

Amanos Dağları ve Çevresinin Eko-Gastronomik Açından Değerlendirilme Olanakları

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ÖZ

Bu çalışma, ülkemizde önemli bir floral ve doğal öneme sahip olan Amanos dağları ve çevresinin eko-gastronomi açısından sağlayacağı imkanları tespit etmek amacıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Son yıllarda ortaya çıkan gastronomi amaçlı turizm faaliyetlerinde doğal güzelliklere sahip alanların tercih edilmesi belirli alanları avantajlı hale getirmiştir. Amanos dağları bir ucu Kahramanmaraş ilinde diğer ucu ise bir sahil yerleşim yeri olan Samandağ (Hatay) ilçesine kadar uzanan uzun bir dağ silsilesidir. Bu dağ ve çevresi geçmişten bugüne çok farklı kültürlerle ev sahipliği yaptığı gibi bugün hala etrafında 4 farklı il ve 15 ilçenin paylaşmış olduğu alanları barındırmaktadır. Diğer yandan bu dağ ve çevresinde bulunan iller (Osmaniye, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş ve Gaziantep) ülkemizin gastronomi açısından öne çıkan şehirleridir. Yapılan çalışmada bölgenin öne çıkan doğal alanları ve bu alanların genel floral yapısı ile sunabileceği ekogastronomik imkanlar multidisipliner bir anlayışla değerlendirilmiştir. Çalışma sonucunda Amanos dağlarının Kahramanmaraş, Hatay ve Osmaniye cephesinin ulaşım ve yerleşim bakımından daha avantajlı olduğu ve bu alanda bölgenin floral zenginliğinin geniş ölçekte kendini gösterdiği tespit edilmiştir. Diğer yandan özellikle alanda bulunan yayla yerleşimlerinin gastronomik imkanlar sunmasına rağmen ekolojik açıdan gelecekte bölge için bir kısım zararları beraberinde getireceği öngörülmüştür. Bu nedenle Amanos Dağlarının ekogastronomik potansiyelinin dağ merkezinden ziyade dağ çepelerinde gerçekleştirilmesinin ekolojik açıdan daha uygun olacağı sonucuna varılmıştır.

Eco-gastronomic Evaluation Opportunities of Amanos Mountains and Its Surroundings

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ABSTRACT

This study was carried out in order to determine the opportunities that the Amanos mountains and its surroundings, which have an important floral and natural importance in our country, will provide in terms of eco-gastronomy. The preference for areas with natural importance in gastronomic tourism activities that have emerged in recent years has made certain areas advantageous. The Amanos Mountains are a long mountain range extending from one end to Kahramanmaraş province and the other end to the town of Samandağ (Hatay), a coastal settlement. This mountain and its surroundings have hosted many different cultures from the past to the present, as well as the areas around which 4 different provinces and 15 districts have shared today. On the other hand, this mountain and the cities around it (Osmaniye, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş ve Gaziantep) are the prominent cities of our country in terms of gastronomy. In the study, the prominent natural areas of the region and the eco-gastronomic opportunities that these areas can offer with their general

floral structure were evaluated with a multidisciplinary approach. As a result of the study, it has been determined that the Kahramanmaraş, Hatay and Osmaniye fronts of the Amanos mountains are more advantageous in terms of transportation and settlement and the floral richness of the region manifests itself on a large scale in this area. On the other hand, although the Plateau settlements in the area offer gastronomic opportunities, it is predicted that they will bring some damage to the region in the future from an ecological point of view. For this reason, it has been concluded that it would be more appropriate from an ecological point of view to realize the eco-gastronomic potential of the Amanos Mountains in their surroundings rather than in the mountain center.

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1. Introduction

The concept of sustainability has become a concept that has found its place in almost every sector and field in recent years. It took time for human beings to realize that natural resources are limited and that any change in the ecological balance will have significant consequences if they are abused in an undue manner. However, at this point, sustainable development in the field of economy, sustainable environment in the field of ecology, sustainable resources in the field of energy resources and sustainable understanding in agriculture has emerged. As it is known, the emergence of different disciplines or concepts usually occurs when the signs of problems that may arise in the future are seen. Today, a concept known as "sustainable gastronomy or eco-gastronomy" has been added to these concepts.

Food and gastronomy are increasingly recognized as potentially determining factors for the sustainable development of regions. The theory that it can contribute to the economic, social and environmental sustainability of regions while potentially representing factors that increase their attractiveness and competitiveness is widely accepted in many research fields (Rinaldi, 2017).

