

DAILY SABAH

Alaçatı: Daughter of the Aegean Sea



ARDA SAYINER, ISTANBUL

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The Aegean Sea is a tourist paradise with its shores, history and nature, but Alaçatı in İzmir is its crowning jewel. One of the windiest regions in the world, Alaçatı is famous for its windsurfing and wind turbines, along with its narrow old streets, local flavors, like gum mastic, and boutique hotels.

Without a doubt, the most famous boutique hotel in the area is Alavya. Tourism gurus Rana Erkan Tabanca and Erol Tabanca have created a gift to the world of tourism with this spot. The hotel's name sounds like the pronunciation of the

English sentence "I love you," so it makes sense that the hotel's restaurant, "Mitu," is pronounced like "me too" for added charm. Likewise, the hotel's graceful name is reflected throughout the establishment's services. Located right in Alaçatı's market area, this hotel serves as an oasis from the street's commotion and crowds. A vacation paradise, the smell of the bougainvillea flowers join the shadows of the mastic, mulberry and olive trees, coupled with a custom pool and 25 unique rooms. Designed by award-winning architect Hakan Sezer, his attention to detail has created a space that feels a piece of art. Tasseled umbrellas near the pool, art books in the rooms and a teddy bear friend waiting on your bed are the sweet details the management has thoughtfully provided. However, the patisserie section of the hotel and the boutique at the entrance are other spots deserve some exploration.

The most ambitious room of the hotel is called "More Than a Suite." The 60-square-meter room, with its patio and Jacuzzi area, living room decorated with antique furniture, Burhan Doğançay originals, spacious dressing room and Aqua Di Parma products, really goes far beyond a normal suite. The hotel also has a very exclusive spa, beautifully named "MIBOSE," a clever combination of the words "mind," "body" and "soul." They also have a whimsical workshop area for Pilates and yoga, with the famous instructor, Alexis Kirespi, facilitating healing and joy for guests throughout the summer. Another spot that will bring a smile to your face is the Mitu restaurant managed by chef Hüseyin Pancar. Breakfast is served every morning on Mitu's terrace, featuring the kitchen's fresh and delicious bread. The tables on the terrace area are protected by the garden's trees, creating a very pleasant space. Mitu also serves lunch. I suggest the grilled salmon and quinoa salad. In the evening you can try Alaçatı's other restaurant, Agrilla, managed by chef Melih Tekşan. To give back, the hotel is involved in a social responsibility project with all the proceeds earned from the hotel's bicycle rentals being donated to a charity for the physically impaired. If you prefer cooler temperatures, visiting Alavya in the fall is also a pleasant experience, just be sure to book a room with a fireplace the first chance you get. I appreciate the attention to detail and careful planning of the Tabanca couple, General Manager Cem Tahtakıran and Marketing Manager Zeynep Çiftçioğlu İpekçi for this unique destination.

Alaçatı, of course, is also very famous for its cuisine. One of the most inspiring restaurants in the area, Asma Yaprağı really makes you feel at home. However, if you want to experience this amazing food, be sure to make reservations beforehand. Once there, prepare to travel back in time with its porcelain dishes on the walls, vintage wooden tables, crystal bottles, lamp shades, delicate pillows with flower designs and antique services. They even have their own wood oven for making fresh bread and raise organic maize.



In the restaurant featuring local cuisine, you order by actually going into the kitchen and choosing from the pre-prepared dishes. I would bet you have never eaten such amazing dishes prepared by the talented women of İzmir anywhere else. Stuffed figs with cheese and Bosnian pie are my suggestions. Likewise, the grape leaves stuffed with sour cherries and stuffed zucchini blossoms are also excellent. For desert, you must try the homemade baklava. Ayşenur Mıhçı, who has been managing the place for 7 years, has established a restaurant that could set an example for the world by putting her sincerity and love into it. She brought the big family dinners from her childhood in İzmir to her restaurant with the slogan, "Everyone has the right to know where what they eat comes

from." In short, she is a natural food lover. If you are in the area, don't miss the chance to eat at Asma Yaprağı but be sure to make a reservation in advance.

The best beach club in Alaçatı is Before Sunset. The place, decorated in a Californian style, is the most popular hangouts in the area during the summer. Kerem Tanel, one of the B4 Group site's managers, has created a trendy place to be. The nearby bay is splendid, and comfortable lounges are available for enjoying the view. However, the real fun is around the main bar and restaurant that offers great parties with famous DJs from Turkey and around the world. I suggest the "Happy Hour" parties on Thursdays, which have quickly become a tradition. The restaurant offers many different flavors. My suggestions are their pastas and burgers accompanied by mango mojitos. As the name suggests, Before Sunset is wonderful both during the day and in the evening. Shore bonfires, a huge swing built on the sand and the party area next to the sea create a fun and comfortable atmosphere along with the Iranian carpets scattered on the beach with antique sofas. I congratulate the B4 Group for creating this year's most popular Alaçatı night club featuring their fusion cuisine experience.

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