

MOUNTAINEERING IN TURKEY

A glance at a topographical map of Turkey immediately reveals that this is a country of mountains. Rising from all four directions mountains encircle the peninsula of Anatolia. A part of the Alpine-Himalayan mountain range, Turkey has mountainous regions of different geological formations. The North Anatolian range skirts the Mediterranean shore.

Turkey's magnificent mountains and forests are mostly undeveloped, existing as wonderful natural preserves for an extraordinary variety of wildlife, flora and fauna. Two of Turkey's most famous peaks are volcanos, both inactive, Mt. Erciyes in Kayseri in Central Anatolia (3917 m) and Mt. Ağrı (Mt. Ararat 5137 m) in the east. Other well-known mountain ranges are the Rize-Kaçkar (3932 m) in the eastern Black Sea region, Niğde-Aladağ (3756 m) in the Central Taurus range, and the Cilo and Sat mountains (4136 m) near Hakkari in the Eastern Taurus.

The mountainous nature of the country has influenced its cultural evolution. For centuries, nomads and semi-nomadic peoples have migrated annually to the fresh pastures of the higher elevations in the summer. These alpine meadows, called yayla, still represent a firm tie to traditional culture.

For climbers and those interested in the geography of mountains, Turkey offers a wealth of exploration. Glaciers, volcanos, and peculiar geological formations such as karst prove irresistible to researchers and students of geology. The challenging terrain offers great opportunities to aficionados of outdoor sports who find interesting experiences on the mountains of eastern, central and southern Turkey. A list of resource organizations to aid an expedition, at whatever level, is found at the end of this guide.

- 1- Mt. Ağrı
- 2- Top of Mt. Ağrı
- 3- Mt. Ağrı and Mountaineers
- 4- Mt. Ağrı Camp Yeşil
- 5- Mountain Flower, Ağrı





THE GREAT MOUNT OF AĞRI

(Ararat) (5137 m.)

Rising at the common borders of Turkey and Iran, Mount Ağrı (Ararat), an inactive volcano capped year round with ice and snow, reaches 5137 meters. The Old Testament records that it was on this mountain that Noah's Ark came to rest after the great flood. Southwest of the mountain, the Little Mount Ağrı (Ararat) reaches up to 3896 meters. The Serdarbulak lava plateau (2600 m) stretches out between the two pinnacles. Whatever your motivation for visiting this region and exploring the mountain range, climbing the spectacular Ağrı (Ararat) is a challenging and rewarding experience.

In the summer, the weather in the area and on Mount Ağrı (Ararat) itself is sunny, warm and dry. However, in the winter and spring cold and harsh conditions prevail, and mountain climbers occasionally face blizzards and turbulent weather. July, August and September are the months when most world mountain climbers come to the area and when the climb up Ağrı (Ararat) is most enjoyable. Despite the usual sunny and clear weather at that time of year, high altitude mountain weather prevails above 3000 meters. The southern face of the mountain offers the easiest and safest ascent to the summit with the best routes and communication, transportation and safety considerations. It is not advised to climb Mount Ağrı (Ararat) alone and without a guide.

Getting there

The Trabzon-Erzurum-Tehran international transit highway, an excellent asphalt road, skirts the western and southern flanks of Ağrı (Ararat) before leading on into Iran. Doğubayazıt, 270 km from Erzurum, and nearby Iğdır, the two closest towns to the mountain, lie on this route. Daily planes, trains, and buses connect Erzurum with Ankara.

Regional attractions

The area surrounding Ağrı has retained its natural beauty and the local population still engages in the traditional lifestyle. In the summer months whole villages move to the yayla, the summer pasture, to find fresh grazing for their herds of sheep, goats, cattle and horses. Women continue to weave carpets and kilims in time-honored designs; Örtülü village is particularly renowned as a center of beautiful handicrafts. Other nearby tourist attractions include the İshak Paşa Palace, a fabulous 17th century castle of a local potentate, and a meteor crater near the Iranian border.