Eco-gastronomy demonstrates that a community can prosper socially and economically when it has an eco-nutrition responsibility towards economic, socio-cultural and environmental sustainability and adheres to the most appropriate health standards for its members. In this respect, eco-gastronomy is also called sustainable gastronomy and communicates with all other elements of a developing system. In this context, it is stated that sustainable gastronomy supports the production and sale of local foods, transferring cooking rituals to future generations, preserving food diversity and ensuring the welfare of the society (Işıldar, 2016).

In recent years, people's tendency to seek natural and organic food has led to a significant increase in the use of weeds. This increase is important in terms of protecting nature, raising awareness of local people, increasing environmental awareness and sustainability of natural resources. In this context, the preservation of the local gastronomic heritage allows eco-gastronomic activities to be sustainable (Diker et al., 2017).

Although gastronomy is defined as the art of eating and drinking in many sources, it is actually closely related to chemistry, literature, biology, geology, history, music, philosophy, psychology, sociology,

medicine, nutrition and agriculture (Sormaz et al., 2016). Although eating and drinking needs in the past seemed to be only a biological demand, today, even when, where, how, how and with whom people eat what they eat has become important. On the other hand, eating and drinking have become the most important instruments of social cohesion in the world and in our country.

Eastern Mediterranean and Southeastern Anatolia regions stand out in terms of eating and drinking (Gastronomy) activities in Turkey. To Unesco Creative Cities Network Two of the three provinces (Gaziantep, Hatay, Afyonkarahisar) accepted in terms of gastronomy in our country are located in this region. On the other hand, the opportunities offered by these regions in terms of their historical characteristics have also affected the development of gastronomy. These regions, which are the destinations of millions of domestic and foreign tourists every year, also stand out in terms of their geographical features. Amanos Mountains and its surroundings, which are located on the transition route between these two regions and at the junction point of both countries (Turkey-Syria), are ecologically valuable. Therefore, using and evaluating this ecological asset with the same sustainable approach can ensure that these resources are also available for future generations.

When the activities such as sheltering, feeding and social needs of the world population, which has reached almost 8 billion today, are evaluated as a whole, it is seen that the anthropogenic pressure on ecology is gradually increasing. This pressure on ecology also has reflections in the field of gastronomy. These reflections are more evident in the production, reproduction and presentation processes of all plant and animal organisms that make up the main materials of gastronomy in the closest way to nature. It is the most basic requirement of the concept and understanding of "Eco-gastronomy" that all production processes of herbal and animal products are ecologically friendly. Meeting this requirement adequately is important for the healthy development and preservation of both humans and all other non-human beings in nature (Pehlivan and Yavaş, 2022).

Ecological sustainability can be expressed as reducing resource use, reducing environmental impacts from transportation, diversifying the use of local agricultural lands and reducing intensification, protecting traditional agricultural lands and promoting environmental production regulations (protecting local biodiversity, promoting organic production, reducing chemical inputs). Sustainable gastronomic tourism is aimed at protecting local gastronomic heritage, supporting local citizens and providing local development in this direction (Çetin et al., 2021).

The Amanos Mountains, which are rich in biodiversity, form the southern end of the Anatolian diagonal, starting from the southern tip of the Eastern Black Sea Mountains and extending to the Munzur Mountains and the Eastern Taurus Mountains. The Amanos Mountains have been selected as one of the hundred priority forest areas in Europe and an Important Nature Area in Turkey. In this area, it forms the habitat of 1580 plant taxa, 251 of which are endemic. Therefore, it is the richest natural area in terms of species diversity in Turkey. These taxa can be defined as three generations from the coast; "Maquis", which is the Mediterranean vegetation on the coasts, "forests" with

Mediterranean and Black Sea vegetation characteristics as you go up, and the “high mountain steppe” vegetation on the forest upper border (Güzelmansur and Lise, 2013).

The application of the concept of Ecogastronomy, which addresses ecological and gastronomic opportunities with a multidisciplinary approach, in Turkey's natural areas and prominent areas is a plus for those areas. For this reason, it is important to consider the Amanos mountains and its surroundings from a perspective that is related to many different fields such as Eco-gastronomy and has the potential to affect it positively. With the activation of this potential of the region, opportunities will be created where Ecology and Economy are evaluated together and the total potential of the region is revealed. While this region already has a very important field of activity such as gastronomy, integrating ecological opportunities into this field will benefit the people of the region.

