

The Katipoğlu Mansion, which we mentioned as having been formed from the 19th century onwards, traces its origins to the Katipoğlu family, a famous aristocratic family of İzmir. Known to have existed since the beginning of the 18th century, this family gradually gained power during that century and became one of the most influential centers of power in the administration of İzmir. The building that gives its name to the square we know as Konak Square is the mansion of the Katipoğlu family.

The small open space in front of the main gate, or rather the walls surrounding the outer courtyard of this mansion, is İzmir's first Konak Square. Behind the mansion was a small Turkish cemetery called Sulu Mezarlık, and at the seaward end of the square stood the Ayşe Hatun Mosque, also known as the Yalı Mosque, which still exists today.

The construction of the quay marked the second phase of Konak Square's development as the administrative center of İzmir, beginning in the 1850s. Among the investments made in this context, the construction of the new quay (1867-1876) was paramount. Since the quay project also resulted in the filling in of İzmir's old harbor, the inner harbor, the city's appearance from the sea changed significantly. This change became even more pronounced with the demolition of the harbor fortress at the entrance to the inner harbor.

While all communities except the Turks had hospitals in İzmir, the first Turkish hospital was built in 1849 under the name Gureba-yı Müslimin (Muslims' Destitute). As part of the provincial hospitals that became widespread after 1909, the old hospital was expanded by adding a third block.

The clock tower, located near the center of the area known as the Mansion Square or Barracks Square, was begun on September 1, 1900, thanks to the efforts of the governor of the time, Kamil Pasha, and the mayor, Eyref Pasha. After approximately a year of construction, it was opened with ceremonies and festivities on September 1, 1901, as part of the celebrations of the 25th anniversary of the accession to the throne of the Ottoman Sultan, Abdul Hamid II.

The elevator, located in the Karataş district of İzmir, was built in 1907 by İzmir merchant Nesim Levi to provide access from Mithatpaşa Street to Halil Rıfat Paşa Street, which is approximately 40 meters higher. Transferred to another businessman, Yücel Remzi Reyent, in 1942, the elevator was donated to the municipality in 1977.

Until the 1860s, İzmir lacked a proper port and quay. This created difficulties in loading and unloading ships, and also facilitated smuggling, leading to significant losses in customs revenue. In the mid-1860s, the opening of railway lines and the resulting increase in the flow of goods from the region created a need for a quay where large tonnage ships could easily dock and load and unload goods. In 1867, the concession to construct the quay was granted to a company founded by British merchants J. Charnaud, A. Baker, and G. Guerracino. The company began construction in 1869, and a significant portion of the quay was completed and opened to service in 1876. The British construction of Alsancak Station, followed by the building of a quay from the Customs House to Alsancak and the laying of a tram line along the quay, brought the British to the forefront of commercial relations. While tram lines laid along the First Kordon transported passengers during the day, at night, trains operating on the tram line carried goods arriving at Alsancak Station, passing them through the First Kordon to the Port of İzmir, and assisting in loading them onto ships.

Alsancak Station was established in 1856 with a concession for the construction of the İzmir-Aydın railway line.

The concession was granted to the British entrepreneur Wilkin and four of his friends. In 1857, the concession was transferred to the "Ottoman Railway from İzmir to Aydın" company, and it started from Alsancak Station.

The 133-kilometer İzmir-Aydın railway line, which began construction that year, was opened to service in 1866.

With the beginning of commercial activity in İzmir, inns began to be built in the coastal trade zone from the 18th century onwards. These inns reflect the Ottoman-Turkish character of İzmir. Very few examples of these buildings have survived to the present day. The Kızlarağası Inn, which has become an important center after its restoration, is a two-story, four-gated inn built in 1744 by Kızlarağası Hacı Beğir Ağa, commissioned by Sultan Mahmud I.

The Hisar Mosque takes its name from the fortress (hisar) that stood beside it during the period it was built. Located in the historical business center of İzmir, this mosque was built in 1597 by Yakup Bey. Its large central dome rests on eight pillars, while it has three large domes on each side, three smaller domes at the back, and seven smaller domes in the prayer hall, all supported by a single minaret. The mihrab, minbar, and pulpit are meticulously decorated and have survived to the present day in remarkably good condition.