Ağrı Provincial Dept. of Tourism

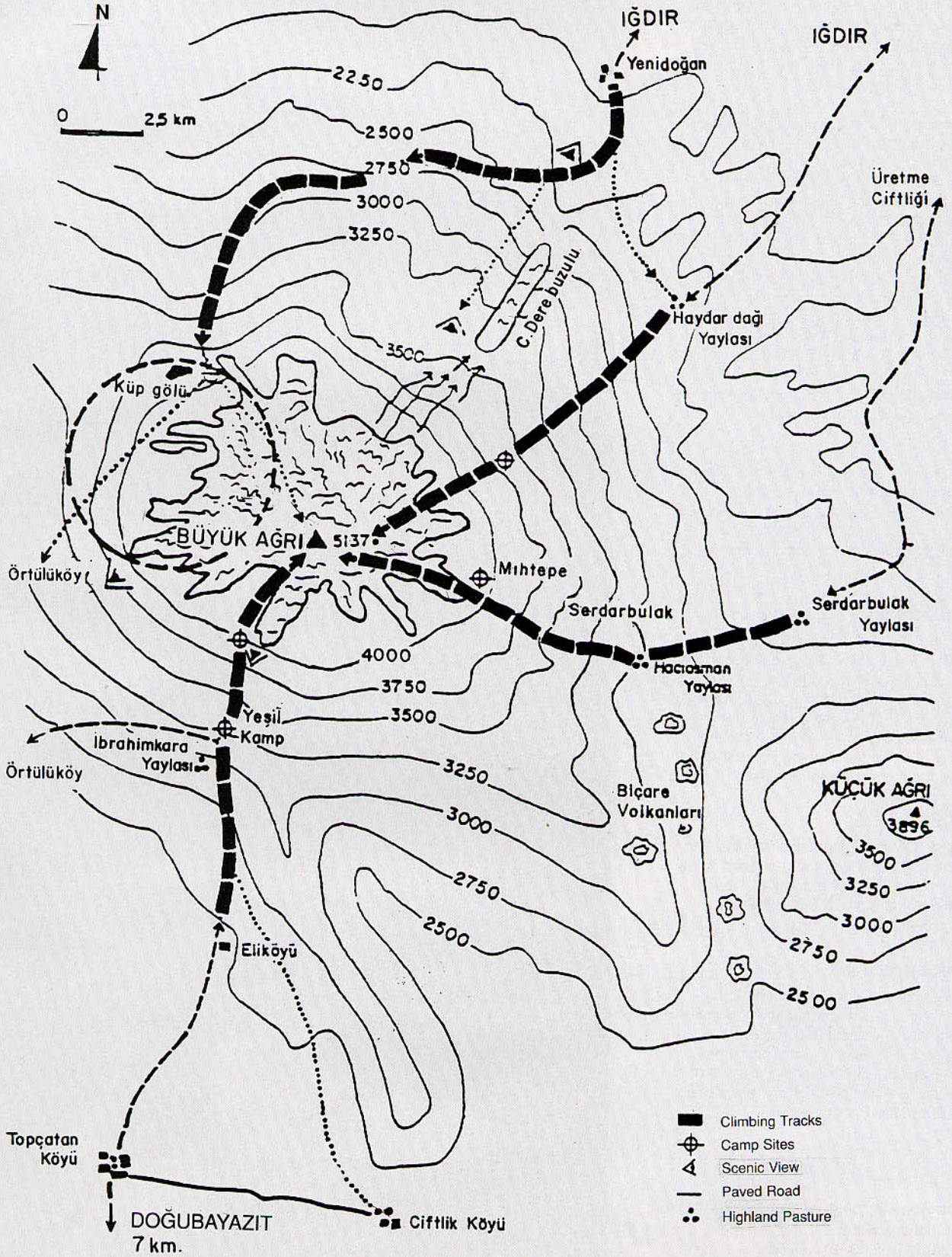
Özel İdare Binası, Kat: 4

Tel : (472) 215 92 97-216 04 50

Fax : (472) 215 37 30



THE GREAT MOUNT OF AĞRI



THE CILO-SAT MOUNTAIN RANGE (4136 m.)

The Cilo-Sat Mountains, within the southeastern Hakkari province, are the eastern extension of the Toros (Taurus) Mountain chain which stretches from west to east along Turkey's southern boundaries. This range of mountains in fact forms the western-most section of the Himalayan Mountain belt. At 4136 meters, the Uludoruk (Reşko) summit is the highest in the Cilo Mountains; Çatalkaya (Samdi), which rises to 3794 meters crowns the Sat mountains.

Resembling the Alps in both general appearance and glacier topography, the Cilo-Sat Mountains are the areas in Turkey most affected by glaciers. The high altitudes of these mountains testify to the effects of glacial formation and water erosion. Of the ten variously shaped glaciers, the largest, İzbırak, measures five kilometers in length, 500-600 meters in width and reaches up to 100 meters in depth. A wide arid expanse stretches across the southern bases of the mountain range. The highlands, in contrast, receive plentiful precipitation during the winter months. In between crests and summits, green and fertile valleys dotted with rural settlements, enjoy a temperate climate that makes them ideal for vine and fruit agriculture.

Above the low valleys alpine meadows blanket the mountain slopes at altitudes between 2000 and 3100 meters. Herds of domestic animals, the raising of which makes up the primary economic activity of the region, graze on these pastures.

Trips and climbs

Arduous and elevated summits, high glaciers, glacial rivers and fast moving streams combine to make the Cilo-Sat Mountains both a fascinating geographic and geological site of worldwide importance. The best time for summer excursions is during June, July, August and September. For winter climbing February and March are the most suitable months.

Getting there

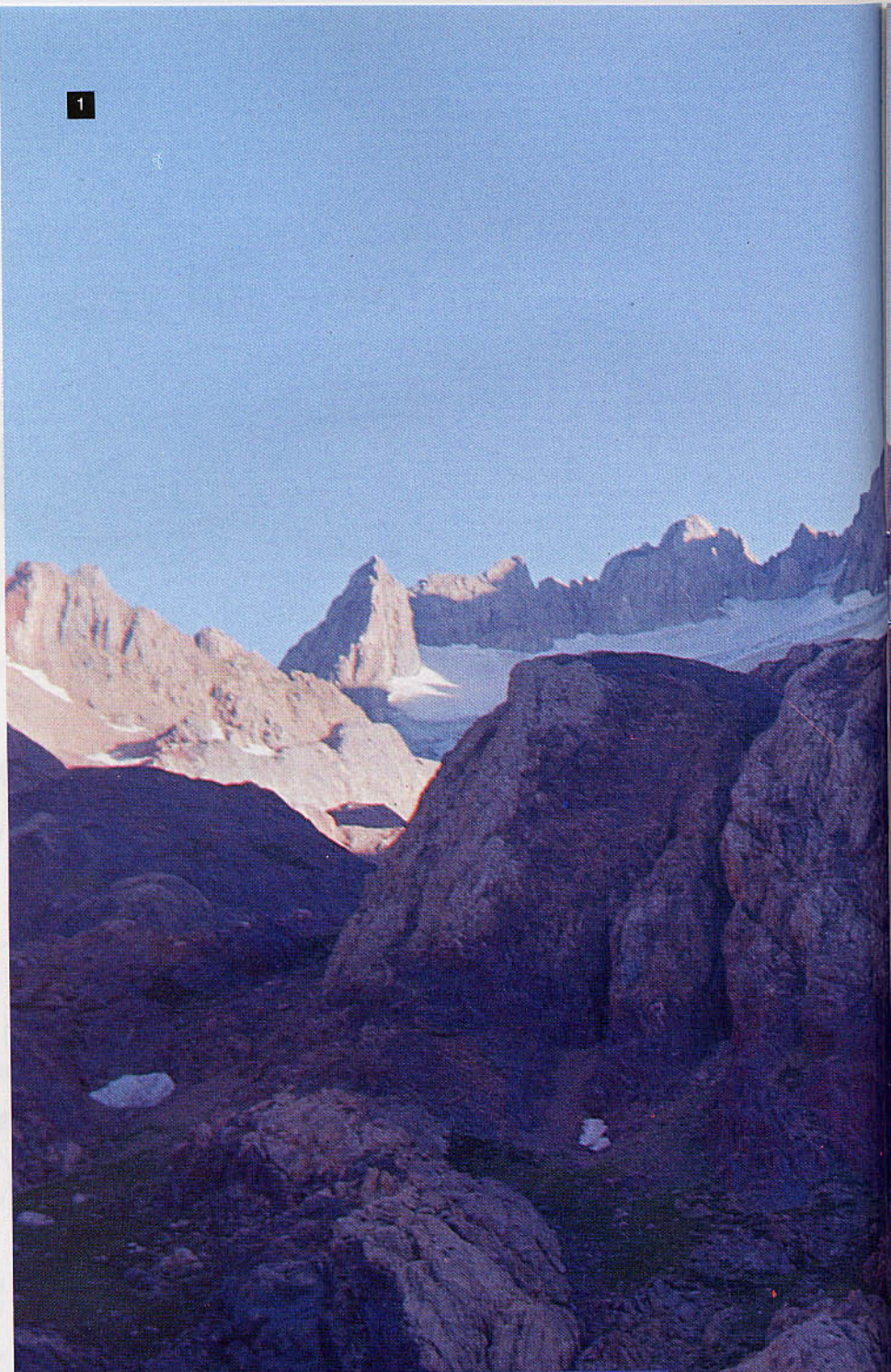
To reach the Cilo-Sat Mountains travel to Van from Ankara by road, rail or air and then follow the 245 km long highway to Hakkari. Serpil village offers one route for an ascent of Uludoruk; another route is Dezköy.