2. Materials ve Methods

Amanos Mountains and its surroundings constitute the research material (Figures 1 and 2). The literature on the area and its natural potential also constitute the material of the research. The method of this study is the synthesis of the information obtained through literature review and field studies. Later, some suggestions were developed in line with this synthesis.



Figure 1. Amanos Mountain and Surround. Kaynak/Source: Özhatay et al., (2003).

The material of this research consists of the observations and visual data obtained in the field studies carried out periodically by me in the Amanos Mountains and its surroundings in 2021-2022. On the other hand, ecological, floristic and faunistic, cultural, gastronomic, etc. literature studies in the area related to the Amanos Mountains have also constituted an important resource for our study. By evaluating both the observations made in the Amanos mountains and the literature information together, the spatial contribution that the region can offer to the concept of eco-gastronomy has been tried to be determined.

While determining the locations of the study, the areas in contact with the Amanos Mountains were taken into consideration. In this context, the settlement areas in the area were listed on the basis of provinces and districts, and the study was evaluated by considering these locations. The areas in contact with the Amanos Mountains in the study are given in Table 1.

Table 1. The areas in contact with the Amanos Mountains in the study

Province	Disrtrict
Osmaniye	Bahçe, Düziçi
Hatay	Erzin, Dörtyol, Payas, İskenderun, Belen, Arsuz, Samandağ, Hassa, Kırıkhan, Antakya
Kahramanmaraş	Andırın
Gaziantep	Nurdağı, İslahiye

The fact that the Amanos Mountains extend parallel to the sea has caused significant differences in general climatic conditions between the east and west of the mountain. While the western slopes of the mountain facing the sea receive quite a lot of precipitation due to the effect of humid winds, the same winds create a blow-dry effect on the eastern slopes of the mountain, therefore the eastern slopes of the mountain, which are under the rain shadow, receive less precipitation than the western slopes. In addition, the mountainous mass prevents the tempering effects of the Mediterranean from penetrating into the interior, which causes temperature differences between the western and eastern slopes (Aytaç and Semenderoğlu, 2014).

3. Results and Discussion

In this study, the Amanos Mountains and the residential areas around them were determined, and the effect of the local people on the natural conditions of the region and how the Amanos Mountains penetrated into their natural environments was revealed through my observations. On the other hand, how the local people benefit from the natural opportunities in this area (ethnobiological) and what they include in the gastronomic opportunities of the area are revealed by literature studies.

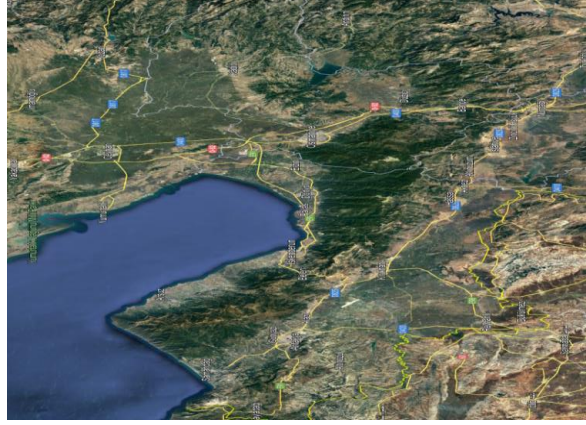


Figure 2. Map of Study area (Google Earth; 10.08.2022)

Within the scope of the study, fieldwork was carried out in the mountain villages of Tandır, Kayabaşı, Koçcağız, Köklü, Kabaklar and İdilli, which are connected to the İslahiye district of Gaziantep province, and Huzurlu Plateau, which is a nature park in this district, in July 2021. In the same period, field studies were carried out in the towns of Dört Yol (Çökek and Topaktaş Plateau), Payas, Sarımazı, Belen, Antakya and Samandağ (Çevlik) and Arsuz (Kale Village) of Hatay province. On the other hand, field observation studies were carried out in Zorkun, Cebel and Karıncalı highlands of Osmaniye in 2022 (Table 2).

