The Hittite sculpture workshop at Yesemek.
Gaziantep
Gaziantep at a Glance

One of the oldest settlements in Anatolia, the province of Gaziantep is located at the junction of the Mediterranean and Southeastern Anatolian regions of Turkey. Standing at the crossroads of major north-south and east-west routes, Gaziantep has been an important destination and settlement for thousands of years. The northern and western stretches of the province are mountainous, while the border region consists of flat lowland plains. Gaziantep is covered in a network of rivers and streams, the most important of which is the Euphrates. The earliest settlement in Gaziantep is Doliche; flint tools found at the site date back to 40,000 BC. Gaziantep was annexed by the Ottomans in 1516, and was known as Ayıntap until the declaration of the Turkish Republic. The Grand National Assembly of Turkey awarded the city the honorific title ‘Gazi’, meaning ‘veteran’ in recognition of its resistance against the French occupying forces following World War I. The city was thereafter known as ‘Gaziayıntap’ until its name was officially changed to Gaziantep in 1928. Gaziantep has experienced tremendous industrial and commercial progress in recent years, and is now the most modern and developed city in Southeastern Anatolia.

Center of trade and industry
As a regional crossroads, Gaziantep is a vibrant center of trade and industry, and is a major manufacturer of Turkish exports. Indeed, Gaziantep is Turkey’s third largest exporter of textiles and foodstuffs. The city boasts three organized industrial zones covering an area of 12 square kilometers. 4% of Turkey’s major industrial companies are located in Gaziantep, and 6% of its small scale industries.

Modern Gaziantep
Gaziantep is a modern city with a swiftly growing population. It has a wide transportation network, including an international airport, railways and links to major motorways. In addition to many institutes of education, Gaziantep also boasts a university and 11 hospitals. The largest park in the city is the 100. Yıl Atatürk Kültür Parkı that stretches 5 km along the Alleben River.

Zeugma
Located on the banks of the Euphrates at the shallowest point of the river, the ancient city of Zeugma flourished during the Roman Empire. Covering 6600 acres within the borders of the modern village of Belkıs in the district of Nizip, the city was named Zeugma, meaning bridge or passage, by the Romans. In 1990, a series of mosaics depicting a variety of mythical figures were discovered at the site. Historic artifacts and mosaics removed from Zeugma are on display at the Gaziantep Museum.
Gaziantep at a Glance

Provincial Population: 1,285,249 according to the 2000 census
City Center Population: 853,513
Altitude: 850 meters above sea level
Area: 6222 square kilometers
Districts and Villages: 9 districts, 494 villages
Neighboring Provinces:
- Şanlıurfa to the east;
- Adıyaman to the northeast;
- Kahramanmaraş to the northwest;
- Osmaniye to the west;
- Hatay to the southwest;
- Kilis and Syria to the south

Geography

The city has very few mountainous areas. The Amanos (Nur) Mountains on the Gaziantep-Osmaniye border stand between the İslahiye Plain and the Gulf of İskenderun. The mountain ranges in the province are branches of the Southeastern Taurus Mountains. Gaziantep is surrounded by the Barak, Araban, İslahiye, Yavuzeli and Oğuzeli lowland plains. The region experiences both Mediterranean and continental climates, with hot, dry summers and cold, wet winters. Most of the rainfall in the city occurs in the winter and spring.

Antep pistachios

Gaziantep offers the ideal conditions for the cultivation of pistachios. The pistachio tree produces bunches of pink fruit, and its seeds are both delicious and highly nutritious.

Inns

Gaziantep once boasted a large number of inns and covered bazaars, some of which survive to this day.
An Ancient Center of Trade

As a historic and geographic crossroad, Gaziantep has always been an important center of trade. In addition to its historic inns, bazaars and arcades, Gaziantep boasts many modern shopping centers that have stimulated its economy. Gaziantep plays an important logistical role in trade relations between Turkey and its Middle Eastern neighbors.

Inns and Bazaars

Gaziantep’s inns are divided into two categories: travel lodges (menzil) and city inns. Menzil were built on roadsides while city inns served a purely commercial function.

‘Bedesten’ are long, narrow covered bazaars that were the hub of Gaziantep’s commercial life. Three of the city’s five bedestens – the Zincirli Bedesten, Hıseyn Pasha Bedesten and Kemikli Bedesten – remain in use to this day.

The growth of trade

The military security achieved first under the Dulkadiroğulları and later during Ottoman rule led to the establishment of new trade routes, while the growing population meant an increase in demand for a wide range of goods. In the 17th century, the famous Turkish traveler Evliya Çelebi wrote that the city had 3900 shops, two bedesten, and a number of bazaars.
Second Silk Road

Gaziantep is located on the Second Silk Road that began in Antakya, passed through Gaziantep, and then went on to China via Iran and the Pamir Plateau in Afghanistan.

Soap

While the town of Nizip is traditionally associated with soap production, technological developments led the soap trade to move to Gaziantep. The city boasts a large number of soap makers that manufacture a variety of brands of green, pure olive oil soap.

Shopping

Traditional Gaziantep handcrafts include copper, mother-of-pearl inlay, gold and silver jewelry, handmade shoes and embroidery. Gaziantep cuisine is famous for its baklava, Antep pistachios, fruit paste and fruit leather, red pepper and other spices. Good shopping areas include the Muterçim Asım, Gaziler, Suburcu, Karagöz, Gazi Muhtarpaşa and Şırcan avenues, as well as the Belediye, Büyük, Söylemez, Halep, Suriye and Kurtuluş traditional shopping arcades and the city’s modern shopping centers.
Antep Pistachios

Pistachios are a delicious and highly nutritious treat. The pistachio tree produces bunches of pink fruit. Pistachios are used in a wide range of dishes: they can be eaten alone as an enjoyable snack or used as an ingredient in savory or sweet dishes. Pistachio trees need long, hot, dry summers and comparatively cold winters to grow, and thrive in Gaziantep’s ideal climate. Pistachio trees bear fruit biannually, with heavier harvests in alternate years, and can measure up to six meters tall.

Cultivation

Antep pistachio seedlings are grafted when they are 7 or 8 years old, and begin to bear fruit when around 10-12 years old. Pistachio trees are long-lived, averaging around 150 years. Hardy plants, they can even survive in poor, infertile soil. They are easy to prune and need minimal care; after the initial pruning, only the dead branches need to be removed. The trees bear fruit in April, which are harvested in August-September. The seeds grow in bunches known locally as ‘cumba’ or ‘comma’ and are shaken off the trees. The stalk is then broken off at the node where it is attached to the branch.

