / Yenice Village

Two things from this shop are very important: its köfte and kavurma. While ordering your köfte, make sure to order some of the kavurma they prepare by adding vegetables, which they cook over the grill wrapped in grease-proof paper. You will love them both. Before leaving, remember to buy some kavurma to take with you. Yenice Village is also worth a visit because of its nature. The scenery and the roads offer much to be enjoyed.



# Çevirmeci Ömer (Ömer, the Rotisserie Cook) / Sütlüce

I do not know where to begin. To be honest, I was not expecting it to be so good. I have eaten rotisserie all over Turkey, but it never crossed my mind that this would be the best ever! The moment it was served to our table, I thought, "This is it!" And the taste on my palate once I got a bite of it sealed the deal! My recommendation for you is to come here during kid time; in other words, at any time between the end of March and the beginning of June. I am sure you will get so much in return from a short weekend escape.



# Bahar Köftecisi (Bahar Köfte Restaurant) / Ahmetbey

Ahmetbey can be considered as the most important köfte center of the region. In fact, it is a complete köfte town. Bahar Köftecisi happens to be the pioneer in town. You buy your ground meat first, and watch them turn it into meatballs in front of your eyes. I believe it is the only store with this method. Once the köftes are ready, he grills them over charcoal and serves them in a bread sandwich lined with tomato paste. They should be holding a köfte festival in Ahmetbey.





# Güldiken Lokantası (Güldiken Restaurant) / Büyükmandra

This restaurant has a very interesting atmosphere. It is famous not only for its köfte, but also for other meat dishes and kokoreç. Besides, its yoghurt, ezme<sup>64</sup> salad, salads and other side dishes are also very tasty. The köfte meat is somewhat coarsely ground, and a bit fatty, but perhaps that is why it was so delicious. This place stands out in making its mark in my memory out of the whole trip in this region.

# Balaban Ice Cream Parlor

Balaban's ice cream and boza<sup>65</sup> are equally famous. You would be amazed to see the long lines in front of the shop in summer evenings. They have couple of branches in the area. Their profiterol is also on par with their ice cream. You may want to end your day by having some profiterol topped with one or more scoops of plain ice cream.

<sup>65 &</sup>quot;Boza" comes from the word "buze" which means millet in Farsi language. "Boza" is a fermented drink made from grains such as corn, barley, rye, oats, wheat or millet. It has a sweet and tangy flavor, and a smoothie-like texture. Sugar, yeast, water and lots of time and patience are needed for the preparations. It is very nutrient, and very popular in winter time.



<sup>64 &</sup>quot;Ezme" literally translates into "mashed". It is one of the popular Turkish mezes, which is usually very spicy. Ezme can be served by itself as a cold starter or meze. It also works extremely well as an accompaniment to grilled meat. Finely chopped tomatoes, onion, garlic, green peppers and parsley; chillies or red pepper flakes, lemon juice, pomegranate molasses, olive oil, pepper paste salt and spices are mixed until smooth. It is called a salad, but it has the texture of a spread.

# Day 2

We start our second day at Park Meat Restaurant and Ömür Patisserie, which we had tried on the first day, and could not forget. The remainder of the day brings in more feasts in the following locations:

# Köfteci Osman (Osman, the Köfte Cook) / Edirne

Mention Edirne, and liver and köfte come to mind. Mention köfte in Edirne, and Köfteci Osman comes to mind. His köftes are seriously delicious. And the hardaliye<sup>66</sup> sherbet serves as the jewel on the crown. Let us not forget the location overlooking to the iconic Selimiye Mosque which makes you feel right in Edirne, and the grandeur of an ancient capital city. A short excursion around the city ending with some marzipan should be more than enough for this stop.

# Köfteci Niyazi (Niyazi, the Köfte Cook) / Uzunköprü

An Uzunköprü legend! Its köfte really leaves a long-lasting mark on your palate. The characteristics of the region's animals reflect on to the delicious taste of the köftes exceeding above common standards. The rest lies in the hands of the masters. Niyazi happens to be one of the best chefs making this kind of mastery and experience speak out bold and loud. In a sandwich or a portion of it on a plate; the köftes here call you to Uzunköprü.

# Şirin Kokoreç / Keşan

Mention kokoreç in Keşan, and this is the address people will be giving to you. Some say it is the best of Turkey. Others claim that it is exaggerated. Yet others explain that it used to be legendary; however, it lost its touch after the master chef passed away. We like the kokoreç we tasted, but we cannot answer the question of whether it is the best of Turkey. To find the answer to this question, it is necessary to try out the entire list under the same conditions and one after another. Otherwise, names fly by in one's mind all the time.

# Çamlıbel Lokantası (Çamlıbel Restaurant) / Keşan

The present owner of the restaurant is the third owner since 1955. It is one of the oldest and most beautiful restaurants of Thrace. Both the mezes and the meats we tasted were very delicious. This is the place for the famous Keşan cleaver-cut meat and liver wrapped in caul fat. I have to add that I like its ambiance, too. And also, their display of garlic in vases that gets served to your table is quite unusual.

66 "Hardaliye" derives from "hardal" which translates into "mustard". It is a lactic acid fermented non-alcoholic beverage produced from grapes, crushed mustard seeds, sour cherry leaves, and benzoic acid. It is produced using traditional methods in the Thrace region of Turkey. Certain studies show that 'hardaliye' have an antioxidant effect in adults.















#### Özen Et Lokantası (Özen Meat Restaurant) / Yeni Muhacır Village

Yeni Muhacır Village is a heaven for cleaver-cut meat. That is exactly why we steer towards there. And, I am so glad we do so! Everything at Özen Et Lokantası is carefully chosen. Sheep's yoghurt and fried and charcoaled peppers are legendary. They go so well with the cleaver-cut meats. What else would one want? This one goes in our records as the last restaurant we have visited during this trip.

#### Seref Ice Cream & Helva Shop / Malkara

Speaking of cheese helva and Hayrabolu helva, entire Thrace cries out the name of Şeref Ice Cream & Helva Shop. The taste of the cheese helva takes wings with the addition of ice cream and tahini on the heated helva. This is another unforgettable point of this trip. I would say eat some at the shop, but do not forget your take out for later, either.

#### Kartal Market (Kartal General Store) / Tekirdağ

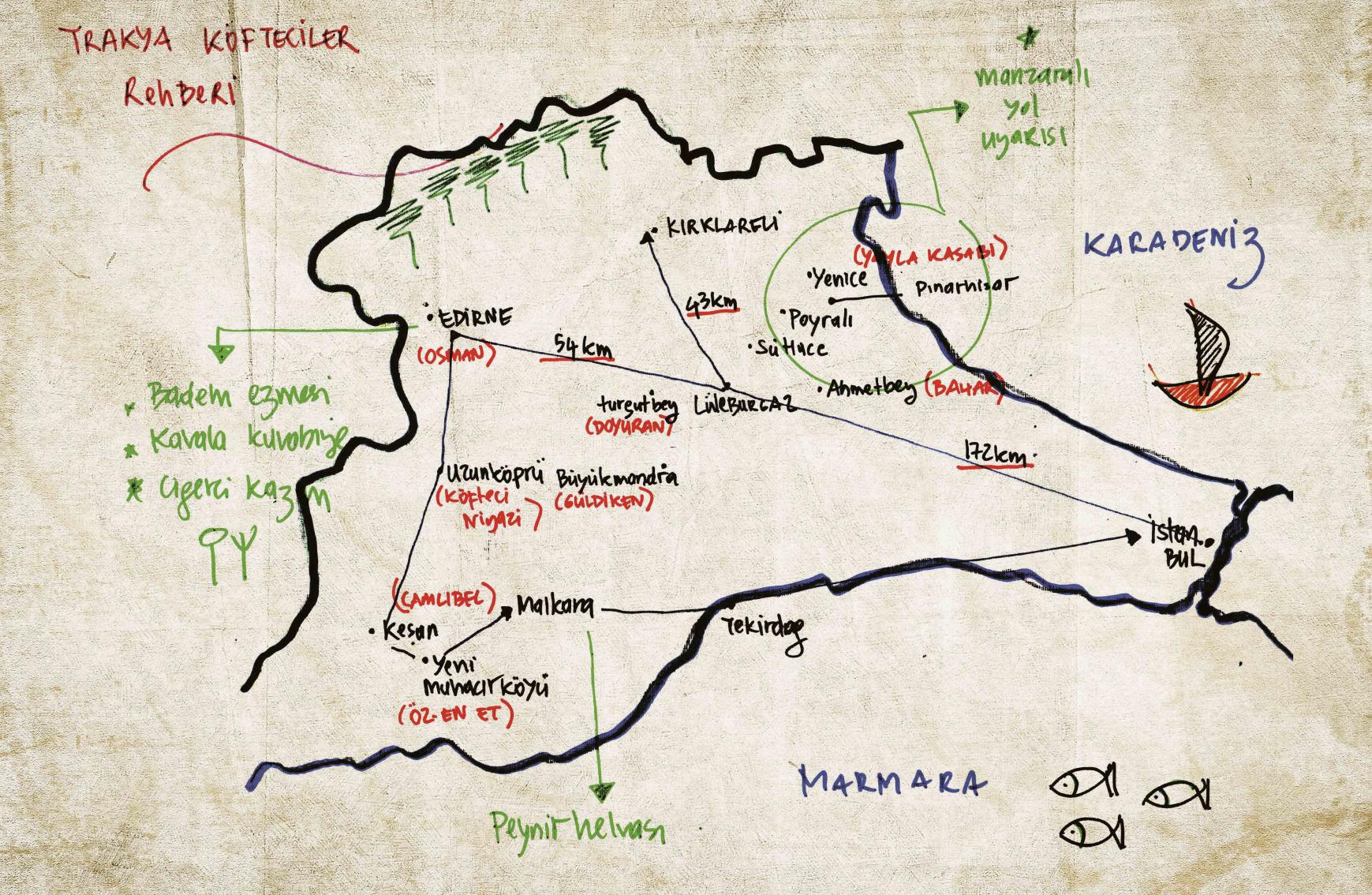
One of the most important and secretive tips we got about cheese has to be the one about this shop: "When you go to Tekirdağ, find the köfte shop on the coast. You will notice the general store diagonally opposite from the köfte shop. Make sure to go in there, and tell them that you are there for 'that famous cheese'! But do not do so when there are people around! You have gotta do it when there is no one around!" We looked around, asked around, and finally found it. We did as we were told. After tasting the famous cheese, we purchased several blocks to take with us. We are still enjoying them with bread, and thinking to ourselves, "Aren't we lucky to have found this place!"

#### Tekirdağ Köftesi

Unfortunately, at this time, we are still collecting data about the right addresses for Tekirdağ köftesi. Currently, I am working on Tekirdağ köftesi to make it a complete section on its own in the further parts of my Book of Travels. If you have any suggestions on this, please feel free to share with me through social media channels.

I felt exhausted even while writing this section on my computer for two days. I still cannot comprehend and explain how on earth we ended up eating all of this in two days.







#### LOR WITH PEPPERS AND OLIVE OIL

#### Ingredients

- 1/2 kg lor cheese
- 1/2 glass Komili Extra
   Virgin Olive Oil
- 250 g green village peppers
- Black seeds (nigella)
- · Rock salt

- De-seed the peppers, and cut them into fine little strips.
- Fry the peppers in Komili Extra Virgin Olive Oil.
- Before the peppers get really fried, add in the lor cheese.
- After mixing well, turn off the stove.
- After putting the mixture of lor cheese and peppers on the service plate, sprinkle the black seeds, and drizzle the olive oil on them.
- Using hot peppers will enhance the flavor.

Where there is such delicious cheese, no doubt, any dish prepared with it will be very delicious, too.







- 125 -Historic Antalya Tastes

## HISTORIC ANTALYA TASTES

The weather is just fit for a visit to Antalya. It is high time to go there! Why not buy a ticket soon to get there? Some say, "Antalya does not have much to offer for culinary experiences." Don't take that seriously, either!

Antalya's fertile nature, its seaside location and its uplands come together to make the city—as well as its cuisine—one of a kind. Now, let us embark on a short excursion to the historic taste stops in this city.



#### Börekçi Tevfik (Tevfik, the Börek Cook) - 1945

His own labor, his own bakery, his own böreks... For the last 58 years... A serious hard worker! His börek with ground meat and lots of black pepper is so tasty, and he serves his börek with cheese with the addition of sugar if you prefer so. Tevfik Usta is an immigrant from Thessaloniki, and his mastery is inherited from his grandfather. I suggest that you allow some time in his shop for a good nostalgic breakfast while in Antalya.

#### 18'lik Bağaça (18's Bağaças) - 1940

This bakery shop is located in Antalya Kaleiçi (inside the Castle a.k.a. Old City Antalya). It is most famous for its bağaças. Since 1940, Antalya's locals have been traditionally breaking their fasts in the evenings during the Ramadan with his products. The bağaças, which are prepared using flour, sugar, tahini, mastic, cinnamon, chickpeas yeast and butter, are extremely delicious.

#### Piyaz Specialists Sami, Ahmet and Aksu

Mention Antalya to me, I will say piyaz with tahini. This is a very delicious Antalya specialty presented to the city by Sami Usta, who had migrated from Egypt. Sami, Ahmet and Aksu happen to be the most famous cooks of this specialty, but you can taste it anywhere as each place comes with its particular delicious taste.

#### Parlak Lokantası (Parlak Offal Restaurant) - 1964

This is one of the older establishments of Antalya. It is most famous for its chicken rotisserie that comes with bulgur pilav, and chicken liver dish. Hibeş<sup>67</sup>, sheep head and feet, and mumbar<sup>68</sup> are also among the restaurant's specialties. Keep in mind that the restaurant does not start serving before noon.

#### Hasan Antalya - 1946

This is another Antalya legend located in the same gardens with the Parlak Restaurant. Its lamb tandir is pretty famous, and it well deserves the fame. You can actually have a seat in one of the two neighboring restaurants and place orders from the other one. The lamb is cooked just right... I highly recommend a lunch break in this garden.

#### Topçu Lokantası (Topçu Restaurant) - 1900

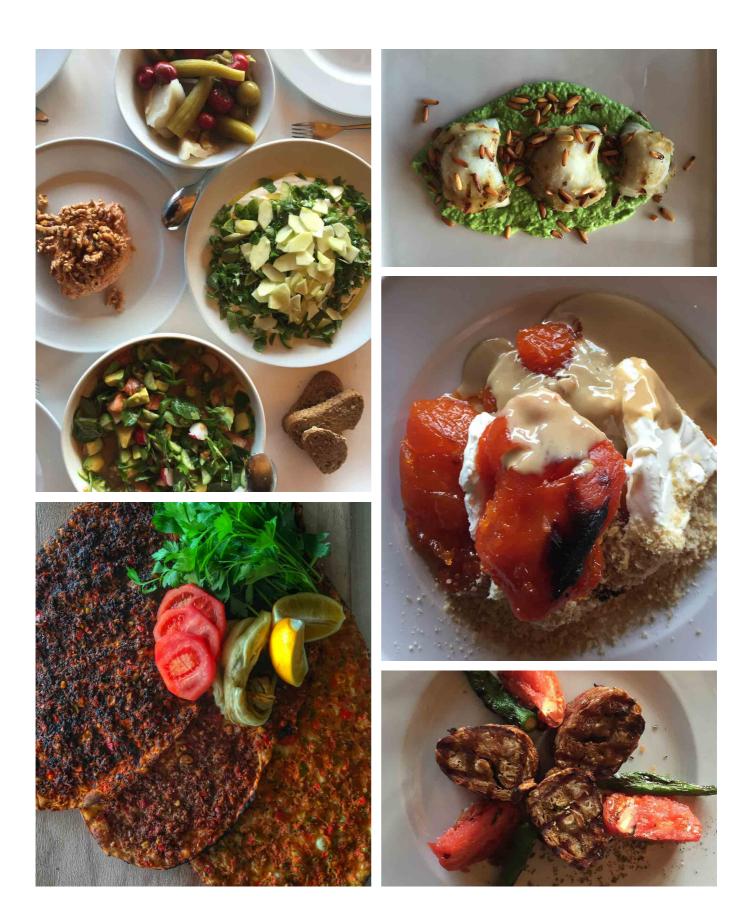
This restaurant, which had started serving tandır and sheep feet as early as the 1900s, continued its services with the addition of piyaz and shish köfte in 1920s. Then, it reached at its present identity with the later addition of döner into its menu. I liked all that I ate here. Everything left aside, a restaurant that has been around for more than a century has to be saluted with standing ovation.

<sup>68 &</sup>quot;Mumbar" is a type of sausage that is made with mutton, rice, black pepper, salt and cinnamon stuffed into an intestinal casing. After the sausage is cooked by boiling and allowed to cool, it is sliced and fried in butter. It is also sometimes called bumbar or mumbar dolması.



<sup>67 &</sup>quot;Hibeş" is an appetizer or starter prepared with garlic, cumin, lemon juice, tahini and olive oil. It is like a thick sauce or spread that is consumed cold.







#### 7 Mehmet Restaurant

I am so glad 7 Mehmet exists in Turkey. I am so glad they are in this industry and raising the bar so high; and I am also so glad they are working so hard on the subject of traditional Turkish cuisine and in protecting the dishes from getting lost. Anyone from any other part of the world would come here just to have a meal. Whenever someone mentions Antalya, this is the first place that comes to my mind. One of the best parts about being in Antalya is having a chance to go to this restaurant.