Table 2. Plateaus in the Amanos Mountains

Province	Plateau
Osmaniye	Zorkun, Olukbaşı, Ürün, Cebel, Alman Pınarı, Dumanlı, Örencik, Kengerlidüz
Hatay	Çökek, Topaktaş, Üçkoz, Bağrıaçık, Karıncalı, Kocadüz, Soğukoluk, Alan, Atık, Nergislik, Teknepınarı, Delibekirli, Çataloluk, Çınarcık, Çardak, Kapılı
Kahramanmaraş	Çığsar
Gaziantep	Huzurlu and Karagöz

3.1. Studies on the Biodiversity of the Amanos Mountains

In the provinces surrounding the Amanos Mountains (Gaziantep, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş and Osmaniye), there are many studies on the flora and fauna of the mountain and its surroundings. Especially the research in the Amanos Mountains, which are the study point, has not been fully investigated due to the mountainous nature of the area, transportation opportunities and security reasons. In the search made with the keyword "Amanos" on the online platform of the Higher Education Institution Thesis Search Center (YÖKTEZ), it is seen that a total of 24 studies were

conducted from 1984 to 2022. 22 of these studies were conducted in the fields of Science (Biology (14), Geology (3), Chemistry (1), Forestry (1), Fisheries (1) Landscape Architecture (1) and Agriculture (1). It is in the fields of Geography (1) and Folklore (1). On the other hand, there are different studies by different researchers that reveal the floristic composition of the Amanos Mountains and its surroundings (Türkmen and Düzenli, 1998; Düzenli and Çakan, 2001; Yıldız, 2001; Özuslu et al, 2005; Pehlivan, 2005; Varol and Tatlı, 2003; Başaran, 2006; Akkaya, 2007; Kara, 2008; Çakır, 2009; Aydın, 2011; Pehlivan et al., 2013; Baba, 2017). However, these studies are only studies to reveal the species list of the studied areas. As can be seen from the studies carried out, there is no holistic and multidisciplinary approach to the Amanos Mountains in postgraduate education, which is one of the important academic activities of universities. Of course, it is important that basic sciences reveal the basic features and current situations of certain fields. However, today's economic and ecological conditions make it necessary to evaluate the underground and aboveground riches of the countries in a multi-dimensional way. So much so that this region exists on a world scale in terms of its gastronomic features, but it cannot integrate other geographical and natural beauties besides this feature.

3.2. Studies Investigating Plants Contributing to Gastronomy in Amanos Mountains and Its Surroundings

The studies that reveal how the people residing around the Amanos Mountains benefit from the plants found in these areas are "ethnobotanical" studies. For this purpose, a total of 128 studies were identified between 1998-2022 in the search (Yöktez) made with the search word "ethnobotany" in order to determine the ethnobotanical studies conducted in this region. When these studies are examined in detail, all the districts of Hatay except Antakya, Kumlu and Reyhanlı districts in the settlement areas of the Amanos Mountains (Table 1) (Odunkıran, 2020) and Kırıkhan District (Arslantaş, 2020), Gaziantep herbalists (Yiğit, 2014). and the studies carried out by Demirci (2010) in the Andırın district of Kahramanmaraş. When the potential of the region is evaluated, it can be said that the plant diversity of the area is not reflected in the gastronomic fields.

The studies on how the local people benefit from the plant biodiversity in the study area are not only thesis studies. Apart from these studies, there are also some studies on natural edible herbs in herbalists or public markets in the region. Keskin and Alpınar (2002) carried out an ethnobotanical study in the Kislak town of Yayladag county in Hatay province. Altay et al (2015) conducted a study in the Kırıkhan district of Hatay province, trying to reveal the ethnobotanical structure of the area in herbalists and local markets. In another study in the field, Altay and Karahan (2012) studied the ethnobotanical use of plants in and around Mustafa Kemal University, Tayfur Sökmen Campus in Hatay. Altay and Çelik (2011) studied the natural edible plants sold in the Antakya local bazaars in their study and gave information on this subject. In their study, Mert et al. (2016) studied the economic

importance and usage areas of some medicinal plants in Hatay province. Kerar and Akan (2018) conducted ethnobotanical studies in Aktepe and Zeytinoba settlements in Hatay's Hasşa district.

In Osmaniye, which includes some of the Amanos Mountains within its borders, Mart and Türkmen (2008) carried out ethnobotanical studies of Bahçe and Hasanbeyli districts of Osmaniye province. Demirci and Özhatay (2012) determined the plants used for medicinal purposes in the Andırın district of Kahramanmaraş, which is located at the starting point of the Amanos Mountains.