‘Boz’ Pistachios

Unripe pistachios are known locally as ‘boz’ or ‘grey’ pistachios after the light yellow color of their outer shells. The seed is not fully grown, and has a distinctive flavor and aroma. Gaziantep baklava derives its unique flavor from the fact that it is made from ‘boz’ pistachios.

Unripe ‘boz’ pistachios on the tree

The unripe pistachios have light yellow shells while ripe pistachios have pink shells.
Menengiç

Wild pistachio trees are known locally as ‘menengiç’, and can be used as rootstock for Antep pistachio cultivation. Wild pistachio trees produce lentil-sized fruits that are roasted and then ground. The grounds are then boiled in water and drunk like coffee. Menengiç coffee is said to be good for hemorrhoids, to help clear the airways and to cure coughs.
Antep Houses

Old Gaziantep houses have a unique and distinctive layout and are traditionally built from soft calcareous rock known locally as ‘havara’, ‘keymih’ or ‘keymik’. Found in the older neighborhoods of the city, the houses are usually one or two stories tall, although some three-story structures can be seen. The houses have thick walls with cellars carved into the rock floor. These cellars have special sections for storing provisions such as molasses and olive oil. Passing through the large main entrance, you enter the ‘hayat’, an area enclosing a large garden as well as a number of rooms serving a variety of functions. The windows of Gaziantep houses open not onto the street but onto this inner courtyard. Above each window is a small aperture called a ‘kuş tağası’ that lets air and light into the house. Traditional Gaziantep houses can still be found in the city center and the neighborhoods of Eyüboğlu, Türktepe, Tepebaşı, Bostancı, Kozluca, Şehreküstü and Kale.

Ocağlık

Old Gaziantep houses feature bread ovens known as ‘ocaklık’. The ovens were located in the part of the courtyard that caught the first rays of the sun. Every morning, the dough was prepared and placed in the ‘ocaklık’ to bake, providing the household with fresh, daily bread.

Cellars

Cellars were carved into the rock foundations of the house. These dark, underground areas were used to store food during the hot summer months.
Fountain
Water fountains are usually located in the ‘sofa’ or hall and feature detailed stonework and painted ornamentation. On hot summer days, the household would sit in the ‘sofa’ and enjoy the cool air from the courtyard.

Bride’s room
The bride’s room is traditionally located off the main corridor. Bedspreads, a mattress and pillows brought from the bride’s family house would be placed in the room, as well as other items from her trousseau.

Hayat
(courtyard)
This large courtyard opens on to the street. The windows of the surrounding rooms look over on the courtyard. Trees and flowers are planted around the perimeter of the courtyard. Some houses have a small pool in the middle of the ‘hayat’.
Located at the meeting point of the Mediterranean and Mesopotamia – the cradle of civilization – Gaziantep is one of the oldest settlements in Anatolia. Settlements such as Sakçagözü, Zincirli, Carchemish (Karkamış), Yesemek, Doliche (Dülük) and Zeugma (Belkıs) provide a window onto the region’s prehistoric cultural and political background. The first kingdom to rule the territory was the Yamhad Kingdom centered at Aleppo. Following the death of Alexander the Great, Gaziantep became part of the Seleucid Kingdom, together with the rest of the region. The area was later annexed by the Commagene, and then ruled for an extensive period by the Romans. Christianity spread to the region under the Byzantines. When the Islamic armies conquered the area during the caliphate of Umar, the local population converted to Islam. After the Battle of Manzikert, a Turkish state tied to the Seljuks was established. The city was destroyed during the Mongol invasions, and then settled by the Dulkadiroğulları and the Mamluks. Gaziantep came under Ottoman rule following the Battle of Marj Dabiq. Production, trade and handcrafts flourished during this period. After World War I, the city was occupied by the English and the French, but resisted the foreign occupiers for 11 months, and was awarded the title of ‘gazi’, meaning veteran. Located on the Silk Road, Gaziantep’s most striking monuments date from the Hittite, Roman and Ottoman periods.
Prehistoric Ages
With its fertile soil, abundant natural resources and strategic location between the Mediterranean and Mesopotamia, Gaziantep has been an important location since prehistoric times. Indeed, the area has seen continuous habitation since the Stone Age, and around 120 prehistoric archeological settlements have been uncovered in the area.

Tilbeşar Fortress and Tumulus
The village of Gündoğan (Tilbeşar) in Oğuzeli
The 7000-year-old tumulus was home to an Assyrian city known as Apparazu, which grew beyond the borders of the tumulus during Roman times, and was renamed Abalar. The city and its fortress remained in use during the Middle Ages.

Gedikli / Karahöyük
The village of Gedikli, 23-24 km northeast of İslahiye
Gedikli boasts the oldest cremation tombs in Anatolia, as well as an interesting burial ground dating from the 22-21st century BC. Pieces of pottery show that the region was in contact with Northern Syria, Mesopotamia, Çukurova and Western Anatolia during the Bronze Age.

Coba Tumulus / Sakçagözü
Between the villages of Hasar and Kurtoba, 3 km from Sakçagözü
The Coba Tumulus is on the İslahiye lowland plain, a stopover on the routes covered by today’s nomadic clans. Even in 6000 BC, the land offered ideal conditions for farming and herding livestock. The tumulus offers a unique insight into the region’s cultural landscape 7000 years ago. Coba gave its name to a type of bowl first discovered at the tumulus. In addition, the site boasts stone blocks decorated with Hittite reliefs.

Gaziantep Museum
The Gaziantep Museum boasts a rich collection of prehistoric objects that serve as a window onto the region’s cultural development stretching back 7000 years.
Tilmen Tumulus

2 km west of the village of Yelliburun, 10 km east of Islahiye
21 meters high and measuring 220 meters by 150 meters, this tumulus is thought to have served as the capital of the Yamhad Kingdom. Archeological excavations at the site have uncovered traces of a 7000-year-old civilization, including adobe and stone houses, round storage rooms, tombs and many pieces of painted pottery. The area was also inhabited in the Iron Age, the Roman-Byzantine period and the Islamic Era. The discovery of city walls, city gates, a palace, and the remains of walls built from large stone blocks suggest that Tilmen was an important center of Yamhad power.

