

# BALYOLU: THE HONEY ROAD

MERHABA! WE ARE BALYOLU: THE HONEY ROAD  
the world's very first honey tasting trekking route, led & inspired by rural  
women entrepreneurs and their communities.

WE ARE A GOOD FOOD TRAVEL COMPANY  
providing village food tours in rural Northeastern Turkey & incubating &  
supporting small-scale rural women in producing a boutique line of honey  
inspired products.

OUR AWARD WINNING MODEL  
has won Audience Favorite awards at the Berkley GSVC & the MIT Social  
Startup Competition, & we have been recognized internationally on Na-  
tional Geographic, the Guardian, Hürriyet, Zaman, and Eurasianet media  
outlets.

WE INVITE YOU TO COME WALK WITH US  
and taste the adventure for yourself!



## Have You Ever...

Dreamed of walking ancient silk road trade routes? Of tasting some of the finest honey in the world? Of living with the mountain people of Anatolia and the Caucasus?

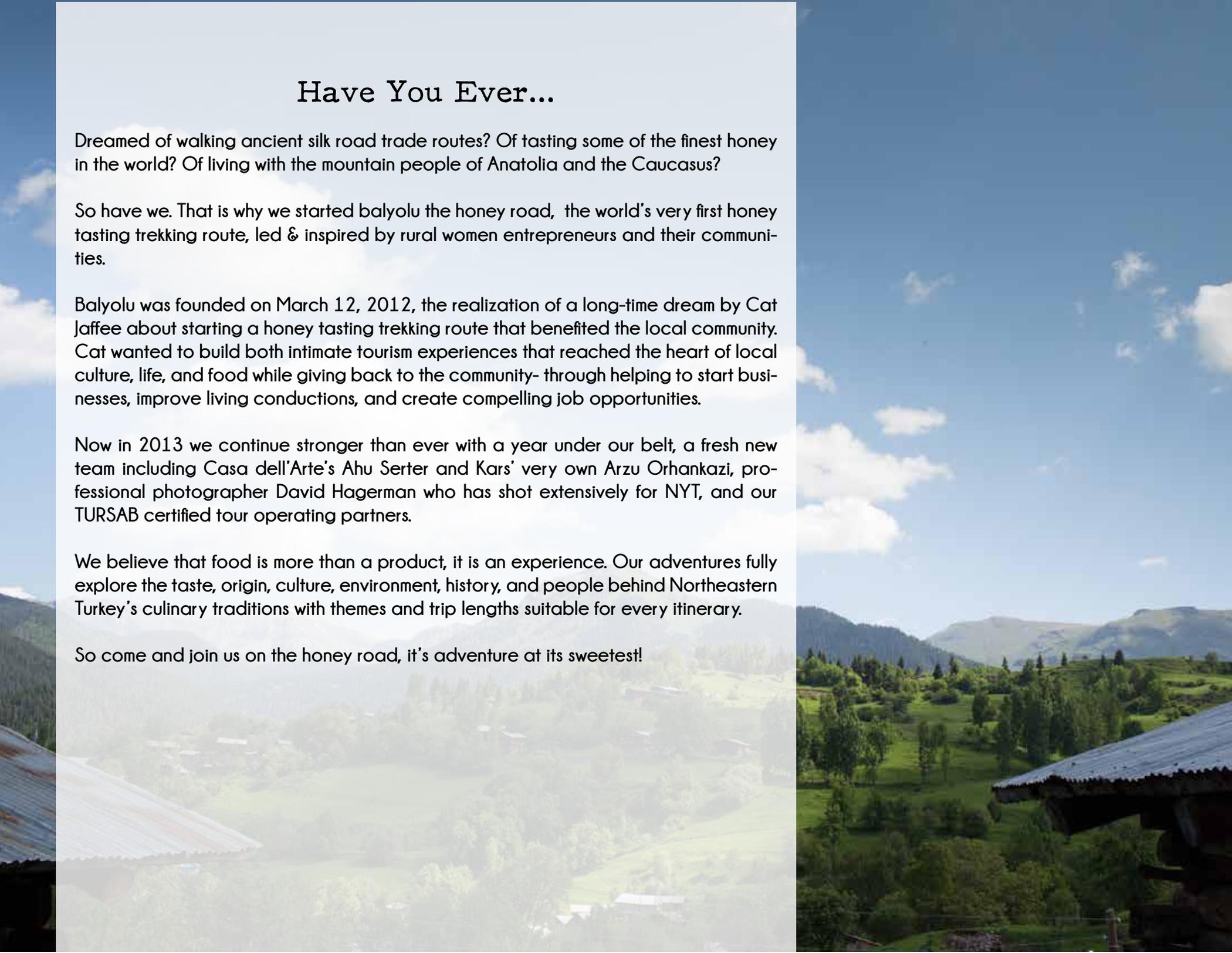
So have we. That is why we started balyolu the honey road, the world's very first honey tasting trekking route, led & inspired by rural women entrepreneurs and their communities.

