

# HATAY

In the light of the archaeological researches, Hatay is one of the settlements that date back to the very past (early ages). Dating back to the Paleolithic Age, its history is an indication that the city offers very good conditions in terms of climatic conditions and soil fertility. Indeed, Hatay has been a city that many civilizations wanted to have throughout history.

Another feature that makes the Hatay region attractive and makes it open to migrations in every period of history is that it is located at the crossroads of the roads connecting Anatolia to Syria and Palestine via Cukurova. In addition, the most suitable ports that can be used to get out of Mesopotamia to the Mediterranean are also in the Hatay region. On the one hand, a big city that connects the roads, on the other hand, strategic harbors that open the doors of the city to the world, that connect cities and seas...

Features that make Hatay a world city are not only limited to these of course.

The first known civilization steps in Hatay were unearthed in the excavations at Tell Tainat and Tell Atçana. Furthermore, documents and historical artifacts showing that the late Hittite Principality united and founded the Hattena Kingdom were found in Çatalhöyük near Kırıkhan today.



The name Hatay was given by Atatürk.

Antioch is known to have been named after Antiochus, the father of Nicator I in 300. During this period, water channels were built and water was brought from Defne (Harbiye) to the city. With the Olympics that began in 195 B.C., it became famous as the "City of Olympics".

Between the years A.D. 29-40, one of the apostles of Jesus Christ, St. Pierre came to Antioch and tried to spread religion, and those who believed in Jesus Christ were called Christian here. Later, the city became an important center of Christian religion.

*Hatay joined Turkey totally as a province with the name "Hatay" on July 23, 1939.*



Yavuz Sultan Selim conquered this land in 1516 and the period of the Ottoman Empire began.

This domination continued until 1918. During World War I, French troops took over the rule of Hatay. Thus, Hatay joined Syria under the auspices of France.

After the War of Independence, the independent government of Hatay was established in 1938 with the intervention of the Turkish Government upon the efforts made for France to give independence to Syria. Lasting for 10 months and 21 days, Hatay State joined the soils of the Republic of Turkey by the decision of Hatay Assembly on June 29, 1939.

Hatay has a very important place with the first illuminated street of the world (today's Kurtuluş Street), the first use of the word "Christian", being the third largest city in the Roman period, and having the first mosque of Anatolia in its bosom.

Hatay still lives its history today and makes it live with the legendary tolerance of civilizations, and perhaps with the coexistence of its people who have lived in peace and brotherhood for centuries.



## Trip Suggestions on St. Pierre Church Route

If you devote one day to your visit to St. Pierre Church, you can see the other faith centers within walking distance of each other and where sounds of bell, azan, and hazzan are at the same point. After visiting St. Pierre Church and Kharon Relief, you can have a tea-coffee break in the city terrace of Mount Silpius (Habib-i Neccar). The Catholic Church and Sarımiye Mosque, which are back to back with each other, and Orthodox Church, Protestant Church, Synagogue and Habib-i Neccar Mosque are among the places you can visit in a short time and those you should visit. You can wander around the historical Uzun Çarşı (Long Bazaar) and Kurşunlu Han (Leaded Inn) and take a break of tray kebab and coal fired künefe. By continuing your trip, you can get souvenir products from the bazaar. If you have time, you can buy souvenirs for your loved ones by visiting the Ancient Glass House on Kurtuluş Street. After discovering the Old Antakya Houses and Streets, you can end your trip by having best tastes of Hatay Cuisine in Antakya houses turned into restaurants.



