

## 10 Reasons To Visit Turkey Now



### 3. Alavya Otel.

Say it slow, lazy: "Ah-lahv-ya." I love ya. (The larger of its two designer restaurants is called Mitu, as in "Me too.")

This brand new boutique hotel is the brainchild of Erol and Rana Tabanca, who hired Turkey's most famous designer, Hakan Ezer, and chef, Carlo Bernardini, to develop their concept of casual chic luxury for the east's highest rollers. (One night recently Muhtar Kent, the head of Coca-Cola, hosted a discreet table there with friends; Patrizia Gucci is scheduled to stay there this week.) When I visited Alavya, it had been open only three days but I detected not one hint of stress or early-opening hiccups. Word from the management was that it was already filled to capacity for the next weeks; a group from Russia had rented out the whole thing for a few days next month.

The hotel is located in the coastal town of Alaçati (pronounced A-la-jah-ti), which until very recently has been quiet, slow and virtually unknown outside of the region. It is an Aegean town on the western coast of Turkey on the Çeşme Peninsula which is famous for its stone walls, lavender fields and vineyards. Now there is a trickle of tourism from Istanbul and a few other places in the Middle East—enough to support expensive boutique hideaways and local, farm-to-table restaurants. (Actually, sea-to-table is more like it—Chef Bernardini told me he goes each morning to local fish markets to choose what he'll serve that evening. Half of the time guests don't even look at the menu, he says—he'll just visit their table, talk with them about what they like, and develop something specially for their group.)

What you should know about Alavya is that the rooms are tidy, comfortable, detail-oriented and whimsical: I walked in to mine to find two kaleidoscopes, a plush tasseled bathrobe, a minibar stocked with select liquors and artisan sparkling water, local chocolates, a plush teddy bear on the bed, thick woven mats and a new pair of flip-flops painted with palm trees at the ready. The walls and floor were white wood and bleached stone—cool and light in a place where the Mediterranean sun gets intense. The feel of the place is like an oasis in the middle of a biblical wasteland; evenings there were full of music, food, *raki*, candlelight and cool ocean breezes as we sat on white linen beds strewn with silk cushions.

The area is famous for its access to epic wind surfing, and along with that the hotel offers yoga classes, spa services, cycling, fishing, scuba diving and sailing on a private yacht with local seamen—but I admit I spent much of my time eating Turkish biscuits and drinking cold beverages by the pool. May I suggest *Tropic of Cancer*? There are multiple semi-hidden enclaves with ottomans and pillows beautifully embroidered in the Turkish style; the lavender and hyacinth that crush the property throughout are held in stone formations rather than pots, and an ancient well hints at the history that pervades the entire town.

Do note that Alavya is about an hour from the nearest airport in Izmir, and it takes roughly 15 minutes to get to the ocean from town. You will not need to rent a car while you are there as the hotel will transport you anywhere.

Total capacity for Alavya is 25 rooms held in six traditional stone houses situated like inside a walled garden, and rates start at 350 Euro per night including tax and breakfast (it is open year-round).

Call or email to make a reservation:

Info@alavya.com.tr and +90 (232) 7166632

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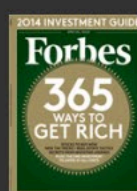
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