Doliche

(Dülük)
The village of Dülük is a veritable open-air museum bearing the stamp of all the major stages of human history.
The Late Hittite Period

Due to its location at the centre of the network of routes connecting the Mediterranean and Mesopotamia, the Hittites had their eye on Gaziantep as early as the middle of the 2nd millennium BC, and fought for control of the area against the Assyrians and Babylonians. The region flourished under the Hittites, and was home to major kingdoms in the Late Hittite Era. The most important settlements during this period were at the Zincirli Tumulus, at Yesemek - whose workshops produced sculptures for the entire kingdom - and at Carchemish, whose worship of the mother goddess Kubaba spread to the rest of Anatolia and later to the Greeks and Romans.

Yesemek
Sculpture Workshop

Near the village of Yesemek, 23 km southeast of Islahiye
Yesemek was a sculpture workshop that produced sculptures and reliefs for all the major Hittite cities and fortresses. The workshop began production under Shuppiluliuma I, employed the local Hurrians, and was deserted after the Assyrian conquest. Blocks of basalt brought from the quarries were roughly carved into sculptures. In order to avoid damage during transportation, the fine detail work was not done at Yesemek, but at the final destination. One such sculpture that was begun in Yesemek and then completed at its destination was uncovered at Zincirli.

Visitors can see how the quarry operated and which techniques and materials were used to create the sculptures. The open-air museum boasts over 300 rough sculptures at a variety of stages of completion.

Other important settlements

Zincirli Tumulus

In the Fevzipaşa region of Islahiye
The Zincirli Tumulus was an important settlement in the Late Hittite Period. Written sources refer to the city as Sam‘al or Ya‘idi. The population of the kingdom consisted of a cosmopolitan mix of Luwians, Sami, Hurrian and Phoenicians, while the upper classes were Aramean. Excavations have revealed city walls, gates and the ruins of a multistory palace. Blocks decorated with reliefs found here are on display at the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations in Ankara.

Carchemish

In the centre of the district of Karkamış, on the banks of the Euphrates on the Turkish-Syrian border
The ancient city of Carchemish was continuously settled for 8000 years - from the Neolithic Age to the Late Hittite Period. Carchemish was the most powerful of all the Late Hittite Kingdoms. Excavations have uncovered an outer city, inner city and fortress arranged in a rectangular pattern. A number of religious structures and a processional way featuring blocks of stone embellished with reliefs were found in the eastern section of the ruins overlooking the Euphrates. These are now on display at the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations in Ankara. Sadly, the ruins of Carchemish are closed to the public, as they are located in a military minefield on the Syrian border.
Statues of Lions
Statues of roaring lions were thought to protect the city and instill fear in the hearts of its enemies.

Sphinxes
Sphinxes usually consist of a human head attached to a lion’s body, and represent the combination of intellectual and physical power.

Mountain God Reliefs
The Hurri-Mitanni mountain gods were appropriated by the Hittites. These examples from Yesemek are thought to represent the Amanos Mountains.

Reliefs of Battle Scenes
Reliefs depicting a two-wheeled chariot pulled by two horses, and a fallen enemy soldier under the horse’s hooves were popular in the Late Hittite Period and can be found in many locations.

Teshup, the main Hittite god (left).
The Roman Period

The Romans annexed the southeastern region of Anatolia in 64 BC. The Euphrates served as a natural border during this era, and legions were stationed here to protect the border from attacks from the east, thereby increasing Gaziantep’s regional significance. The entire area is covered with ruins dating from this period. Most of our knowledge of the era has been gleaned from excavations conducted at the ancient cities of Zeugma and Doliche (Dülük). In 395 AD, the area became a part of the Byzantine Empire. Sadly, few structures and monuments dating from the Byzantine era have survived to this day.

Belkis / Zeugma

10 kilometers east of Nizip

The city was established by Seleukos I Nikator in 300 BC. Latin culture dominated the city under the Romans, who referred to it as Zeugma, meaning bridge or crossing. Zeugma had great strategic importance as one of the main cities on the easternmost edge of the Roman Empire. As a result, the IV Scythica Legion consisting of 6000 soldiers were based at the border outpost. The city quickly prospered due to its location on trade routes and the legionnaires’ economic impact. Zeugma flourished in the 1st and 2nd centuries as a result of the region’s political and military stability; its population is estimated to have reached 100,000 in the 2nd century. However, this golden age came to an abrupt end in 256 when the Sassanids sacked the city. Buildings were burned and demolished, and there was widespread pillaging. Zeugma never fully recovered from the attack. The last church records date from 1048, after which Zeugma fell into a deep and abiding silence.
The Villas of Zeugma

The hills overlooking the Euphrates are dotted with villas that belonged to the wealthy and powerful members of the city’s elite. The floors of these villas were decorated with colorful stone mosaics depicting mythological scenes, while the walls are ornamented with equally colorful frescoes of human figures and plant motifs. To keep cool in the hot summer months, the rooms of the villas opened onto a pillared inner courtyard which also captured rainwater that drained into a cistern. Most of the villas were two stories tall, but some had three stories if built on a slope. The lower floors usually housed the kitchens and storage rooms. The rooms were furnished in the traditional Roman style and decorated with marble or bronze statues.
The Mosaics at Zeugma

The mosaic floors and wall frescoes at Zeugma are the work of fine craftsmen, and provide valuable insights into Roman urban life in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. The mosaics were made using river pebbles in every possible shade of a spectrum of ten colors – white, black, brown, green, blue, grey, red, yellow, orange and pink. Light and shadow were mimicked to create three-dimensional motifs. Colors that could not be found in nature were manufactured in glass.

The Gypsy Girl (Maenad)
The figure in the mosaic was thought to resemble a gypsy when first discovered, and became known as the Gypsy Girl. Later theories stated that the figure was perhaps Alexander the Great or even Gaia, goddess of the earth. However, the grapevines next to her head have led some to believe that she is a Maenad, or female member of the cult of Dionysos. Dating from the 2nd or 3rd century, this mosaic has become the symbol of Zeugma. The figure’s eyes seem to follow you wherever you go.

Poseidon Mosaic
This mosaic portrait of Poseidon, god of the sea, decorated the bottom of a pool. Poseidon is depicted holding a triton in his right hand and riding a chariot pulled by a pair of horses with the tails of fish. Busts of the river god Oceanus and his wife Tethys with two river monsters wrapped around their shoulders can be seen below the chariot. This magnificent mosaic also features a stunning border.