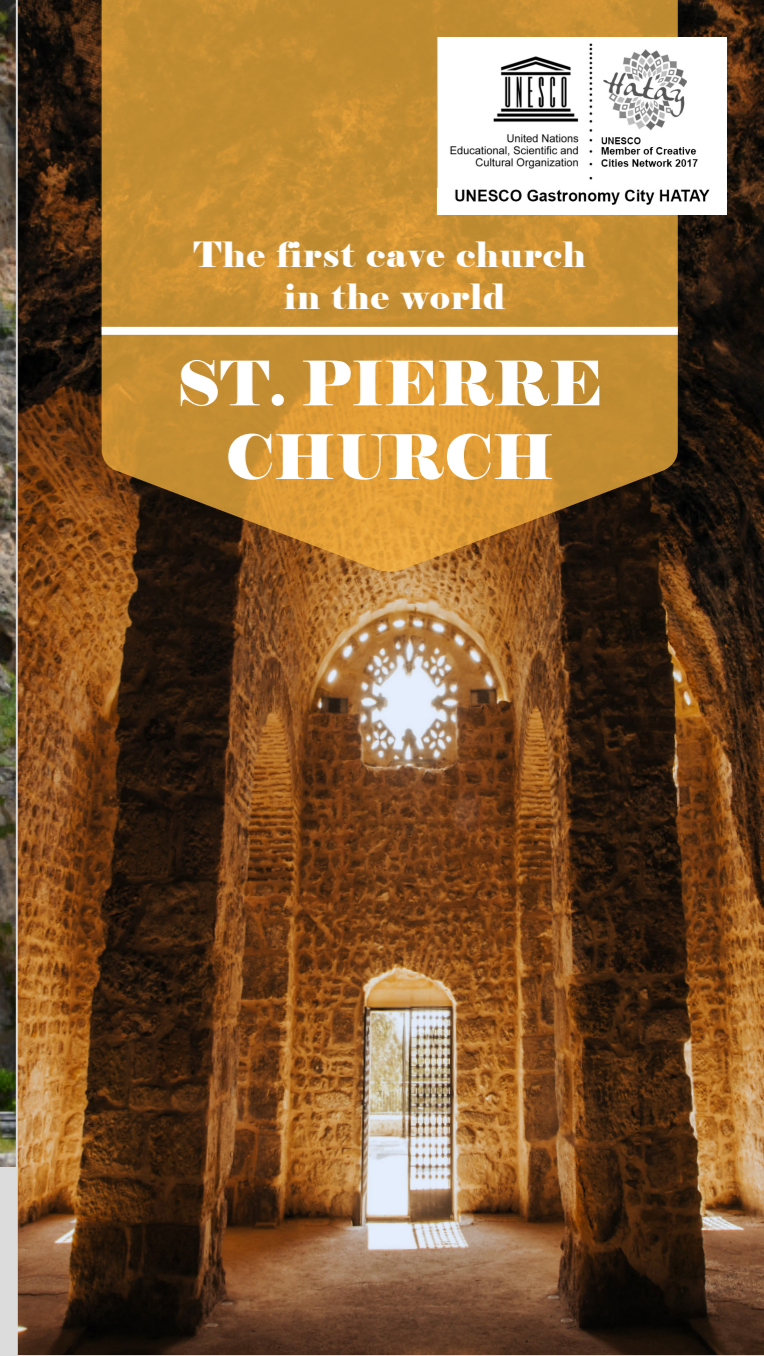
*City of peace, culture and tolerance; Hatay*



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The first cave church in the world

**ST. PIERRE CHURCH**

REPUBLIC OF TURKEY  
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PROVINCIAL DIRECTORATE OF CULTURE AND TOURISM

# ST. PIERRE CHURCH

It is a monumental museum that was used as a place for the rituals of a community called Christians for the first time here. It was a cult center that protected the Antakya people from many wars, sieges and epidemics, and is now accepted as a pilgrimage center for Christians.

St. Pierre Church was built on the front facade of a natural cave, 13 meters deep, 9.5 meters wide and 7 meters high, on the west of Mount Stauris, which is an extension of Mount Silpius (Habib-i Neccar) in the east of the city, on the 2nd km of Antakya - Reyhanlı highway. The cave was turned into a church.

Considered the founder of the church after Jesus and the first apostle, St. Pierre (St. Peter) came to Antakya in A.D. 29-40, and held his first religious meeting in the cave known as St. Pierre Church today.