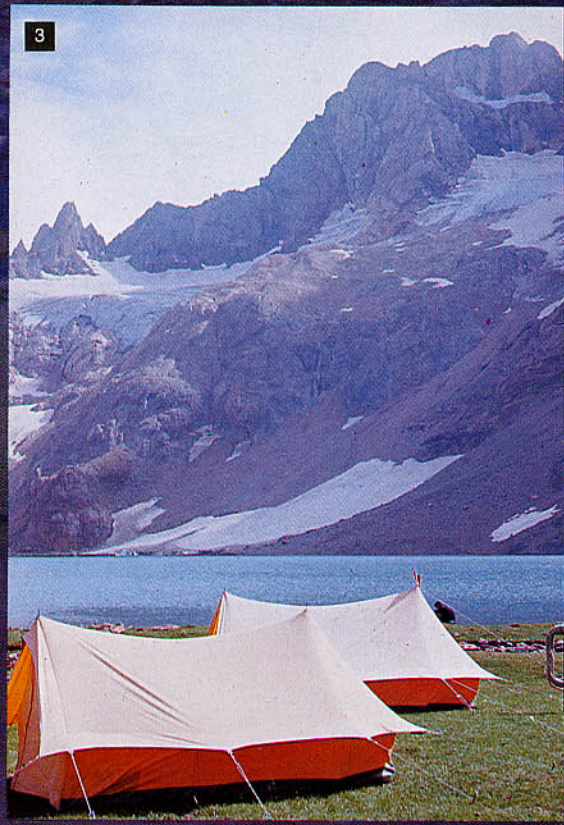
Regional attractions

A vast yayla culture has evolved on the Cilo and Sat Mountains, and the summer migration of the colorfully clad local population to the high grazing pastures is a wonderful sight. Mountain glaciers, swiftly running rivers alive with fish and beautiful glacial lakes are a few of the area's natural wonders.

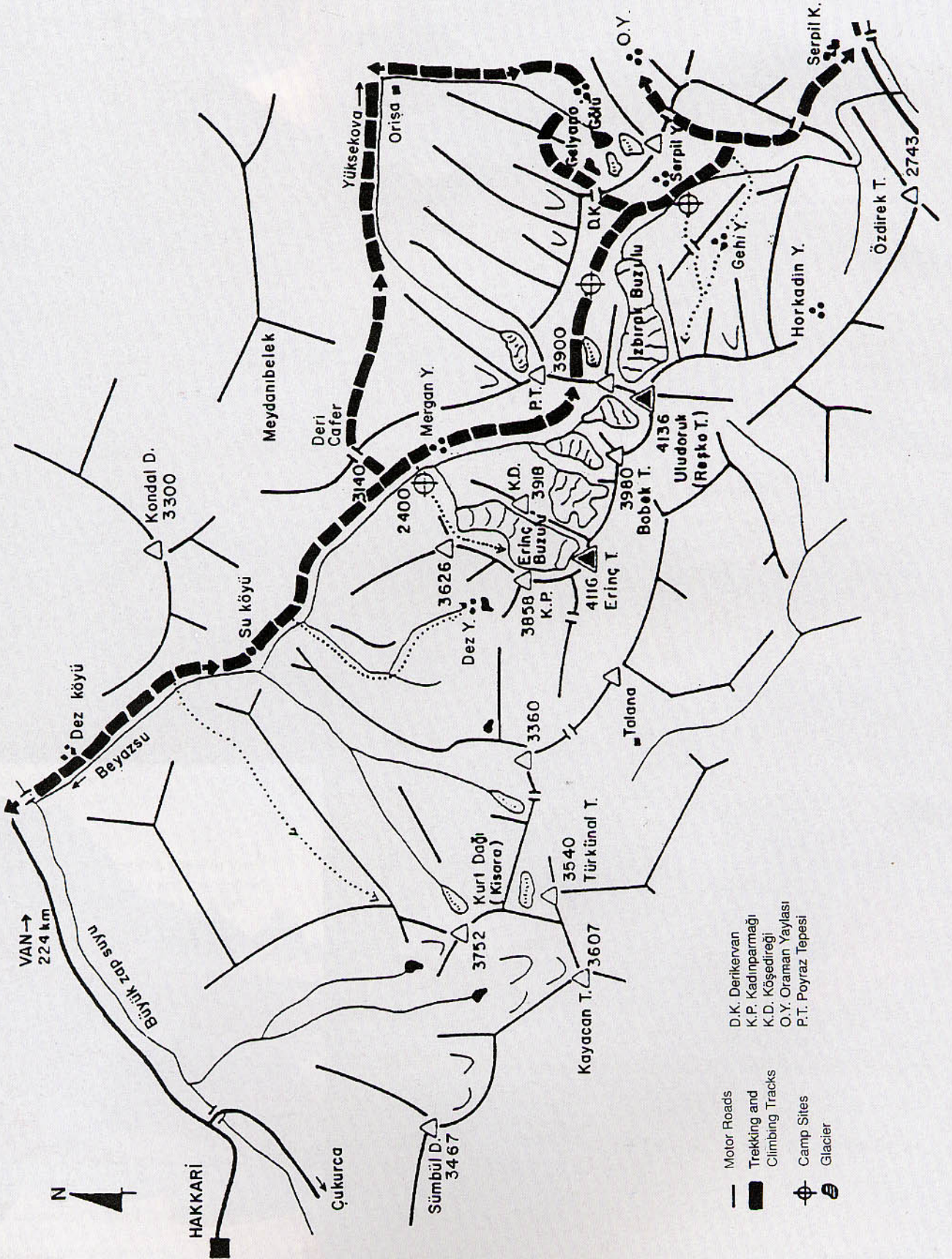
Hakkari Provincial Dept. of Tourism

Özel İdare İşhanı, Kat:2
Tel : (438) 211 65 09 -211 46 55
Fax : (438) 211 27 52





THE CILO MOUNTAIN - HAKKARI





1



2

THE KAÇKAR MOUNTAINS (3932 m.)

In the rainy and lush landscapes of northeastern Turkey, the Kaçkar Mountains form the northern section of the Anatolian mountain chain. The Kaçkar-Kavron summit, at an altitude of 3932 meters, is the highest point in the range. Extensive glacier and water erosion have given these mountains their craggy, rugged look, and they are known for the complexity and power of the streams and rivers which rush down to the lower altitudes. In fact, this range is the third most important glacial region in Turkey following the Ağrı (Ararat) and Cilo-Sat Mountains. The geological and mountaineering aspects of the Kaçkars contribute to their importance in Turkey's economy and tourism.

