

# Ayvalik an as Art Route for Tourism Guides Within the Frame of Art Tourism

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Art is the most important element that directs people to a destination and gives them an original experience in a developing and changing understanding of tourism. Art tourism motivates people to travel, facilitate communication with different cultures, enhance social pride, and contribute significantly to the region's economy. Regions with artistic and touristic attractions are active with art tourism, and they have an art destination brand. In this study, Ayvalik's potential for art tourism is investigated. At the same time, art events, art venues, and artist atelier/studio in Ayvalik are presented with numerical and visual examples. Ayvalik is developed as a new art route within the framework of art tourism and offers various suggestions for its tourist guides.*

## INTRODUCTION

Art is an expression that awakes emotions and thoughts and a language that tells about societies. The best way to know and learn about society is art. Another way is tourism. Along with fulfilling the needs of people such as rest, entertainment, culture, and art, tourism is a phenomenon that brings nations closer together and provides interaction. When we look at the relationship between art and tourism, both are experiences and as an extension of these experiences, art tourism is becoming more and more common. Art and artists make it easy to experience the destination with an authentic and unique sense of place. Art, creating a site-specific reality, plays an active role in the image of the destination (Jolliffe and Cave, 2012: 15). It is also among the most important reasons for traveling and it shapes the expectations of tourists and contributes to the development of tourism. While the artistic activities that are increasing

in recent years have led to the development of tourism, the interest in art has also increased with the increase in tourism activities (Bhatta, 2017: 180).

When culture is defined as maintaining throughout a person's life and shaping his lifestyle, and its relationship with tourism is created, it appears as cultural tourism. Cultural tourism essentially focuses on cultural values and lifestyles on the one hand and social environments where cultural and artistic activities are carried out on the other hand (Andrew and Andrew-Essien, 2013: 276). While cultural tourism in the past has been mostly associated with high culture and cultured people, today it contains many popular cultural attractions that include cultural tourism, sports, living heritage, recent nostalgia and the daily life of local communities. Cultural tourism moving from the concrete heritage of the past to the abstract products of contemporary culture includes heritage tourism (Richards, 2007:2), due to visiting historical artifacts and art tourism as it benefits from current art activities and expands towards creative tourism (Bonet, 2003).

Art tourism, which develops in cultural tourism and takes part as a new touristic product in tourism literature, is a source of motivation for travel and has the power to increase the tourism demand. Many cities and countries attract an influx of tourists by creating an art-based image with its artists, artworks, art activities and programs. The main factor underlying the development of art tourism in cities such as Paris, London, Milan and New York is the understanding and experiencing the contribution of art and culture to urban development by local administrators and politicians. At this point, art becomes an income-generating factor locally and nationally through tourism (Currid, 2007: 2). Art tourism, along with contributing to the urban and national economy, renews the physical and social character of a destination. It brings local people and tourists together, increases community pride, enhances art-related organizations and creates a livelier place (Mandala, 2015: 130; Watson, 2013).

While countries/regions/cities identified with art and art tourism are increasing, it is seen that art has become an institution in Turkey and there has been a movement in the artistic activities in recent years and there have been developments in art tourism. Istanbul, which is an international art center for renewing the image of the country and organizing contemporary art activities, is the focal point of art tourists thanks to its eye-catching museums and galleries, huge exhibitions, fairs, festivals, and biennials. At the same time, Ayvalık district of Balıkesir province, which draws attention with its natural, historical and cultural structure and touristic facilities, hosts art and art activities. In Ayvalık, which is rapidly approaching to become an art destination, art is a part of urban identity and the district renewed with art and came alive with artist workshops. In this study, the potential of being an art destination is revealed by researching the art and tourism environment of Ayvalık. In the context of the study, it has been determined that the district has a liberating and dynamic art environment thanks to its art galleries, projects, events, artists and art workshops and has turned into a city known for art in terms of tourism. Ayvalık, which strengthens the city image with art and is a vibrant city with art tourism, offers an alternative to tourist guides as an art route. In line with these findings, suggestions were made to tourist guides for the development of Ayvalık as an art destination and for more tourists to visit.

## **THE RELATION OF ART AND TOURISM: THE CONCEPT OF ART TOURISM**

The relationship between travel, tourism and art forms art, artworks, artists, the imagination of local people and tourists, and ideas about tourist places. Art tourism, which is a new tourism product and growing rapidly, provides the promotion of travel. Since the desire to see, experience and recognize art

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