#### Sıralı Kebap - 2016

This is the latest addition to Antalya's culinary scene, and it serves the most delicious meals of Antalya. The restaurant's location along the Old Lara Road, and its views, together with the extremely delicious lahmacuns<sup>69</sup> and kebaps make it top the lists. The special touches on the kebaps, in other words, their interpretations make them very successful. It also proves to be a good alternative for the locals of Antalya. Their pumpkin dessert follows the authentic characteristics of the Antalya recipe; slightly burnt on the outside by placing the already cooked pumpkin in the stone-oven, thus giving it a crusty shell; only to be topped with ample amount of tahini and walnut pieces.

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<sup>60 &</sup>quot;Lahmacun" is most of the time a round (and sometimes oval-shaped), thin piece of dough topped with ground meat, finely chopped onions, tomatoes, parsley, and spices such as chili pepper flakes or paprika. Most of the time, it is baked in wood-burning ovens. It is served very commonly all around Turkey as a snack, a starter to a main course, or sometimes as a whole meal by itself. Some will (perhaps unjustifiably) refer to it as "Turkish Pizza", but the dough is way thinner than that of a pizza, and the topping does not have the variety of pizzas.

#### Asmani Restaurant

Asmani, which is located inside the Akra Barut Hotel, is one of the restaurants with the best views I have eaten lately. In fact, I should not say, 'lately'. It is one of the restaurants with the best views I have eaten at all times. What makes it even better is its menu in rivalry with the views. Their dishes are great! Everyone that puts some labor in their creation has to be congratulated. I highly recommend you to spend one sunset evening at Asmani's terrace.

#### Akra Barut Hotel

This one is Antalya's most scenic hotel. The Kemer district, the Taurus Mountains, the Mediterranean Sea and its cool navy-blue waters... Its breakfast, personnel, room service, meet & greet, and courtesy... Everything is tip-top and exceedingly fitting to a five star category! Akra Barut is a city hotel, and I highly recommend it for your city escapes.

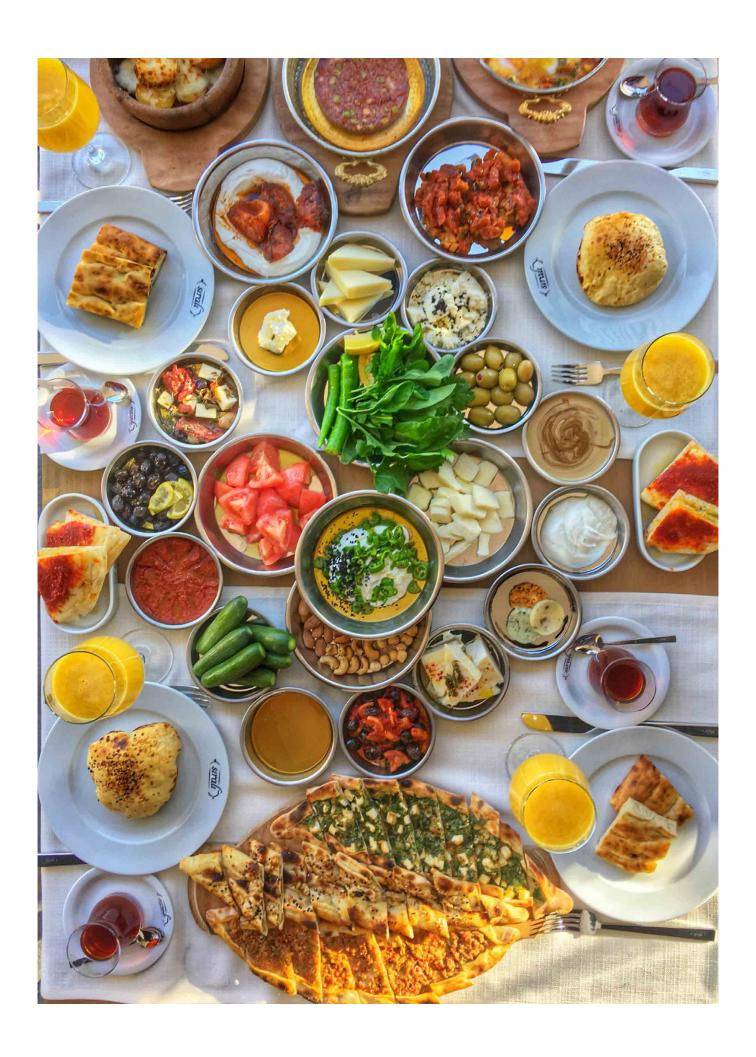
#### Akdeniz Pastanesi (The Mediterranean Patisserie) - 1961

Who would have thought that an ice cream could take you back to your childhood? I am now convinced that it can. This place, which was opened by Davut Usta from Skopje in 1961, is a true Antalya legend with its burnt ice cream made with goat milk. The recipe has never changed since 1961, and neither has the taste.

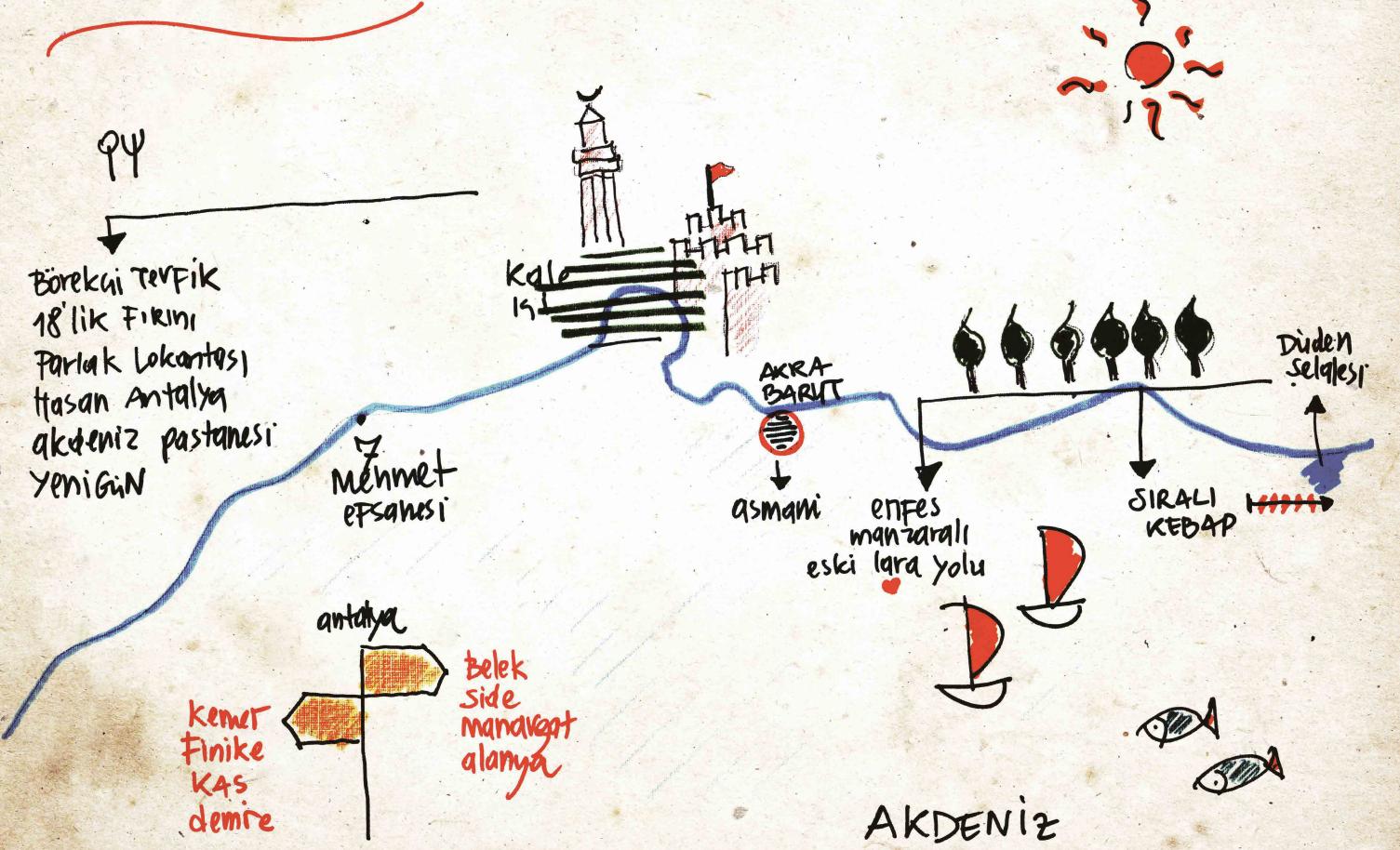
#### Yenigün Jams & Marmalades - 1914

Mention Antalya, and one thinks of fruits. Mention fruits in Antalya, and one thinks of jams and marmalade. And jams & marmalades will make you recall the brand Yenigün. The jam kinds that specifically stand out in their collection are fresh walnuts, bergamot, and the fabulously fragrant bitter orange among many more. I consider a stop at their shop in Kaleiçi (inside the Castle a.k.a. Old City Antalya) as a must.





## TARIHI ANTALY 4 Lezzetleri





#### PIYAZ WITH TAHINI

#### Ingredients

- · 2 bowls boiled white beans
- 1/2 glass Komili Cold-Pressed (Stone-Pressed) Olive Oil
- 1/2 glass tahini
- 3 boiled eggs
- 2 tomatoes
- 1 onion
- Parsley
- Juice of 2 lemons
- · 2 tablespoons vinegar
- The water in which the beans are boiled
- · Rock salt

- Using a blender, prepare a sauce by mixing the tahini, lemon juice, vinegar, rock salt, the water in which the beans were boiled, and a few spoons of the boiled beans. Keep adding in the boiled water as needed for a liquidy sauce consistency.
- Put the beans on service platter. Add the thinly sliced onions, the diced tomatoes, and the small-cut eggs on top in that order.
- First, drizzle the sauce, and then some Komili Cold-Pressed Olive Oil.
- · Decorate with some parsley leaves on the top.

Yes, Antalya has the sea, the sun, and the sand. But, one does not need any of this as a reason to go to Antalya. A portion of 'piyaz with tahini' suffices as a reason all by itself for a visit.





## THE OLD ROAD FROM SAMSUN TO TRABZON

One of the reasons for my travels around Turkey, which has been going on for a long time, is the occupational high schools. My motto is "Occupational high schools: a national matter," and with that in mind, I visit as many schools as I can. This is exactly why I think my recent trip to the Central Black Sea Region turned out to be one of the best journeys serving this purpose.

I had been invited to Ünye Occupational High School of Tourism and Hospitality by my friends Orhan and Ayşegül Aydoğan who worked there as instructing chefs. I extended my stay beyond the two days of observation of the education and training at the school so that I could prepare the road trip story from Samsun to Trabzon for you. Naturally, Oğuz Yenihayat, whom I trust so much for his knowledge and recommendations on matters of food, accompanied me on this trip. We put some pretty hard work in planning the course of our trip, and then finally we set off...

Leave aside the points of interest for tasting great food. I recommend taking this trip even just for the road.



#### Lezzet Döner - 1925 / Samsun

This restaurant has been serving since 1925 in the Saathane Meydanı (Saathane Square). It is one of the important restaurants of the area where they cook their döner over wood fire. There is so much to be mentioned about Samsun's culinary scene, but we save that for another time, and continue on with our journey.

#### Göğceli Mosque / Çarşamba

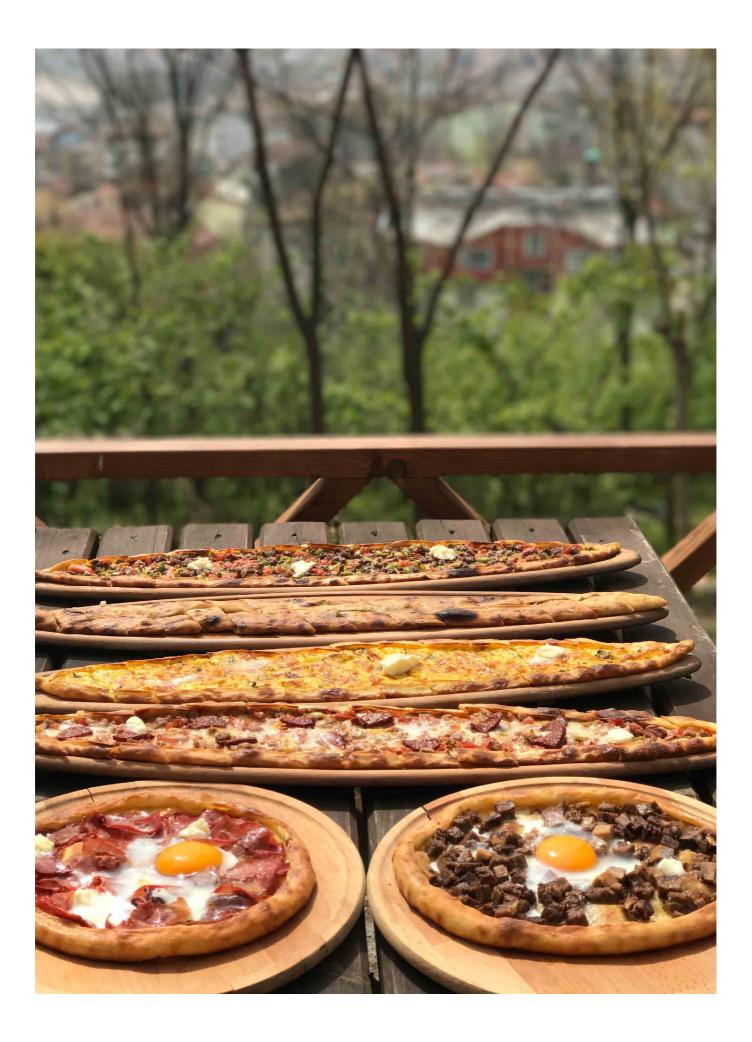
This is one of the most beautiful and oldest wooden mosques of Turkey. The mosque had been built in 1206. Its portico was added in 1335. Its architecture is so uncommon. The mosque was built using nothing but chestnut tree wood; no bracing members including nails! The entire building was built by using a system of interlocking. As if that is not awesome enough, the ceiling decorations add to the beauty of the building. You will experience the true meaning of peace when you are inside the Göğceli Mosque.



#### Deniz Pide / Terme

The Black Sea Region is the heartland of pide. Therefore, if someone mentions pide in Black Sea, you will have to stop, think and show some respect. However, if someone mentions Terme, you will have to think further, and show even more respect! Terme is special in respect to pide together with a few other points in the Black Sea Region. Flour from Çorum's Hatap town; butter, cheese and sour ayran made from home-made yoghurt from Terme, are so tasty that they must be the reasons behind the success. Not to forget that all the dough is hand rolled with a thin rolling pin...





#### HİDOLİM (Halil İbrahim Ice Cream & Lemonade) / Terme

HİDOLİM is the acronym for Halil İbrahim Dondurma Limonata (Halil İbrahim Ice Cream & Lemonade). Hidolim is also the name of the creation of this shop; one scoop of ice cream in lemonade. The lemonade, which is ice cold, is served in a glass with the addition of one scoop of ice cream. Initially, I approached the idea hesitantly, but after digging in with the help of a spoon, I thought to myself, "This is it!" It is really a very interesting combination. Make sure to try it!

#### Ünye

What a beautiful place! Its old houses, and especially the two-kilometer long promenade in the pine grove along the shore cannot be missed. We are not so used to seeing such a pine grove, or a small-scale forest either in a city or along the shore. I highly recommend you to stop here for a walk while passing through the city, and to award yourself with some tea at the Lighthouse at the end of the walk.

#### Pelit Park Pide / Ünye

This is the best address for the most delicious Black Sea pides, and the most spectacular views over Ünye. Their menu also covers some of the regional dishes. If you are there in season, you can taste some of the Black Sea herbs, fresh or cooked. Its breakfast, hazelnut trees, sweeping views, and the fresh weather surrounding it call for a definite visit.

#### Tarçın (Cinnamon) Restaurant & Cafe / Ünye

This is a small restaurant & cafe located in an old Ünye house. It is run by Öznur Hanım who had started all by herself using an SME subsidy. I am so glad she did! She makes the traditional Black Sea cuisine—and particularly Ünye cuisine—live on. She also prepares fairy tale breakfasts. You name anything from the Black Sea, and she has it on her menu! Anything from the pickle kavurma to the local herbs, and from the su (water) böreks to pepeçuras<sup>70</sup>...

#### Zübeyde Hanım's Baklava

My friend, Orhan Hoca<sup>71</sup> is from Ordu. Naturally, his mother Zübeyde Hanım is a local. Ordu is most famous for its hazelnuts. And the Black Sea ladies' fabled mastery in the kitchen resound all over Turkey. When this is the case, it is not a surprise that Zübeyde Hanım's hazelnut baklava made with painstakingly hand-rolled yufkas stacked layer over layer, is one of Ünye's most famous food items. We pick our whole tray of baklava from Zübeyde Hanım, and head for Orhan Hoca's home by the seaside. After preparing the semaver<sup>72</sup> tea brewing over wood fire, all we have to do is wait for the sunset. Hope you get a chance to do the same!

