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ŞANLIURFA



Nature and Rural Life





Feel the Unique Nature of Şanlıurfa

Şanlıurfa is located at a transition zone between continental and desert climates. Due to its special ecosystem featuring hills, riverbeds, steppes and semi-deserts, the region hosts a range of unique plant and animal species, including such endangered species as the Bald Ibis.

The many animals depicted on the T-shaped pillars of Göbekli Tepe more than 12,000 years ago such as bulls, foxes, gazelles, lions, wild donkeys, snakes, wild boars and

various types of birds introduce us to the landlords of Şanlıurfa's soils and provide an ancient "guide book" of the fauna of the land.

Birecik and Halfeti located at the eastern bank of the Euphrates, the Tek Tek Mountains National Park, Karacadağ (Mount Karaca), the Ceylanpınar and Takoran Valley along the coast of the Atatürk Dam Lake are the main attractions for nature and wildlife enthusiasts in Şanlıurfa.





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|--|----------------------|--|-------------|
| | Archaeopark | | Hippodrome |
| | Balıklıgöl Park | | Tea Gardens |
| | Gölpınar Tabiat Park | | |









Walk Ancient Trails

Şanlıurfa, located on one of the oldest caravan routes in the world dating back to 2000 BC, offers several cultural and natural trekking routes. Şanlıurfa city centre, Göbekli Tepe, Harran, Soğmatar, and Halfeti and the Takoran Valley along the Euphrates are among the most popular hiking trails in Şanlıurfa. Spring and autumn are the ideal times for nature trekking due to the region's hot and dry summers.



Sail the Euphrates

With the completion of the Birecik Dam in 1998, much of Halfeti city, set on the eastern bank of the Euphrates, was submerged by the dam water. Rumkale (Roman Castle), set on the opposite bank of the Euphrates, has become the symbol of this flood. Reachable only by boat from Halfeti, the trip to Rumkale also offers spectacular views of the Euphrates basin along the way.

Cruising the Euphrates from Halfeti is one of the unique experiences in Mesopotamia and the only river cruise in Turkey. The mild climate, enchanting starry nights and amazing landscape seen from a deck of a cruise boat are the best ways to take in the history and rich wildlife of the Euphrates. Besides cruising the Euphrates, other opportunities in Halfeti include tasting local fresh fruits and other local delicacies, experiencing the unique architecture of the Halfeti houses and its narrow streets and enjoying the sight of the famous Black Rose.











See the Gazelles of Şanlıurfa

As depicted in the Roman mosaics, gazelles (*Gazella subgutturosa*) once wandered vast steppes of Şanlıurfa and subsequently became a common theme in Şanlıurfa folk songs. Today, gazelles are strictly protected and bred at the Ceylanpınar State Farm about 100 km southeast of Şanlıurfa. Very few gazelles remain wild in nature and can be seen at the Kızılkuyu Wildlife Reserve.



Endangered Bald Ibis

Birecik district, located 100 kilometres west of Şanlıurfa on the eastern bank of the Euphrates, is home to the last 200 bald ibis birds in the world. The banks of the Euphrates around Birecik and Halfeti are one of the best spots for observing these unique and highly endangered birds, which you can hardly see anywhere else in the world, especially in spring. The fertile soils of Şanlıurfa also host other rare species of birds including the Iraq Babbler, See-See Partridge, Blue-Cheeked Bee-Eater, Cream-Colored Cursor, Sociable Lapwing, Great Bustard, Pallid's Scops Owl, Pied Kingfisher and Black Francolin.











Experience Rural Life

Karacadağ (Mount Karaca) is an important ecosystem of biological variety where einkorn wheat was first cultivated about 12,000 years ago. The agricultural revolution first started on these lands around 10,000 BC with the cultivation of einkorn wheat by our prehistorical ancestors. Şanlıurfa is a geography where the wild ancestors of wheat, lentil and chickpea are still being naturally cultivated. Şanlıurfa, which has a steppe and half-desert habitat, is still home to steppe animals such as gazelles, striped hyenas and monitor lizards as well as numerous wild steppe plants.