Considering the extent to which the natural plant diversity of the Amanos Mountains is evaluated in the restaurant menus of the provinces close to this mountain, it can be seen that there are important deficiencies in this regard. Although meat-oriented foods are prominent in the menus of this region, it can be said that some vegetable dishes also contribute to the gastronomy of the region. This shows that the local people are not far from the dishes made from plants. As a matter of fact, Onur (2021) reported in his study on Hatay Cuisine that there are many flavors that are locally made at home but cannot find a place in the menus of restaurants. Some of these are Tirit, Mortadella, Maklube, Şihl Mahşi, Sırayıl / Sireysil, Mütebli, Kumbursiye, Mahulta, Zilk Stalk with Yoghurt, Fresh Surk Salad, Kete, Külçe, Semirsek (Sembusek), Haytali, Kebbet jam. This shows that there are some flavors that the local people consume themselves, but that are not reflected in the restaurant menus and still remain local.

In Osmaniye, flavors such as Gavurdagi salad and Tırşik named after a part of this mountain show that the people of this region also attach importance to plant-based foods. In addition, Bahçeci (2019) reported in their study that Çoban Salad, Handmade Pickle, Ezme Salad, Spinach Sourdough, Kavut, Cabbage Sour, Seasonal Salad, Süllüm, Sögürme, Onion Salad, Teleme as salads in Osmaniye cuisine. They stated that as vegetable dishes, Spring olla, Sour Kömeç, Roasted Beans, Spinach Roasted-Yogurt, Spinach in Water, Chickpea Leeks, Roasted Potatoes, Potato Juice, Zucchini with Olive Oil, Fresh Beans with Olive Oil and Meat are the prominent flavors of the region.

Pirpirim (purslane) and tırşik, also known as " Doctor of Andırın" among the people in Osmaniye, are herb dishes that are commonly made in the local cuisine (Yayla and Yayla, 2019). As a matter of fact, the fact that nomadic shepherds who go to the highland to graze their animals with the arrival of spring meet their nutritional needs with herbs grown from the natural environment shows that dishes made from natural herbs are quite common in Osmaniye cuisine. In particular, roasting kömeç herb (Malva) with onions and adding bulgur, then cooking it like rice is a common herb dish in the local cuisine (Akçaözoğlu and Koday, 2019; Üzülmez and Onur, 2021).

Considering the geographical location of Osmaniye province, it is seen that it is a transition zone to close provinces such as Hatay, Adana, Gaziantep and Kahramanmaraş, which come to the fore in gastronomy tourism. In this context, the inclusion of Osmaniye in the gastronomic routes to be created within the scope of these cities and the inclusion of activities for food rituals as a gastronomic attraction element in the tour programs will contribute to the learning of the said culture by gastro tourists (Üzülmez and Akdağ, 2019).

Ceylan (2019) in his study on the Düziçi district of Osmaniye province, the wild herbs consumed as soup in this region; he stated that there are stinging nettle, watermelon and current grass. The researcher determined that Tirsik herb is one of the most well-known and abundantly made herbs by the local people, and the people of the region who think that this herb is very healthy, often include this herb in their menus. On the other hand, it has been reported that the people of the region get the herbs that are grown in this area and the dishes made from these herbs, such as pincushion rice, vinegar roast, mustard herb stew, and cold purslane pickle through edible herbs.

Gaziantep city center is approximately 80 km from the Amanos Mountains. However, Nurdağı and İslahiye districts of the province are settlements established on the skirts of Amanos Mountains. Therefore, it can be said that the province has partially benefited from the opportunities of the Amanos Mountains. Moreover, it can be said that these districts frequently use this geography for their shelter, food, heating, agriculture and tourism needs as they are bordered by mountains. Local people consume some plants as fresh in season, while others use them by drying them when the plant is not found naturally.

It is seen that tarragon grass, which is not very common in other regions, purslane, which is called "pirpirim" in the region, and mint are dried in Gaziantep. The dried Purslane is then used in the production of dishes such as "purslane meal", which is a nutritious meal (Şahin, 2015). Among the piyaz consumed according to the season in Gaziantep, onion, mung, pirpirim, green olive, watermelon and shepherd's purse are widely consumed (Tokuz, 2002).

According to the research conducted by Şenol and Giritlioğlu (2021), it has been seen that there are 100 regional dishes that are about to be forgotten in Gaziantep, and the most forgotten dishes are "Purslane Meal, Şiveydiz and Doğrama". Researchers have determined that the main reason for forgetting meals is that meals are mostly preferred by adults, but children are not willing to consume these meals.

3.3. Amanos Mountains and Ecogastronomic Opportunities

The importance of regional cuisines has increased with eco-gastronomy. The development of local cuisine has begun to come to the fore both in terms of tourism and as a regional distinctive feature. In this way, it has become a feature that can be used in the selection of tourist destinations, an element that will increase tourism revenues and an important feature for the development of the region (Öztopçu and Akar, 2019).