Statue of Mars
Dating from the 2nd century AD, this bronze statue of Mars (Ares), the god of war, has survived in perfect condition to this day. His right arm is bent at the elbow and he holds a spear, while his left hand holds a curved branch. This is the only known statue of Mars to symbolize both war and fertility. The figure wears a helmet, and his curly, thick hair is parted in the middle and flows over his forehead, face and the back of his neck. Sporting a baleful expression, the statue’s eyes are made of silver and gold.

Dionysos-Telete-Skyrtos
This 2nd–3rd century mosaic depicts Dionysos, Telete and Skyrtos standing side by side. Their names are written in Greek above their heads.
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The Making of Mosaics
First, the mosaic craftsman selected a subject from a catalogue of mosaics. The mosaic pattern was then drawn onto a piece of cloth backing. The pieces of cut mosaic stone or tesserae were then stuck one by one onto the cloth. Next, a grouting made of lime and egg white was poured over the mosaic and allowed to set. The finished mosaic was then carried on a wooden board to its final destination and placed upside down on a layer of wet mortar. When the mortar dried, the cloth backing was removed using hot water, and the mosaic would be complete.

Mosaic Training Center
In conjunction with the European Commission and the GAP Administration, the Gaziantep Chamber of Commerce has opened a Mosaic Training Center in Gaziantep as a part of the ‘Enhancing the Tourism Potential of Gaziantep, Halfeti, Rumkale and Zeugma’ project. The aim of the center is to support the ancient tradition of mosaic making around Zeugma. The center welcomes both experienced mosaic artists seeking further training and newcomers who wish to pursue it as a hobby.
The Islamic and Ottoman Periods

Byzantine rule over Gaziantep and its environs came to an end with the Islamic conquest during caliphate of Umar. In 639, the local population converted to Islam. After the Battle of Manzikert in 1071, a Turkish state tied to the Seljuks was established. The city was destroyed during the Mongol invasions in 1270, and was later settled by the Dulkadiroğulları and the Mamluks. The entire region came under Ottoman rule in 1516 after Selim I defeated the Mamluks at the Battle of Marj Dabiq. Many mosques, madrasas, inn and baths were built while the city was under Ottoman rule. Located at the crossroads of major trade routes, the city quickly grew and developed. Due to its strategic location near northern Syria, a number of Western nations established consulates in Gaziantep and various foreign universities opened faculties in the city.

Boyacı Mosque

At the junction of Hamdi Kutlar Caddesi and Kutlar Sokak, Şahinbey

One of the largest mosques in Gaziantep, the Boyacı Mosque is thought to have been built by Kadi Kemalettin in 1211. An engraved inscription on the minbar states that it was completed under the Mamluks in 1357. The mosque has a rectangular plan with two naves parallel to the mihrab. Interestingly, the minbar is set on rails, and slides in and out of a special wall compartment. The minbar is particularly worth noting as it is one of the oldest wooden minbars in the city, and is ornamented with 12-pointed stars, rosettes and geometric motifs. The interior of the mosque is decorated with ceramic tiles, and the single-balcony stone minaret has a polygonal trunk.
Şirvani (Şirvani Mehmet Efendi) Mosque

Seferpaşa, west of the Gaziantep Fortress

Officially named Şirvani Mehmet Efendi Mosque after its patron, the mosque is also known as the ‘İki Şerefeli’ or ‘Double Balconied’ mosque after the two balconies on its minaret. Records indicate that it was built before 1677, a fact supported by the materials used in its construction. Like that of the Boyacı Mosque, the minbar is set on rails and can be slid in and out of a special wall compartment.

Kurtuluş Mosque

Tepebaşı, Şahinbey

The mosque was originally built in 1892 as a church and was converted into a mosque after also functioning as a prison. The church’s bell tower was converted into a minaret, and a second minaret was added to the opposite corner. One of the largest mosques in Gaziantep, the building is in good condition.
Gaziantep and the Turkish War of Independence

During the Ottoman period, Antep was a district under the jurisdiction of Aleppo. After the Ottoman defeat at the end of World War I, the city was occupied first by the English on January 15, 1919 and then by the French on October 29. The people of Antep resisted the occupation for 11 months between April 1, 1920 and February 8, 1921 under the Müdafaa-i Hukuk Cemiyeti (society for the defense of national rights). 6317 people died during the resistance. The city was evacuated on December 25, 1921 following the signing of the Treaty of Ankara on October 20, 1921. On February 6, 1921, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey awarded the city the honorific title of ‘Gazi’, meaning ‘veteran’. The city was thereafter known as ‘Gaziantap’ until its name was officially changed to Gaziantep in 1928. Atatürk extolled the heroism of the people of Gaziantep, saying ‘Every city, town and smallest Turkish village that calls itself Turkish should be inspired by the courage of the people of Gaziantep.’

Martyrs’ Memorial

Atatürk Bulvarı

A memorial to the 6317 martyrs to the resistance who died between 1920 and 1921 was erected above the Çinarlı Mosque. The mosque was referred to as the Çinarlı (Ariburnu) Front during the War of Independence and was an important front in the defense of the city. On December 25, 1935, the soldiers’ remains were brought here and interred beneath the memorial.

The cemetery section of the Martyrs’ Memorial has been recently restored. Images of the War of Independence have been hung on the walls, and the cemetery has been opened to the public.
Şahin Bey Monument

Şahinbey

This monument in the town of Şahinbey consists of a square column on a square platform. The inscription on the column reads, ‘Şahin Bey, the true hero of the Gaziantep defense, was martyred on this spot. May his martyred soul rest in peace March 20, 1920.’