The region enjoys an almost sub-tropical climate of temperate yet rainy weather with an average temperature of 14°C. The lowest temperature, 7°C, falls in the month of January while August sees the hottest days reaching a maximum recorded temperature of 22.6°C. The Kaçkars rise between the shores of the Black Sea to the north and the Çoruh river valley to the south. On the northern flank an immense variety of vegetation flourishes in the rainy climate. Up to 500 meters above sea level, tea plantations and citrus orchards cover the hillsides. Chestnut, hornbeam, beech and other large-leaved trees forest the slopes to 750 meters. Between elevations of 750-1500 meters, pines mix in with the large-leaved trees until gradually they remain the only species of tree from 1500-2000 meters. Alpine meadows and other grassy vegetation covers the ground above 2100 meters. On the southern faces of the Kaçkars, which receive strong sunshine and less precipitation, the agriculture is based on the cultivation of fruit and vines. On the northern side, in the higher elevations, meadows of wild flowers and grasses blanket the slopes up to elevations of 2300 meters.

Trips and Climbs

The Altıparmak, Kavron and Varşamba (Verçenik) mountains are the principal peaks of the Kaçkars. Both the north and south faces of the Altıparmak and Kavron can be scaled but Varşamba should only be attempted from the north face. It is imperative to use a local guide when climbing the Kaçkars.

Rize Provincial Dept. of Tourism

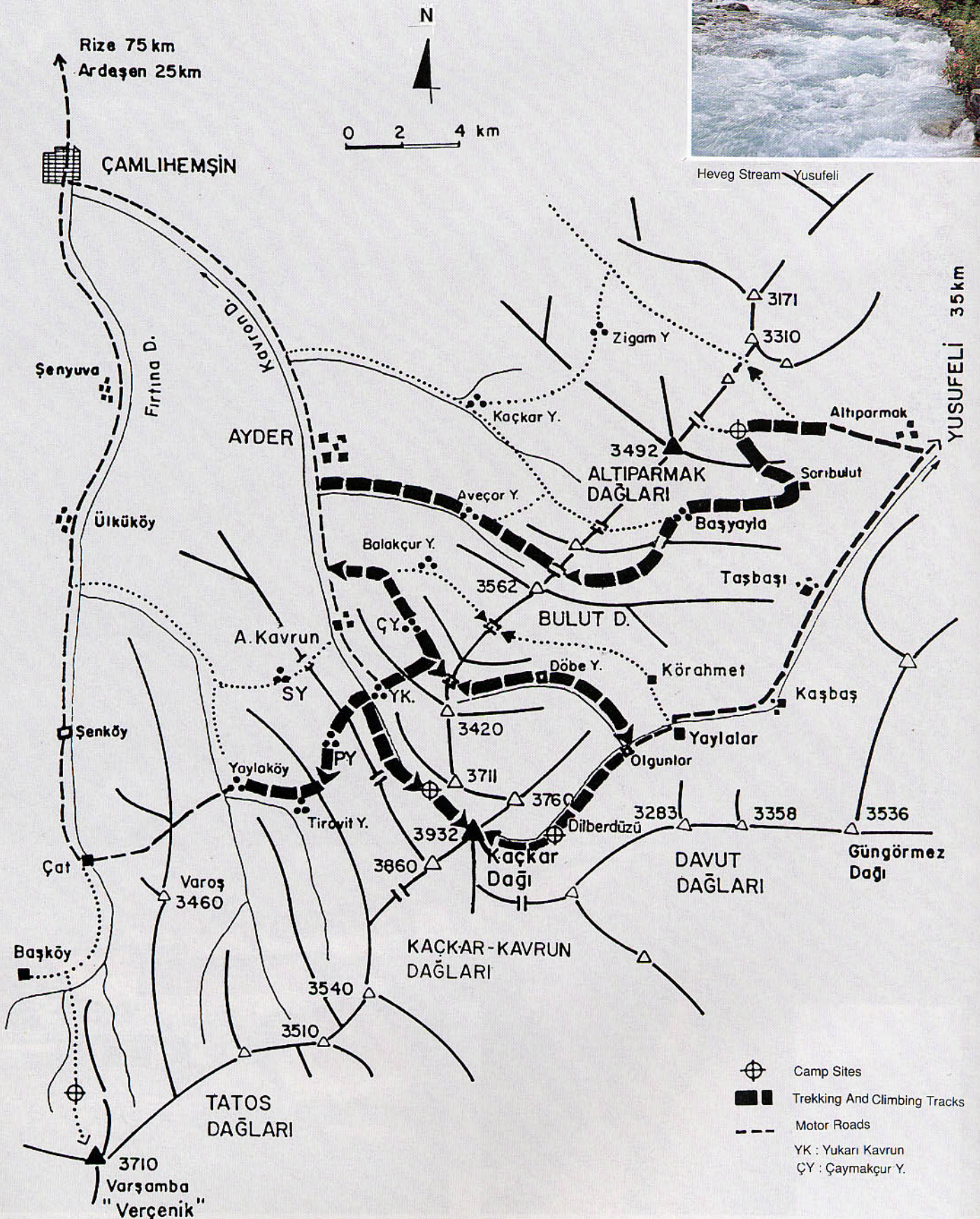
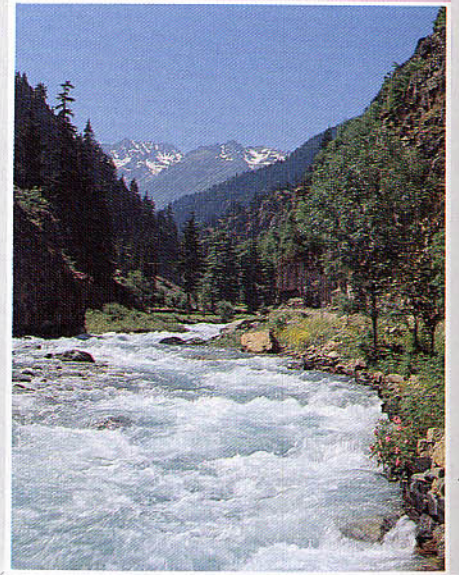
Yeni Valilik Binası, Kat:5
Tel : (464) 213 04 07
Fax : (464) 213 04 06

- 1- Rize-Kaçkar Mountains National Park
- 2- Buzul Lake, Kaçkar
- 3- Plateau girl, Upper Kavrun, Rize
- 4- Yayla village, Kaçkar-Rize