Onur and Onur (2016) reported in their study that although there are eating and drinking activities on the basis of touristic trips in terms of gastronomy, the main intention is not only eating and drinking. They state that in these activities, besides meeting the physiological and social needs of the tourists, discovering and tasting the foods and beverages specific to that geography, seeing different production methods and learning the cultural values of food and beverages. Gastronomic tourism, which has the characteristics of innovation, difference and originality, respecting nature and cultural values and

protecting these riches, is becoming increasingly important today. If quality food and beverage in a region are offered to the tourist experience as a tourism product of that region, purchasing and consuming local foods has a multiplier effect on the region. Thus, the local economy gains. The money that visitors to the region spend on these products contributes to the regional economy and ensures the development of these sectors.

The desire of individuals not only to fill their stomachs but also to taste local delicacies during their travels ensures that different locations are visited in the destination country. Realizing this detail, countries focus on gastronomy and develop strategies to stand out from others. It is an advantage to work on gastronomy for places famous for their cuisines such as Turkey, India, Mexico and the Far East. According to the tourist mentality, in order to get to know the culture of the travel destination, it is necessary to taste the food of that culture (Yun et al., 2011).

The Amanos Mountains and its surroundings offer very important advantages to the region in terms of natural beauty. It is very important to support an area such as gastronomy that keeps people's travel demand alive for 12 months of the year with local delicacies. The field studies carried out within the scope of the research started periodically from the district of Nurdağı, and respectively, İslahiye, Akbez, Hassa, Aktepe, Kırıkhan, Antakya, Samandağ, Arsuz, Belen, Sarımazı, İskenderun, Payas, Dört Yol, Erzin, Osmaniye, Andırın, Düziçi, Bahçe and again Nurdağı. to be completed. The focus was on the skirts of the Amanos Mountains, but the situation of some highland settlements (Huzurlu, Çökek, Zorkun, Karıncalı and Cebel) was also observed from time to time (Figure 3-4).



Figure 3. Photographs from observations in Gaziantep and Osmaniye parts of Amanos Mountains (Photed by *T. Pehlivan*)

In the study, it was seen that the transportation possibilities, especially from the Nurdağı district of Gaziantep, to the Sarımazı-Belen district of Hatay province, are more advantageous than the Nurdağı-Kırıkhan line. On the other hand, there are many highland settlements in the area. However, plateau settlements may not be suitable in terms of eco-gastronomy. The reason for this is that the highland settlements are in the inner parts of the Amanos Mountains, the damage to the area by the roadworks

and construction activities to reach these areas and the ecologically unacceptable overpopulation. Instead, the inner parts of the Amanos Mountains can be recommended for ecotourism to the masses who will visit the area from a touristic point of view, while the skirts of the mountain can offer the region's outstanding gastronomic opportunities. In order for a gastronomic activity to be carried out in any field and at the same time to be environmentally friendly, it must have a sustainable understanding. This sustainable understanding is possible with awareness of issues such as the protection of nature, efficient use of resources, environmentally friendly production and waste management.

Sustainability is defined as a state of balance in which there is harmony between the activities of the human population and their natural, social and cultural environments, and the transfer of cultural values to future generations. The basic idea of the concept of sustainability is to benefit from all natural and man-made resources without destroying, deteriorating their quality and improving them, taking into account the needs of today and future generations (Demir and Çevirgen, 2006).

In Gastronomy and Tourism activities, there are places and facilities where those who come to a destination can meet their food and beverage needs while visiting other than the places where they stay. It is important in tourism marketing to attract tourists who have some knowledge of the places to visit and spend their time there. For this purpose, it is necessary to arouse a desire for tourists to get to know the region and spend it by bringing together the touristic factors and activities that do not attract enough attention and by creating awareness (Kervankıran and Çuhadar, 2014; Moulin and Bonifica, 2001).

Integrating the provinces of Gaziantep, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş and Osmaniye, which have a very important natural advantage such as the Amanos Mountains, alongside this natural advantages in the region, can reach a very important place in terms of eco-gastronomy and ecotourism.