In many households, the tea is prepared using two pots: one for brewing the tea, and one for hot water. In restaurants, or in public places, where a lot of tea is consumed, the tea is prepared using a semaver. With a semaver the tea is brewed in the pot or kettle on the top of the semaver, while the water is kept at boiling point in the lower part. The tea coming from the pot on the top of the semaver is then mixed or diluted with the boiling water. If you prefer your tea lighter or weaker, more water is added.



<sup>70 &</sup>quot;Pepeçura" is a kind of pudding from the eastern Black Sea Region. It is made with local fragrant Concorde grapes with thick skins that are made into an unfermented juice, which in return gets mixed with cornflour, and a little starch. While it gets cooked over slow fire, some sugar is added gradually. It may also include almonds, walnuts, and other nuts. Its looks resembles chocolate pudding.

<sup>71 &</sup>quot;Hoca" or "Hodja" was originally a title for a Muslim schoolmaster or wise man (many times in a religious school context). However, nowadays, it is used for any teacher or instructor at any kind of school. It has a connotation of respect. Hence, rather than simply calling Orhan Teacher, Instructor Orhan, etc... Turks use the Hoca title.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> "Semaver" derives from the Russian word "samovar"; literally "self-brewer". It is a metal container traditionally used to heat and boil water with the purpose of making tea. Traditionally, it is heated with charcoal, but many newer semavers use electricity.

- 141 -The Old Road from Samsun to Trabzon













#### Hünkar Lokantası (Hünkar Restaurant) / Fatsa

While going through this region with Oğuz Yenihayat, we get recommendations from our followers on Instagram. This place is on the top of the list; one out of two or three recommendations says, "You must stop and eat at Hünkar in Fatsa!" Hence, we cannot wait to eat dinner there! We eat pide, tava and whatever else they serve with great appetite. From its cleanliness to the flavors of the dishes, the restaurant takes a full thumbs up from us.

#### Breakfast in Bolaman

You will want the time to stop! You will want for that moment to last for a thousand years! It does not matter what you eat or drink. You will be grateful for the breath you take, for the sea, the trees, and the nature. We had our breakfast by the seaside at Yıldız Hotel. Seriously, it just does not matter what is served! Even just a glass of tea will make you happy here!

#### **Yason Church**

This church, which is located on Cape Yason, was built in 1868 by the Georgians and the Rums<sup>73</sup> residing in the area. The sunrise and the sunset can be watched 320 days a year on Cape Yason where the church is located. If you steer to this point so that you are there during sunset, you will also have a chance to experience one of the most memorable moments of your trip.

#### Vonalı Celal Turşucusu (The Pickle Shop of Celal from Vona) / Perşembe

If you are wondering, "Do they really make pickles from everything?" then you will see when you are here that they actually do. Vonalı Celal is actually a fish restaurant, but the fame of their pickles have surpassed beyond borders. I could even give this place a new category: the pickle shop with the best view in the world! Both the fish and the regional dishes are very delicious here. I also have to mention the seagull-feeding ritual at this restaurant; it is quite a sight!

#### Denizciler Dondurma (Denizciler (Mariners) Ice Cream Parlor) / Ordu

The ice cream from Denizciler Dondurma, which is made with milk burnt on purpose, is exceedingly delicious. The milk is boiled in a copper cauldron over a long period of time so that the milk gets thicker, sticks to cauldron's bottom and burns to give its unique flavor. Such a delicious ice cream!



<sup>73 &</sup>quot;Rums" are Turkish citizens of Greek ethnicity.

#### Aktaşlar Pide Restaurant / Ordu

Aktaşlar Pide Restaurant is another important gastronomical point in Ordu. Many years ago I had tasted pide here, but without eggs. I am yet to understand why I did so. I still burn in regret. Breakfast, lunch, 5 o'clock tea... Does not matter when you visit as long as you make sure to stop by!

#### Kahraman Tostçu (Kahraman's Toast Shop) / Ordu

Kahraman Tostçu was probably the second most recommended point among all. Sure enough, we did not turn a deaf ear to all the recommendations telling us such things as, "You must definitely—but I mean absolutely—stop by here, and taste the Ordu toast made with mashed sucuk! Don't forget to have some fizzy Ordu soda with it!" The 55-year-old shop is about ten square meters. Kahraman Usta, who is behind the counters for the last 40 years, had learned the trade from his maternal uncle. He mashes the sucuk, which is their own production, on a cutting board by the help of a knife. After putting the mashed sucuk and some cheese inside a piece of bread, he toasts it in a machine. We enjoy our toasts with Ordu sodas as recommended.

#### Kukul Pide Restaurant / Piraziz

My favorite pide restaurant in Bursa is called Kukul. The moment we see the sign of Kukul by the road, we hit the breaks hard. We go inside and check it out. The hands by the oven seem very masterful to us. We place our orders and start chatting while waiting. I tell them that my favorite pide place in Bursa has the same name. When they reply, "Indeed, it is owned by our brother." I get very surprised. What a small world! Then I ask myself, "Which one is better?" and give the answer to myself, too, "They are equally good as far as the flavor goes." I think to myself, "This one here is a bit more special because it might as well be in the top of the list for pide shops with the best view." I also admire and congratulate the owner in Bursa for duplicating the same success in Bursa, and making it available to us at a closer point. A genuinely friendly family, a spectacular scenery, the famed Black Sea tea, and fantastic pides...

#### Hazelnut and Cherry Pickles / Giresun

World's best hazelnut is produced here; simply the best quality! Legend has it that the word kiraz (cherry in Turkish) derived from kyras (cherry in Greek), eventually leading to the name of the city Kyrasus, and later on Giresun. Giresun is not only famous for its cherries but also the kavurma made from pickled cherries. I am not so sure that you will have a chance to find some of the cherry pickles, but make sure to buy some hazelnuts.





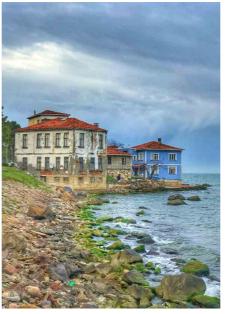
#### Kadayıfçı Mustafa Patar (Mustafa Patar, the Kadayıf Cook) / Giresun

I am writing this part of the book four weeks after the trip. Yet, my feeling has not faded since then. I just cannot forget the kadayıf with hazelnut butter. I cannot take it out of my mind. I just cannot! I cannot forgive myself either for having eaten only one portion of it. I just cannot forgive myself! I simply cannot! It has almost been four weeks since I came back but I cannot stop thinking about it. I am simply infatuated, and can only wish for their delivery service to begin at the earliest time possible. In the meantime, I am all alert for anyone coming from Ordu so that I can have some.

#### 42 Numaralı Çay (Tea from Number 42) / Tirebolu

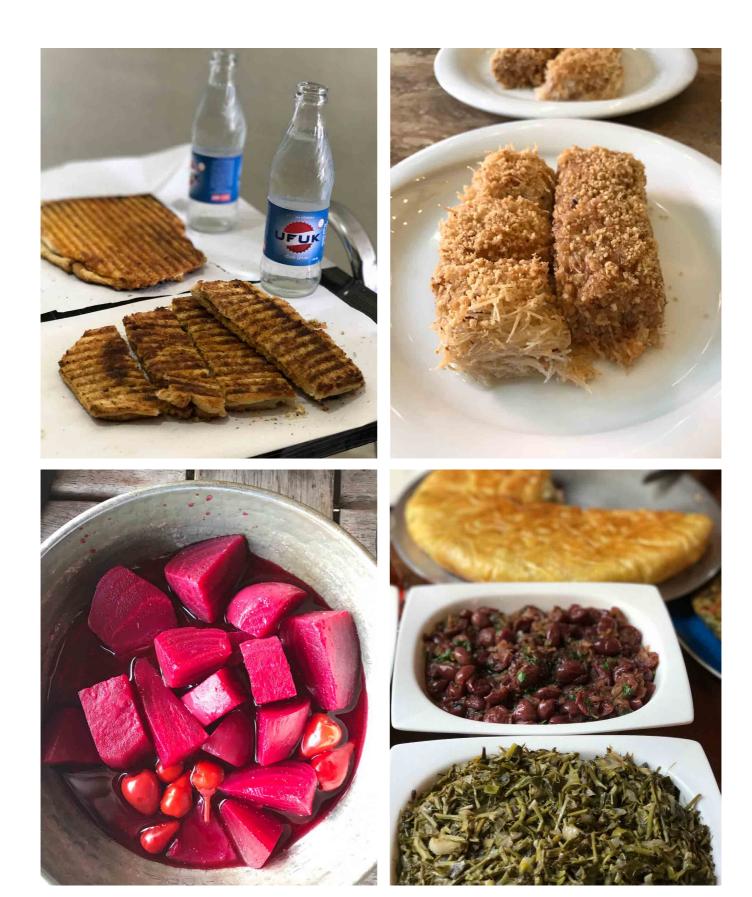
Our route passes by the famous Tea Factory at Number 42. Make sure to stop by! For a tea addict like myself, the tea is a bit weak, lacking a full aroma, but it is the most popular tea in Turkey.





Here we are at the end of another trip. It had been a long time since I was on another trip where the route was so good. Why not make a change this year for your summer vacation? I highly recommend you to visit Central Black Sea Region.



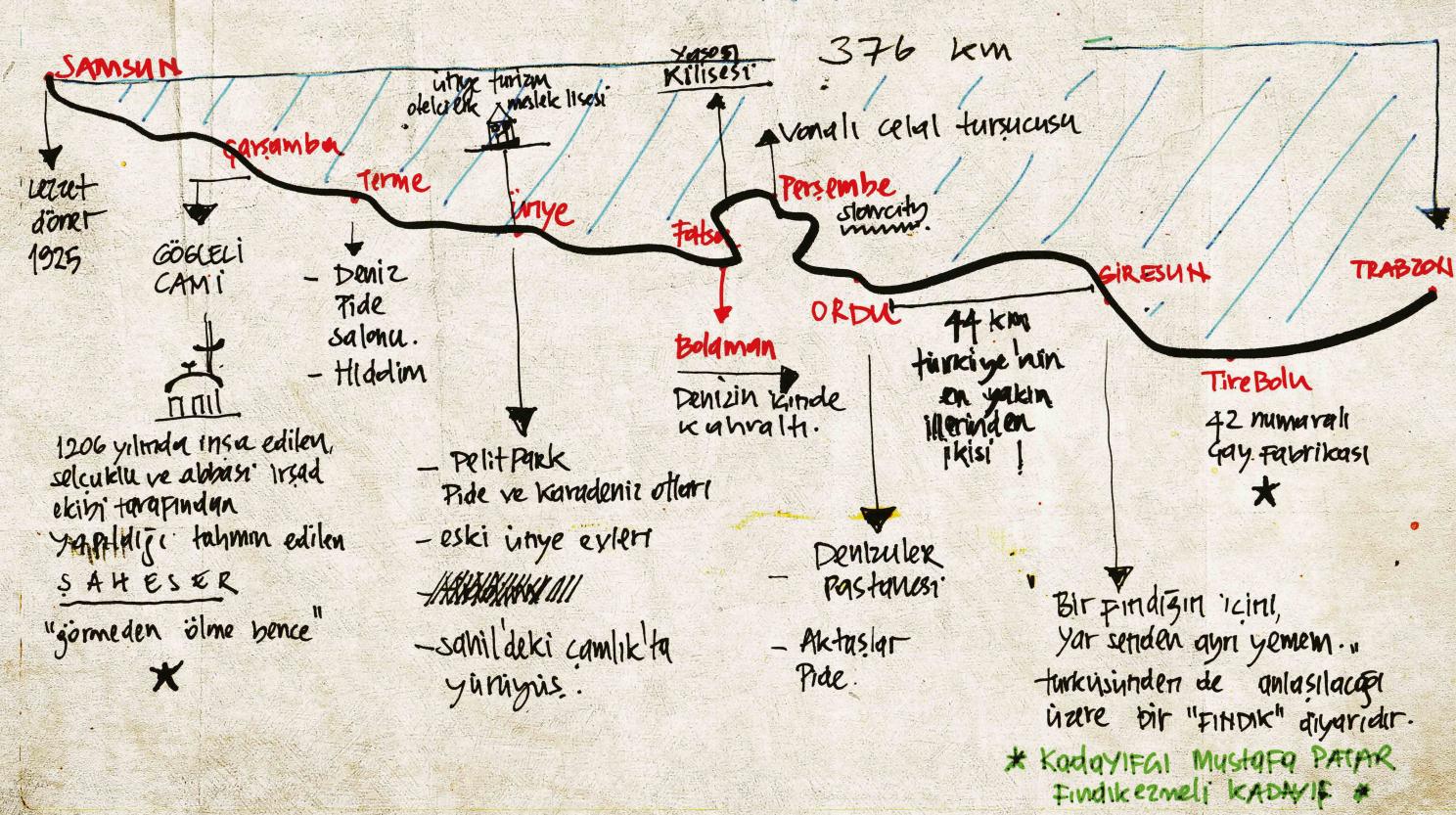




# Samsundan TRABIOHA eski yol

yaptigim en sahin ve enguzel yal seyahatlerinden bri.

Karudeniz





#### ÇAKALLI74 MENEMEN WITH OLIVE OIL

#### Ingredients

- 5 egg yolks
- 1/2 glass Komili Early Harvest Olive Oil
- 3 field-grown tomatoes
- 4 long, thin green peppers
- 100 g grated kaşar<sup>75</sup> cheese
- Powdered red pepper
- · Rock salt

- Grill the tomatoes over the fire. Dice them after peeling.
- Heat the Komili Early Harvest Olive Oil in a pan.
- First add in the thinly sliced green peppers, then the tomatoes.
- Stir while turning the peppers and tomatoes with a wooden spoon.
- · Add in the red pepper powder and salt.
- After adding in the grated kaşar cheese, mix in the egg yolks.
- · Serve as soon as the eggs are cooked.

Antonio Carluccio, who was a speaker at 'Gastromasa (Gastrotable)'—the best international gastronomical organization in Turkey—, had asked, "How do you manage to make such good meals with so little ingredients?" while referring to the menemen he had just sampled. I do not think that he has tasted the menemen in Samsun yet!

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> "Kaşar" or kasseri is a medium-hard pale yellow cheese made from unpasteurized sheep milk with very little, if any, goat's milk mixed in. Kaşar is made from boiling the milk curds in salt water. This process gives a slightly distinct flavor to the cheese.



<sup>74 &</sup>quot;Menemen" is a very common meal all around Turkey served mostly for breakfast, but also at other meal times. The main ingredients are invariably tomatoes, green peppers, and eggs. However, the method used in cooking and the cutting size of the ingredients differentiate from one region to another as well as the addition of a few other ingredients. "Çakalli" is a district of Samsun, and the menemen made in here has a distinctive feature. It has a more homogenous texture to it. It is almost like a smooth paste. Over time, this method became popular and regardless of where it is made, it defined the style





### SURUÇ, HARRAN, URFA, DİYARBAKIR

I have been on the road for two weeks as part of the grand Turkey tour I had been planning for a long time. I have started in Kayseri, and continued to Maraş, Gaziantep and Urfa respectively. Before going into Urfa, we stopped in Suruç. And I am so glad that we did! It is spring time... All flowers are in full bloom... All wheat ears are green... A freshness everywhere... Scents everywhere...



#### The Store of Locksmith Ali Usta

Our first stop is Ali Ağabey's store in Suruç Meydanı (Suruç Square). We are going to have some delicious chickpeas tava here. Seems like Ali Ağabey had already begun the preparations. When we got there, he had bought three glasses—each glass sold for 1 TL— of boiled chickpeas that were sold on street carts. He had mixed them with isot<sup>76</sup>, onions, and tomatoes, and sent it to Saygı Bakery. When we arrived, the tava was waiting for us, and he made some ayran from home-made yoghurt to wash it all down. We swept the tava with bread for breakfast. I would also like to mention that Saygı Bakery's breads were as successful as their chickpeas tava.

## Cemile Anne's Köftes with Eggs

Köftes with eggs is one of my favorite dishes, and if it is someone from Urfa who is making it, it is hard to replace it with anything else. My friend Oğuz, who is a food aficionado, used to say all the time how good his mother was making them. Well, that is where we went altogether to his mom's house. She started kneading the isot, onion and bulgur together. When she was happy with the consistency of the dough, she fried the eggs in ghee, and then poured it into the dough. One spoon out of it made me feel in the wheat fields of the East, on a hot day in Urfa. I devoured it with great appetite, thinking to myself, "This is exactly what I am looking for!" Health to Cemile Anne's hands!

## Paf Ciger (Paf Liver Restaurant)

Urfa and liver are almost synonymous. What other city has liver shops in every corner? I cannot think of any other city with so many liver shops. Paf Ciğer is owned by Mustafa Paf. It is located on the Ciğerciler Sokağı (Liver Cooks' Street) in central Urfa. The cook first puts liver and tail fat pieces on thin skewers. Then, he smothers them with lots of spices before cooking on charcoal fire while turning each side from time to time. By the way, the restaurant has floor tables only, and there are no utensils on the tables. No plates, no forks! Only wooden boards and knives. They serve fresh greenery and vegetables to the table. You make your own salad, or if you prefer, you just enjoy them as is; as an accompaniment to the warm liver dish.