The Yalı (Konak) Mosque, built in the 18th century, takes its name from its location by the sea. It was also known as the Ayşe Hatun Mosque. Two different dates are suggested for its construction: 1755 and 1774. However, this 18th-century structure was commissioned by Ayşe Hatun of İzmir, located in the courtyard of her madrasa (religious school) by the sea. It is elegantly decorated with Kütahya tiles and features a single minaret.

The Republic Square and Atatürk Monument are undoubtedly one of the most important achievements in İzmir's reconstruction efforts following the 1922 fire. The square and monument are among the most significant indicators of urban planning. Designed in 1925, the square and monument were only finalized in 1929 by an Italian sculptor.

Although it was commissioned from Canonica, due to the economic crisis, it could only be completed in 1932 thanks to the efforts of the then Mayor Behçet Uz.

The İzmir National Library and Elhamra Cinema: The İzmir National Library, the first library in Türkiye to bear the name "National," was established in 1912 in the selamlık (reception) section of the Salepçizade Mansion on Beyler Street, thanks to the efforts of the Committee of Union and Progress, with the aim of educating and cultured Turkish youth. Construction of the current building began after 1922, with the Elhamra Cinema completed and opened in 1926, while the library building was finally completed in 1933. The design of this monumental structure was prepared in the Neo-Classical style by architect Tahsin Sermet Bey.

İzmir, a port city where commercial relations flourished, lost this characteristic after the Greek occupation and subsequent burning of the city. After liberation, there was a need to revive the city's international commercial identity and introduce its products to foreign markets. For this purpose, during the İzmir Economic Congress held on February 17, 1923, a "Domestic Goods Exhibition," which can be considered the foundation of the İzmir Fair, was organized. Following this temporary exhibition, in 1927, thanks to the initiative of Governor Kazım Pasha, exhibitions were held under the name "9 Eylül Meyheri," first at the Mithatpaşa Art Institute.

It was later opened on the site that is now the Efes Hotel. The İzmir Fair, which gained international status in 1931, began to be held in Kültürpark, which was built to reclaim the sites of fires, from 1936 onwards.

Alaçatı is located 80km west of İzmir.

Alaçatı's history dates back to 3000 BC. In the 10th century BC, Alaçatı was part of İonia.

It is located right in the center of the region. Its ancient name was "Agrilia". Agrilia was an Ionian village. The largest Ionian city in the region was Erythrai.

It was successively ruled by Lydia, Persia, the Kingdom of Pergamon, Rome, Byzantium, and finally, in the 14th century, the Genoese.

16. The region began to gain importance in the 16th century during the Ottoman period with the settlement of a tribe called Alacaat. According to one story, the local chieftain had a spotted horse. It is possible that the name derives from the phrase "man with a spotted horse." Also in the 16th century, Piri Reis visited the region. In 1566, the Ottomans conquered Chios Island, and the Alacaat tribe, a Turkish tribe, settled in the area. By the 17th century, the Grand Vizier of the time ordered the reclamation of the region, whose southern part was marshy.

In the mid-19th century, Hacı Memiý was appointed as the ayan (local notable) of the region, which had fertile lands. (Ayan: individuals responsible for the state's duties of recruiting soldiers and collecting taxes.) Ottoman notable Hacı Memiý invited the impoverished Greek population of Chios Island, devastated by earthquakes, to Alacaat village to work in various jobs. Thanks to the contributions of the Greek laborers, the marshy area south of Alaçatý was reclaimed and opened for settlement. Hacı Memiý called the Greek population from Chios to the region. A canal was dug to Alaçatý Port to drain the swamp, which was causing malaria outbreaks in Alacaat village. This canal later became a port where ships docked. Turkish landowners in the region gave their fields to the Greek laborers who came for the canal construction, on the condition that they cultivate and develop the land.

Thus, a village is established a few kilometers inland from the sea. With the settlement of Greeks in the region and their leasing of the fertile fields of Turkish landowners, viticulture also begins to develop in Alaçatý. During this same period, a disease rages in European vineyards.

Europeans turned to different vineyards to meet their wine needs. This was a great opportunity for Alaçatý, which has productive and healthy vineyards and a harbor.

Thanks to its port, it became a wealthy settlement through wine exports. As its economic situation improved, trade flourished with the arrival of Greeks who began buying the fields it cultivated. Today, many of Alaçatý's stunning stone houses, which are being restored one by one, are these historic houses built between 1850 and 1890.