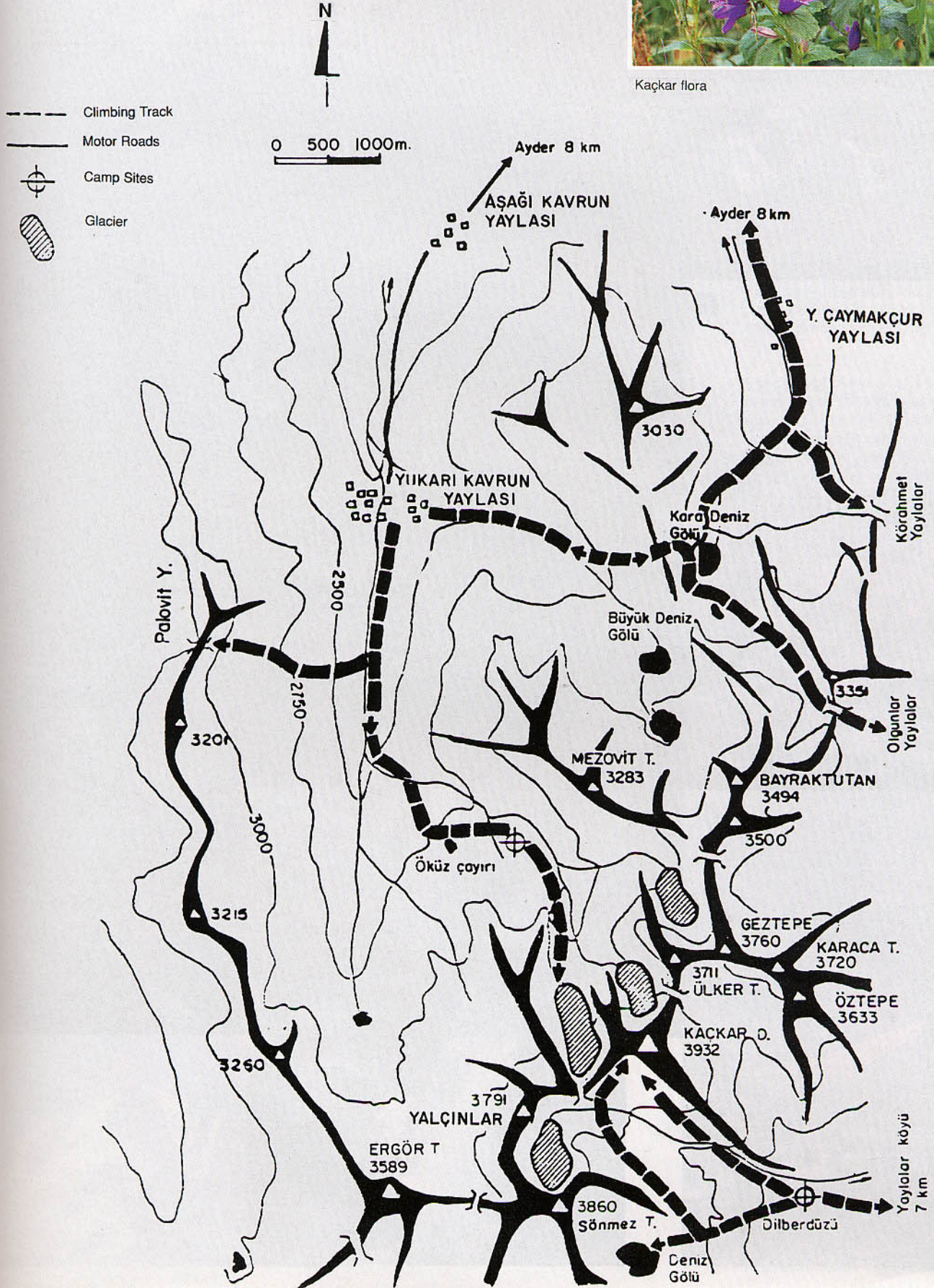
THE KAÇKAR MOUNTAINS - RIZE



THE KAÇKAR MOUNTAINS - «KAVRUN GROUP»



Kaçkar flora







THE TOROS (TAURUS) MOUNTAINS (3756 m.)

The Toros (Taurus) Mountains are the westernmost branch of the great mountain chain that stretches across all of Asia — the Himalayan mountain belt. The Turkish section of this massive mountain range follows the southern border of Anatolia and is itself made up of four major sections, the Western, Central, Southern and Southeastern Toros (Taurus) ranges. The highest peaks rise out of the Central and Southeastern branches, a stretch of mountains which are rugged, magnificent and arduous to climb.

The Toros Ala Mountains

Forming part of the Central Toros (Taurus) range, the Aladağlar range runs from the southwest to the northeast for approximately 50 kilometers and boasts the region's highest peak, Demirkazık which stretches to 3756 meters. Other high summits include Kızılkaya in the center (3725 m), a peak that reaches 3688 meters in the south, and Mount Vayvay in the east (3565 m). This long range, situated in the provinces of Niğde, Kayseri and Adana, rises between Lake Eciemiş and the Zamanti River.

The geology of the area is responsible for the interesting rock formations and waterfalls. The erosion of limestone has created a fascinating karstic topography and hydrography, especially in the Yedigöller valley, where karstic underground rivers and caverns collect the surface water. Both the Mediterranean and Anatolian weather systems influence the climate of the Aladağlar bringing warm summers and cool winters to the mountains.

Trips and climbs

The best season to climb the mountains is during May, June, July and August when the alpine meadows of the higher elevations are rich in vegetation.

Researchers and mountaineers ascending the Aladağlar usually begin their climb from either Çamardı or Çukurbağ villages. Those attempting to climb the Demirkazık summit depart from Demirkazık village. Both of these villages lie 65 km from Niğde and can be reached by asphalt road.

Regional attractions

The yaylas of the Toros (Taurus) Aladağ are the summer homes of entire villages and the summer grazing of herds of animals. Be sure to see the rounding up of all the animals for milking. Traditionally women of these encampments have produced some of Turkey's most beautiful carpets and kilims, and it is often possible to see a carpet still in progress.