Balyolu was founded on March 12, 2012, the realization of a long-time dream by Cat Jaffee about starting a honey tasting trekking route that benefited the local community. Cat wanted to build both intimate tourism experiences that reached the heart of local culture, life, and food while giving back to the community- through helping to start businesses, improve living conditions, and create compelling job opportunities.

Now in 2013 we continue stronger than ever with a year under our belt, a fresh new team including Casa dell'Arte's Ahu Serter and Kars' very own Arzu Orhankazi, professional photographer David Hagerman who has shot extensively for NYT, and our TURSAB certified tour operating partners.

We believe that food is more than a product, it is an experience. Our adventures fully explore the taste, origin, culture, environment, history, and people behind Northeastern Turkey's culinary traditions with themes and trip lengths suitable for every itinerary.

So come and join us on the honey road, it's adventure at its sweetest!



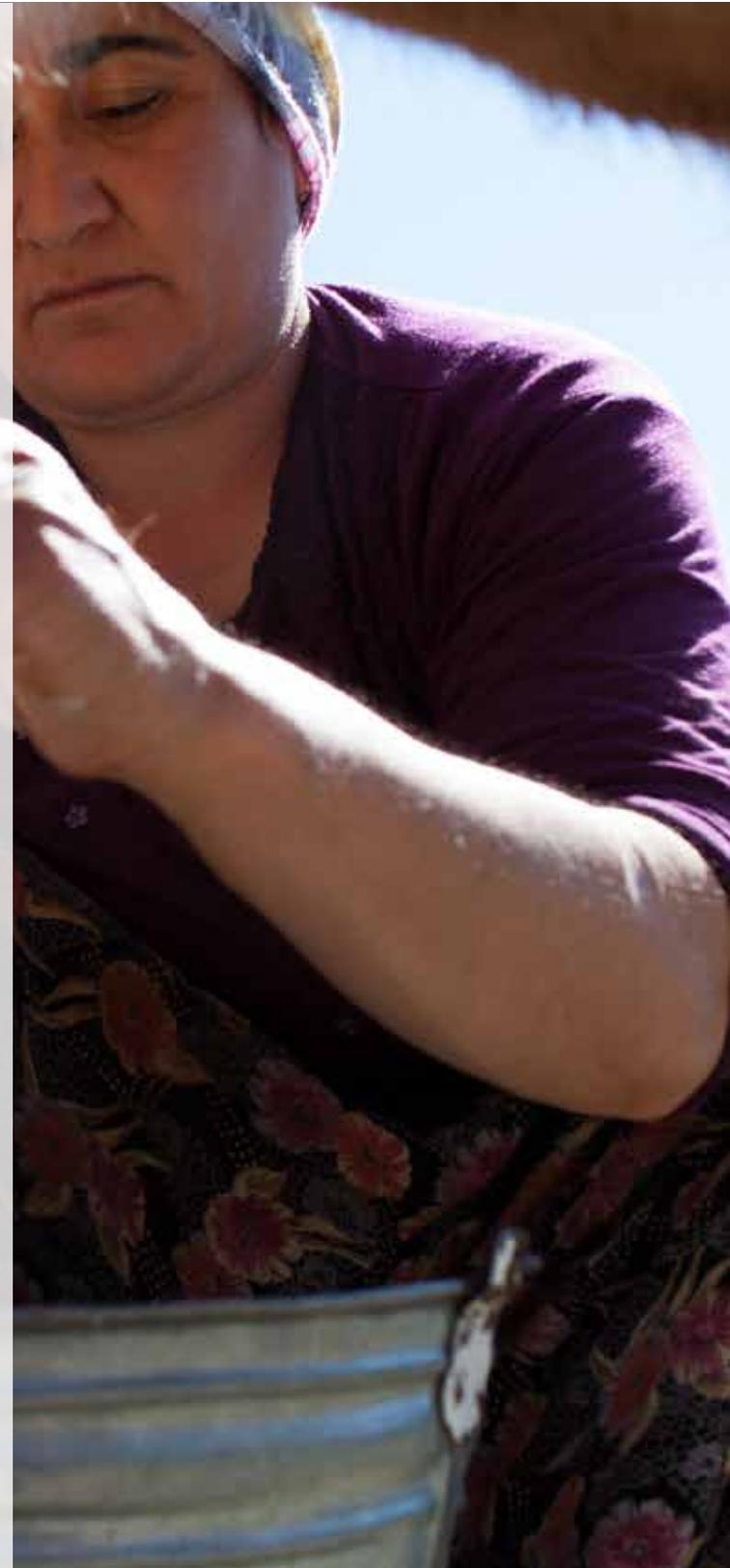
# Balyolu's Exclusive Photo Expedition

## A Snap Shot!

Dates:	7 June - 15 June
Costs:	\$3,100 (no single supplement)
Start & End Point:	Kars, Turkey
Trip Instructor:	Professional Photographer, David Hagerman
Trip Coordinator:	National Geographic Young Explorer, Cat Jaffee
Trip Level:	For beginner to advanced photographers
Number of Guests:	6 per trip

### Trip Includes:

- One-on-one daily photo workshops and review sessions with David.
- A tour of the region's most dramatic landscapes, architecture, culture, and people.
- A combination of village home-stays and boutique hotels.
- Full travel services (airport pick ups, hotels, food, guides, translations) offered by our local partner TURSAB travel company Sınır Seyahat as well as professional local Kokart certified guides.
- Beekeeping, cheese making, bread baking, plant foraging and other culinary experiences unique to this region.
- Memorable nature treks to some of the region's secret castles and the celebrated ruins of a Silk Road capital- Ani.
- Social good reinvested back into the community through using your booking fee to support local artisans.





## Meet Your Teacher: David Hagerman

David Hagerman is a professional editorial and commercial photographer based in Malaysia, who splits his time between Asia and Turkey. He began making photographs 25 years ago and has been shooting professionally since 2005. David specializes in food, travel and street photography and portraiture. His images excel at capturing food and people in their cultural context.