Şanlıurfa is one of the leading places for the cultivation of wheat, barley, red lentil, cotton, peanut and sesame. Water is of crucial importance in Şanlıurfa due its hot and dry climate. The region's soil, which bakes under the Mesopotamian sun, has longed for water for centuries. Upon construction of the Atatürk Dam, the waters of the Euphrates have been brought to the fertile lands of Şanlıurfa through huge tunnels beginning a new era of irrigated farming on the plains of Şanlıurfa.



Ride an Arabian Horse

Şanlıurfa is a well-known centre for breeding and racing Arabian horses in the Middle East. On the back of the establishment of the Horse Breeding Improvement Institution between 1924-1928 to serve the whole East Anatolia region, Şanlıurfa is now one of six cities where official horse races are held in Turkey with the racing calendar starting in November each year. Enthusiasts can see the province's famous Arabian horses and enjoy a horseback ride at the breeding centre.











Discover the Secrets of Halfeti

In 1998, much of Halfeti city, set on the eastern bank of the Euphrates, was submerged by the water of Birecik Dam. Buried under the water today, the other half of Halfeti serving as a home to historic Halfeti houses with their surrounding garden walls, can only be seen by diving into the clear lake water with the accompaniment of professional divers.

One of the features worth seeing in Halfeti is its endemic black roses. The natural colour of these roses is black. The colour of these roses is due to the unique soil properties of this region and pH value of the underground water. Scented black roses, which in the entire world are only cultivated in Halfeti, blossom from spring to summer. The height of these bushes reach up to 1.5 m.



Festivals and Events

• **March-April-May**
Şanlıurfa Music and Culinary Festival
The Remembrance Day of Prophet Job
Halfeti Fruit Cuisine Festival

• **October**
The İsot (Pepper) Festival
Göbekli Tepe Half Marathon Run
“Her An Harran” Photo Contest

• **November**
Haleplibahçe Mosaic Art Competition
and Workshop (*once, every
two years*)

Where to Stay

Şanlıurfa offers accommodation in 3-, 4- and 5- star hotels. Traditional Urfa houses (Konak) and small Boutique Hotels are also available. For the list of the accommodation facilities, please visit our website.



Cuisine

Melting down many cultures in a pot and bringing their traces to the present, the rich cuisine of Şanlıurfa appeals to the stomach, eye and heart with its delicious taste. We recommend that you try such traditional tastes as kebab, raw meatball (çiğköfte), beet borani, stuffed meatball (içli köfte), ağzı açık (pastry), semsek (pastry) and şıllık dessert in Şanlıurfa which is known as a city of gourmet tastes.

Getting Here

National Airlines have regular flights to Şanlıurfa GAP Airport from İstanbul and Ankara on a daily basis and from İzmir three times a week. The airport is located about 35 km northeast of the city centre and is serviced by shuttle buses (HAVAS). There are scheduled intercity bus services available from several provinces to and from Şanlıurfa with the most travelled being to Gaziantep, Diyarbakır, Adıyaman, Mardin and major cities in Turkey. Car rental is available by ground handling agents at Şanlıurfa GAP Airport or in the city centre.

Climate

Şanlıurfa has a continental climate marked by very hot, dry summers and warm, rainy winters. Due to the dry climate, daily and annual temperatures vary greatly. Temperatures in the height of summer can easily reach 39°C (102°F). The best time to visit is in the spring and autumn when the weather is mild.



For Further Information

Şanlıurfa Directorate of Culture and Tourism

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Cultural and Natural Heritage are Fragile

We believe that Şanlıurfa is a special place; not only in Turkey but in the world. Shaped by civilisations dating back thousands of years, religious and traditional practices are strongly maintained to this day. Appreciate, respect and celebrate what makes Şanlıurfa special, including its historical, religious and natural places, and you will be sure to make your travel experience to Şanlıurfa a great one!