Şahin Bey (1877-1920)

Şahin Bey, a soldier from Gaziantep, fought on the front lines during the Gaziantep resistance, and died in battle. His real name was Mehmet Said, but the people of Gaziantep referred to him as Şahin Bey. Mehmet Said served as a private on the Yemen front, and was promoted to the rank of sergeant major in recognition of his bravery. He went on to fight in the Turco-Italian War, in the Balkans and at Çanakkale. He became a lieutenant in 1917 on the Sinai front, and was captured during a violent skirmish. He remained a prisoner of war in an English camp in Egypt until the ceasefire in 1919. Following the occupation of Gaziantep, he joined the Kavay-i Milliye corps, and died in battle while fighting on the Antep-Kilis line. Many folk songs and poems have been written about him, and Şahinbey’s local high school is named Şehit Şahin (Şahin the Martyr) after him.
SIGHTSEEING IN GAZIANTEP

Museums
1. Gaziantep Museum
2. Hasan Süzer Ethnographic Museum

Mosques (Camii)
3. Ömeriye Mosque
4. Sheikh Fetullah (Şih) Mosque
5. Nuri Mehmet Pasha Mosque
6. Ahmet Çelebi Mosque
7. Tahtani (Tahtali) Mosque
8. Tekke (Tekke Mevlevihane) Mosque
10. Ali Nacar Mosque
11. Eyüpoğlu Mosque
12. Şih Omer (Omer Sheikh) Mosque

Churches (Kilise)
12. Kendirli Church
13. Fevkani Church

Fortress (Kale)
14. Araban Fortress

Inns (Han)
15. Kürkçü Inn
16. Eski Büyük Buğday
17. Pazari Inn
18. Mecidiye (Nakıp) Inn
19. Belediye (Şire) Inn
20. Eski Maarif (Yemiş) Inn

Covered Bazaars (Bedesten)
21. Kemikli Covered Bazaar
22. Zincirli Covered Bazaar

Bridge
23. Tabakhane Bridge

Turkish Baths (Hamam)
24. Hûseyin Pasha Baths
25. İki Kapılı Baths
26. Tabak Baths
27. Şih (Fetullah) Baths
28. Şehitler Baths

Fountains (Çeşme)
29. Demirligane Fountain
30. Nuri Bey Fountain
31. Hûseyin Pasha (Köşçe Ahmet) Fountain

Mausoleums (Türbe)
32. The Mausoleum at Hisar
33. The Mausoleum at Elif
34. The Mausoleum at Hasanoğlu

Parks, Walks and Picnic Areas
35. Tahmis Coffeehouse
36. Kavaklık Kasrı Outdoor Coffeehouse
37. Burç Forest Walks and Picnic Area
38. Nature Reserve and Zoo

Doliche (Dülük)
1. Dolük Cave and its Environs
2. The Ancient City of Doliche
3. The Mithraea of Doliche
4. Doliche Necropolis
5. Doliche Rock Tomb
6. Doliche Quarries
7. Dülük Baba Forest Walks and Picnic Area
1 Gaziantep Museum
Kamil Ocak Caddesi, Şehit Kamil
The first museum in Gaziantep opened in 1944, later moved to the Nuri Mehmet Pasha Mosque, and then to its current premises at the Archeology Museum in 1969. In 2005, a new building was opened next door to house the mosaics and frescoes removed from Zeugma. Accessed via a gallery, the old building exhibits works dating from prehistory through to the Islamic era.

2 Hasan Süzer Ethnographic Museum
Eyüpoglu, Şahinbey
The museum is located in an early 19th-century traditional Gaziantep house with ashlar walls and a hipped roof made of brick. The building was restored in 1985, and donated to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism with the proviso that it function as the Hasan Süzer Ethnographic Museum. The ethnographic works formerly displayed at the Gaziantep Museum are now on show at the museum house.

3 Ömeriye Mosque
Düğmeci, Şahinbey
An inscription on the mosque tells us that it was built during the caliphate of Umar and was restored on three occasions - in 1210, 1785 and 1850. One of the oldest mosques in Gaziantep, the ashlar Ömeriye Mosque has a rectangular plan and two naves parallel to the mihrab. The striking, pointed mihrab is made from black stone and red marble. The squat, cylindrical minaret rises from inside the mosque. The balustrade of the minaret balcony features stunning stonework.

4 Sheikh Fetullah (Şih) Mosque
Kepenek, Şahinbey
Known locally as the Aşağı Sheikh Mosque, the Sheikh Fetullah Mosque is part of Gaziantep’s most important mosque complex. Today, however, the mosque has no connection to the other buildings in the complex, which consists of a small dervish lodge, Turkish bath and madrasa. According to the foundation’s deed of trust, the mosque was built in 1563. The mosque has a totally unique roof structure, and is in close to its original condition.

5 Nuri Mehmet Pasha Mosque
Suburcu Caddesi, Çukur
The mosque was built a few years before 1786 by Nuri Mehmet Pasha. The classic Ottoman minaret has two balconies, and the ornate minbar is made from yellow, black and burgundy marble in a zigzag pattern. A wooden platform stands above the entrance. The mosque was damaged during the resistance, and was briefly used as a military depot. In 1958, it was converted into a museum. In 1968, the mosque was restored and reopened for worship.

6 Ahmet Çelebi Mosque
Ulucanlar
The mosque complex was founded by Hacı Osman, son of Sheikh Ramazan - a direct descendant of Muhammed – and consists of a mosque and fountain. The mosque was built in 1672 and is commonly referred to as the Ahmet Çelebi Mosque after the founder of the adjoining madrasa. The mosque features striking examples of woodwork as well as a section for women.
7 Tahtani (Tahtalı) Mosque
Şekeroğlu, Şahinbey
Known locally as the ‘Tahtalı’ or wooden mosque, this wooden mosque is thought to have been built in 1557. The unusual semi-circular mihrab is made of red marble. The mosque was restored in 1804, and from 1958-1960.

8 Tekke (Tekke Mevlevihane) Mosque
Kozluca, Şahinbey
Officially known as the Mevlevihane Mosque, the complex consists of dervish cells, a ‘semahane’ for the ritual whirling, sitting rooms for the administration and the Mevlevi dervishes, toilets, pools and a small, short minaret. The mosque was built in 1638 by a Türkmen Agha named Mustafa Agha. All the revenue generating areas of the mosque burned to the ground in the fires that raged from 1901-1903. These sections were rebuilt by the then Mevlevi sheikh and trustee of the foundation, Sheikh Mehmet Münip Efendi. Rather unusually, a road passes beneath the mosque’s minaret. The Turkish General Directorate of Foundations restored the mosque and converted it into a Mevlevi museum.

9 Alaüddevle (Ali Dola) Mosque
Yaprak, Şehit Kamil
Although the precise date of construction is not known, the mosque was built by a carpenter named Ali. An inscription on the mosque tells us that the first major restoration occurred in 1816. The staircase to the muezzin’s platform is dated 1213 in the Hijri calendar. The mosque is one of the largest in Gaziantep, with a rectangular plan and two naves parallel to the mihrab.