The Greeks who settled here played an important role in the development of the region. Two major earthquakes occurred in 1878 and 1881, damaging the houses.

According to the 1895 census, Alaçatý had a population of 13,845, of which only 132 were Muslim. However, during the Balkan War of 1912, Muslims fleeing the Balkans from Crete, Yugoslavia, Thessaloniki, and Macedonia arrived in the town.

Migrants are settled. The region, famous for its vineyards and wine, shifts its livelihood to tobacco cultivation, olives, artichokes, anise, citrus fruits, melons, mastic trees, and livestock farming as the population changes. With the Balkan Wars and World War I, the Greek population is also forced to migrate. After the end of World War I, some families who had been forced to migrate returned, but this situation did not last long. They were forced to leave again in 1922. With the "exchange agreement" signed between Turkey and Greece in 1924, the Orthodox Greeks residing in Türkiye were sent to Greece. With this practice, nearly 2 million people were forced to migrate.

The Greeks gave Alaçatý the name Alatsata. Turkish immigrants changed it to Alaçatý. The Greeks who were forced to leave Alaçatý migrated to different parts of the world, but they kept the name Alatsata alive. Today, they have established cities called Nea Alatsata on the island of Crete, and in Australia and America. This continued until World War II. Alaçatý port was used as İzmir's export port.

By the 1990s, Alaçatı had begun to gain fame for its winds. With windsurfing enthusiasts arriving at the harbor, Alaçatı's transformation into a tourist destination began. Today, Alaçatı, with its preserved historical character and natural beauty, is one of the most popular and distinguished holiday resorts.

Particularly influenced by Greek architecture, the houses in Alaçatı are mostly built with local stone, typically two-story with bay windows. Local pumice stone is used in their construction. To combat the unbearable summer heat, the houses are oriented north-south, receiving less direct sunlight and benefiting from the breeze. Narrow streets provide shade. The windmills, which have become a symbol of Alaçatı and were considered technological marvels of their time, are among the oldest structures in the region.

In 2006, Alaçatı was declared an urban protected area, preventing the construction of new buildings that did not conform to traditional architecture. The region's architectural fabric has been preserved and valued thanks to its stone houses made from pumice-like cut stones, known as Alaçatı stone. It has a population of 10,000 and covers an area of 704 square kilometers, hosting numerous entertainment venues and hotels. The Alaçatı Herb Festival, held since 2010, aims to promote the variety of herbs grown in the region through dishes made from them.

History of Çeşme

Çeşme is located 94 km west of İzmir, at the very tip of the peninsula bearing its name. It is the westernmost point of Türkiye. It served as the port of the ancient city of Erythrai, one of the twelve Ionian cities with a highly protected harbor. Commercial relations were established with Egypt, Cyprus, and Western countries. It is believed that Çeşme derives its current name from the "fountains" where sailors obtained water. Indeed, Çeşme's most important features are its drinking water and its harbor.

It was captured by the Turks in 1081 by Çaka Bey. Çeşme Port,

In the early 14th century, it became a naval base for the Ayyıldızid dynasty. It was first incorporated into Ottoman territory by Bayezid I, but after the Battle of Ankara (1402), it was returned to the Ayyıldızid dynasty by Timur. It came under Ottoman rule again in 1422. In 1503, Bayezid II had the Çeşme fortress built there. In 1529, Suleiman the Magnificent constructed a caravanserai.

In 1770, a major naval battle took place off the coast of Çeşme during the Ottoman-Russian war. This was the second major battle in Ottoman history after the Battle of Lepanto (1571).

This was the second major defeat. As a result of this war, Russia temporarily gained control of the Aegean Sea and the islands within it.

This accelerated the uprisings of minorities against the Ottomans. The Ottoman fleet, consisting of 60 ships, lost 50 vessels and approximately 10,000 sailors. Due to his courage and success during and after this raid, Hasan Pasha of Algiers was promoted to Admiral of the Fleet. He was not originally from Algeria; he received the title of "Algerian" because of his heroism during an attack on an enemy ship as a result of an expedition to Algeria. Legend has it that he traveled with a lion he had tamed.