## Köşem Kebap

This is another favorite liver restaurant of the locals of Urfa. Do taste the liver here; it is seriously delicious. But, its mashed lamb shish is equally successful. When we got there, we ordered liver, but when the locals at the neighboring table insisted that we try the lamb, our plans were shifted. We took their advice, and ended up eating a sensational lamb kebap.

<sup>76 &</sup>quot;Isot" is a fresh or dried Turkish chili pepper, many times used in its dried and flaked version as a spice. It is often described as having a smoky, raisin-like taste. It is technically a red pepper, ripening to a dark maroon on the plant. Isot is mostly grown and produced in and around Urfa.















## Şimşek Kardeşler Lahmacun Fırını (Şimşek Brothers Lahmacun Bakery)

As we were exploring Harran, we got a text message on our cell phones: "We have ordered Urfa lahmacun for delivery at home. Why don't you join us?" In about 30 minutes, we had reached at Hekimdede Mahallesi where Muhammed Badıllı's home was located amidst all the other old Urfa houses. We met at Şimşek Kardeşler Fırını, and followed him to his house, which was a historic Urfa mansion. We enjoyed the Urfa lahmacuns, which I love, together in his garden. The bakery had also sent some peppers cooked in the oven. What a delightful bonus they were! Following the dinner, we listened Badıllı tell us the story of these lands, and the historic story of the local wheat expanding over a 13 thousand year span.

## Breakfast in Bölücek Village

Since we had spoken about wheat the previous night, in the morning we departed for the Badıllı Family's village where these wheat was cultivated. Once we got to Bölücek village, we were hosted in a garden with a view overlooking to the plains. We had breakfast before heading for the fields. Urfa cheese, eggs with pepper paste, and Urfa katmer were more than enough to mesmerize us. A short walk through the wheat fields and a soft rain wetting the fertile soil, which has been feeding and growing for thousands of years, followed.

#### Miroğlu Pastanesi (Miroğlu Patisserie)

This is a 20-year-old Urfa patisserie. It is famous for its kadayıf and all other desserts, but what we want the most is their equally famous ice cream. It is really very delicious. It has a strong aroma, and it was served to us as a reminder of the approaching summer.

#### Culcuoğlu Desserts

We could not make it to Çulcuoğlu, but their desserts made their way to us. Şileki means "wet" or "wetted" in Kurdish. However, the word derives into "şıllık" in colloquial language. Thus, the dessert becomes şıllık tatlısı<sup>77</sup>. In fact, just like the name of the dessert, the recipe also goes under change over time. The grape molasses which is used to wet the cooked dough, gets replaced with a lighter sugar syrup.

#### Semolina Helva with Cheese

The semolina helva made with Urfa ghee and fresh Urfa cheese has to be one of the most distinctive local flavors. Here, the semolina is not turned over in the pot too much as we customarily see in other parts of Turkey where they make this helva. That is why the semolina does not brown much it has a lighter yellow color. The semolina gets turned over slightly first, then it meets with sherbet and small pieces of Urfa cheese. After resting for 15 minutes, it gets ready to be served.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> Urfa's "Şıllık" dessert has very basic ingredients: flour, water, walnut pieces, sugar, and ghee. What makes it special is the distinctive method the masters of Urfa use, and the characteristics of the local products. For example, the ghee is produced locally from the milk of the sheep fed naturally in the region.



#### Harran

The meaning of the word Harran is claimed appropriately to be 'crossroads' and 'extremely hot weather'. The earliest mention of the word is found on clay tablets dating back to 5000 years ago. The city of Harran is one of the most interesting settlements of the world because of the styles and techniques used in the city. Harran, which used to be one of the leading scientific centers of the ancient world, is definitely on the top of the bucket the list for places to be visited in Turkey.

## Breakfast at Hasanpaşa Hanı (Hasanpaşa Inn) / Diyarbakır

One has to respect Diyarbakır for its breakfast. They serve almost all the varieties of cheese from all the neighboring regions. The cheeses are not alone either; different kinds of olives, kavurmas, honeys, böreks and whatever else you are looking for is on the table. And to wash it all down, tea is served. What else would one want? This breakfast will call anyone to Diyarbakır, no?

## Diyarbakır Liver

A local person from Antep would be quite familiar with the liver scene; he or she would either cook it well, or would it only good quality liver. However, even such a person from Antep would agree that the liver in Diyarbakır is a bit better than the one in Antep. The crucial point is the liaison used for the liver. You can eat it almost anywhere in Diyarbakır, but here are two names for you: Muharrem Usta and Dağ Kapı Ciğercisi.

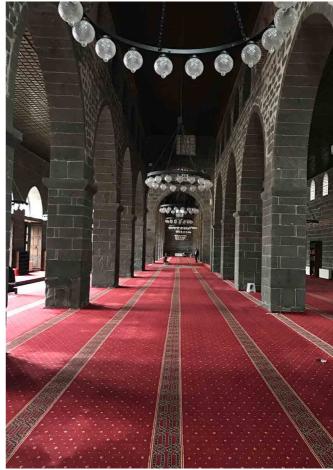
## Ulu Cami (The Grand Mosque)

This mosque has been recorded as the oldest mosque in Anatolia. The Muslims reigning in Diyarbakır had converted the Mar<sup>78</sup> Thoma Church into a mosque in 639. Due to invasions, fires and earthquakes, over time, the building had collapsed or fallen into ruins at different parts, but each time it had been rebuilt. Consequently, it currently displays very interesting architectural features while emitting a mystic atmosphere. When you stand in the courtyard, all the sounds and the people around will carry you away into other realms.

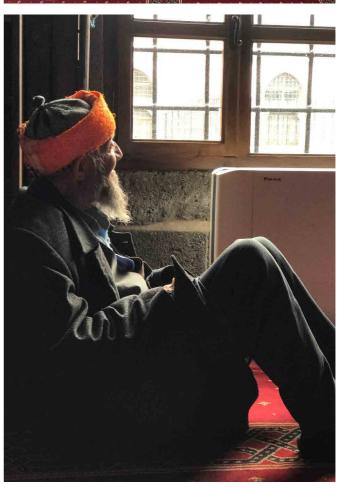
<sup>78 &</sup>quot;Mar" stands for 'Saint' in Assyriac. This was an Assyrian church dedicated to St. Thomas.





















#### **Hevsel Gardens**

The 700 hectares (about 1730 acres) territory, which is between Diyarbakır Castle and Tigris River, is called Hevsel Gardens. This area happens to be the largest bird sanctuary in south-eastern Anatolia, but it is also the habitat for many mammals. It is considered to be a crucial point for the migrating birds to rest and breed. The area houses the endangered levant sparrow hawks.

Hevsel Gardens has been in the UNESCO World Heritage List since 2015.

## Kadayıfçı Sıtkı Usta (Sıtkı Usta, the Kadayıf Cook)

Now, it is time for Diyarbakır's most prominent phenomenon: burma (twisted) kadayıf. On this token, Sıtkı Usta is the jewel on the crown, and no one is fit to hold a candle to him. I stand as warranty for anything relevant to kadayıf in this store. You can hardly find any better kadayıf. I need to pinpoint that he only uses the best quality kadayıf, pistachios, and butter from the region. Damat kadayıfı (groom's kadayıf) is one of my favorites, and one of the many kinds that stand out. Its sherbet is uncommonly prepared with milk. I highly recommend this particular one.

The weather is better now, and everywhere is green now.

The most beautiful times in Anatolia... If you have the time and the means, travel around the country. I am positive you will feel so good. We all need this; travel in the country.





## CHICKPEAS TAVA WITH OLIVE OIL

### Ingredients

- · Two glasses boiled chickpeas
- 1/2 glass Komili Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 1 onion
- 1 tablespoon Urfa tomato paste
- 1 tablespoon isot
- 2 hot red peppers
- 1 hot green pepper
- · Rock salt

- Chop the onion, one red pepper and one green pepper into very thin slices.
- Put the chopped vegetables and all of the remaining ingredients in an oven tray. Mix well and spread evenly in the tray.
- Place the remaining three red peppers on the mixture towards the edges of the tray.
- Have it cooked at the closest wood-burning oven, or in your own oven at home at 200°C for 25 minutes.
- Serve with tırnak pide<sup>79</sup> and ayran.

This is one of the most prevailing dishes of Urfa tradesmanship tradition. It is consumed mostly in the mornings. As a rule of thumb, the hotter the weather gets, the more hot peppers will be added to the dish as if to prove that diamonds will cut diamonds.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> "Tirnak pide" translates to "fingernail pita". It takes its name from the checkered shapes on top that are created by using fingernails. It is a thick and chewy kind of pita bread specifically serving well as a dipper.







## Three Seljuk Cities

# SİVAS, ERZİNCAN, ERZURUM

I always consider each city with some Seljuk stamp on it as beautiful. I have a special kind of liking for such cities. The Seljuk Empire has its own mark on architecture, arts, mathematics, aesthetics, and life. You can enjoy following the traces of the Seljuks in these three cities while tasting most delicious meals.

If I ever write a book like 'Five Cities' by Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, I will name it 'Three Cities' and base my story in these three cities that I have visited during almost any season of the year. They are equally beautiful in any season, but in a different way. We are approaching summer when the days are long and the roads are very enjoyable. If you have not done so, make sure to see these cities soon.



## Cumhuriyet Meydanı (The Republic Square) / Sivas

The Republic Square is right in the center of the city. However, it is not your typical city center. When you are in the square, you face a madrasa dating back to the Seljuk times, with an Ottoman mosque next to you, and a Republican Era congress building behind you. This is a historic square where you can lay eyes on remnants of many centuries.

Order some tea and watch life. The past, the distant past and the near future; all exist simultaneously. This is an interesting place where you can comprehend the value of the moment.

## Akın Kellecisi (Akın Sheep Head Restaurant)

When in Sivas do as the locals do: start your day with sheep's head. Keep in mind though; by 9:00am, there is nothing left. You have to wake up early, and take your first breath at Akın Kellecisi. The previous master chef of the restaurant Hacı Akın had inherited the profession from his grandfather, and he passed it on to his sons who are all deceased now. Muharrem Usta, who had been trained by Hacı Akın, is running the restaurant now. He cooks the heads in the wood-burning overnight to have them ready for his customers first thing in the morning. He personally attends the preparations while serving his customers.

Their soups are as delicious as their sheep heads. Complete your ritual by ordering 'sheep's head in small portion soup'. You will have had your breakfast just like a local from Sivas.

## Köfteci Kirli Ahmet Usta (Dirty Ahmet Usta, the Köfte Cook)

Ask for köfte in Sivas, and the name of Dirty Ahmet Usta will be echoed unanimously by all the inhabitants of Sivas. Four generations from the same family has been making nothing but köfte in this restaurant. Ahmet Usta had started making and selling köfte at his father's street cart while attending the elementary school. Ahmet Usta's sons Ishak Kaan and Burak are now running the business as the fourth generation, and Ahmet Usta still continues to cook in their first store in the center. One can observe his enthusiasm as if he is on his first day at the street cart. He is eager, hard-working and very meticulous. They prepare their köftes with nothing but specially ground meat and salt. They cook the köftes, let them rest, and serve them with yoghurt and ayran, which they make on premises using the milk they buy directly from the shepherds.

## Çerkes Kahvesi (The Circassian Coffee House)

This coffee house is among the important coffee houses of Turkey with a 100 year life span into the past. The coffee house is managed by the new generation nowadays. Their coffee is perfectly delicious, but I could not help thinking during the service that they could have paid a little more attention to making the traditions live on. Preserving the coffee should not be the ultimate goal alone. The culture of coffee, tradesmanship around it and the story must be protected as well.











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#### Sivas Katmeri

The dough that gets prepared using butter is rolled into thin phyllo pieces to create many layers for the katmer which gets cooked in wood-burning stone-oven. The result is a crunchy katmer that serves as a breakfast item. It can be enjoyed all by itself or with some cheese, butter or honey. People of Sivas, who are residing outside of their city, are still in the habit of ordering parcels and parcels of katmer from Sivas.

## Tozlu Raflar Sahaf (Dusty Shelves Antiquarian Bookstore)

Dusty Shelves Antiquarian Bookstore, which is located in the premises of Çifte Minareli Medrese (Double Minarets Madrasa), is one of 3 most beautiful second-hand bookstores of Turkey. Old wooden handcrafted toys, old phonograph records, various kitchen utensils, many coffee cups, and wonderful books collectively make this store a unique place that is more than just a second-hand bookstore. Make sure to listen to the stories and the details of the great Turkish culture looked after by the retired teacher and daughter running the bookstore. Allow some time to spend here, and have some tea breathing in that specific scent of the old times created by the old Turkish games, hours and years...

## Evin Döner / Erzincan

When you are hungry, you either go home or to Evin<sup>80</sup>.

Really, that is the case. It is one of Erzincan's important restaurants. Both the meat and the bread are in Erzincan style. The taste remains on one's palate for a long time.

#### **Tulum Cheese**

You can find tulum cheese in all parts of Turkey, but the best—without a doubt—is simply here. Just buy some warm bread from the closest bakery to go with it. That is all you need! Oh, well, maybe some tea to wash it down...



### Gezgör Cağ Kebap Restaurant / Erzurum

This is an important establishment for cağ kebabı. It has been run by Kenan Tunç and Necdet Yüksel since 1975. Their bread cooked in Erzurum-style tandır is equally delicious as their cağ kebabı. The meat they use comes from the grass-fed lambs growing in the uplands of Eastern Anatolia. The meat is seasoned with onions, salt and pepper; and stacked on a big flat skewer that is placed horizontally over open wood fire for slow-roasting. I believe in on-site tasting which has been proven right one more time here.

#### Erzurum Evleri (Erzurum Houses Restaurant)

Eleven old Erzurum houses and an old inn has been converted into a complex like a historic museum which serves as a restaurant. From the way they serve tea with sugar cubes to the music played, from the bread and breakfast to the kavurma, everything in here calls out loud: "Erzurum, Erzurum, Erzurum..." I am confident you will end up spending hours in this museum-like restaurant.

## Hünerli Eller Lokantası (Masterful Hands Restaurant)

This is a successful family restaurant where you can taste Erzurum's homestyle cooking. The mother and her two sons are everywhere; in the kitchen, at the cashier, at service, preparing the tea. You can easily eat everything on the menu, and that is exactly what four of us have done. Their manti is extremely delicious; the soup cries out loud as mom-made; and the sherbets are not to be missed.

## Kadayıfçı Muammer (Muammer, the Kadayıf Cook)

The sine qua none of Erzurum is kadayıf dolması. But it has to be the one from Muammer Usta's hands. Visitors to Erzurum frequent his shop as much as all the historic sites. He serves as the culinary tourism ambassador of Erzurum.

## Emirşeyh Köfte Restaurant

The store's old stone building and interior decoration are as pleasant as their köftes which come in couple different varieties. This is the last, but not the least of our stops on this part of the journey. We sip some more of the Erzurum dark-brewed tea for the last time, and head on for our return trip.











Selfuklunum 3 sehri SIVAS, ERZINCAN, ERZURUM - Kelle - Sivas katmeri er Zinuan'a 20 km kala mutlaka - sivas koptesi manzara Fotografi cekin R 260 km. 219 km Siyas Erzincan -elma -peynir +orlu raplar -döner Squap

· Dirkigi

\* Kemaliye , Divrtži
arası "TAS YOL"
dürya'da sörebilecegining en güzel
yallardan biri.

ERURUM.

- erzyvym evleki

- hünerlieller lokantası

- kadayıfcı muammer

· kemaliye

~ 7745 d

Görmeden olme Bence



## **HORIS**

## Ingredients

- 100 ml Komili Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 75 g flour
- 75 g honey comb

- Put the Komili Extra Virgin Olive Oil and the flour in a pan, and keep stirring them over the stove until the flour gets caramel-brown.
- Turn off the stove, and add the honey right in the middle.
- As the flour and oil mixture will be so hot, once the honey is added, it will start melting.

I will never forget this taste I had tried in Ispir's Hunut village many years ago...







# **ADANA MERSIN**

Where you eat super food

This was the most delicious trip I have taken in many years. I can even go further, and announce this trip as the most gastronomically laden trip of the last five years. Years ago, I had the pleasure of meeting the Merih family on a flight to Frankfurt. They had been inviting me to Adana since then, but I never had a chance. Now, while writing this part of the book, I get to fully comprehend how delicious were the meals I had, and how belated I have been. I would like to thank a lot to Okay Merih and the entire Merih Family who has been my captains in the culinary scene of Adana. I am confident that they will take you on the same route, if you get a hold of them.

I fly into Adana as my starting point. Therefore, I have to have kebaps. You can find more details about Adana in Volume I of the Komili Book of Travels. That is why I will have a brief section on Adana at this time, and continue onwards with the trip.



### Three kebap restaurants in Adana

#### Adana<sup>81</sup> has to be eaten in Adana.

I do not think you can truly get the real taste of "Adana" if you do not eat it on-site, i.e. in Adana. It might be my most favorite dish ever! I visit Adana four times a year, and it is one of those places which I will not leave without having eaten a meal. This is where I begin this part of my trip.