Niğde Provincial Dept. of Tourism

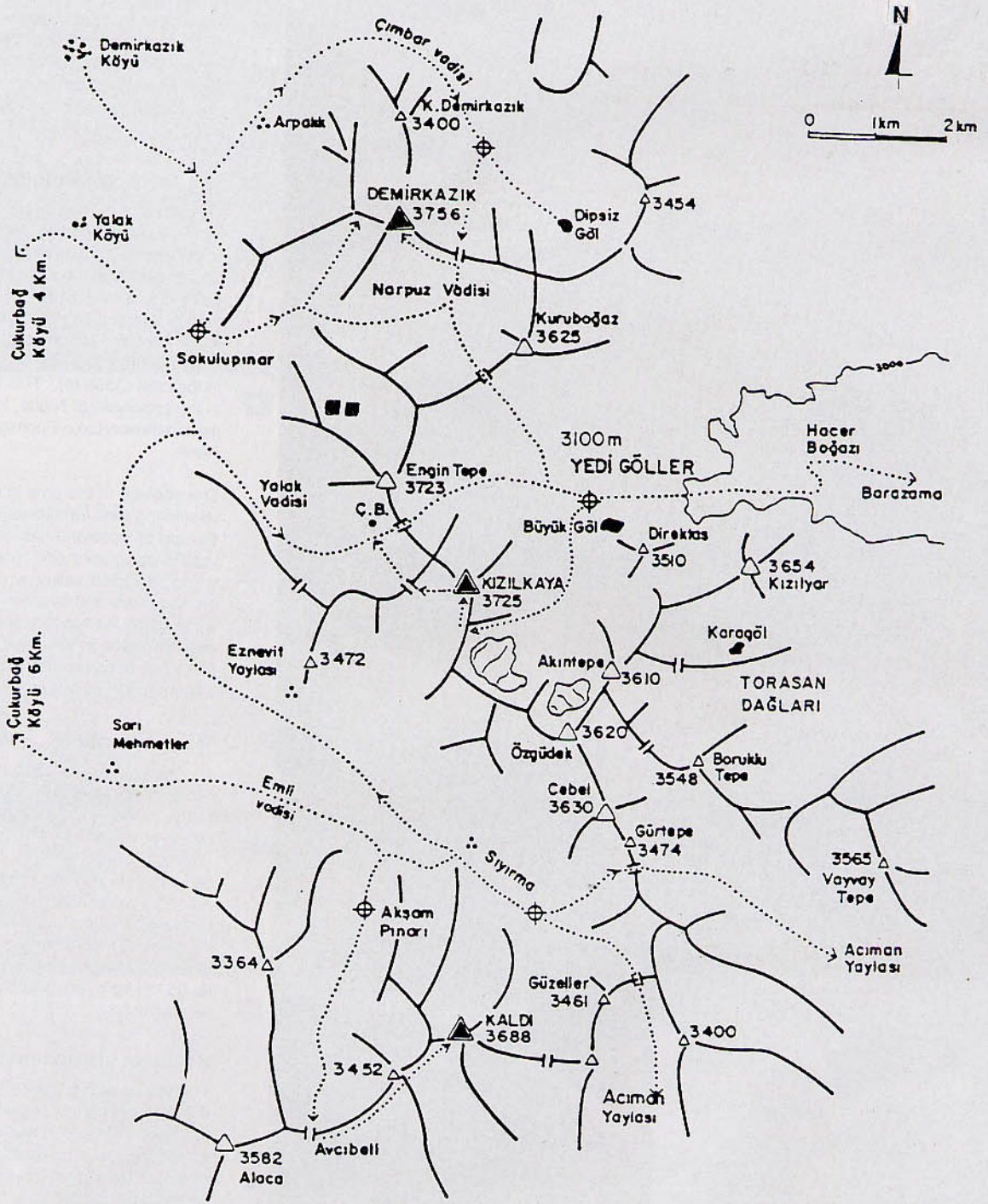
Belediye Sarayı, C Blok, Kat:3

Tel : (388) 232 33 92

Fax : (388) 232 47 04

- 1- Ala Mountains
- 2- Yedigöller Valley and Direktaş summit
- 3- Mountain flowers
- 4- Trekking in the Ala Mountains
- 5- Kapuzbaşı Waterfall, Ala Mountains National Park
- 6- Demirkazık Summit, Ala Mountains

THE TOROS-ALA MOUNTAINS - NIĞDE



- Highland Pasture
- ⊕ Camp Sites
- Climbing Tracks
- ⊕ Glacier





MOUNT ERCIYES (3917 m.)

One of Turkey's most important mountaineering and winter sports centers, Mount Erciyes rises from the south of the Kayseri valley. The Sultan Marshes lie to its west and to the south falls the Develi Valley. Its summit always covered in snow and ice, Mt. Erciyes ranks as central Anatolia's tallest volcano.

Approximately 18 kilometers in diameter and covering an area of 1000 square kilometers, the mountain's stratification and geology make it a fascinating geographical formation. The region's climate, influenced by that of the Anatolian plateau, is considered typical of steppe geography. Certainly the winter brings considerable snowfall to the higher elevations. The northern side of the mountain enjoys a somewhat more temperate climate encouraging the cultivation of vast areas of vine and fruit orchards between 1100 and 1600 meters. Above that altitude, vast meadows stretch far into the distance. The higher elevations display typical alpine vegetation. Herds of animals graze year round on the east, north and west slopes of the mountain.

Trips and climbs

Mountaineers attempt Mt. Erciyes either on the northwestern flank or from the south and find the best climbing in June, July, August, and September.

Regional attractions

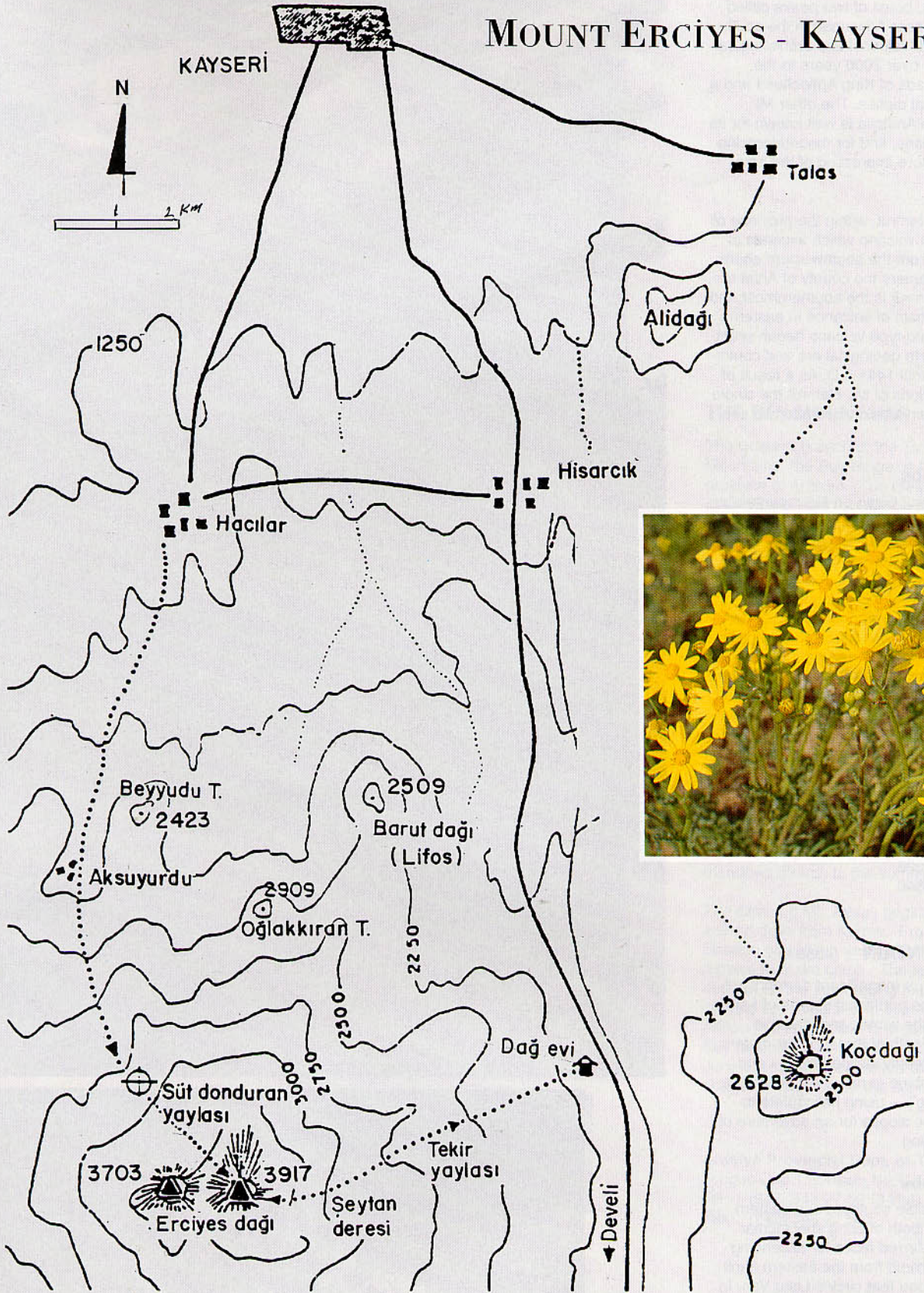
Tourists visiting the area should also see the fantastic rock formations, underground cities and fabulous frescoes in rock carved churches in neighboring Cappadocia. The Sultan Marshes, a habitat for many different species of birds, has fortunately been designated a National Park and wildlife preserve.