10 Ali Nacar Mosque
Yaprap, Şehit Kamal
The mosque was built in the 14th century with the support of learned man named Eyüboğlu Ahmet. The ashlar structure was extensively restored in 1947, and has been painted, thereby significantly altering its original appearance.

11 Eyüpoğlu Mosque
Eyüpoğlu, Şahinbey
The mosque is thought to have been built in the 14th century with the support of learned man named Eyüboğlu Ahmet. The ashlar structure was extensively restored in 1947, and has been painted, thereby significantly altering its original appearance.

12 Şih Ömer (Ömer Sheikh) Mosque
Yazıcı, Şahinbey
Originally built as a masjid sometime before 1559, the deed of trust states that it was expanded into a mosque in 1698 by Aparoğlu Hacı Mehmet.

13 Kendirli Church
Bey, Şahinbey
The Armenian Catholic church was constructed in 1860 with the support of French missionaries and Napoleon III. The rectangular plan, white ashlar church is built on a black ashlar foundation and surrounded by a large garden. Three steps lead up to the main door featuring a pediment and pilasters. The floor of the church is made from red and white marble in a checkerboard pattern. Today, the church functions as a meeting hall.
14 Fevkani Church

Şıklar, Nizip
This Byzantine church was briefly used as an inn, and is now deserted.

15 Araban Fortress

Central Araban
The Araban Fortress is located on a high, flat-topped, prehistoric tumulus. Most of the ruins consist of the remains of a medieval citadel. In the 11th and 12th centuries, Araban was an important city within the County of Edessa, a Crusader state. Today, it has lost its historic importance and is a small district capital. The exact plan and details of the medieval fortress are unknown. A large structure built from stone blocks stands on the summit, and is currently used as a mosque.

16 Kürkçü Inn

Boyacı, Şahinbey
The inscription states that it was built in 1890. A classic Ottoman two-story inn with a single courtyard, the building is in good condition following numerous restorations. The ground floor features shops, storage rooms and stables, while the guestrooms are on the upper level. A relief of a six-pointed star can be seen in the centre of the pointed barrel vault stretching along the east-west side of the courtyard.

17 Eski Büyük Buğday Pazarı Inn

Kozluca, Şahinbey
This white ashlar, single-story inn is thought to have been built in the 19th century. The section opening onto the road on the northern face is filled with shops. The inner courtyard has 11 rooms. An iwan leads to the stables. Many additions have been made to the structure over time, altering its original form and layout.

18 Mecidiye Inn

Eski Saray Caddesi, Şahinbey
Although the precise date of construction is not known, the inn is referred to as Nakıp Inn in records dating from 1756. This is a typical two-story Ottoman inn with a single courtyard. The ground floor of the trapezoid courtyard is surrounded on all four sides by rooms of different shapes and sizes, while a portico surrounds the upper level. The main entrances to the inn are on the east and west sides of the building, which are also lined with one-story shops.

19 Belediye Inn

Belediye Caddesi, Şahinbey
The inscriptions on three sides of the inn provide important information about the structure. Built by an architect named Kırkos, the rectangular plan, classical Ottoman inn was constructed from ashlar and has a hipped roof made of brick. Unusually, three sides of the inn each feature a large portal. The inn has been recently restored.

20 Eski Maarif (Yemiş) Inn

Belediye Caddesi, Şahinbey
Thought to date from the 19th century, the courtyard of this inn only has buildings on two sides, the south and north. The buildings to the south are single-story structures, while those to the north are two stories tall. This layout is unique to the Eski Maarif (Yemiş) Inn. The inn has been recently restored.

21 Kemikli Covered Bazaars 1 and 2

Şehitler Caddesi, Şahinbey
Thought to date from the second half of the 17th century, the Kemikli Bedestens consist of two adjacent covered bazaars. Both are classic covered bazaars with shops on both sides of their barrel-vaulted passages. The buildings’ entrance is made of black stone and local ‘keymik’ stone. The covered bazaars still serve their original function.

22 Zincirli Covered Bazaar (Meat and Vegetable Market)

Şekeroğlu, Şahinbey
Rumkale
This fortress is located near the village of Kasaba, 25 kilometers from Yavuzeli. Perched on a peninsula in the Birecik Dam reservoir, Rumkale is accessible by boat from Kasaba or Halfeti. The fortress is set on a high, steep bank at the junction of the Merzimen River and the Euphrates. Due to its strategic location, the area is thought to have been settled since Assyrian times. Originally named Hromgla, it was known as Hromklay by the Armenians and as Kala Rhomata by the Syriacs. After the Mamluk conquest in the 12th century, the area became known as Kal-at el Müslimin. Rumkale came under Ottoman rule following the Battle of Marj Dabiq, and was a district of Birecik in the state of Aleppo. Legend has it that St. John the Apostle made copies of biblical scripture in Rumkale, and some believe that his tomb is located here. The area was an important center of power in the 11th century when it was part of the County of Edessa, a Crusader state. In the 12th and 13th centuries, the area was an archbishopric and patriarchate. The outer walls feature a number of rooms as well as gates that lead to the inner fortress. The Barsamva Monastery, Church of Saint Nerses and a number of Turkish-Islamic structures remain standing to this day. The most intriguing of Rumkale’s structures is its 75-meter deep well that spirals down to the level of the Euphrates. When the Turkish explorer and writer Evliya Çelebi came here in the 17th century, he described Rumkale as a well-preserved fortress with a mosque, inn, Turkish bath and marketplace.
Built in the first quarter of the 18th century, the covered bazaar is known locally as the Zincirli Bedesten. The bazaar consists of two sections - one running from north to south, the other east to west - that intersect in the northwest. The one-story structure houses 80 shops.

Tabakhane Bridge
Bostancı, Şahinbey
Spanning the Alleben River, this ashlar bridge with a semi-circular arch is thought to date from the 19th century.

Hüseyin Pasha Baths
İsmet Paşa, Şahinbey
According to an inscription, the baths were built in 1727. The tepidarium has a square plan and is covered by a dome with round windows and a lantern. Today, the baths have been converted into a market.

Iki Kapılı Baths
Eyüpşu, Şahinbey
This remarkably well preserved structure was built in 1737 and is a functioning bath to this day.

