



**Dates indicated are Draft Dates for guidance only, with actual tour dates confirmed closer to the actual indicated draft dates for the tour. All tours will only be undertaken if TRNC & Turkish Government Regulations can be complied with. Tours are subject to change should circumstances arise.**

## **ATA Organised TOUR for APRIL 2021**

**A 4 night guided tour to the Diyarbakir & Mardin region of Turkey – actual dates to be confirmed**

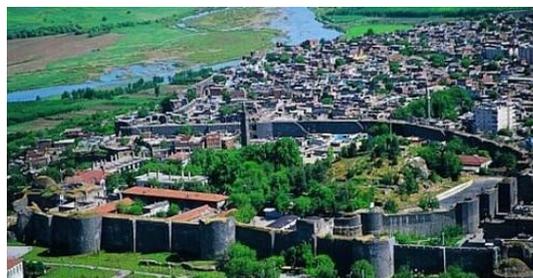


A war torn region that has over last few years transformed its self into a must see tourist destination for those seeking something out of the history of our past.

The region is where the first animals in the world were domesticated as mankind started settled farming at Çayönü, a place that is hugely important for neolithic research and dates from 7200 to 6600BC. With the cultivation of wheat in the area dating back to approximately 8,800 BC the forerunner of domesticated wheat originated in the mountains of Karacadag. This region can truly be considered to be the birth place of

farming as we know it today.

Situated on the banks of the Tigris River Diyarbakır is one of the largest cities in southeastern Turkey and is often considered the unofficial capital of Northern Kurdistan. Full of heart, soul and character, Diyarbakır is proud of remaining the symbol of Kurdish identity and tenacity. It has long been famous for its gold and silver filigree work, whilst woolen and cotton textiles and copper products can also be found for sale in its bazars and shops. Behind the grim basalt walls, the old city's twisting alleyways are crammed full of historical buildings and Arab-style mosques, all of which are magnificent in their own individual way, from the Great Mosque of Diyarbakır to the Four Legged Minaret – from St. Giragos Armenian Church to the City Walls – from the Mar Petyun Keldani Catholic Church to The house of Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı, indeed the Diyarbakır fortress has been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The old town within the walls which is like a village in the middle of the city with village mentality; goose running around, women having cay in front of their houses and kids shouting to foreigners the few English words they know. However, walking around in the city center is unique and totally different from other Turkish cities. You'll see people as they live their everyday Kurdish life. If you are lucky, you may even get invited for a tea by a friendly shop owner.



In Diyarbakır visits will include the City Walls, Ulu Mosque, Gazi Mansion, 4 pillar Minaret, Hasan Paşa Khan, Mar Petyun Church, Hevsel Gardens, and the 10 arched Bridge.

Mardin an hour's drive from Diyarbakır is situated on the top of a hill, and is known for its fascinating architecture consisting of heavily decorated stonework cascading from the hilltop. Walk the maze of alleys in this old city to grab more of local atmosphere and architecture, a maze of alleyways that while the maps and aerial photos of old city may look like a labyrinth, it is pretty hard to get lost in narrow alleys — depending on which side of main drag you are on, take downhill or uphill alleys you will come across one by one in a succession, and within 15 minutes at most, you will be back at main street. Where from every corner you can see the Mesopotamian plains, plains that look as if they are lying flat till the end of the world.

In Mardin visits will include the Mardin Museum, Mardin Ulu Mosque, Historical Mardin, Zinciriye Madrassa, Kırklar Church, Kasımiye Madrassa, and Dayrül Zafaran Monastery.

In Midyat, visits will include: a Silver Smiths Market, and the Mar Gabriel Monastery.

Hasankeyf is a small village located along the banks of the Tigris has been settled for perhaps as long as three millennia, though most cliff dwellings are around 2,000 years old. It was perhaps inhabited first by Assyrians and/or Urartians, and then most certainly by successive Roman, Byzantine, Turkic, and Arabic dynasties. Aside from the spectacular heritage sites, thousands of caves exist in the cliffs that surround the city with old shepherd paths through narrow side canyons and along the tops of towering limestone cliffs. Many of the caves are multi-storied and water-supplied. Until the 1970s many families still lived in the ancient cliff dwellings (signposted *Mağaralar*) along the river, but now there aren't more than a few inhabitants. Churches and mosques were also carved into the cliffs and numerous ancient cemeteries exist throughout the area as well.



The great thing about Hasankeyf is that the lack of Western tourists — and pretty much anyone at all — really makes you feel that you're pretty off-the-beaten track.



This is a tour you will never forget!

A tour itinerary will be published on the association website once actual dates and costs are confirmed.

***Please note this tour was originally scheduled to have taken place in 2020, and as such places on this tour are limited, due to attendees who booked for the 2020 tour exercising their right to participate in this tour. Therefore the limited number of available places on the tour will sell out quickly!***

**Descriptions of all Tours** are done so using poetic journalistic license and should not be assumed to be a detailed description or itinerary of any particular Tour, rather a '*wetting the imagination*'. Detailed information on all Tours will be emailed to members in sufficient time prior to the actual Tour to enable informed decisions made as to if the Tours of interest to you. For more information on any of our Tours in 2021 please email our Tours Organiser; contact details can be found on the committee members page and tours page of our website.