Kayseri Provincial Dept. of Tourism

Kağı Pazarı, No:61, Melihgazi
Tel : (352) 222 39 03 -231 92 95
Fax : (352) 2220879



MOUNT ERCİYES - KAYSERİ



..... Climbing Tracks

⊕ Camp Sites

— Motor Roads

- 1 - Mt. Erciyes
- 2 - Mountaineers, Mt. Erciyes
- 3 - Mt. Erciyes
- 4 - Spring on Mt. Erciyes

MT. NEMRUT (3050 m.)

Turkey can in fact, boast of two peaks called Nemrut. The one near Adiyaman in the south-east is primarily of historical and archeological interest, home for over 2000 years to the colossal stone heads of King Antiochus I and a number of classical deities. The other Mt. Nemrut in eastern Anatolia is well-known for its geological formations, and for mountaineering purposes is the more interesting of the two peaks.

This Tatvan Mt. Nemrut, within the province of Bitlis, is an extinct volcano which ascends to 3050 m. It rises from the southwestern shore of Lake Van and enters the county of Ahlat to the north. Mt. Nemrut is the southernmost and youngest of the chain of volcanos in eastern Anatolia. This strato-type volcano began erupting during the fourth geological era and continued to be active until 1441 A.D. As a result of the volcanic eruptions of Mt. Nemrut the single Van-Muş river basin was divided into two separate basins.

Trips and climbs

Treks up Mt. Nemrut begin on the mountain's southeastern flank at Tatvan. Climbers reach the south or southeastern side of the crater after an easy hike of 4-5 hours. Those who reach this point have the rare chance to see the wondrous crater of this inactive volcano. For those who find the climb up to the crater too strenuous, four-wheel drive vehicles can reach the summit from either Ahlat or Tatvan. Mt. Nemrut is bare of vegetation except in the south which has groves of oak and birch trees. Summer (June-September) is the best season for expeditions up Mt. Nemrut. Hikers who climb to the crater and summit from the south-east or eastern face of the mountain are rewarded with wonderful views of Lake Van.

Adiyaman Provincial Dept. of Tourism

Atatürk Bulvarı, No:148

Tel : (416) 2161008

Fax : (416) 2163840

SÜPHAN MOUNTAIN (4058 m.)

Süphan Mountain, a magnificent dormant volcano rises from the northwest shores of Lake Van. Throughout the winter, snowfalls on Süphan reach a depth of three to four meters. The mountain's steeply inclined slopes and snow blanket combine to make it a good location for "Heli-skiing" — using helicopters to drop you off on the slopes for an adventure of high mountain skiing.

Trips and climbs

The easily accessible southern and eastern flanks of Süphan, both offering spectacular views, are the preferred faces for ascending the mountain. To climb from the eastern flank take the coastal road that circles Lake Van. In the stretch between Adilcevaz and Erciş, turn north to Aydınlar village. From there you continue on to Kığgıllı village where you can engage a guide to lead you in your ascent. The climb from the south begins at the village of Harmantepe.

Van Provincial Dept. of Tourism

Cumhuriyet Cad., No:223

Tel : (432) 216 20 18

Fax : (432) 216 36 75





THE BEY MOUNTAINS (3086 m.)

The western branch of the Toros (Taurus) Mountains, the Bey range, is located in the province of Antalya. The crest of the range parallels the north-south line of the western shore of the Gulf of Antalya. With altitudes ranging between 600 and 3086 meters, these mountains offer geologists and geographers many peculiar morphological characteristics. Tekedoruğu, Bakırlıdağ, Tahtalıdağ and Kızlarsivrisi summits are particularly remarkable. The highest point in the mountains is Mt. Kızlarsivrisi (3086 m), and climbers reach it through the cedar forested Çamçukuru valley. The best approach to the valley is by road inland from Antalya to Elmali. Antalya, of course, can be reached from İzmir, İstanbul and Ankara by land, air and sea routes.

Tahtalı Mountain, west of Kemer, offers another interesting ascent. Rising to an elevation of 2360 meters, pine and deciduous forests cover the slopes up to an altitude of 2000 m. Bare meadows stretch to the summit.

The climb up Mt. Tahtalı begins at Soğukpınar, a short drive from Kemer. From there a combination of walking and climbing brings you to a place to make camp. The final ascent is carried out on the flank facing the coast and offers a spectacular and ever-changing view. Although it is possible to organize trips to the Bey Mountains all year round, April, May, and June offer both a temperate climate and a chance to experience the richest vegetation.

Antalya Provincial Dept. of Tourism

Tonguç Cad.T.R.T.yanı,No:11
Tel : (242) 343 27 59 (3 Hat)
Fax : (242) 343 27 58



- 1- Bolkar Mountains
- 2- Mountaineers and Bolkar Mountains
- 3- Kızlarsivrisi 3086 m. Bey Mountains- Antalya



Munzur Mountains, Erzincan

THE BOLKAR MOUNTAINS (3524 m.)

Continuing the line of summits in a southeasterly direction, the Bolkar Mountains are bounded by the Göksu River to the west and the Pozantı River to the east. The northern part of the mountains lies in Niğde province while the southern peaks rise in Mersin province.