1

Ufuk's Place: Nowadays, this is my favorite place to eat. After eating your kebap at Ufuk's Place along the road to Karataş, you must find Ağaçaltı Tatlıcısı (Dessert Cook Under-the-Tree) for the icing on the cake. Ask anyone, and they will direct you, because he has been under the same tree the last 55 years or so.

2

Elem: I have been visiting Elem the last ten years. It is one of the most delicious kebap restaurants. Especially, its tarator<sup>82</sup> with tahini and romaine lettuce is legendary. I make sure to visit this restaurant every time I am in Adana.

3

All the street vendors: You can eat from any of the street vendors who make kebap. If you visit them after midnight especially, you will taste the most delicious kebaps.

#### Yeni Ada Kebap Restaurant / Tarsus

The taste of the kuşgözü lahmacun (bird's eye lahmacun)<sup>83</sup> I ate here is still on my palate. Do not mistake it for fındık lahmacun (hazelnut lahmacun). This lahmacun is the size of a 1 TL coin, and it is made with ground meat specially prepared for kebap. My recommendation to you: "Eat before you die!" The turnips, the fresh mint, onions and hot peppers that are served as accompaniments are nothing less than the lahmacuns, either.

## Humusçu Akın (Akın, the Humus Cook) - 1960 / Tarsus

He prepares his humus by pounding in a mortar. He uses a wooden pestle which is made of mulberry, loquat and citrus tree trunks, because they do not absorb the juices. Akin prepares the humus fresh using this method any time an order is placed. The bread, pickles and water that come with the serving are free of charge. Do I need to tell more? I highly recommend you find this place!

## Havana / Tarsus

This shop is like a patisserie, but they sell gofret<sup>84</sup>—a Tarsus legend—and kahke<sup>85</sup> the most. Different types of biscuits and peksimet can be found, too. Havana, which is quite an old store, ships all over Turkey.

<sup>85 &</sup>quot;Kahke" is type of a cookie prepared with lots of spices. It is believed that it originates in Aleppo.



<sup>81</sup> Here "Adana" stands for Adana kebap. Many times, while ordering people will not say, "I want an Adana kebap" but rather "I want an Adana!"

<sup>82 &</sup>quot;Tarator" is a combination of tahini (sesame paste), lemon juice, garlic, and parsley. This sauce adds a nutty, fresh tang to almost any dish. Some versions will have blanched almonds or pine nuts.

<sup>83 &</sup>quot;Kuṣśözü" (bird's eye) and "findik" (hazelnut) define the size of the lahmacun. In many places all over Turkey, lahmacun comes in bigger sizes (15-25 centimeters in diameter) of round or oval shapes. Findik (hazelnut) lahmacun is also somewhat common, and its diameter is about 7-10 centimeters. However, kuṣgözü (bird's eye) lahmacun is more specific to the city of Adana, and perhaps to this restaurant, although it may be spreading elsewhere lately. Kuṣgözü (bird's eye) lahmacun is the smallest among all kinds (about 2 centimeters in diameter).

<sup>84 &</sup>quot;Gofret" is a generic name for crisp, flaky wafer bars which come in various flavors of filling, and with or without coverings like chocolate.

















## Merih Family's Home / Mersin

This is the kind of home where they make everything from scratch. Pomegranate molasses, butter, kaymak (clotted cream of milk), sürk<sup>86</sup>, yoghurt... Whatever you think of! It also happens to be the place where I ate the best içli köfte in my life time! I would like to extend my respects to Nazlı Teyze and Muhittin Amca.

## Sarnıç Restoran (The Cistern Restaurant) / Gözne Yaylası Yolu (Gözne Uplands Road)

They have the most unforgettable bulgur pilav ever! Both the bulgur and the butter are simply unbelievable. It is served with fried chicken; but what a chicken! It is fried in butter; but I mean, lots of butter! The vegetables, yoghurts, and salads are delicious beyond any description. Add on the fresh weather of the uplands, and you have a true feast! What else could one possibly ask for?

## Yürü Kerebiç<sup>87</sup> / Mersin

I was in bad terms with kerebiç, but I am not sure why it was so. To be honest, they had to drag me into this store to taste it, but I was pleasantly shocked after the first bite. I started ordering from Mersin from time to time. The most delicious kerebiç is definitely in Mersin. We—the people of Antep— also make it, but this one is two bars above.

### Halil's Ice Cream Parlor / Mersin

Stop by here when you hear cezerye<sup>88</sup> mentioned! They make only two kinds: with pistachios and walnuts. One does not fancy anything else anyway. Their story that had begun in 1960 is still continuing in the same beauty as it had started.

## Emin Usta / Mersin

This is the right address for peynirli kadayıf (kadayıf with cheese) (No, they do not call it as künefe like elsewhere.) and şıralı börek (börek served in syrup). The künefe; oops, sorry, the peynirli kadayıf, which is cooked in copper trays the size of truck tires, is not to be missed.

## The matter of liver in Mersin

Two restaurants stand out in Mersin on this token. The first one is Ciğerci Saboş. They open at 5:00am. The grill is ready by 5:30am. And the store closes before the clock hits 9:00am.

The second liver restaurant is Arkadaş (Friend). It is a tiny shop. I remember it having only three tables. The liver and ayran made with sour home-made yoghurt were equally delicious.

<sup>88 &</sup>quot;Cezerye" is a semi-gelatinous traditional Turkish dessert made from caramelized carrots, roasted walnuts, hazelnuts, or pistachios, and coated in shredded coconut. Different versions replace the carrots with figs or date. Nevertheless, the word "cezer," means "carrot" in Arabic.



<sup>86 &</sup>quot;Sürk", means cottage cheese in Arabic. Fresh, unsalted cottage cheese is flavored with olive oil, black pepper, purple basil leaves, flaked pepper, clove, thyme, pimento, cinnamon, cumin, nutmeg, garlic and hot pepper paste, and made into (usually) conical shapes.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup> "Kerebiç" is a dessert native to Mersin. It is most consumed during the Ramadan. The looks of the dessert is very similar to içli köfte. The main ingredient for the shell, which is the shape of elongated balls, is semolina. The filling is either pistachios or walnuts. The most distinctive feature of the dessert is the peculiar tasting, sweet, white foamy dipping sauce. The sauce is made by soaking the root of soapwort plant in water for 24 hours, and then boiling it to the point when it gets foamy, and finally whisking it with some sugar.

#### The matter of tantuni<sup>89</sup> in Mersin

The city is divided into two on this matter: There is one kind that is fried in tail fat, and that is called tantuni. Then, there is the other kind which is called biftek, and I believe this is fried in vegetable oil. They are both delicious but I always take one step forward upon the mention of tail fat.

At Memoş Tantuni I tried the one fried in tail fat, but they do carry the other kind, too.

Enis Tantuni prepares only the biftek kind.

Both are devoured by the inhabitants of Mersin.

In the meantime, it seems like the natives of Mersin have forgotten the origins of this dish. Tantuni used to be a type of kavurma made with lungs (not liver), and because lungs were cheap at one time, the dish was known as the 'poor man's food' or the 'porters' food'.

#### The Heaven and Hell Caves - Breakfast in tents

The Heaven and Hell Caves have to be on everyone's bucket list. However, having breakfast in the local tents set up against a spectacular view en route to the caves is also very important.

#### **SILIFKE**

There are so many reasons to visit Silifke. I am summarizing them here:

Batırık (This one is slightly different from the Batırık in Ermenek. You must try it here, too!)

Silifke yoghurt (Only the name and the fame survive! Kudos to the one who finds it! I suggest looking for it in the farmers' markets in the villages)

Karsambaç<sup>90</sup> made from the snow brought from the Taurus Mountains (This is a legendary—and rare to find—seasonal dessert unique to Silifke.)

Strawberries (Silifke is abundant in strawberry fields. No matter where you go, you will find yourself surrounded with them.)

Blue crab (Especially in Dalyan)

And last but not the least; Boğsak Bay

<sup>90 &</sup>quot;Karsambaç" is a dessert specifically made in the high plateaus of the southern regions of Turkey. It is prepared by adding a sweet flavored syrup on shaved ice or pure snow from the mountains. "Kar" means "snow" in Turkish.

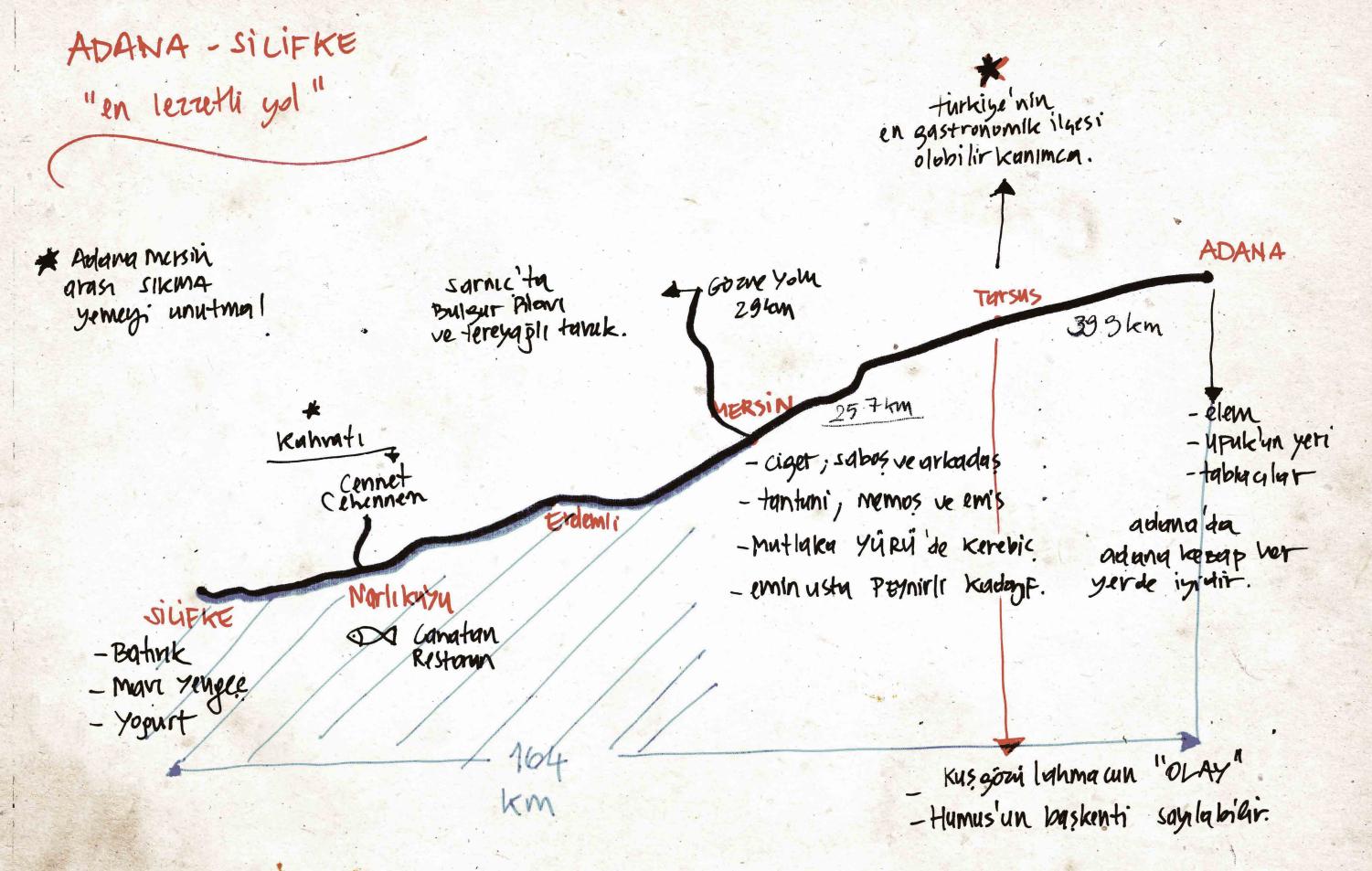


<sup>89 &</sup>quot;Tantuni" is a traditional street food native to Mersin. Thinly sliced beef that is seasoned with spices and herbs gets cooked with chopped onions and tomatoes on a sac. Traditionally, the dish is served rolled in a wrap.









P.S: Adoma Kebaba Adana'da YEHIR.



## **AROUND LAKE VAN**

Circling around Lake Van is one of the best routes for travel anywhere in Turkey. If you make your plans to take this 400 kilometers trip in May or September, you can catch one of the best times around this area. Gevaş, Tatvan, Ahlat, Adilcevaz, Erciş, Muradiye... You will pass through unbelievable scenery amidst inexplicable scents. I highly recommend you to overnight in Ahlat on this two-day journey where you can wake up to the spectacular scenery of Lake Van. Sümbül, Süphan, Tendürek...



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## AHLAT: THE DEED OF ANATOLIA

We arrived in Ahlat at night. We stayed at the only hotel of the district that is located on the shores of Lake Van. I was so curious about the next morning's scenery. The high expectation stirred me up all night. I went to the window of my room with the first lights of the day...

There lay a lake in front of me the color of which I can barely describe! Turquoise? Or green? Maybe blue? Where the lake ended in the distance there was Gevaş, and Hakkari Mountains. Mount Nemrut was to my right, and Mount Süphan to my left. And behind me was Ahlat, the very first settlement of the Turks... I believe the time came to a halt, and so did I at that moment...

We had told the hoteliers the previous night on our arrival that we wanted to have our breakfast by the lake, and there it was; soon to be served where we wanted.

#### The Breakfast

Adilcevaz walnut is something else! You can easily extract some oil by squeezing it in your palms. Van cheese, sac bread, the butter, Bitlis honey, Ahlat kaymak, village eggs, and countless others... It was a breakfast to be remembered for a long time. And the Reşid Behbudov songs playing in the distant background... A moment to last for a thousand years... That is what I felt...



# The first seal of the Turks in Anatolia "AHLAT CEMETERY STONES"

Following Balkh and Bukhara, Ahlat is the third city carrying the title of "Kubbet-ül Islam" (The Dome of Islam). This is an important city for the Turks and Muslims alike, mainly because of all the evliyas<sup>91</sup>, dervishes<sup>92</sup> and alperens<sup>93</sup> who were raised here. This important Turkish city is home to one of the largest (approximately 200 dönüms, or 50 acres) historic cemeteries in the world. The cemetery stones in this cemetery are the first seal for the Turks in Anatolia. They are sometimes referred to as the Orkhon Monuments of Anatolia. The Turks, who made these lands their base during their transition from Central Asia into Anatolia, blended their own culture with the indigenous cultures of Anatolia.

These cemetery stones are very important. I believe that every Turkish citizen must see them. The impact of these cemetery stones is great on the Ottomans who used to call this place as the "Ancestral City."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>93</sup> "Alperen" is a name referring to the person who acted as both the religious leader and a soldier at war (sometimes referred as a dervish-soldier) at the times when the Turks first arrived in Anatolia.



<sup>91 &</sup>quot;Evliya" is a term used in Sufism. It is the plural form of the word 'veli' which means 'the friends of Allah'. The word is most commonly used in tariqahs (religious sects in Islamic mysticism); in other words, in the practice of Sufism, in the sense of a "hoca" or "teacher".

<sup>92 &</sup>quot;Dervish" can refer broadly to members of a Sufi fraternity (tariqah), or more narrowly to a religious mendicant, who chose or accepted material poverty.

### **ADİLCEVAZ**

I had always been curious about this city because of its name. I always wanted to visit it. It turned out to be just as I dreamt of it. The waters of Lake Van along the shores of Adilcevaz has the best colors. The Urartian Castle perched high above, and the walnut groves circling the district add so much to the wonderful scenery in this area.

### Hanımeli Lokantası (Lady's Hands Restaurant) / Adilcevaz

Hanımeli Lokantası in Adilcevaz, where we stopped for lunch, was very very good about the local dishes. I have to mention that I have eaten the best meals of Eastern Anatolia here. Keep in mind that I have been to Eastern Anatolia several times before. Kengerli ayran aşı<sup>94</sup> was really good; I finished two full plates of it followed by keledoş<sup>95</sup>, keşkek<sup>96</sup>, murtağa<sup>97</sup> and grape molasses helva. If you are in the area, you must stop here. The dishes of the East are unique! And so are its people and their courtesy...

#### Van

Van tops the list of all the cities I have visited in the East. I have been there in almost every season. It is one of the most beautiful cities of the East with its crowd, sounds, people, cheese, and distinctive flora and fauna. And breakfast is the sine qua non of Van.

#### Van Breakfast

I was told that sütçü (literally; milk shop or milkman) is the name people used to give to the stores selling breakfast in the past. Currently, all the breakfast restaurants are called sütçü.

Sütçü Kenan is one of these restaurants where they have been preparing Van breakfast for three generations. We keep eating and talking as Kenan explains why Van breakfast is so famed, and why it comes with so much variety at a time. He tells us, "the reason lies in an old tradition," and continues to unravel, "one day in the past, the man of the household in one of the Van houses gets up very early to go to work in the crop fields. He does not have the heart to wake his wife to prepare breakfast in such wee hours of the morning. He leaves the house picking just a piece of food to eat as breakfast later. All the other workers in the fields do the same that day. So, each one takes out whatever he had brought, and everyone shares their food for breakfast next to some tea they brew together. Starting that day, this turns into a tradition."

While telling this story, Sütçü Kenan emphasizes how chivalrous Van's people are.