Tabak Baths
Bostancı, Şahinbey
Thought to have been built before the 17th century, the Tabak Hamam still functions as a bath.

Şih Baths
Kepenek, Şahinbey
Located to the west of the Şih Mosque, the baths are in good condition and are still in operation.

Şehitler Baths
Ulucanlar Sokak, Şahinbey
Thought to date from the 19th century, the baths are in their original condition and remain in working order.

Demirgane Fountain
Kozluca, Şahinbey
The current fountain is a recent reconstruction. Photographs of the original fountain show that it was made of ashlar and featured an inscription that stated that it was built in 1592 and restored in 1959.

Nuri Bey Fountain
Şehitler Caddesi, Şahinbey
Thought to date from the end of the 19th century, the ashlar ‘keymik’ stone fountain has a pointed arch.

Hüseyin Pasha (Koşçe Ahmet) Fountain
İsmetpaşa, Şahinbey
Made of black ashlar and local ‘keymik’ stone, the two-tone fountain was built in 1826, and became a part of the Hüseyin Pasha mosque complex in 1872.

The Mausoleum at Hisar
The village of Hisar in Araban
This 10-11 meter high mausoleum is made from ashlar blocks and consists of three sections incorporating a sepulcher, pedestal, pillared gallery and pyramidal roof. Technically and stylistically, the mausoleum appears to date from the 2nd or 3rd century. Four columns support a pyramidal roof with a Corinthian capital at the top.

The Mausoleum at Elif
The village of Elif in Araban
This 2nd or 3rd century tomb is made from cut stone. The vaulted roof is supported by arches that rise from a square pedestal. Three sides of the tomb feature arches. Semi-circular arches top the Corinthian capitals. A door in the pedestal leads to a room that is thought to be the actual sepulcher.

The Mausoleum at Hasanoğlu
The village of Hasanoğlu in Araban
Dating from the 2nd or 3rd century, the cut stone mausoleum stands on a square pedestal. The northern and eastern facades are completely ruined, and only half of the pedestal remains intact.

Tahmis Coffeehouse
Next to the Tekke Mosque
A deed of trust dated 1635 and Farsi inscription dated 1638 above the door to the dervish lodge’s ‘semahane’ show that the coffeehouse was built by the Ayıntab Sancak Bey Türkmen Mustafa Agha Bin Yusuf. The entire structure was burnt to the ground in the fires that raged between 1901-1903, and was subsequently rebuilt by Feyzullahoğlu Sheikh Mehmet Muhip Efendi. The name ‘tahmis’ means ‘place where coffee is roasted and ground’. For many years, the Tahmis Coffeehouse was also known as the ‘Lokuslu’ and ‘Tömbekici’ coffeehouse. In the years immediately following the establishment of the Republic, meetings were held at the coffeehouse as it was the second largest venue in Gaziantep after the Community Center.

Kavaklık Kasrı
Outdoor Coffeehouse
A Gaziantep institution, the Kavaklık Kasrı Outdoor Coffeehouse has been in service for nearly a century. The summer mansion was built by İsmail Fevzi Pasha from 1897-1899. The stone building was constructed by an Armenian builder, and has served a number of different functions over the course of its history. Today, the well-preserved building serves as a coffeehouse and picnic area.

Burç Forest Walks and Picnic Area
2km from the city center
The Burç Forest is a popular spot with locals who come here to relax, play games, exercise and have picnics. The 350-hectare forest of fragrant pine trees is located conveniently near to the city.

Nature Reserve and Zoo
In the Burç Forests
Construction work began in 1998, and the zoo was completed in 2002. Today, this is the largest animal park in Turkey, boasting 4000 animals from 250 different species.
Dülük Cave and its Environs
This is one of the oldest settlements in Anatolia. Excavations in the region have uncovered flint tools dating from the Paleolithic era. The high quality flint found in the region was shaped into tools on the hilltops around the village and in the large cave. The Paleolithic tools uncovered here are referred to as Dolikien.

The Ancient City of Doliche
A place of worship since Hittite times, Doliche was declared an archbishopric by the Byzantines. The region was devastated during the Islamic incursions, and the archbishopric moved to Zeugma in the 7th century. Doliche’s importance as a center of religion swiftly declined. Doliche was supplanted by the new city of Aynatap that grew around the Gaziantep Fortress. Ultimately, once proud Dülük became a humble village attached to Aynatap. Nevertheless, Dülük retains its status as a place of worship to this day as the site of the mausoleum of Dülükbaba (Davut Ejder).

The Mithraea of Doliche
The southern foothills of Mount Keber
This is the first subterranean shrine to Mithras discovered in Anatolia. The shrine has two sections, and features a relief in its central niche depicting the god Mithras slaying the sacred bull Tauroctoni. The figure of Mithras is shown surrounded by stars as well as a scorpion, serpent and dog representing the constellations. The cult of Mithras spread out of Tarsus in the first century, and had reached Scotland and the Sahara by the 3rd century. Bulls were sacrificed to Mithras, and the worshippers believed that by drinking and bathing in its blood, they would achieve the power and immortality represented by the bull.
4 Doliche Necropolis
The rocky area near the village of Dülük served as the necropolis of Doliche. Inspired by the appropriately eternal nature of rock, the multi-roomed tombs were carved underground or into the rock face. The arched niches in the tombs represented the sky, or immortality. The rooms are ornamented with architectural embellishments and sacred symbols. The necropolis was used from the 4th to the 6th centuries BC during the Hellenistic, Roman and Early Byzantine periods.

5 Doliche Rock Tomb
One of the most beautiful rock tombs in the necropolis of the ancient city of Doliche, this 3rd century tomb consists of three rooms and a hall. The ornamentation in the central section suggests that the most important members of the family or group were interred here.

6 Doliche Quarries
Rock was first quarried here for the construction of major structures in the ancient city of Doliche, and later for the fortress and other important buildings in Gaziantep. The quarry functioned until the late Ottoman period. Workmen’s marks and sacred symbols can still be seen.

7 Dülük Baba Forest Walks and Picnic Area
Covering 40 square kilometers to the north and northwest of Gaziantep, this is one of the largest nature reserves in Turkey. The Dülük Baba forests consist mainly of black pine and cedar trees and are a popular picnic area. The Dülük Rock Tombs are located within the nature reserve.
Culture

Copper work
Gaziantep has a long and established tradition of copper work, and is renowned for producing solid pieces without any soldering or joins.