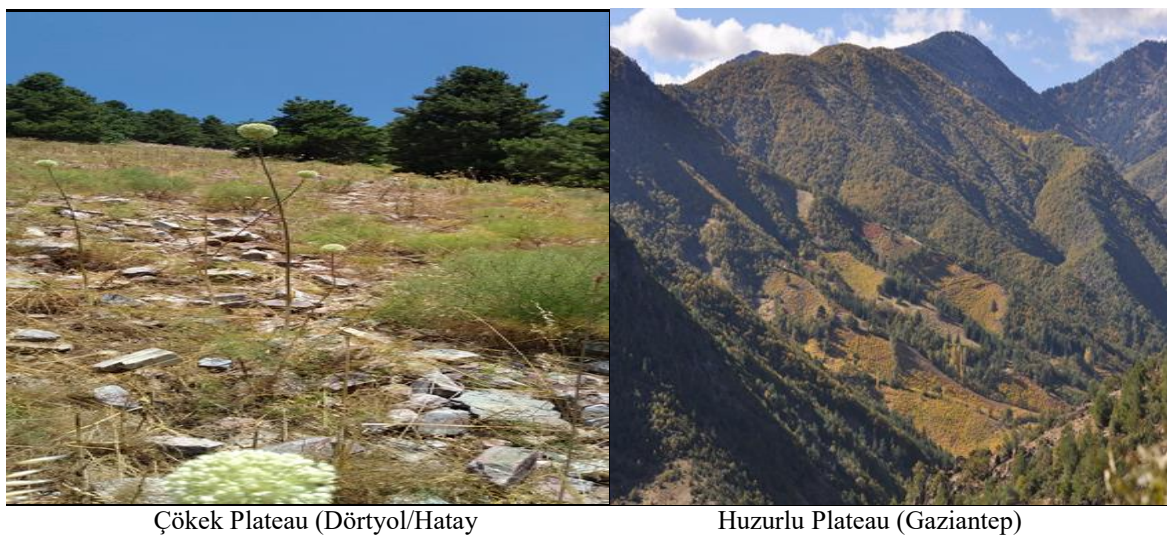


Figure 4. Photographs from observations in Hatay and Gaziantep parts of Amanos Mountains (Photed by *T. Pehlivan*)

Local dishes, prepared with various cooking techniques, especially using local products, contain their own unique flavors. With the increasing interest in local foods, tourists going to various countries to taste these flavors have revealed gastronomic tourism. Local foods play an important role in ensuring sustainability for destinations, in addition to their contribution to the local economy and being a destination attraction.

Geographical and climatic features are among the most important factors that shape culinary cultures in the world (Kızilirmak, et al. 2014). In this study, it has been determined that the people in the settlements close to the Amanos Mountains have more information about medicinal plants and use many different plant species other than the edible plants that are found to be consumed in their kitchens. Unless the destruction of this experience and cultural accumulation can be prevented, information is in danger of being lost.

Gastronomic tours and routes, which can be considered in tourism products, have recently attracted attention and are frequently used. In this way, by increasing tourism activities, it can be ensured that it is in demand by connecting places that are not very valuable and demanded in tourist terms. Gastronomy tours and routes also contribute to the increase of the recognition of the destination, the protection of cultural heritage and the reinforcement of intercultural understanding, thus the development of sustainable tourism with effective promotion and marketing activities (Filiposki, 2017; Uluçay, 2017).

İzgi (2007), in his research on the local people in Osmaniye, concluded that the local people think that local food, desserts and beverages will attract the attention of tourists, and draws attention to the fact that gastronomy tourism is one of the potentials that should be developed in the region.

According to Ceylan (2019), people have become curious about what edible wild herbs are, how they are consumed, their taste, how they are cooked, and the benefits of herbs. As this is the case, weeds have begun to take their place in restaurant menus, festivals, events and in many different places such as local bazaar. In addition to such activities, meals made with edible herbs as a local dish in tourist destinations and information about these herbs can be considered as different alternatives and different experiences for gastro-tourists. In this sense, information on edible herbs belonging to the region can be obtained from experienced resource people living in the region, and the determination and preservation of original recipes can prevent the consumption of these plants from being forgotten.

Diker et al., (2017) In their study, they examined the ethnobotanical characteristics of Eskişehir together with the concept of eco-gastronomy. According to the results of the researchers' study, there are 129 plant varieties that grow naturally in and around Eskişehir, which has a rich gastronomic culture, and are consumed as food by the local people. Since these plants emerge especially in April, they are consumed intensively in the spring months. These plants are mostly used in cooking. There are also plants that are consumed both as food and for medicinal purposes. Plants used for medicinal purposes are generally consumed by making tea. As a result of the study, the researchers suggest obtaining geographical indications for important plants unique to the region for the development of

eco-gastronomic activities in Eskişehir, and thus, they state that the gastronomic heritage of the region will be protected and the local culture and identity of Eskişehir will be recognized.

