

Ever heard of Gaziantep? If not, it's high time to add this Turkish gem to your travel list. Gaziantep is a historical city, famous for its delicious cuisine and a wonderful heritage. It's not about checking off the boxes of the places to visit, but it is about the culture, that is, the feeling of the taste buds, the olfactory senses, and the soul.

It is really difficult to describe all the opportunities of this city in several words. But do not fret, here are all the things that you need to know before you start packing your luggage.

About Gaziantep Turkey

Gaziantep is in the southeastern part of Turkey and is not very famous among tourists who on their way to Istanbul or Cappadocia. But those people who have never taken their time to watch it are the ones that are really losing out big time. Also known as the food capital of Turkey, this city is sure to satisfy all your taste buds and eyes.

Gaziantep is a city in which cultures blend. Its location near Syria has greatly impacted what the city eats, how it builds, and even the overall atmosphere. Visiting the city, one will be able to observe the architecture of the Ottoman period, the bazaars and cafes of the present days. It's a city that breathes history, and you'll notice that wherever you turn.

The city is particularly known for its pistachios – used in the baklava the city is famous for. I am not even kidding you, their baklavas are to die for. Locals travel from far and near just to get a taste of it. But it's not just about food. There are also great museums, exotic bazaars, and archeological sites in Turkey's Gaziantep.

Why Visit Gaziantep?

- **Food capital:** If you love food (and let's be real, who doesn't?), Gaziantep's local cuisine is a game-changer.
- **Cultural richness:** It's a city that's rich in history and tradition.
- **Affordable travel:** Compared to tourist-heavy spots like Istanbul, Gaziantep is easier on the wallet without sacrificing the experience.

The History of Gaziantep

Talking about history, Gaziantep's roots run deep. If you love history, this place will blow your mind. Gaziantep was first settled by the Hittites back in the Bronze Age. Yep, we're talking ancient times here. Over 4,000 years, it became part of empires like the Romans, Byzantines, and Ottomans. This mix of rulers left behind a rich cultural heritage, which still shines through today.



During the Roman period, Gaziantep was known as "Antiochia ad Taurum." After the Roman Empire split, the city came under Byzantine rule. In the 12th century, it fell under the Seljuk Turks' control, and by the 16th century, it became a part of the Ottoman Empire.

One thing that stands out in Gaziantep's history is its role in the Turkish War of Independence. After World War I, the city resisted French forces that occupied the region. The people's bravery earned the city the honorific title "Gazi," which means "veteran" in Turkish.

Today, when you walk through Gaziantep, you're walking through a city that has fought for and earned its place in Turkish history.

When's the Best Time to Visit?

Timing is key when planning a trip, right? The best time to visit Gaziantep is either in the **spring** (March to May) or **fall** (September to November). These months offer the most comfortable weather—warm days and cooler nights, ideal for wandering through the city's streets and markets.

Avoid the summer, unless you love heat. Gaziantep gets **hot** in the summer, with temperatures sometimes hitting 104°F (40°C). Winter, on the other hand, is pretty chilly but still manageable if you pack warmly. But trust me, those cool spring and fall months are the sweet spot.

When's the Best Time to Visit?

Timing is always important when planning for a trip. Well, you know what, the weather in Gaziantep can be a little over the top sometimes. Summer is really hot, sometimes scorching hot while winter may be cold. That being said, when is the best time?

If you desire ideal climate plan your trip for the early spring (March-May) or early fall (September- November). It is not extremely hot so walking tours, visiting museums, or eating as much baklava as one can imagine is possible.

Summer is long, from June to August and the temperature reaches over 100°F most of the time. If you do not like it hot, then you should better avoid these months. December to February is winter and the temperature might be a little low, but the overall atmosphere makes it a good time to visit.

How Many Days Should You Stay in Gaziantep Turkey?

Well, you might be asking yourself the question: How many days should I spend in Gaziantep? That, of course, depends on how far you are willing to go. That's why a tourism trip for 2-3 days will be more than enough to see the main attractions of Gaziantep, such as the Zeugma Mosaic Museum, Gaziantep Castle, and, of course, the best places to try delicious meals.

But if you want to get much deeper into the culture and spend more time with no haste, it is better to choose 4-5 days. This will give you more time to walk through the bazaars, try the local markets, and possibly even take a food tour – believe me, you will want to do that.

The longer your stay, the much better you are going to feel. Well, Gaziantep isn't the sort of place you can quickly run through—it's the sort of place you linger in, as over the world-renowned dishes.

Getting Around the City

Worried about how to move around? Gaziantep makes it easy for visitors. The public transport system here is reliable and affordable. You've got buses, dolmuş (shared minivans), and taxis at your disposal.

- **Buses:** Super cheap and efficient. They cover most of the city, so they're a good option for budget-conscious travelers.
- **Dolmuş:** These are shared taxis that follow set routes. They're faster than buses but cost a bit more. Locals love them, so you'll get a real feel for everyday life in Gaziantep.
- **Taxis:** If you're in a hurry or just don't feel like taking public transport, taxis are everywhere. Make sure to ask the driver to use the meter.
- **Walking:** In the older parts of the city, walking is the best way to explore. The cobblestone streets, ancient buildings, and vibrant markets are best enjoyed on foot.

If you're feeling adventurous, renting a car might be a good idea, especially if you want to explore areas outside the city. Roads are generally in good condition, and having a car gives you the flexibility to discover nearby villages or hidden gems.

What Things to Do in Gaziantep & Must-See Spots

Gaziantep might not be on the top of every tourist's list, but once you're here, you'll wonder why it's still such a hidden gem. There's plenty to keep you busy:

1. Zeugma Mosaic Museum

This is the top must-see spot in Gaziantep. It houses mosaics from the ancient city of Zeugma, some of the best-preserved Roman art in the world. The "Gypsy Girl" mosaic is the most famous piece here.