These mountains exhibit interesting geological characteristics. Made of sedimentary material such as limestone and dolomites, the range reveals excellent examples of nappes, or folds in the layers of rocks. There are vast formations of karst as well as landscapes that reveal the effects of glacier and water erosion. Despite this erosion, no real water network has developed on the mountains. Because of the sedimentary nature of the rocks, water is absorbed creating large areas of karst, such as Pozantı and Şekerpinarı.

The highest peaks of the Bolkar are: Medetsiz (3524 m), Keşifdağı (3475 m), Koyunaşağı (3426 m), Tahtakaya (3372 m) and Eğerkaya (3347 m). The northern flank receives the most exposure to snow and glacier formation; it is nevertheless the best route for an ascent to the highest summits of the Bolkar.

Mersin (İçel) Provincial Dept. of Tourism

İsmet İnönü Bulv., No:5
Tel : (324) 238 32 70-237 97 45
Fax: (324) 238 32 73

THE MERCAN (MUNZUR) MOUNTAINS (3462 m.)

The northeastern extension of the Central Toros (Taurus) range, the Mercan range, straddles both the Tunceli and Erzincan provinces. Mt. Akbaba, at 3462 meters, is the highest summit in the Mercandağı range. The limestone geology of these mountains creates their very rugged profile.

Erzincan, a major city north of the mountain range and accessible by air, rail and road, is the base from which to attempt an ascent on the north face.

Those wishing to climb the mountain from the south begin their trek at Ovacık in the middle of the Munzur Mountains. Climbers entering from this point can reach the highest summits of the Munzur. Ovacık lies 70 kilometers from Erzincan and is accessible by a road which follows the banks of the Munzur valley. The Munzur River, which rushes through a National Park, tempts tourists with superb fresh fish and beautiful mountain scenery.

Erzincan Provincial Dept. of Tourism

Fevzipaşa Cad. Yazıcıoğlu İşhanı No:19/2
Tel : (446) 223 06 75-223 37 92-
Fax : (446) 214 31 89

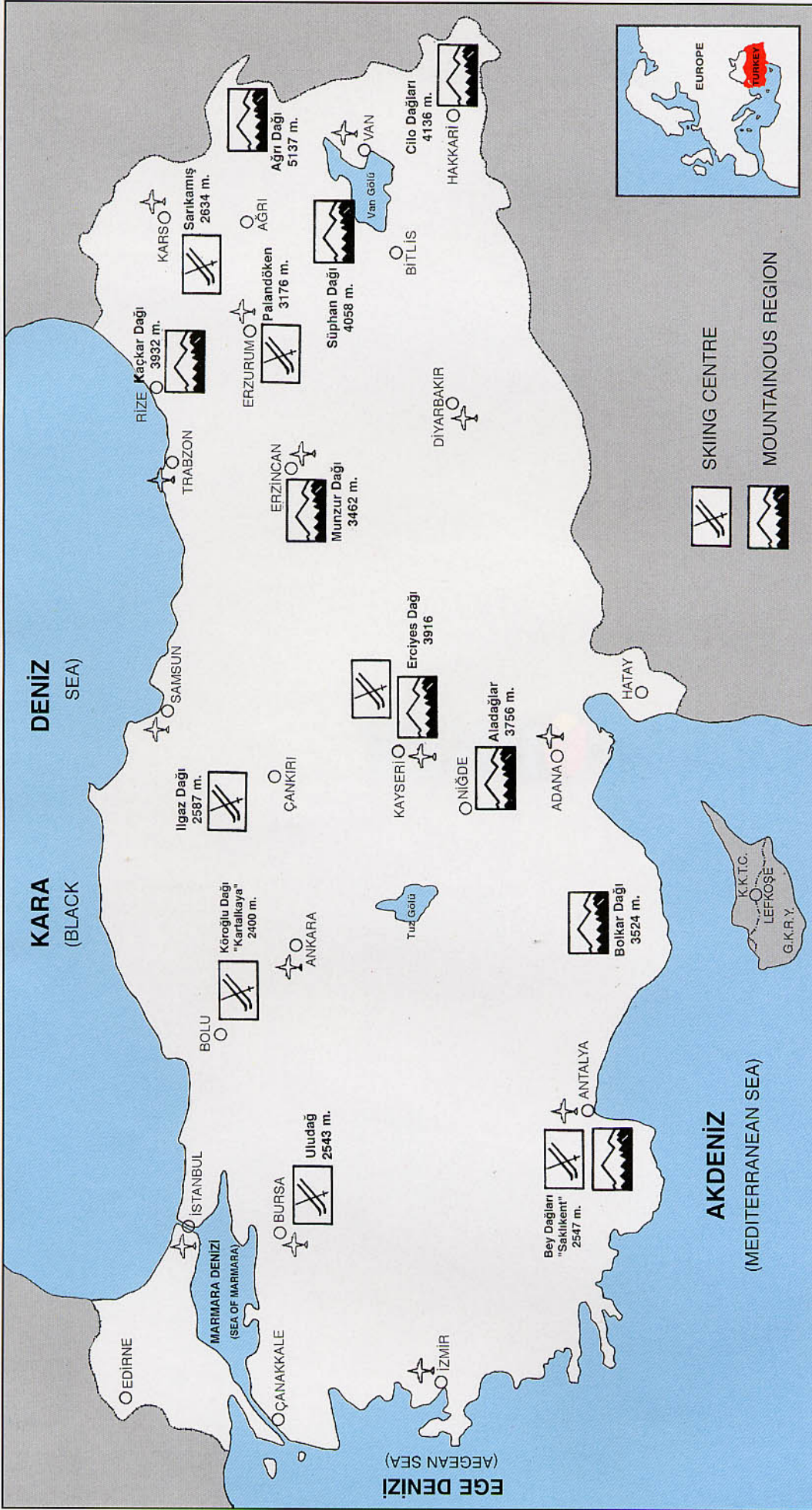
RESOURCE ORGANIZATIONS FOR MOUNTAIN TOURISM AND SPORTS

Ministry of Tourism:
Tourism Information Office
İsmet İnönü Bulv. No: 5 Ankara
Tel : (312) 212 83 00
Fax : (312) 213 68 87

Mountaineering Federation Administration
Sanayi Cad. Nüzhet Atay İşhanı, 2 / 22
Ulus - Ankara
Tel : (312) 310 15 78
Fax : (312) 310 15 78

Youth and Sports General Management
Ski Federation Administration
Ulus İşhanı 4. Kat No: 406, Ulus - Ankara
Tel : (312) 310 38 60
Fax : (312) 311 07 64

Turkish Union of Travel Agencies
Ayten Sokak No: 33, Tandoğan - Ankara
Tel : (312) 212 04 74 - 75
Fax : (312) 213 22 16



Front Cover: Mt. Erciyes, Kayseri

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