Batman
Batman at a Glance

The province of Batman is located near the eastern end of Southeastern Anatolia. The northern regions of the province are high, craggy and mountainous, while the southern areas are mountainous and hilly. The most important rivers in the province are the Tigris and Batman. The province of Batman is most famous as the site of Hasankeyf, a historic city on the Silk Road. Batman is also renowned for the rich petroleum reserves on Raman Mountain, the highest point in the province at 1263 meters. Batman’s major industries are oil, agriculture and livestock breeding.

Rivers and Dams

The most important river in the province, the Tigris, also forms the border between Batman and Mardin. The border between Batman and Diyarbakır, meanwhile, is formed by the Batman River, which covers 155 km of the province. The Batman Dam and Hydroelectric Power Plant on the Batman River is an important source of both water and power. Two artificial lakes, the Gercüş-Kırkat (used for irrigation) and the Kocaklı Ceffan (a source of hydroelectric power) are also located in Batman province.

Raman Mountains

The Raman Mountains rise in the east, starting with imposing Raman Mountain. After the Memnuniye Pass cuts through the mountains, the range is known as the Batı (Western) Raman range for the next 20 km, before it comes to an end at the confluence of the Batman and Tigris rivers. The majority of Batman’s oil reserves are found in the 60km-long and 15km-wide Raman Mountain, which boasts over 450 oil wells. Access to the mountain is carefully restricted in order to protect the oil wells. As a result, the mountain has become a precious refuge for wildlife where herds of wild horses literally roam free.

The best places to enjoy rambles in the countryside are the Karakoş, Raman, and Aydınlık mountains and the Garzan valley. The Batman, Garzan, Tigris and its tributaries are ideal rivers for sport fishing.
Climate

Batman has a continental climate with long, wet winters and hot summers. Compared to other cities, Batman boasts rich water reserves.

Hasankeyf

Hasankeyf, the 12th-century Artukid capital, offers a unique combination of medieval urban structures and natural rock formations and caves. Throughout history, Hasankeyf has been a melting pot of Western, Persian and Central Asian cultures, and is adorned with a citadel, mosques, tombs and ruined historic bridges. 520 meters above sea level, Hasankeyf is located in a valley between the Midyat Mountain Range and the Raman Mountains to the north.

Sleeping on the roof

With summer temperatures in Batman reaching 40-45°C, the locals keep cool by living in adobe houses. In the summer, many prefer to sleep on their roofs on platform beds known as ‘taht’ – a widespread habit throughout Southeastern Anatolia.

Petroleum reserves

Batman’s main natural resource is petroleum. Oil was first discovered on Raman Mountain in 1939, and led to the rapid development of the city. The Batman Refinery, Turkey’s first, opened in 1955.

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- Provincial Population: 476,063 according to the 2000 census
- Central City Population: 225,450
- Altitude: 550 meters above sea level
- Area: 4694 square kilometers
- Number of Districts and Villages: 5 districts, 263 villages
- Neighboring Provinces: Muş to the north, Diyarbakır to the west, Bitlis and Siirt to the east, Mardin to the south
The 2967-meter high Mereto Mountain
Batman and its environs have been settled since prehistoric times. Indeed, archeological findings at İluh, Girmator and Hallan Çemi reveal that the area around Batman was settled in the Neolithic Age, Copper Age and Bronze Age. The region was first ruled by the Assyrians, followed by the Urartu. Batman was known as Ela Khan (İlihan) in 546 BC when it became a part of the Median Empire. With the death of Alexander the Great, the entire region, including Batman, came under Seleucid rule. Like the rest of Southeastern Anatolia, Batman and its environs were fought over by many great civilizations. Until the Mongol invasion, the area was ruled by the Seljuks, Ayyubids and Artuks. After the region fell to the Karakoyunlu and Akköyunalı states, the city was briefly ruled by the Safavid state. In 1514, Batman was conquered by Selim I and came under Ottoman rule. Upon the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, Batman was merely a village under the jurisdiction of Bitlis. In 1957, it was declared a district, and the city and surrounding region became an administrative province in 1990. Batman’s most famous district is Hasankeyf, which boasts Artukid, Ayyubid and Akköyunalı remains.
Hasankeyf

Set on the banks of the Tigris, Hasankeyf is in the historic region known as Mesopotamia. This ancient settlement and center of trade is located on the eastern bank of the Tigris, to the north of the Midyat Mountains, and south of the Raman Mountains. Hasankeyf consists of a citadel perched atop a steep, rocky bluff and the city below it. Due to its location, Hasankeyf remained an important city throughout history, and was even the Artukid capital for a time. Hasankeyf played an important role in Turkish-Islamic history, and was the fourth largest city in the region in the 16th century. Important structures were constructed in Hasankeyf by the Artukids, Akkoynulu and Ayyubids. The city grew both economically and culturally in the 16th century but began to decline in the 18th century, in line with the Ottoman political climate. In 1926, it came under the jurisdiction of Gercüş, and was declared a district of Batman province in 1990.