2. Gaziantep Castle

Sitting right in the heart of the city, this ancient castle offers great views of Gaziantep. There's also a war museum inside that tells the story of the city's resistance during the Turkish War of Independence.

3. Bakırcılar Çarşısı (Coppersmith Bazaar)

Get a glimpse of traditional craftsmanship at this bustling bazaar. You'll find handmade

copper products, local sweets, and spices. It's a great place to shop for souvenirs.

4. Gaziantep Archaeological Museum

If you love history, this museum is a treasure trove of artifacts from the Hittite, Roman, and Byzantine eras.

5. Emine Göğüş Culinary Museum

Don't leave Gaziantep without learning a thing or two about its world-famous cuisine. This museum is dedicated to the history and traditions of Turkish cooking, with a special focus on Gaziantep's culinary legacy.

What to Eat & Drink in Gaziantep

It's impossible to discuss Gaziantep without mentioning food. Yes! This city has acclaimed fame as the culinary capital of Turkey and once you taste their culinary specialties it is easy to find out why. Food lovers will be surely delighted. Gaziantep is all about flavors - intense, complex and nothing you will ever forget. Here's the list of foods and beverages you should not miss when in town.

Baklava

Let's get this one out of the way first. If you haven't heard already, Gaziantep is the king of baklava. The buttery layers of phyllo dough filled with chopped pistachios and drenched in syrup are heavenly. It's sweet but not overpowering, and the pistachios from the region make it stand out from the rest.

Lahmacun

Often called Turkish pizza, lahmacun is a thin, crispy flatbread topped with minced meat, herbs, and spices. It's light but full of flavor. Roll it up with some lemon juice and parsley, and you'll be hooked.

Kebabs

Gaziantep is home to some of the best kebabs in Turkey. Whether you go for the classic lamb kebab or the spicy Urfa kebab, the smoky, tender meat will leave you craving more.

Katmer

Looking for another sweet treat? Katmer is a flaky pastry filled with pistachios and clotted cream, usually served for breakfast. Yes, dessert for breakfast—why not?

Gaziantep isn't just about food; the drinks are just as delicious. Don't leave without trying these local beverages:

Turkish Coffee

A must-have in Turkey, Gaziantep's version is rich, bold, and flavorful. It's brewed in a special pot called a "cezve" and served in a small cup. Don't drink the last sip—it's all grounds at the bottom.

Ayran

This is a salty yogurt drink that's super refreshing, especially on a hot day. It pairs perfectly with a heavy meal and helps balance out the rich flavors.

Where to Stay in Gaziantep

You've stuffed yourself with delicious food, so now it's time to find a place to crash. Luckily, Gaziantep has plenty of options for all types of travelers. Whether you're looking for luxury or budget-friendly digs, you'll find something that fits your style.

Luxury Hotels

- **The Anatolian Hotel:** If you want a mix of modern comforts and traditional charm, this is the spot. Located in the city center, it offers a spa, elegant rooms, and top-notch service.
- **Divan Gaziantep:** Known for its hospitality, this five-star hotel has large rooms, an indoor pool, and great dining options. It's perfect if you want to splurge a little.

Budget-Friendly Stays

- **Ali Bey Konagi:** A beautiful boutique hotel with Ottoman-style decor. It's cozy, clean, and won't break the bank. Plus, it's located in the heart of the old city.
- **Gaziantep Plaza Hotel:** This hotel is a great choice for travelers on a budget. It's simple, clean, and offers all the basics you need for a comfortable stay.

Mid-Range Hotels

- **Ibis Gaziantep:** Part of the popular Ibis chain, this hotel offers reliable comfort and modern amenities at reasonable prices. It's centrally located, making it easy to explore the city.
- **Tugcan Hotel:** With stylish rooms and great service, Tugcan Hotel provides a cozy stay for mid-range travelers. It has a gym, pool, and a popular restaurant.

Last Words

And that wraps up this guide! I hope it gives you everything you need to know before visiting Gaziantep.

Although Gaziantep is not as popular as Istanbul or Antalya, this city is very diverse, and there is much to do there. The city is quite culturally charged, which I love, and the food they serve is delicious. It is even possible to shop in the historic bazaars with the air of history around it. It is possible to have tasty food in small restaurants that seem like they are hidden from the world.

If you like food, and history, or are looking for an extraordinary travel destination, then Gaziantep is just for you. That is why it is more diverse than other places, because it combines both the old and the new.

FAQs About Visiting Gaziantep Turkey

Here are some frequently asked questions to help you plan your trip:

What is the best way to get to Gaziantep?

You can fly into Gaziantep Oğuzeli International Airport from major cities like Istanbul and Ankara. There are also regular bus and train services that connect Gaziantep to other Turkish cities.

Is Gaziantep safe for tourists?

Yes, Gaziantep is generally safe for tourists. Like any other destination, it's important to stay aware of your surroundings, but the city is welcoming and friendly.

What is the currency used in Gaziantep?

The local currency is the Turkish lira (TRY). You'll find ATMs and currency exchange offices throughout the city.

Can I visit Gaziantep as a day trip from Istanbul?

While it's possible, Gaziantep is about a 90-minute flight from Istanbul. It's better to plan at least a 2-3 day visit to truly experience the city.

Is English widely spoken in Gaziantep?

While English isn't as commonly spoken here as in more tourist-heavy cities like Istanbul, you'll still find that younger people and those working in hotels or tourist areas can communicate in English.

What's the dress code in Gaziantep?

Gaziantep is a bit more conservative than other parts of Turkey, so it's a good idea to dress modestly, especially when visiting mosques or religious sites.