*St. Pierre Church is a unique heritage that has known to protect itself from the first century to XX. Century.*



The church has been renovated many times in history and additional buildings have been acquired. It was discovered during the researches that the Crusaders who seized Antakya in 1098 added a few meters to the church and tied them to the front with two arches.

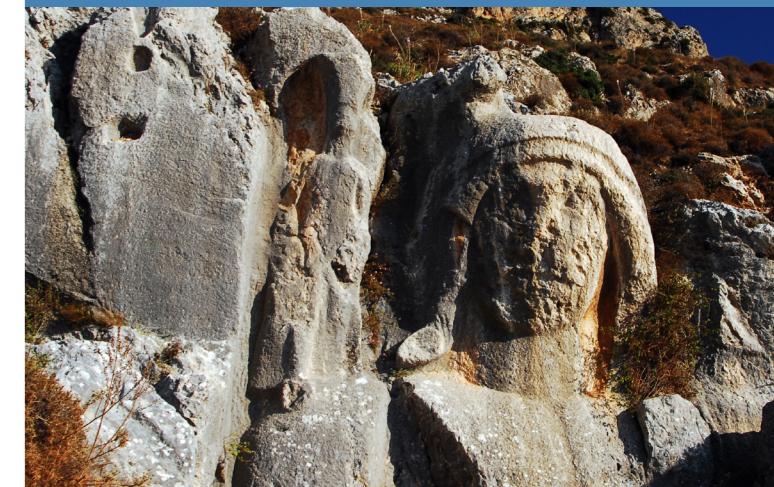
This front was rebuilt by the capuchin monks who undertook the restoration works at the request of Pope Pius IX in 1863. It is also known that Napoleon III contributed to the restoration. The altar built in 1863 was replaced with a new one in 1931. In 1932, the statue of St. Peter of white marble was placed upon the altar niche.

In the year it was restored, a stone lectern was placed behind the altar to remind the feast day of "Saint Peter's Chair at Antioch", which once meant a universal church. In 1997, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey prepared a restoration and landscaping project, and expanded the front garden of the church adding a second entrance.

Considered as one of the first churches in the world today, the cave continues to function as a Monumental Museum and is used for ritual, wedding, baptism and ceremonies when requested by the Christian community. The church was declared as a place of pilgrimage for Christians by Pope Paul VI in 1963. Every year on June 29, the clergy and a large community attend celebrations of the Feast Day of St. Peter and St. Paul in the church.

## BUST OF KHARON (The Ferryman of Hades)

It is ten minutes' walk distance to St. Pierre Church. You can walk from a pathway just above the hill. The rock relief dates to the period of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 BC) and called "the Ferryman of Hades" in mythology. Its head is covered with a veil. It is a giant relief carved into the rocks, 4 meters to 1.5 meters in size.



During this period, it started to be carved for the gods in order to stop the spread of the plague epidemic in the city. During this period, upon the advice of the seers, it was decided to make such a relief on the mountain overlooking the city from above. It resembles an unfinished portrait of a woman with a veil on her head. With the outbreak stopped, the relief was left unfinished.

According to Greek mythology, Kharon, the Ferryman of Hades is tasked with passing the souls of the dead through the river Styx to the underworld. Kharon took the payers of the dead into his boat and left those who did not pay off on the shore without ignoring their pleading. Those Kharon had left on the shore would have suffered and wandered in space before they entered under administration of Hades, the God of the Underworld.

The First Cave Church of the World / First Center of Christianity

*It is known that the name Christian, for the first time in history, was given to the community worshipping in this church in Antakya.*



The tunnel from the church to the mountain is thought to have been used by the first Christians, who once gathered secretly here, to escape quickly during any attack and raid. To the right of the altar and the mosaic fragments on the ground inside the church, there are some traces of the frescoes rarely seen and once behind the lectern. Inside the church, especially in front of the altar, clergy graves were found and the front garden was used as a cemetery for several centuries. The water collected from the rocks was used for baptism. However, the earthquakes caused this water, which was thought to be healing by the visitors and drunk to the patients, gradually decreased.