1. Hasankeyf Citadel
2. Citadel Gate
3. Grand Palace (Büyük Saray)
4. Small Palace (Küçük Saray)
5. Grand (Ulu) Mosque
6. Small Fort or Mint (Darphane)
7. Sultan Süleyman Mosque
8. Koç Mosque
9. Kızlar Mosque
10. The Historic Hasankeyf Bridge
11. The Mausoleum of Zeynel Bey
12. Imam Abdullah Dervish Lodge (Zaviye)
13. Ottoman Hamam
14. Küçük Saray

The palace was once covered with golden lettering.

Hasankeyf Bridge

The famous medieval stone bridge.
El-Rizk Mosque
The minaret features Arabic Kufic inscriptions and ornamentation.

Small Fort or Mint
Coins minted here by the Artukids are on display at the Mardin Museum.

Grand Palace
Supported by metal clamps, the palace’s tower is still standing.

The caves of Hasankeyf
There are approximately 4000 caves in the Hasankeyf Citadel and along the valleys that surround the city. Some of these are naturally formed, while others are manmade. The people of Hasankeyf have long used these caves as dwellings.
Hasankeyf

Citadel
The Citadel was built by the Byzantines in 363 as a defense against the Sassanids, but the area is thought to have been settled since prehistoric times. The citadel is built entirely from natural stone, and is accessed by two long flights of steps, one in the west and one in the east. Spring water was piped in to the citadel in Ayyubid and Artukid times. The area to the south of the Grand Mosque was later converted into a cemetery. Under the Ayyubids, a large iwan was built here. Most of the homes in the citadel are cave dwellings dug into the rock.

Citadel Gate
The Citadel Gate appears before you as you climb up the eastern flight of steps. An inscription tells us that the gate was built in 1416 by the Ayyubid Sultan Süleyman. The facade of the gate is made of ashlar masonry, while the back is made of rubble. Sadly, dangerous cracks have emerged in the gate.

Grand Palace
The Grand Palace is located below the Grand Mosque to the north of the citadel. Most of the building has collapsed or subsided, but round buttresses support the northern façade.

Small Palace
Built in 1328 by the Ayyubid Muciruddin Muhammed, the Small Palace is located at the northeastern end of the citadel. The palace looks like a tall tower as the rock below it has been carved away to form a cylinder. Like many other domed and vaulted structures in Hasankeyf, the palace features a room whose vault is made of clay jars cemented together. A relief depicting two lions with Kufic tablets between them can be seen above the window on the northern façade.

Grand (Ulu) Mosque
Built in 1325 by the Ayyubid leader Muciruddin Muhammed over the ruins of a church, the Grand Mosque has undergone many changes over the years. The minbar is preserved at the Hasankeyf Excavation House, while the partially collapsed minaret is made of rubble. The northern face features plaster ornamentation and a plaster inscription dated 1520.
Small Fort or Mint
This rock formation to the east of the citadel is known by the locals as the ‘küçük kale’ or ‘small fort’ and was used as a mint by the Artukids and Ayyubids. After the Mongol occupation, the Ayyubids continued to use the structure for a period of time. The fort is accessed by a staircase opposite the Citadel Gate, but the rocks supporting the staircase have partially collapsed.

El-Rızk Mosque
The El-Rızk Mosque is by the Tigris near the foot of the bridge. The main entrance features a late 15th-century inscription dating from the Akkoyunlu period. The mosque was built in 1409, but only the minaret remains of the original structure. The minaret features Arabic Kufic script inscriptions and ornamentation, but its most striking feature is the double staircase that leads to the şerefe or balcony.

Sultan Süleyman Mosque
An inscription on the eastern face of the minaret base tells us that the Sultan Süleyman Mosque was built by the eponymous Ayyubid Sultan Süleyman. The minaret, courtyard gate and fountain are made of ornamented ashlar masonry. All four faces of the rectangular minaret are ornamented with Arabic Kufic script. The section above the balcony has collapsed, but the dome is decorated with plaster ornamentation.