This led to him being called "Lion Pasha." In commemoration of this victory, the Russians erected monuments in various locations throughout Russia. The Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca was also signed in 1774. In 1795, during the time when Hasan Pasha of Algiers was Grand Admiral, the first taxation agreement between America and the Ottoman Empire was signed. According to this agreement, American merchant ships sailing in the Mediterranean would be protected by the Ottoman Navy, and in return, the USA would pay taxes to the Ottoman State.

17. With İzmir, a small trading center where products from Western Anatolia were sold, suddenly gaining commercial dominance from the late 19th century onwards, the Port of Çeşme gradually declined and lost its importance compared to the Port of İzmir.

The current population of Çeşme is 40,000.

Chios Island, located opposite Çeşme, is the 5th largest island in Greece and 4.5 nautical miles from Türkiye. It gets its name from mastic gum production. It came under Ottoman rule during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent and remained under Ottoman control for approximately 350 years, until the Balkan Wars. Its current population is 50,000. Namık Kemal was exiled to this island.

Historical Places to Visit in Izmir

Izmir, with its rich history, is home to many important ancient cities and historical structures. Bearing traces from both ancient times and the Ottoman and Republic periods, Izmir has numerous historical sites to visit. Here are some of the main historical places to visit in Izmir:

1. Ephesus Ancient City

Ephesus, one of the world's most important ancient cities, is located in the Selçuk district of İzmir. It is famous for its Roman-era ruins, the Temple of Artemis, the Celsus Library, the Great Theatre, and other significant structures. Ephesus is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

2. Pergamon (Bergama) Ancient City

Ancient Pergamon, located in the Bergama district, was one of the most important cities of the Hellenistic period. It houses significant structures such as the Acropolis, the Asklepion (temple of health), the Red Courtyard, and the Pergamon Library.

3. Agora Ancient City (Izmir Agora)

Located in the city center of Izmir, the Agora is a Roman-era marketplace. Its ancient remains include columns, walls, and fountains. It is an important destination for those wishing to explore Izmir's history in depth.

4. Kadifekale (Pagos Hill)

Kadifekale, located at the highest point of Izmir, is a Hellenistic fortress estimated to date back to the 4th century BC. From the fortress, you can enjoy a magnificent view of Izmir. Used for defensive purposes in ancient times, the fortress is now an open-air museum open to visitors.

5. Yirince Village

Yirince is a historic village famous for its stone houses dating back to the Ottoman period. Located very close to the ancient city of Ephesus, it's a perfect place to explore traditional Turkish village life. Yirince is also renowned for its wines.

6. Izmir Clock Tower and Konak Square

Built in 1901 by Sultan Abdul Hamid II, the Clock Tower is one of the symbols of Izmir. The Ottoman-era buildings and statues around Konak Square also offer a historical atmosphere.

7. Kemeraltı Bazaar

Kemeraltı is İzmir's historic shopping bazaar. A trading center dating back to the Ottoman era, it sells traditional handicrafts, souvenirs, antiques, and local food products. Kemeraltı offers a journey into İzmir's social and commercial life.

8. Kadifekale and the Remains of the Byzantine Walls

In the lower parts of Kadifekale lie the walls and ruins dating back to the Byzantine period. These structures, offering traces of İzmir's defense history, are situated in a commanding position overlooking the city.

Izmir Archaeology Museum

This museum, which has a vast collection related to the history of Izmir, displays artifacts dating back to 3000 BC. Sculptures, stones, and everyday objects unearthed from Ephesus, Pergamon, and other ancient cities are exhibited here.

10. House of the Virgin Mary and Church of the Virgin Mary

Located very close to the ancient city of Ephesus, the House of the Virgin Mary is a significant site for Christianity. It is an important pilgrimage center. Christians believe that the Virgin Mary spent her final years here.

11. Red Basilica (Red Courtyard)

The Red Basilica in Bergama is a large structure dating back to the Roman period. This ancient church is particularly noteworthy for its magnificent architecture and historical significance. The Red Courtyard bears traces of both the Byzantine and Roman eras.

Library of Celsus II (Ephesus)

It is one of the best-known structures in the ancient city of Ephesus. Dating back to the Roman period, this library was one of the largest libraries in the ancient world. It stands out with its magnificent architecture and reflects the rich cultural life of its time.