Gaziantep produces copper kitchen implements including frying pans, bowls, drinking cups and cauldrons as well as other household objects including ewers, samovars, vases, coffeepots and teakettles.

Mother-of-pearl inlay
The art of mother-of-pearl inlay was born in the Middle East, and spread to the Ottoman Empire after the 15th century. Traditionally, walnut is used in mother-of-pearl inlay. New and elaborate motifs were developed over the years, and mother-of-pearl inlay became a popular form of ornamentation in buildings, household objects and weaponry.

Yemeni making
Traditionally worn by farmers, ‘yemeni’ are a kind of flat-heeled shoe made from natural leather and cotton thread. The sole of the shoe is made from water buffalo or cattle hide, the uppers from goatskin, the lining from sheepskin, and the border from kidskin. Yemeni usually come in two colors, red or black, and in variety of styles known as ‘kelik’, ‘küçük hasbe’ or ‘büyük hasbe’. The shoes are extremely comfortable and healthy as the natural leather is soft and breathes. In addition, a layer of clay between the lower and upper soles absorbs energy from the body and transfers it to the ground.
Antep Work
This type of embroidery is unique to the region of Gaziantep. White, yellow and cream threads are embroidered onto a white background. ‘Antep işi’ or ‘Antep work’ was developed by housewives in and around the city. Modern examples of Antep work feature colored and glittery threads while remaining faithful to the original technique.

Weaving
Kilims
Antep kilims are woven from threads made from ox hair, camelhair, horsehair, sheep’s wool and goat hair, and differ from kilims made in other regions in terms of their shape, weave, embroidery and even the looms on which they are woven.

Kutnu
An ancient, hand woven fabric produced only in Gaziantep, ‘kutnu’ is a blend of artificial silk and cotton. Kutnu is used to make traditional Gaziantep dress as well as accessories, souvenir items, bags, slippers and curtains.

Aba
An ‘aba’ is an traditional item of men’s clothing made from a special fabric woven from camelhair, ox hair and horsehair. ‘Aba’ come in a range of styles, and are known by a variety of names depending on their material, color, length, and the region where they are worn.

Folk dances
The most famous Gaziantep folk dance is the ‘halay’. Performed by men and women together, the halay is a celebration of the end of the harvest. Local folk dances vary in tempo from languorous to almost frantically rhythmic. The most popular dances are the Dokuçu, Oğuzlu, Çepikli-Çibikli (Havarisko), Kirikhan, Ağırlama, Fatige Demane, Şirin Nar, Mendilli, Leşlim, Meryem, Mermere, Çobanbeyli, Nahtınsı and Barak Halayı.

Music
Turkish Classical Music plays an important role in Gaziantep culture and lifestyle, and the city boasts many live performances as well as music stores selling traditional Turkish instruments. The music of the regions of İslahiye and Nurdagı, as well as the plateaus and mountains, is heavily influenced by Barak Music. Indoor entertainments are usually accompanied by a bağlama (a plucked instrument with three double strings and a long neck).

Zurna
The most popular folk wind instrument in the region is the ‘zurna’, crafted from apricot wood. Varieties known as Tüm Kaba Zurna, Orta Kaba Zurna and Cura Zurna are produced in Gaziantep.
Gaziantep Cuisine

Gaziantep has one of the finest cuisines not only in Turkey but in the whole world, boasting unique sauces and blends of flavors and spices. Local fruits and vegetables play an important role in the Gaziantep kitchen. The majority of meat and vegetable dishes can also be prepared with yoghurt. Cuts of meat and spices are chosen specifically for each dish.

Meatballs (Köfte)
İçli Köfte, Çiğ Köfte, Ekşili Ufak Köfte, Malhıtalı Köfte, Yoğlı Köfte, Tene Katması, Sini Köftesi, Aktımalı Köfte

Kebap

Soups (Çorba)
Alaca Çorba, Ezo Gelin Çorbası, Lebeniye, Öz Çorbası, Maş Çorbası, Dövmeli Alaca Çorba, Yoğurtlu Çorba, Börek Çorbası, Keme Çorbası, Şiveydiz Çorbası, Tarhana Çorbası

Meat Dishes
Gaziantep meat dishes are primarily made with mutton and include Yuvalama, Alınazık, Firik Pilavı, Potatoes with Yoghurt, Ekşili Daraklik Tavası, Trotters, Kelle Paça, İncik Haşlaması, Paşa Köftesi, Fried Chicken with Vegetables and Beyran.

Stuffed Dolmas
Mixed Dolma, Eggplant Dolma, Pepper Dolma, Tomato Dolma, Haylan Kabağı Dolma, Firikli (fresh wheat) and Cucumber Dolma, Carrot Dolma, Onion Dolma, Artichoke Dolma, Mumbar Dolma, Rib Dolma, Vine Leaves Stuffed with Cracked Wheat, Vine Leaves Stuffed with Rice, Stuffed Cabbage Leaves, Stuffed Beets, Vine Leaves Stuffed with Nuts
Antep Baklava
The most famous Turkish dessert is baklava. The nomadic peoples of Central Asia are known to have cooked thin layers of pastry on a hot plate and served them layered on top of each other. Today, this proto-baklava has metamorphosed into a refined and delicious dessert. Two varieties of 'yufka' pastry are prepared in Turkey: a thick dough used to make savory 'börke' and a wafer thin dough for baklava. Gaziantep baklava is renowned not only for its exceptional flavor but also for the extraordinary thinness of its translucent pastry. Although every baklava maker has their own secret measurements, the basic preparation is the same. Dough is prepared using flour, eggs, salt and starch, and rolled out into a thin pastry. 12-14 layers of pastry are placed on a greased pan, interspersed with layers of plain butter. Clotted cream made with semolina and milk is spread evenly over the entire surface. Ground unripe 'boz' pistachios are sprinkled over the top. Further layers of pastry are placed on top of the filling, again interspersed with butter. The baklava is then cut into the desired shape. Warm oil is drizzled over the baklava, which is then placed in the oven. When the baklava is ready, the 'şerbet' syrup is poured over the top and left to cool before being served.

Breakfast specialties
Katmer, Kaymak, Muhammara, Yeşil Zeytin Ekşileme, Tarhana Ertimesi

Desserts
Candied walnuts in molasses
Gaziantep is also famous for two other pastries: şöbiyet (above) and fıstıklı dolma (below).