Kızlar Mosque
Located to the east of Koç Mosque, Kızlar Mosque is thought to have originally been a mausoleum. The dome, the remains of the tomb and sepulcher have all been restored. The walls of the tomb located on the corners of the northern façade feature Kufic inscriptions embellished with organic designs, as well as an elegant inscription of the ‘besmele’ prayer. The overall design of the structure suggests that it was built by the Ayyubids.

The Historic Hasankeyf Bridge
The masons’ marks and figures on the collapsed bridge suggest that it was built by the Artukids, as does the fact that it bears a strong resemblance to the Malabadi Bridge. The span between the two piers that support the large arch measures 40 meters. The upstream sides of the piers are triangular in order to withstand the force of the river, while the downstream sides are semi-circular. The ashlar masonry arches and façades are held together by metal clamps.

The Mausoleum of Zeynel Bey
The mausoleum was constructed for Zeynel Bey, the son of Uzun Hasan, an Akkoyunlu leader. The circular sepulcher features a central structure with a round exterior and octagonal interior. Three lines of ceramic tiles surround the exterior, and feature the names “Allah-Muhammed-Ali”. The ceramic tiles on the exterior of the structure are the only examples in Anatolia of the classical style that arose in the mid-14th century.

Imam Abdullah Dervish Lodge
This small dervish lodge is located on a hill to the left of the entrance to Hasankeyf Bridge. The square lodge is set in a rectangular courtyard, and is surrounded by a cemetery that overlooks the Tigris from the north. The elegant ‘alem’ (crescent and star design) on the dome of the tomb and the woodcarvings on the door panels of the semi-circular vaulted doorway connecting the tomb and the tower are classical examples of 14th-century design. These doors are preserved in the collection of the Diyarbakır Museum.

Ottoman Hamam
This Turkish bath or ‘hamam’ is the only remaining Ottoman structure in Hasankeyf and is located on the northern bank of the Tigris to the west of the foot of the historic bridge. The domed Turkish bath has many similarities with Ottoman mosque architectural design.
Mosques (Camii)
1. Ibrahim Bey Mosque
2. Hizir Bey Mosque

Mausoleums (Türbe)
3. The Mausoleum of Seyyid Bilâl

Monasteries (Manastır)
4. Mor Kiryakus Monastery
5. Mor Aho Monastery

Forts (Kale)
6. Kozluk (Hezo) Fort
7. Rabat Fort
8. Kandil Fort
9. Beksi Fort
10. Bozikân Fort
11. Pertükân Fort

Bridges
12. Malabadi Bridge
13. Memikan Bridge
14. Seyyidler Village
A GUIDE TO SOUTHEASTERN ANATOLIA
1. Ibrahim Bey Mosque

**Kozluk**

According to an inscription above the entrance, the Ibrahim Bey Mosque was built in 1705 by Ibrahim Bey, the son of Murtaza Bey of the Garzan clan. The minaret has a pentagonal base, and two staircases—one of which has 100 steps, the other 99.

2. Hızır Bey Mosque

**Kozluk**

Hızır Bey is the largest mosque in Kozluk. According to an inscription, the mosque was built in 1512 by Hızır Bey, the son of Ebubekir Roşkin, the Bey of Sason and Hezo (Kozluk).

3. The Mausoleum of Seyyid Bilâl

**The village of Vergili (Becirman) in Gercüş**

The mausoleum of Seyyid Bilâl, believed to be a descendant of Husayn ibn Ali, the grandson of Muhammad, is the most important hub of faith tourism in Southeastern Anatolia. An inscription on the tomb tells us that Seyyid Bilâl lived from 1132-1212, spent part of his life in Karbala, Iraq, and emigrated from Baghdad to Vergili, a village in the district of Hasankeyf, in 1154. He spent the remainder of his life in the village, and is buried there.

4. Mor Kiryakus Monastery

**The far end of the Tur Abdin region in the village of Ayränk in the Beşiri district**

The monastery has great significance in early Syriac Christianity. Missionary monks that came here from Aleppo in the 4th century built many
monasteries on hills and bluffs overlooking Northern Mesopotamia. The three-story monastery with an underground section is set on 2500 square meters of land. The monastery served as a seminary for training priests, and was linked to the Deyr-ül Zafaran monastery in Mardin.

Mor Aho Monastery

The monastery is known locally as Deyr Mahar, meaning Mahar Church. Perched some 150 meters above the Tigris, the monastery is built on a plateau overlooking the lowland plains. With the gradual departure of the Christian population, the monastery was slowly deserted and is now in ruins. Pieces of ancient masonry found in a garden by the banks of Tigris suggest that this area was once attached to the monastery.