It is clear that some initiatives (Herb Festivals, Plateau Tourism and Mountain Sports) that can bring the region to the forefront from an ecoastronomical point of view, will contribute to the development of the region in the vicinity of the mountain range, which has a large population such as the Amanos Mountains. As it is known, "Herb Festivals", mostly hosted by the Aegean Region in recent years, has become an important tourist activity for the region. The presence of important cities in terms of air transportation such as Adana, Hatay and Gaziantep, which are very close to the Amanos Mountains and have high mobility, can make the region more attractive. A sustainable gastronomy initiative to be carried out with nature-friendly practices will be able to bring to light the ecological values of the region as well as highlight the gastronomic opportunities.

4. Conclusion

At the point where the world has come today, the concepts of economy and ecology are now almost considered together. As the needs of human beings diversify, all underground and aboveground resources of countries can become the starting point of development. Features such as the presence of natural habitats and the richness of biodiversity provide important advantages for the regions that host these areas. On the other hand, the point reached, evaluating the resources of countries with a multidisciplinary approach can create more comprehensive opportunities. A concept such as gastronomy, which appears to be basically eating and drinking activities, but actually contributes to and receives contributions from many different fields (Tourism, Transportation and Accommodation), should be evaluated multi-dimensionally. In this context, the evaluation of a geography such as the Amanos Mountains, which is one of the important natural areas of Turkey, in a way that will contribute to the gastronomic opportunities of the settlements around it will make significant contributions to the region. For this purpose, the Amanos Mountains, which are in the domain of two of the 3 cities (Gaziantep-Hatay) included in the Unesco Creative Cities Network from Turkey, formed the field of this study. The connection of this area with the settlements around it was examined. On the other hand, in this study, the flora, ethnobotany and gastronomy studies carried out in and around these settlements were examined and interpreted with a common understanding.

As a result of the study, it was determined and observed that the Amanos Mountains have a rich biodiversity and natural beauty. Although the gastronomic infrastructure of the settlements in the area is rich, it has been determined that the local people themselves consume some dishes that are not reflected in the restaurant menus. Studies conducted in the region have reported that local people have and consume many edible natural herbs such as (Gavur Pancarı, Isırgan Otu, Ebegümeçi, Yarpuz, Zahter, İğnelik, Hardal and Sirken etc.), but these are not reflected in the regional restaurant menus as much as they should.

Trying to evaluate the entire ecological structure of the region with its gastronomic characteristics can create a combined opportunity for touristic trips, the destination of which is this region. For example, the presence of restaurant establishments that reflect the gastronomic characteristics of the region at the same time in the highland and historical tourism areas of the region will increase the preferability of the region as it will offer many different opportunities for domestic and foreign tourists. The fact that the Amanos mountains and their borders are located in the circle of 6 different provinces, namely Adana, Osmaniye, Kahramanmaraş, Gaziantep, Kilis and Hatay, is in an advantageous geographical position as it is on the natural route of the tourists who want to visit these provinces. The presence of 4 metropolitan cities such as Adana, Hatay, Gaziantep and Kahramanmaraş in the region also increases the number of potential tourists who can come to this geography. On the other hand, besides the gastronomic features of Hatay, faith tourism, Gaziantep's gastronomic and cultural features, Kahramanmaraş's being an active province even only for ice cream, and Adana and Osmaniye's being an important bridge connecting the east and the west are important factors that make this whole region attractive.

In addition, "Edible Grass festivals", which have become popular in recent years, provide great economic advantages to the regions where they are held. However, although there is a significant consumption of natural herbs among the ethnobotanical features of the Amanos Mountains and its surroundings, it is seen that the region is deprived of such activities. In this study, the literature and field work were evaluated together and it was seen that these mountains and natural edible herbs, which have the opportunity to be neighbors with 6 different cities, do not contribute enough to the gastronomy and tourism of the region. Extensive edible grass festivals can be organized in the region, at least in provinces such as Osmaniye or Hatay, which are directly bordered by the Amanos mountains. Such studies, which will contribute to the gastronomy of the region around the Amanos Mountains today or in the near future, will highlight this region, which is already of great importance in the field of gastronomy, in terms of eco-gastronomy and eco-tourism and rural development.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author of the article declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Contribution Statement

The author declares that he has contributed 100% to the article.

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