“We are going to Kalem House. To where? Yalova Ciftlikkoy Gacik Village. Let's set up the GPS. 40° 36´ 38.5308, 29° 20´ 31.4844" Where is this Yalova?

Here!

The half-sister of Istanbul, the resentful mother of Bursa, the cousin of the same father, the next door neighbor of Kocaeli whose address is forgotten. In the middle of three big cities, it is a small coastal city that has come close to Istanbul because of its accident at the time, and later became a province, but it is a small coastal city where the joke "Who cares about Yalova District Governor" does not leave its texture. Then it should talk a little bit about the story.

The young district governor was coming to Yalova by ferry from Istanbul for his first duty. When the ferry came to the pier, he saw that the square was filled with an enthusiastic crowd. She was filled with excitement, and she turned the dyer boy who was passing by the district governor.

-Isn't this crowd for the Governor of Yalova, little boy? The boy laughed.

-Who cares about the Yalova District Governor? Atatürk is coming.

Even though he is now its governor, Yalova carries Atatürk's "my city" badge on his chest, and is fond of its supreme leader. Because, in the liberation struggle, 9000 people, burned down villages and incurable pains were left behind. Speaking of history, it should not be overlooked that this tiny place, whose soil is fertile, whose climate is naive, and whose beauty is mind-blowing, was the apple of the Ottoman's eye and the Byzantine backyard. Well, did you know that the Bithynians held the Carthaginian Hannibal as a prisoner/host in these lands?

You are coming to Yalova. Even though he is dressed in ugly clothes and invaded by uninvited guests, the beauty of his face and the secret of his heart remain. Blue and green are still lovers, regardless of intruders. Green stretches behind you on the slope of the sea, and blue lies in front of you in the lap of green. The clock of its winds is unfailing, its moist and clean air permeates you.

You are coming with us. To the people who grieve for no reason with the sunset on the sea. In lands where time flows slowly, unhurried or even without enthusiasm, next to melancholic, careless, maybe even a little nasty people. Speaking of Yalova people, it should be noted that this is a lifestyle rather than a background. Because while the population consisted of Balkan immigrants of Caucasian/Crimean origin or known as Muhacir (macir) who adopted the modern lifestyle and mentality brought about by their origins and waterside settlement, over time, the migration from the eastern provinces of the Black Sea and the eastern provinces after the '99 earthquake, and finally the rapid growth of the Arab population. Due to the increase, it now has a cosmopolitan structure like all western regions.

Although Yalova's reputation for apple and flower growing is left behind, the market stalls are still filled with the fresh produce of its fertile soil. If you visit a few villages or even towns, it is easy to find fresh milk, butter and eggs. Even in the city center, the gardens of the houses that have not surrendered to the floors are decorated with bougainvillea, roses, mimosas, jasmines and indispensable fruit trees.

Names tell a lot for those who want to have an idea for a city. “Bahçelievler District, Sahil District, Gazi Paşa Street, Orkide Street, Papatya Street, Akasya Park, Sait Faik Abasıyanık Street, Orhan Veli Street, Poetry Road.” If you don't mind the "city" clothes that don't fit, you will feel the seaside town texture even if you don't read the signs. Every street smells of the sea, every slope goes down to the sea. There are stools, tea and backgammon in front of the shops that open late. Street animals napping inside the newly opened chain stores. You'll see people walking slowly from side to side on the beach. Aside from trendy fancy cafes, there are many frequenters of tea gardens where tea is added to teas and children's ice cream falls to the ground. Dozens of people who have tasted/poisoned reading and writing in Balıkçiler Kahvesi are an integral part of the city.

Now, you come to Kalem House. To the hills of Gacık Village, one of the most beautiful nooks of the Blue Green road route, before coming to Yalova city center. To the castle of green and peace, where you will see the proud glory of the sea as soon as you stick your head out from the secret of the forest. To Kalem House, born in a place that combines the power of literature with the talisman of nature.

Here are some suggestions for those staying at Kalem House:

-Have a coffee next to the 400-year-old tree at the Walking Mansion, where Atatürk built a mansion for a tree. (Ciftlikkoy)

- Visit Termal, where the mythological character Nyphes are hidden under mossy trees, healing thermal waters and magnificent trees, stay if possible. (Thermal)

-Visit Water Falling Waterfall, which will make you forget the noise of life with its song. (Thermal)

- Explore the waterfalls hidden in Erikli Plateau, which includes a hiking trail surrounded by chestnut, elm, linden, fir and apple trees. Find Delmece Plateau right behind it and camp if you have the opportunity. (Tesvikiye Village-Cinarcik)

-Do not leave without visiting Karaca Arboretum, the most beautiful heritage of Toprak Dede Hayrettin Karaca. It will fascinate you with its imprinted trees, iris gardens, herb gardens, bonsai plant collections and rose gardens, and thousands of woody plants spread over an area of ​​135 thousand square meters. (Samanli Village-Yalova)

Meet the unique Caucasian flavors in Güney Village, which carries the traces of the 1800s. (Yalova)

-Explore the Blue-Green Road, which starts from sea level and reaches 127 km in total. Because Gacik Village is also in this route. (Altinova-Armutlu)

For those who do not have time to travel, the best thing to do in Yalova is

- You will be to watch the most beautiful sunset of the country with raki-fish or a strong tea by the sea. (Yalova Center)

Hande Çiğdemoğlu

https://handecigdemoglu.com/

<https://www.instagram.com/hande.cigdemoglu/>

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*A traveler who was born into the sea, grew up in flower greenhouses, and returned to his "village" without seeing the age of thirty, which he lost in his education and business life. “And they lived happily ever after.” After the fairy tales ending with , the lonely boy ate one of the apples that fell from the sky, made a boat out of the shells of the other, and fed the most beautiful one to the crows. Nowadays, he is a storyteller who is crowded with the stories and their heroes that he sees under every stone, in the traces of every water drop. A business owner, a woman, a mother. A mortal, independent of titular, rooted in the sea, fond of his homeland.*