Kozluk (Hezo) Fort

Kale, Kozluk
Built on top of a rocky peak by the Persians as a place of worship, the fort was an important post on the Silk Road, which passed near here in medieval times. The fortress was held for many years by the Persians, but was taken in 638 by a Muslim army under the command of Iyaz Bin Ganem.

Rabat Fort

The village of Yankkaya (Rabat), 18 km north of Kozluk
Built at the end of the 4th century by the Byzantines, this is one of the forts built around Sason, Kozluk and Bitlis to defend the Erzen region.

Kandil Fort

South of the village of Bölükkonak, 6 km northwest of Kozluk
Perched on top of a natural outcrop, Kandil Fort was built by the Romans in the first quarter of the 4th century.

Beksi Fort

Near the village of Bekiş on the southern slopes of Meydanok Mountain, 7 km northwest of Sason
This partially ruined Byzantine fort was built on a slope overlooking the valley and had strong defenses. The topography of the land made it nigh invincible.

**Bozikân Fort**
The village of Kaleyolu, 25 km north of Sason
Built in the 4th century, this Roman fort is thought to have been a defensive post on the Silk Road.

**Pertükân Fort**
East of the village of Tekevler, 4 km southwest of Sason
Almost completely in ruins, this fort was easily conquered and changed hands many times during its history. Many of its walls have been breached or have collapsed, proof that it weathered many battles.

**Memikan Bridge**
Spanning the Garzan River
The bridge is thought to have been built after the Muslim conquest in the 6th century, or to have been constructed over the ruins of an ancient predecessor. The Memikan Bridge is located at a strategic point on the Garzan River, serving as a crossing for the Silk Road. From antiquity until the first half of the Middle Ages, the bridge facilitated trade, particularly between the ‘beylik’ principalities.

**Seyyidler Village**
The historic village of Vergili, also known as Seyyidler Köyü, is home to the mausoleum of Seyyid Bilâl and is a site of pilgrimage for the locals. There are many caves, historic ‘han’ or inns and water mills around the village. The life of Seyyid Bilâl is commemorated annually during the second week of September.

**Malabadi Bridge**
Spanning the Batman River, on the Batman-Silvan-Diyarbakır highway
The Malabadi Bridge has the widest arch of any stone bridge, and is the twin of the famous Mostar Bridge. The bridge was built in 1147 by the Artukid Timur Taş, son of Ilgazi, grandson of Artuk. The most striking feature of the bridge is that it is set at an angle to the river, so there are angular breaks in the east and west approaches. The spandrels of the main arch incorporate small rooms for travelers. Like other important Artukid bridges, the bridge is decorated with human figures that represent the zodiac, and who hold unidentifiable objects in their hands.
The 150-meter long, 7-meter wide bridge was originally built with colored stones.
Batman Culture

Carpet weaving

Carpet weaving is the most common handcraft in Batman and the surrounding regions. Today, traditional looms are being replaced by kilim and carpet weaving looms. Batman carpets are sold in Turkey and around the world.

Folk Dances

Batman folk dances are typical of Southeastern Anatolia. The dances are classed according to their lineup.

In a straight line:
- Girani, Govend, Hirpani

In a half-circle:
- Delilo, Dipe, Kız Kaçırma

In a circle:
- Gazele, Doldurhan

In two straight lines facing each other:
- Teşi, Çepik, Şimle

The folk dances are most commonly accompanied by tambours made from goat and sheepskin, ‘zurna’ pipes made from plum or horn beech trees, ‘kemençe’ (small, three-stringed violin) made from a calabash tree and covered in fish skin, and ‘def’ decorated with silver.
Batman Cuisine

Batman cuisine is characteristic of the region, and includes traditional local dishes such as ‘köfte’ (meatballs), kebabs, and vegetable dishes. Mutton and ‘bulgur’ (cracked wheat) are staples of the cuisine.

Perde Pilavı

Perde Pilavı (veiled rice) is the regional dish of Siirt and is endowed with cultural and symbolic significations. It is also popular in Batman. Perde Pilavi ingredients include rice, chicken, almonds, currants and nuts.

Meatballs

Batman cuisine features many local meatball varieties, including ‘çiğ köfte’ (spicy Turkish steak tartare) and ‘içli köfte’ (meatballs in a bulgar wheat shell).

Fish

The ‘şabut’ (Barbus grypus) is a freshwater fish indigenous to the Euphrates but also found in the Tigris. The delicious fish is very popular in and around Hasankeyf.

Bread

Bread forms an important part of Batman cuisine. Varieties known as ‘kıçıl’ and ‘tiftik’ are baked in stove ovens in Batman’s smaller districts and villages, while ‘tandır’, the local specialty, is baked in a pit.