Now let us see what the sine qua non of Van breakfast are according to Sütçü Kenan:

- · Van herbed cheese
- Buffalo kaymak in sahan<sup>98</sup>
- Walnuts
- Cacık<sup>99</sup>
- · Catak black honeycomb honey

<sup>98 &</sup>quot;Sahan" is a shallow pan with two handles; traditionally made of copper.



<sup>94 &</sup>quot;Ayran aşı" is chilled yoghurt and chickpea soup. "Kenger" is the local name for a type of thistle.

<sup>95 &</sup>quot;Keledoş" is one of the staple dishes of the Van cuisine. The distinct ingredients for keledoş are Heliz and ak pancar herbs. Chickpeas, wheat, lentils, regional herbs, and meat are all cooked in water, each in a separate pot. In a copper cooking-pot, the boiled meat is sautéed together with some onions in some butter. All the other ingredients, which were previously boiled and strained, are added in to the copper pot to cook further. Then, some çökelek or drained yoghurt is used as a liaison before the fire is turned off. At the time of service, some heated butter with powdered paprika is drizzled over.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>96</sup> "Keşkek" used to be a ceremonial stew served at weddings, circumcision celebrations, and religious holidays. The main ingredients are meat or chicken and cracked wheat (bulgur) or barley. It has a porridge-like consistency. For special events, people prepare keşkek over an open fire in a large cauldron. The cooks mash and stir the ingredients together with large wooden spoons. Usually, volunteers take turns stirring because it is a very labor-intensive task.

<sup>97 &</sup>quot;Murtağa" is a very simple breakfast dish made only with three ingredients. Butter and flour are roasted in a pan. After taking the pan from the stove, whisked eggs are added into it and mixed. It can be served as is, or with some honey on top.



- Murtağa
- Kavut<sup>100</sup>
- · Tahini and grape molasses
- · Various fresh cheese kinds
- Various bread kinds; sılap pide, çöre (kete), thin lavaş, tandır bread.

If you are in Van, I highly recommend you to stop at this restaurant:

#### Sütçü Kenan

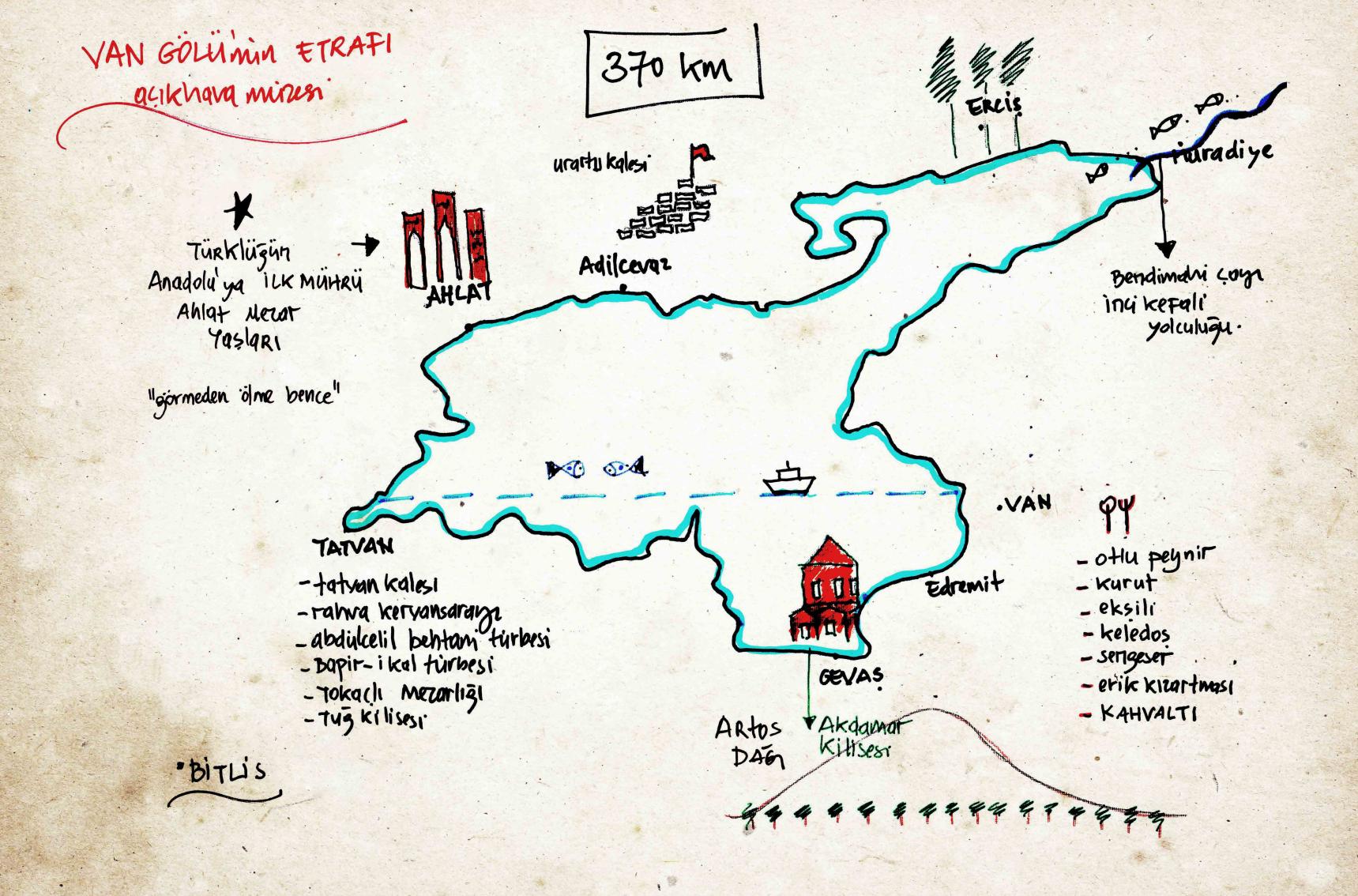
Cumhuriyet Caddesi, Kahvaltıcılar Sokak No: 7/A Van

<sup>100 &</sup>quot;Kavut" is an extremely simple breakfast dish. A largely milled variety of wheat grains are toasted in butter, and served. It can be served as is, or with some honey or jam on top.



<sup>99 &</sup>quot;Cacik" is a cold dip, soup, or sauce depending on the preferred consistency. It is made of strained yoghurt or regular yogurt (diluted with water if preferred) mixed with small diced or grated cucumbers, garlic (optional) and salt. Sometimes olive oil, and herbs such as dill or mint are also added in.







## ANATOLIAN GÜZELLEME<sup>101</sup> AN ODE TO ANATOLIA

Çorum, Amasya, Tokat

Anatolia is the world's greatest and finest teaching. Every moment, every day and every month spent in Anatolia is very precious. I take trips around Anatolia especially in spring and fall. In this part of the book, I will be taking you to Çorum, Amasya and Tokat. I can easily write hundreds of pages on each city, but because I love them all, I have put them together in this piece of writing.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Güzelleme" literally translates into "Beautification". It is a genre used in Aşık (Minstrel) Folk Literature referring to lyric poems (mostly) about love. They are written in the form of masters, semai, or running verse. It can be roughly interpreted as an "ode". Turkish folk literature is an oral tradition deeply rooted, in its form, in Central Asian nomadic traditions. The word aşık (literally, "lover") is in fact the term used for first-level members of the Bektashi order. The Asiks (minstrels) are one of the most distinguished and brilliant communities of performers encountered within the realm of Turkish culture. Generally coming up singing lyrics and poetry to the accompaniment of the musical instrument 'saz', the asiks are artists that give voice to all of the social events of the societies in which they exist, and write footnotes to history.



#### Corum

One of my favorite places... I have been feeling like a native for quite a while. No one knows, but their dishes are legendary. The flour, the bread, the morning soups, and the dried vegetables... Just cannot have enough of these... I would consider Çorum's cuisine in the top five among all the regional cuisines of Turkey.

#### Alaca Höyük

Start your excursions in Alaca Höyük which is the earliest excavation site in Turkey. You will bear witness to the traces of the civilizations predating us in these lands; and also to how much art and culture were valued in this land thousands of years ago. If you stop by at the dig-house, make sure to give my respectful greetings to my dear teacher Prof. Aykut Çınaroğlu who has been spending his life in dig-houses around Turkey for the last 56 years. I am sure he will be happy to offer you some tea while talking about the Hatti and Hittite civilizations.



#### Katipler Konağı (Katipler Mansion)

This is a humble Anatolian restaurant that I have included in the top 10 best restaurants of Turkey. The owner, Fevziye Hanım, is a treasure trove on her subject. She has everything from plum, cherry, unripe (green) almond, and quince pickles that are separately jarred so that their colors are preserved, to rose syrup prepared by using the paste that is the end product of a process of placing rose petals in a jar with some sugar and salt of lemon, and letting it rest under the sun for 15 days. Whatever she has, it is all one of a kind. Whatever you find here, it is abundantly Anatolian!

#### İskilip Dolması and Cacık with Vinegar

The process of cooking İskilip Dolması starts with putting some Akçeltik rice in a Ca—a cloth bag made of plant fibers—that gets sealed by sewing the open mouth. On the other side, the meat and water is put in a copper cauldron. A trivet is placed on the meat in the cauldron on which the bag of rice is laid. It is crucial to pay attention that the bag of rice does not touch the water. After the mouth of the cauldron gets sealed with some dough, the cauldron is placed over the fire at night so that the cooking process continues all night long. When the dough-lid of the cauldron gets opened in the morning, the cloth bag is taken out, and slit open by the help of a knife. The rice in the bag, which is cooked in the steam of the meat, is placed on a serving plate, and the meat, which had been cooking overnight, is put on the top of the rice. It is always served with cacik with home-made vinegar on the side. I highly recommend you to eat this legendary dish! In fact, you should go to Corum to experience the whole ceremony.





#### Amasya

Everyone knows the story of Ferhat and Şirin (Farhad and Shirin), but no one knows that the mountains Ferhat carved out happens to be in Amasya. Amasya is so different because of its stories, and the Ottoman princes who resided here; and many times simply because of its physical beauty alone. I do not know if it has to do with Yeşilırmak (The Green River) that passes through the city, but the airiness and peace is felt to the bone.

#### Ali Kaya

I do not think it would be an exaggeration to list this as one of the restaurants in Turkey which has the best views. Overlooking to Yeşilırmak, the Kings' Tombs and the city of Amasya from a high point, the restaurant offers a spectacular scenery, and delicious regional dishes to top it all. I highly recommend you to be there in time for the sunset to watch Amasya fall into the lap of the night.

#### Amasya Çörekçisi Galip Usta (Galip Usta, the Amasya Çörek Cook) - 1925

This is the traditional corek shop of Amasya which has been open for over three generations. They make two kinds of corek: with poppy seeds alone, and with poppy seeds and walnuts, both of which are shaped as fingers. There is also a round version with walnuts. The recipe for Amasya coregi, which is passed on from the grandfathers to the grandchildren, is only one of the many traditional treasures of Anatolia. Why not have some breakfast along the Yeşilırmak after buying some corek from here?





#### **TOKAT**

Tokat got its place in #ömürakkorseyahatnamesi as the 77th city among all that I have visited in Turkey. It is not possible to forget Tokat which I had visited last August. The moment I entered the boundaries of the city, I kept telling myself, "I will be visiting this city many times more." I believe one of the most important characteristics of Tokat is its eagerness in protecting the old texture of the city; or at least the effort in trying to do so. Had I been an administrative chief, I would have put the entire old Tokat under protection, and restored it. I am confident it could make it to the world lists on this matter. The district right under the castle is especially delightful to look at from above because you do not see any high apartment buildings. All you see is old single or double-story Tokat houses and their roofs scattered amidst the trees. One can find similar scenes in Europe, but it is very difficult to find in Turkey. This is why we need to appreciate the value of Tokat, and truly treasure it.

#### **Traditional Tokat Breakfast**

Tokat is a wonderful place especially because of its local products. Nowadays, industrial products are being sold all over Anatolia in the name of locality. I have not witnessed any such thing in almost anything I ate in Tokat. Cloth sucuk, Tokat yağlısı<sup>102</sup>, walnut çörek with chickpeas yeast, çökelek sündürme<sup>103</sup>, Zile grape molasses, cornelian cherry and rosehip jams make a Tokat breakfast very special. Served with some bread, each one by itself is good enough for a breakfast because all of them on one table takes it to the level of a feast. Actually Fırınistan, which is a patisserie created as the novel brand of Akıncılar Fırını (Akıncılar Bakery) that has been around for four generations, gives you such a chance. They also serve çöreks delivered from their own bakery. All very very delicious...

#### Tokat Yağlısı and Tokat Çöreği

Tokat yağlısı is the guest of honor on all breakfast tables in Tokat; sometimes with some cheese, and at other times with some jam... They make their çöreks using chickpeas yeast. Another characteristic of Tokat that carries it to the upper echelons of regionality is the use of sourdough. Our next domestic travel plan for our sourdough group (Pasto Hakan and Palemek Şevki) which has been working together for quite a long time, is for Tokat; obviously for the sake of its sourdough. The signs posted on many of the grocery store windows, which read, "We carry bread made with home-made sourdough," is more than enough to make us excited.

#### Fruits and Vegetables

No matter from which direction you enter into or leave Tokat, you pass through a belt of vineyards and gardens extending out about 50 kilometers. About 10% of Turkey's fruits and vegetable production comes from Tokat. When that is the case, you can eat the best of everything here. Especially in the restaurants along the road in the green belt region, the fruit service is almost directly from the tree to your table. I have never seen this anywhere else in Turkey. Imagine being seated at your table with an apricot tree on one side and a cherry tree on the other. You just enjoy your conversation while picking your fruits from the trees.

<sup>103 &</sup>quot;Çökelek sündürme" is a breakfast item made by frying curd cheese in olive oil and butter.



<sup>102 &</sup>quot;Tokat yağlısı" is a bread that is cooked in special pans placed in black ovens. The ingredients are flour, water, salt and butter.

#### Tokat Kebabi

I hope you will have an idea about the fabulous result when I tell you about the ingredients and the features that altogether make up the Tokat Kebabi:



Lamb from Niksar

Tomatoes from Tokat

Eggplants from Erbaa

Peppers from Kazova

Potatoes from Artova

The master mason building the oven is from Tokat.

The master chef pounding the meat on the skewer is from Tokat.

And the master chef cooking the shish is from Tokat, too.

I had been fortunate enough to taste Tokat kebabi before, but unfortunate enough to have eaten it outside of Tokat. Since then, I had been considering to do it on-site in Tokat. I was so right! One has to eat it on-site where it is originated! Honestly, I was yearning for this trip mostly for the sake of Tokat kebabi. If you have finished reading already, I would suggest you to start searching for a plane ticket immediately. Get up and go! Anatolia is so beautiful!





ANADOLM GUZELLEMEST 11 GOVUM, AMASYA, TOKAT

> tence turkiye'nin en izi 10 Lokantası arasında

> > GORUM

92.3 km

Amasya dibet kuya ) ortada "Ali kaya"

AMASYA

TOKAT

\_\_ 257.1 km

Putkiye nin en guzet monzaralı Lokantalurından Biri - Tokatkebalan icin en uygun zaman

- Tokat Yağlısı

- Tokat coregi

- Bez sucuk

- BAT

113 km

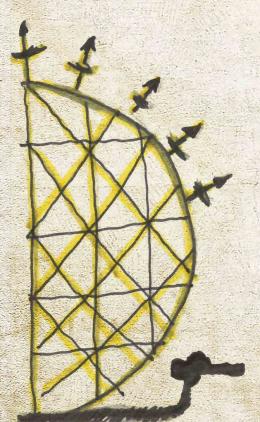
- Meyve ve Sebrekt

ALACA HÖYÜK

51.8 km

109 yıldır devam eden Türkiye'nin en iskl kazı 9lanını mutlakq ziyoret edin.

GÜNES KURSU:
Hititlerde uygarlığın ve
sanatın simgesidir!





## THE DESSERT ATLAS OF TURKEY

Dessert is one of the most prominent features of the Turkish Cuisine since the Seljuk times. The helvas, revanis<sup>104</sup> and baklavas of the (Ottoman) palace have been the talk of town around the world. At this time, I want to use the map of tastes to show you the living members of the great inheritance of desserts in Turkey.

<sup>104 &</sup>quot;Revani" is a classic dessert that has been present in Turkish cuisine since the Ottoman period. It is one of the most common desserts and is served both at home and in restaurants. It is a simple dessert made with a single layer of soft, yellow semolina sponge cake steeped in lots of light syrup.



#### KATMER AND SWEET GOZLEME

This historic dessert, which can be traced back in early written records such as the Divânü Lügâti't Türk (compiled in 1072-74), is made in many different parts of Turkey albeit under different names such as katlama or katmer. However, the most famous katmer is the one from Antep.

Orkide Pastanesi (Orkide (Orchids) Patisserie) / Gaziantep Küşleme Lokantası (Küşleme Restaurant) / Gaziantep Halil Usta / Gaziantep Ayten Usta / Eskişehir / Kafkas Gözlemesi Tatlı (Sweet) Gözleme / Denizli

#### **KEREBİÇ**

Unlike Antep's gerebiç, Mersin's kerebiç is served with the sweet foamy dippingsauce made with soapwort plant roots. It is one of those desserts which utilizes wooden spoon moulds that hold an important place in our dessert culture as part of the moulding tradition.

