

ATCM 2011 GUIDE

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The purpose of this document is to clarify some important issues related to the ATCM 2011 conference in Turkey. The setting for this conference is quite different than we had in the past. Therefore, please read this document before making any decisions related to flights, hotels, plans for sightseeing, etc. Please check also the web site <http://atcm2011.org/> for more information and registration forms (hotel, airport transport).

LOCATION

The conference will take place in the Abant hotel that is located high in the mountains, 1327 meters above the sea level, and about 40 km from the nearest town, Bolu. The place looks absolutely wonderful – large pine forest, volcanic mountains, a beautiful volcanic crater lake, and a lot of opportunities for healthy walking. The hotel is one of the best hotels I have ever seen, it is very expensive hotel but we have a special discount in this hotel. Therefore, there is no better option. By the way, this is not Kuala Lumpur, or Singapore, where you have a number of hotels around. Here we do not have any option to choose. This is our only option we have. I was told that near there is another hotel, but without a discount one still have to pay a lot more. So, I suggest let us stick to this place and enjoy. This was the good news. The bad news is that we were offered a limited number of rooms. You have to understand that this hotel is usually fully booked. Therefore, it is a good idea to share room with somebody whom you know and like. I suggest looking who is attending the conference and ask him or her to join you in the room. This way you can save money.

IMPORTANT: you can book your hotel only through Dr Erol Karakirk, erol@atcm2011.org or filling the form at http://atcm2011.org/en/index.php?k=otelform_en

If you try to book via official hotel reservation system you will have to pay the official price.



Abant Lake and mountains around the Abant hotel

TRANSPORT

We will provide busses from major airports in Turkey – Istanbul, Ataturk airport, Istanbul Sabiha Gökçen Airport, and Ankara. However, we may not be able to offer this service for the participants who will come later or earlier. Therefore, below is enclosed information how to get to the Abant hotel if you have to organize your trip on your own.

There are a number of bus companies with regular transport services between Istanbul and Bolu. The major and the most reliable is Oz Bolu or Kamil Koc. They have regular bus schedule:

- From Istanbul bus station to Bolu: 7:00, 11:00, 15:30 and 19:00.
- From Bolu to Istanbul: 5:00, 9:30, 13:30 and 18:00

If you arrive to Istanbul Ataturk airport, then you have to take the subway to the bus station and then find the bus you need. Officially the trip from Istanbul to Bolu should take no more than 4 hours from Ataturk, and 3 hours from Sabiha airport. But this is theory, in some hours the traffic in Istanbul is so dense that your trip may take more time that you expected.

There are also busses from Bolu to Abant and back.

- Bolu to Abant hotel: 7:30, 11:00, 13:00, 15:00 and 17:00
- Abant to Bolu: 9:00, 13:00, 15:00, 17:00, and 18:30

My personal experience with Turkey shows that the Ataturk airport in Istanbul is more convenient than any other airport. It is a major international airport in the whole region, with great shopping and dining opportunities. It is very easy accessible from the center of Istanbul – just a subway that costs very little and is fast, reliable and goes very often. There is also tram system going through the Istanbul, and it has connection with the subway. You do not need to fiddle with different tickets. The same plastic tickets, the same price, are valid for both. Learning this transport system takes a few minutes and then you can get almost anywhere in Istanbul.

COMPUTER WORKSHOPS

As we have this conference in a hotel, we may not have enough space for computer labs. Therefore, I suggest bringing your own laptop and using it for any workshop you wish to attend. The only one thing – you will have to install software on your laptop. In my opinion this is great solution as you can continue your workshop for many hours later, and you can do it even in the mountains.

SIGHTSEEING

Turkey is the most exciting place I have seen in last few years. You can find there many things – old architecture, historical places, nature parks, etc. The country is quite safe and people are very hospitable. There are not many people speaking English, but I still managed to communicate almost everywhere.

We will try to show you some historical villages around Abant. These are very unique places and you do not see anything like this in the west. Sometimes, when I do not see a car, then I have a feeling that I am still in old Ottoman times. I really enjoyed walking through these villages. I also enjoyed their wonderful food. We will try to show you how it looks.

I know that many of you would like to see Istanbul – the 2000 years old city. There is no way that you can see major attractions in Istanbul in a few hours or even a day. You need at least three full days and still you will see very little. Therefore, I suggest come to Istanbul a few days before the conference, or stay after the conference. Find a nice cheap hotel through the web site <http://www.istanbulhotels.com/> book it online and enjoy. The standard of these hotels is usually very good: clean rooms, very good breakfast, and nice service. The cheaper hotels may have smaller rooms, but in general you still will be very happy with them. Try to get a hotel in Sultanahmet area. This is the very center of the old town. You will be close to most important historical places.

Here are some of them:

THE BLUE MOSQUE



Sultan Ahmed Mosque, so called Blue Mosque

In Istanbul you can enter any mosque. The Sultan Ahmed Mosque is the most crowded. If I wish to go there then go early, I usually go at 6 AM – the mosque is completely empty and I can do photographs without anybody disturbing me.

HAGIA SOPHIA



Hagia Sophia or Aya Sophia,

Hagia Sophia is a former Byzantine church, later mosque and now museum. You can enter there only after buying a ticket and unfortunately visiting hours are restricted. Therefore, there is no way to avoid crowds of tourists.

THE TOPKAPI PALACE



The Topkapi Palace is a large Ottoman palace. You may need at least half of the day for seeing only the major things. But if you wish to see the library, harem, etc. you will need more time.

THE PRINCE'S MOSQUE



The Prince's Mosque is a bit off the tourist tracks. Therefore, you will have a peaceful excursion. This is my favorite mosque in Istanbul.

THE CHORA MONASTERY



The Chora Monastery, currently this is Kariye Museum, is a place worth of any time. It is not in the center of Istanbul, so you will have to find it deep in the town.

THE GOLDEN HORN AND BOSPORUS



The view of Golden Horn from the Topkapi palace

The area on the other side is full of many interesting things. Do not miss this part if you have enough time. There are hundreds of things to enjoy in Istanbul, and Turkey.

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