Yürü Kerebiç / Mersin

#### **BAKLAVA**

Increasing the number of layers of the phyllo dough, rolling the dough as thin as possible, and making the baklava as crispy as one can have always been the traditional standards in measuring the mastery and artfulness of all dessert chefs.

Evliya Chelebi tells that the quality of baklava can be measured by dropping a metal coin on the baklava from high up. If the coin goes into the layers of the baklava, it is always a good sign. Nowadays, the Gaziantep baklava is the most famous all over. However, many cities around Anatolia has their own versions of baklavas.

Elmacıpazarı Güllüoğlu / Gaziantep Koçak / Gaziantep Beyaz Baklava / Katipler Konağı / Çorum















#### **KADAYIF & KÜNEFE**

Ancient sources in Arabic mention yassı kadayıf<sup>105</sup> as early as 10th century. Nevertheless, unless it is stated otherwise, kadayıf always refers to tel kadayıf<sup>106</sup> during the Ottoman era.

Kadayıf with tahini / Ağaçaltı Lokantası (Restaurant Under-the-Tree) / Kayseri Kadayıf with milk / Besler Köfte / İnegöl
Sıtkı Usta / Diyarbakır
Muammer Usta / Erzurum
Çınaraltı Künefe / Hatay
Emin Usta / Mersin
Ozikizler / Gaziantep

#### SAC ARASI (BETWEEN THE SAC)

The name suggests it all! It is cooked in between two sac. A sweet taste from Konya that is served with kaymak...

Köşk Restaurant / Konya Şölen Patisserie / Konya

#### **PUMPKIN DESSERT**

I take trips for the sake of this desert. If you are around in these cities, make sure to stop by at the following addresses for a taste.

Refik Usta / Karacabey, Bursa Merkez Lokantası (Central Restaurant) / Aydın 7 Mehmet / Antalya

#### MARON GLACEÉ

Bursa's maron glaceé is the most famous one, because the type of chestnut that grows in Bursa absorbs the sugar the most. Nowadays, although it is very difficult to find the maron glaceé made with chestnuts collected in Uludağ, you can find the 'maron glaceé in a bundle' made with Osmanlıoğlu seeds at the following address.

Pasto Ekmek Fırını / Bursa

<sup>106 &</sup>quot;Tel (wire) kadayıf" is finely shredded phyllo dough. The shreds are so fine that they look like thin wires. It is also the name of the dessert itself which is cooked in trays. It has a pistachio filling in between two layers of kadayif, and gets soaked in thick syrup (sherbet) after being baked in oven.



<sup>105 &</sup>quot;Yassı (flat) kadayıf" is the name of a dessert made with a sweet pastry dough stuffed with a filling of sugary toasted, cinnamon-kissed walnuts. They are then fried (or baked) until golden brown. Just as they exit the frying pan they are quickly dipped into a simple sugary syrup bath. The shape is somewhat like ravioli or empanadas. In modern times, adaptations have been made creating changes not only in form but also ingredients; flat round ones without any fillings are more common in big cities.



#### PİŞMANİYE (FLOSS HELVA), ÇEKME HELVA (TENSILE HELVA)

An ode to desserts comes from all parts of Anatolia; from Erzurum to Afyon, and from Bolu to Alanya. We even have a couplet for this type of tensile helva made by flossing thin strands:

"...Sözümüz, ağzımız tatlı tatlıdır

Çekilen helvamız katlı katlıdır..."

"...Our word, our mouth is so sweet

Our flossed helva has so many layers..."

#### SÜTLAÇ (RICE PUDDING)

Rice pudding is a contribution to Europe from the Turkish cuisine. I consider the rice pudding from the Black Sea Region among the best in Turkey. 60 kilograms of milk gets boiled down to 40 kilograms so that the fattiness increases. Only then the milk gets ready for making rice pudding. And this process makes the Hamsiköy rice pudding legendary.

Lale Restaurant / Çayeli / Rize

Konakoğlu Restaurant / Trabzon

#### CENNET ÇAMURU (MUD OF HEAVEN)

This is a legendary dessert created by the incorporation of the cuisines of Aleppo and Ottoman Empire. Nowadays, it is mostly found in Kilis. You can taste it at these addresses:

Baklavacı Bekanlar / Kilis

Fadıloğulları Baklava / Kilis

#### **DAIRY DESSERTS & PUDDINGS**

Dairy desserts are found abundantly in the Ottoman cuisine, and in the old recipe books. Here are the shops where you can find the best dairy desserts:

Su Muhallebisi (Water Pudding) / Mazlumlar Muhallebicisi / Eskişehir

Süt Helvası (Milk Helva) / Rumeli Lokantası / Bursa

#### BİCİ BİCİ / HAYTALI

I do not think there is anyone who does not like this. It gets even more delicious when it is prepared in hot climates. That is why the best comes from Adana and Hatay in the heat of the summer

Affan Coffee House / Antakya

All the Tablacis (Street Vendors) / Adana ('Tabla' is the local name for street carts on which they sell food.)



#### PIDE WITH TAHINI

If someone mentions pide, I think of the Aegean region. And if someone mentions pide in the Aegean Region, I think of pide with tahini. The tahini and the buffalo kaymak make it extra delicious.

Elmalı Pide / Tavas / Denizli Kısmet Pide / Nazilli / Aydın

#### **HELVA**

There were tens of different categories of helva during the Ottoman era. Nowadays, it has been narrowed down to three as flour, semolina and cheese helvas. I find it quite disappointing.

Semolina Helvas / Hacı Şerif at Merkez Dükkan (Central Branch) / Denizli Cheese Helva / Kadir Usta / Çanakkale Cheese Helva / Şeref Dondurma (Ice Cream) / Malkara

#### AND THE OTHERS

Candies, lokums (Turkish Delights), cookies, pastes, jams, fruit desserts, lokmas (doughnuts), types of revanis, nevzine, zerde, cezerye, iron dessert, keşkül and hundreds of others... I cannot possibly finish writing about the desserts—and the dishes—of the Turkish Cuisine, which attributes its past to great cultures such as the Seljuks and the Ottomans.













#### GRAPE MOLASSES HELVA WITH OLIVE OIL

#### Ingredients

- 2 glasses grape molasses
- 1/2 glass Komili Extra
   Virgin Olive Oil
- 1/2 glass starch

- Whisk the grape molasses and starch in a mixing-bowl.
- Put the Komili Extra Virgin Olive Oil in a pan, and heat for a few minutes on the stove.
- Add the mixture of grape molasses and starch into the oil.
- Cook while stirring continuously.
- As the helva gets more stirred and cooked it will have a thicker texture.
- Turn off the stove when the helva is thick enough.
- Let it rest.
- · Serve with walnuts.





# 10 GASTRONOMIC FLAVORS FOR LESS THAN 10 TL

At this point, I would like to recommend you 10 extraordinary meals that will cost less than 10 TL each. Leave aside the lists for the best and the most expensive. My 10-names list for the cheapest will present such tastes that the 'best of' lists cannot offer. I have got a few bonuses as well...



There is a statement
in the most famous
Michelin Guide for
3 Michelin Star
Restaurants; "Travel to
the country where this
restaurant is located."
In other words, they are
saying, "Visit that country
just for the sake of this
restaurant."

Well, naturally my
list is nothing lesser!
Get up and go! Antep,
Konya, Hatay, Samsun,
Gümüşhane... Eat some
while traveling in the
country.

I would like to pinpoint that I am writing in no particular order of liking or categorization.

## Yağ Somunu (Butter Loaf) / Pideci Hasan Şendağlı (Hasan Şendağlı, the Pide Cook)

The best savory pastry I have eaten in the world! In one word; unbelievable!

Within the same week I have visited the shop in Napoli which makes the best pizza in the world and our bakery shop in Konya. The result is clear! The champion is obvious! If Sorbillo's master chef were to visit this shop in Konya, he would go back to Napoli in tears. Go to Konya just for the sake of this pide! Imagine Konya blue mould cheese and Konya butter in the middle of a masterfully prepared dough which is sprinkled on top with sesame seeds and poppy seeds, and all baked together in the oven. Especially the poppy seeds leave an unbelievable taste on the palate. Let me not write further. Just get up and go! And please do not forget to give my regards...

Kadınlar Pazarı Yanı (Next to the Women's Market) / Konya

#### Şaşakaldım Köftecisi (I-am-Amazed Köfte Restaurant) / Bursa

I have been eating köfte from the hands of street vendors for so many years, but I have never come across with one who is so artisanal and so innovative. At the time when he puts the monolithic piece of köfte on the grill, he places the tomatoes, green peppers, tomato sauce and butter on the side. He toasts the bread that is soaked in the fatty juice of the köfte. When all is cooked, he first dips the köfte in the melted butter, and then puts it in the bread. He adds the tomato sauce, and the grilled vegetables; and tops it all with sizzling Bursa butter. This is a true urban legend! Make sure to give my regards to Cevat Ağabey. You will have its benefits by doing so.

#### 10 TL

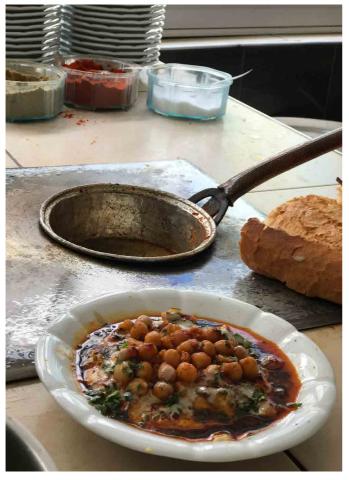
On Vişne Caddesi (Cherry Avenue), behind the Garanti Bank. Ask anyone, and they will direct you.

## Ciğer Kavurma Dürüm (Liver Kavurma Wrap) / Köşk Ciğer Salonu (Köşk Liver Hall)

If you simply cannot have enough liver just like me, you can have your own feast with the most delicious liver kavurma specifically in the morning, or if you prefer, at lunch time. The liver, which is stir-fried in tail fat with the addition of onions and red peppers, is served in a pide. You pick what you like from the display of accompaniments on the counter to go into your wrap; greeneries, lemon and spices. I added in lots of fresh mint leaves, parsley, onions, lemon, cumin and red pepper flakes; and ate in great appetite.

Full size sandwich is 6 TL, half size is 3 TL.











#### Siron / Özdenoğlu Konağı

I had tasted siron for the first time in Bursa from the hands of a cook from Artvin, but I also ate this legendary dish on-site in Artvin and Gümüşhane during a trip I took later in the Eastern Black Sea Region. Yufka bread is made into a wrap which gets cut into smaller pieces. Chicken or meat broth, yoghurt and butter are poured respectively on the bread. There are several different kinds with ground meat, with chicken, or sweet. You can make it at home, or do the right thing as I did eat it on-site.

10 TL

Karşıyaka, Vadi Sokak No: 1 Merkez (at the center) / Gümüşhane

## Humus / Çayırcı Bakla Humus Dükkanı (Çayırcı Broad Beans Humus Shop)

This humus can be made either from chickpeas or broad beans, but definitely with lots of tahini. The pickles, bread and water that come with it are compliments of the shop. The chickpeas or broad beans are put into the carra (copper cauldron with handles) at night, and delivered to the hammam (Turkish Bath). They get cooked overnight in the külhan (the furnace where the water is heated) of the hammam. When you place your order, they pound the cooked chickpeas or broad beans in a mortar; prepare it all fresh before serving.

4 TL

Eski Sanayi 5. Cadde (The Old Industrial Zone) / Hatay

#### Nohut Dürümü (Chickpeas Wrap) / Adil Usta

We, the people of Antep, are mad about this. Put the chickpeas cooked in bone broth in a tırnak pide; add in some onion piyaz; and squeeze some lemon on top. You have your breakfast ready! This chickpeas wrap comes at a jaw-dropping price. The minimum price and maximum flavor matchup for a gastronomic meal just cannot get any better than this!

3,25 TL

The demolished old market site - Şehitler Caddesi, Ağa Camii arkası (behind the Ağa Mosque) / Gaziantep (Make sure to visit this branch.)

## Tahinli Kadayıf (Kadayıf with Tahini) / Ağaçaltı Kebapçısı (Kebap Restaurant Under-the-Tree)

It is not only the best dessert a ridiculous 4 Liras can buy, but also one of the best I have ever eaten! Make sure to go to Kayseri to eat this! In the meantime, I have to mention the special effect of Tarsus tahini on this kadayıf, phenomenal!

4 TL

Oto Sanayi Sitesi (Automobile Industrial Zone) / Kayseri



#### Ağaçaltı Tatlıcısı (Dessert Cook Under-the-Tree) / Adana

He has been selling the same dessert—halka tatlisi<sup>107</sup>—for the last 54 years under the same tree. I do not think that there is another one like him in Turkey. At least, I have not come across with one so far. They arrive in tray after tray, all warm. If you can manage, I recommend you to eat while they are warm. Wait for the new tray just arriving; you will not regret the wait!

#### 2 TL

Karataş Yolu (Along the road to Karataş) / Adana

#### Piyaz with Tahini / Antalya

It does not matter at which restaurant you eat; just make sure to eat it in Antalya! Sure, my liking for tahini is influential in my liking for this piyaz, but this dish will make even those who do not like tahini start liking it.

The most famous in Antalya are Sami, Ahmet and Aksu, but as I have already mentioned, it has a distinct flavor in each location, and they are all delicious.

#### Kıymalı Tost (Toast with Ground Meat) / Yeşilova - Burdur

'Toast with ground meat' is specific to Yeşilova, located along the shores of Lake Salda. It is especially fabulous when enjoyed with Zafer Gazozu (Zafer (Victory) Fizzy Soda). I consider toasts in the Turkish Cuisine as one of the most successful dishes, and 'toast with ground meat' might be my favorite toast kind. You can try toasts at a few different food stalls like I do.

#### **BONUS MATERIAL**

#### Sıkma (Clinched) / Adana - Tarsus - Mersin

Shame on you if you cover the road between Adana and Mersin without trying sıkma<sup>108</sup> and ayran. One piece of sıkma with lor cheese and potatoes is 2 TL.

#### HİDOLİM (Halil İbrahim Ice Cream & Lemonade) / Ünye

HİDOLİM is the acronym for Halil İbrahim Dondurma Limonata (Halil İbrahim Ice Cream & Lemonade), and also the name for their specialty drink. One could say that it is the Turkish version of an affogato, but with variations: one scoop of chocolate ice cream in a glass of lemonade. A Black Sea legend!

#### Hamsiköy Rice Pudding / Konakoğlu Restaurant / Trabzon

If you hear the two words, Hamsiköy and rice pudding, being used in combination, I recommend you to order some roasted hazelnuts, too.

<sup>108 &</sup>quot;Sıkma" literals translates into "clinched". It is the local name for a wrap prepared with flatbread.



<sup>107 &</sup>quot;Halka tathsi" literally translates into 'hoop dessert' referring to the shape of the dessert. It is very similar to churros, but this one is soaked in sugary syrup



Papağan Çibörek<sup>109</sup> Salonu (Papağan (Parrot) Çibörek Parlor) / Eskişehir Eskişehir... Food... Tatarian... Turkic World... And çibörek. If my mind is not playing tricks on me, one piece is 2 TL.

#### Kazım Büfe (Kazim's Food Stall)/ (Banana Milk Shake) / Adana

Adana's kebap, sıkma and—although it looks like it does not align with the rest—banana milkshake! I think the fact that they make it with burnt milk turns it into a legend!

#### Kardeşler Büfe (Brothers Food Stall) / İzmir

Their toasts made with eggs and kaşar cheese, or with sucuk, or with eggs and kavurma are legendary. They have been serving in Alsancak since 1974. This one tells the story of an Aegean legend.

<sup>109 &</sup>quot;Çibörek" is very similar to "çiğbörek", but the meaning behind the wording is not the same. 'Çiğ' means 'raw' in Turkish, and 'çi' means 'delicious' in Tatar language. Çiğbörek is stuffed with ground meat that is not pre-cooked; thus, the name 'raw'. That is the classic way to make it. However, there are recipes in which they use pre-cooked ground meat in the filling. It is a deep-fried turnover with a filling of ground meat and onions. It is made with a single round piece of dough folded over the filling in a crescent shape. Chebureki is a national dish of Crimean Tatar cuisine.







### HUMUS-U ÂLÂ (THE SUPERB HUMUS)

#### Ingredients

- 2 bowls boiled chickpeas
- 3 cloves garlic
- 1/2 glass tahini
- 4 tablespoons Komili Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 1 dessert spoon cumin
- 1 tea spoon rock salt
- 1/2 tea glass water

#### For the salad

- 1/2 bunch arugula
- 1/2 bunch dill
- 2 tomatoes
- 1/2 onion
- 5 pickled gherkins
- 1/2 bowl pickled beets
- Pomegranate molasses
- · Komili Extra Virgin Olive Oil

- Put the boiled chickpeas in the blender. Add the garlic, tahini, Komili
  Extra Virgin Olive Oil, cumin, water and salt. Blend until you get a smooth
  consistency.
- Prepare the salad on the other side by chopping all the ingredients except the gherkins coarsely.
- Put the humus in the serving plate, and add the salad on top.
- Decorate with the pickled gherkins.
- Drizzle as much pomegranate molasses and Komili Extra Virgin Olive Oil as you like.

You can save the remaining humus for sandwiches or future salads by keeping it in a jar for couple of days in the refrigerator.

My dear deceased paternal grandma used to make it so good.

With sucuk... With pickles... With köftes... With romaine lettuce...

With lemon...I have created this recipe by drawing some
inspiration from her.





for the Vacationers

#### From İstanbul to the Aegean

# THE ROUTE OF FLAVORS FOR THE VACATIONERS

Turkish people are famous for their love for the bayram (religious holiday) vacations, or the long weekend trips. Everyone makes lengthy preparations, and many times, people hit the road in their cars for some point in the Aegean. I have prepared a gastronomical route for you for such a trip starting in İstanbul and ending in any corner of the Aegean. I recommend you to visit these shops which are in rivalry with each other in humbleness and deliciousness. So, let us set off from İstanbul now and taste all the good stuff as we proceed step by step.



Especially their Çorum,
Gümüşhane and Kastamonu
breads that are made with
Anatolian wheats are,
in one word, legendary!

One of the most outstanding shops in this route.

Their sac tava and pumpkin dessert with chestnuts are very delicious.

This market has been opening with prayers for the last 100 years. Try to be there at 8:30am to catch this ritual.

This is a 180-year-old stone-oven bakery, and there has been only two master bakers in the last 90 years.

That is the essence of the story here!

A 40-year-old shop; and one that supports the local producers for all the 40 years.

#### Pasto - Palemek - Gökhan Aperatif / Bursa

Bursa has to be the breakfast point on this route. You can go to Gökhan Aperatif or Pasto for breakfast. And on the way back, do not forget to buy superb sourdough breads from Palemek and Pasto to take home with you to İstanbul. Especially their Çorum, Gümüşhane and Kastamonu breads that are made with Anatolian wheats are, in one word, legendary!

#### Kayhan Köftecisi / Bursa

A young representative of the Bursa tradesmen... Besides the traditional köfte varieties, he introduces novelties through his hallmark köftes. And those buttered pides and dried hot peppers they serve with the köftes... They will de-throne even the köfte and pide! And their monolithic köfte weighing one kilogram... So delicious! But it is not over! The grilled vegetables, fresh-squeezed apple juice, and so many other things he serves as an accompaniment to the köftes... This restaurant is simultaneously one of the most traditional and most innovative restaurants that have opened in Bursa lately. This restaurant by itself can justify a trip to Bursa.

#### Refik Usta / Karacabey

One of the most outstanding shops on this route. Their sac tava and pumpkin dessert with chestnuts are very delicious. You will not be able to get over its ezme with tomato paste, Karacabey onion and pepper cooked in stone-oven, and the thick tava yoghurt which looks like cheese. Make sure to give my regards to them!

#### Atadan Peynirci (Ancestral Cheese Makers) / Mustafakemalpaşa

A family that has been making cheese for four generations. Superb cheeses and humble tradesmanship... Their shop is located only three kilometers off the road. If you are a cheese-lover like I am, I highly recommend you to include it in your return trip.

#### Düzdağ Kahvesi (Düzdağ Coffee House)

Of course, it is about toast and ayran! Hardly anyone knows about this place, but it is right off the road. This toast with Yanturalı sucuk, Mihaliç cheese and tomato paste is a fantastic meal. Make sure to stop by on either direction.

#### Haktanır Pide Fırını (Haktanır Pide Bakery) / Izmir

This is a 180-year-old stone-oven bakery, and there has been only two master bakers in the last 90 years. That is the essence of the story here! Ask anyone in Kemeraltı, and they will direct you. Also, while in Kemeraltı, you cannot leave without stopping at the söğüşçüler<sup>110</sup>. Leave some space in your stomach for the set.

<sup>110 &</sup>quot;Söğüş" translates into "cold cuts' in its broadest sense, but in this particular location it refers to sheep head cold cuts. "Söğüşçüler" means the "cold cuts sellers or makers"





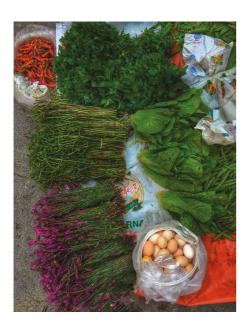






#### Salı Pazarı (Tuesday Farmers' Market) / Tire

This market has been opening with prayers for the last 100 years. Try to be there at 8:30am to catch this ritual. Tire market, where local producers and especially women from all the villages in the area meet, is one of the most impressive farmers' markets in the world. While strolling through the market, make sure to stop and eat in the small restaurants around. There are tens of them which are all good. I consider Köfteci Sezgin, Ali Usta Taktak Kebabi and Kaplan Dağ Lokantası (Kaplan (Tiger) Mountain Restaurant) as the masterpieces of Tire's gastronomical life.





#### Töngül Pide Fırını (Töngül Pide Bakery) / Ödemiş

A master had once said that for someone to be called an artist he or she must have artists in his or her family for at least three generations. Here, we have a family executing the artistry of pide making... You must definitely, but I mean absolutely, taste the Töngül pide that is served with butter and grated two-year-aged Ödemiş cheese on top. At least once before you die!

#### Sümer Pide and Hukul Pide / Yenipazar

Yenipazar is a slow-city. That is why all from here is so tasty; the food and beverages, the vegetables and the fruits... Both pide restaurants are worth making your route longer. This city has a unique practice, too: 'pide restaurant on duty'. I believe it is a first in Turkey! Therefore, you can stop by at any time you like.





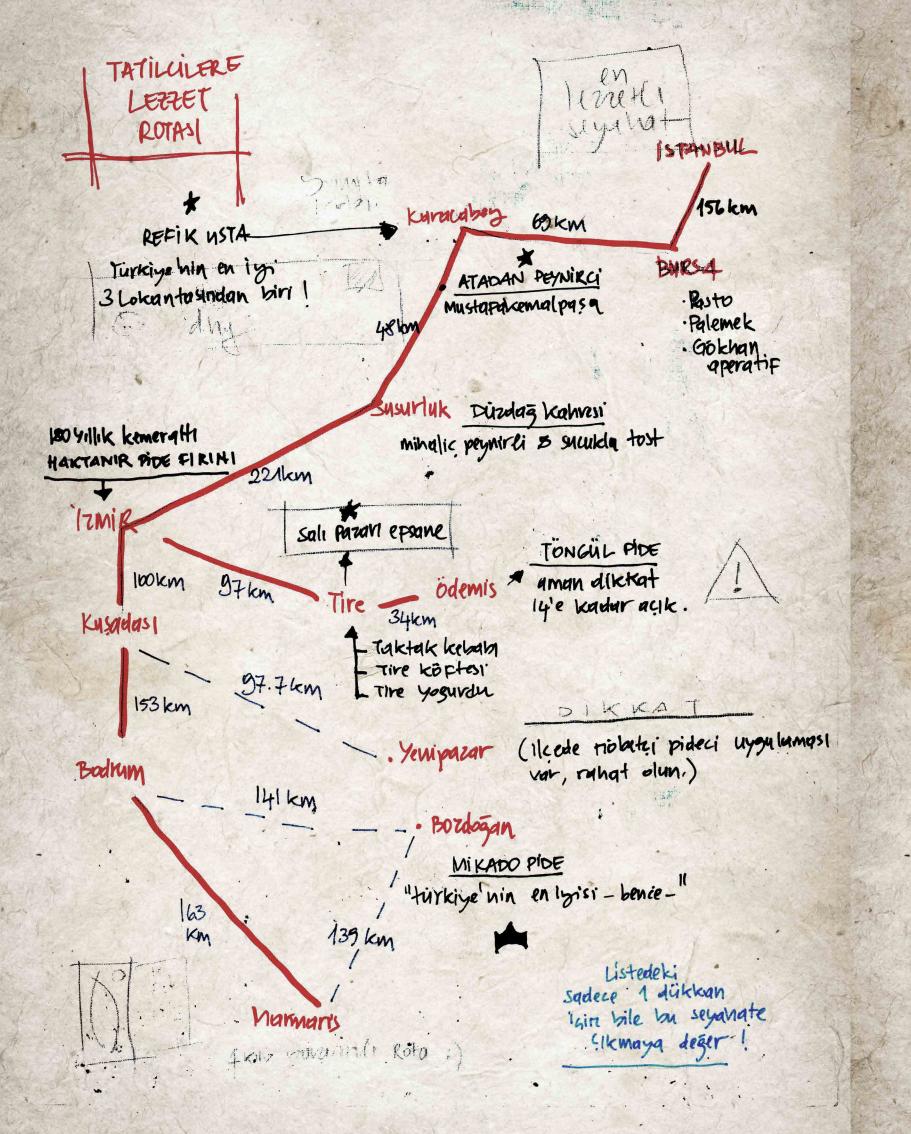


#### Mikado Pide / Bozdoğan

The meat is from Bozdoğan. The butter is from Bozdoğan. The milk is from Bozdoğan. The bitter orange, the vegetables, the buffalo kaymak, the water... All from Bozdoğan! And not to forget the fizzy soda: Bozdoğan Municipality Soda... That is my description in brief. A 40-year-old shop; and one that supports the local producers for all the 40 years.

The pides are served with bitter orange in this region. Do not forget to ask for it if it is not served automatically; and also for some buffalo kaymak with tahini for the final closing.





## BUYUK DOGU SEYAHATI cildir dorimus gol matizams! ardahan "ocak- mart" arası 1 65.7 km KARS - Kaz "erboga kasar" - Gravyer - 391 - Tercyago . DIGOR Sarikappys Kizilcam ormanlari 16DIR ranklar loka ntasi . 4-740km A Horasan eleskirt AGRI . soft doner DOGU BAYAU. esnat kahvaltisi

enfes kis mancarasi

- Ergul Hamm

Lokantosi

## **FLAVOR ROUTES**





TRABZON - RIZE KARADEHIZ \* agstronomi seyahati LALE LOKANTASI kavurma, pilav, sutlas Parar TRABZON ► RIZE PLATODA 80.4KM Gayeli MOLA - Huzur lokantası kadınlar pazarı KM - Liman Lokantası Kalkanoglu pilavası Syrmene ! - Ziraat Lay evi Rustu'nun Firm - Yılmaz pide Zilkale Ayder menmet usta köpte Jalonu \* - surbist break BORDO-MAVI BALIK MACKA Sümet restoran. seyahat album Kesinlikle ugragip Karadenize ait ne vorsa dnerisi tadilmali ... Karmete "nayino"

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# KONYA GASTRONOMISI

"selcuklu nun izinde"

# Mutlaka Yenmesi Gerekenler,

- KONYA YOGURDU
- KÜFLÜ PEYNIK
- BAMYA CORBAST
- MYMKYNSE BIR DÜGÜNE KATILIN ama YEMEKLI :)
- Su Boresi
- YAPRAK SARMA
- Mevlana seketi
- evde yapılan "sac arası"



Beysehir Gölü

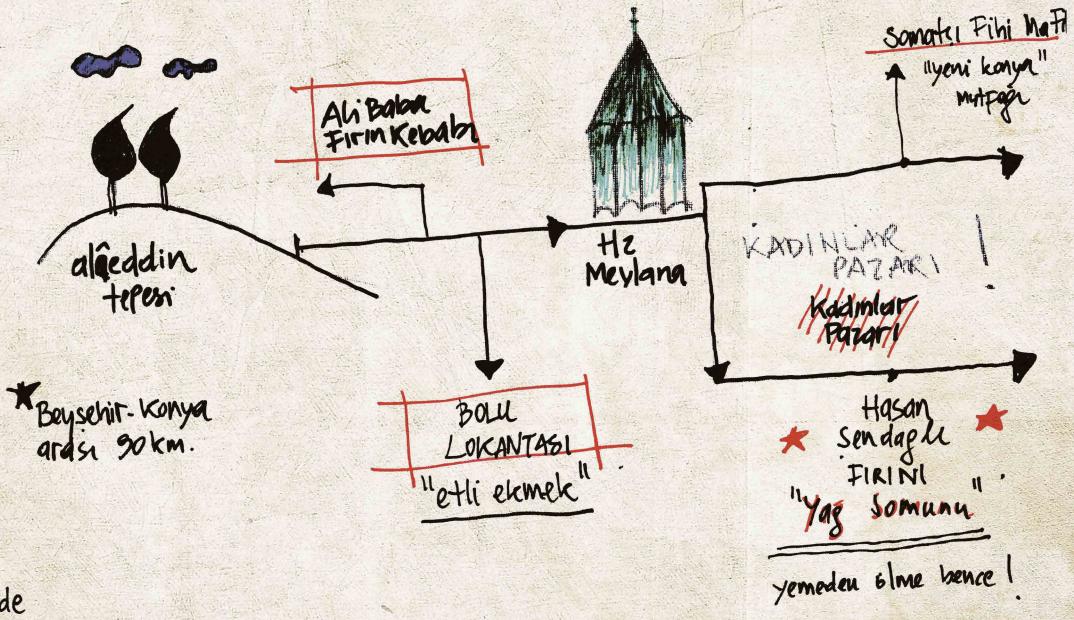
Beysehir'de

YÖREM ETLI EKMEK

Sok Iy: tot alın!

# muzelek,

- Karatay Medreson Muzen
- ince Minareli Medrese
- Ateshaz Yeli Türbası

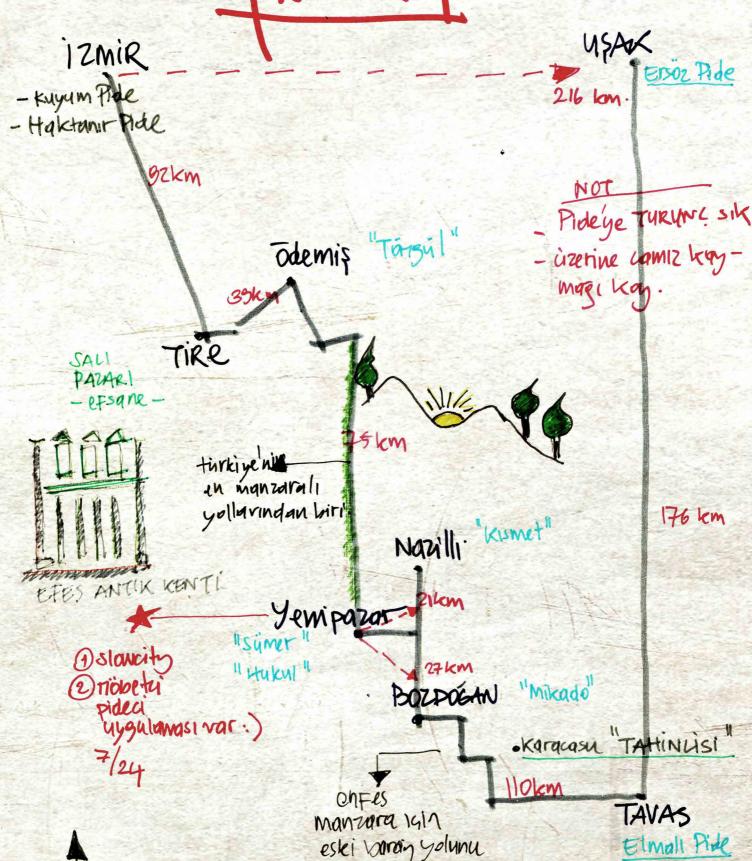






# PIDECIUERI Rehberi

580 toplam km.



KULLANIN 1



#### Translator's Preface

While translating this book from Turkish to English, I have tried my best to do a faithful translation. I have simply tried to reproduce the author's own mixture of colloquialisms, localizations, repetitions, choice of words, and writing style.

Due to the nature of the main subject matter of this book (regional gastronomy) there were many local words, phrases, and expressions in Turkish that would not be even familiar to a Turkish person outside of the specific area. Therefore, a useful echo could not be reproduced in English. At such instances, I have kept the Turkish word in italics, and I have generally called attention to it in a footnote, or in parentheses. There were several such words appearing repetitively in the book. I chose to give an explanation for the word the first time it appears, and did not repeat an explanation each time.

Although some of the Turkish words for food items, dishes, provisions, and especially plants had equivalents in English, I preferred to include the Turkish name in italics followed by the English—if any— in parenthesis. I thought it would come handy to have the Turkish version, in case anyone wants to follow this book as a guide while visiting the mentioned locations and restaurants, or while researching further into any ingredients such as indigenous plants.

Similarly, I have kept the names of restaurants, meals, chefs or cooks with titles in Turkish; original titles of TV programs, articles and books, giving literal translations where necessary, either in footnotes, or in parenthesis next to them; or without parenthesis in the titles. Certain titles in Turkish reflected derivations from the originals based on the discretion of the author, and I have kept them as is.

At certain points, I could not have possibly refrained from giving the literal translations of certain words and names because they encompassed so much in them.

Elizabet Narin Kurumlu



### KOMİLİ TRAVEL BOOK OF F<u>LAVORS</u> II

WITH ÖMÜR AKKOR

## Translated by Elizabet Narin Kurumlu



You can neither come to an end while traveling in Anatolia, nor while writing about it.

My love for this country will never come to an end either.

I have put together experiences and memories for you compiled from a few thousand kilometers of my travels.

I only hope that you read them with the same enthusiasm I had.

Have a nice journey!

M. Ömür Akkor