David is on the masthead as a Contributing Photographer at Travel+Leisure Southeast Asia and photographs often for the New York Times Travel Section, Saveur, SBS Feast (Australia) and Wall Street Journal Asia. His photographs have also appeared in the International Herald Tribune, Afar, Travel+Leisure and Food & Wine the Chicago Tribune. He spent two months documenting Chiang Mai's historic Gat Luang neighborhood for a forthcoming book and is currently photographing a book on the foods of Turkey's eastern regions. For the last three years he has been conducting private photography workshops in Kuala Lumpur, Penang and Chiang Mai.

Last June David spent several weeks photographing in Balyolu country:

"Whether you're taking in the ruins at Ani, on trail or in a village, there's always something photogenic around the corner. Stunning landscapes, phenomenal light and fantastic people come together to make the Balyolu experience very special.

"I am excited to partner with Balyolu; our expeditions will give you unique and unrivaled access to locations and people, to the details of daily life. In short, we'll place you in the types of situations that lead to one-of-a-kind images. Throughout the week we'll review your work and talk about ways to refine your techniques. Balyolu and I aim to help you grow as a photographer while you experience eastern Turkey's legendary hospitality."

All photos in this brochure were taken by David on Balyolu's first trip in 2012.

# Itineraries: the Photography Tour

Day 1: Arrival, hotel check-in. We'll meet for dinner and talk about the week ahead.

Day 2: During an early morning shoot in historic Kars city we'll focus on the city's unique architecture and street life. Expect late 19th-early 20th century Baltic-style basalt structures, a fort dramatically perched on a hillside, activity around the market and tea houses. A short workshop on portraiture and using available light will be followed by one-on-one sessions with each participant to review the morning's images (and, if they like, any past images) and talk about individual goals for the week. After lunch we'll drive to the incredible medieval Armenian city of Ani, where we'll wander and photograph through sunset. Expect a dramatic setting with ruins perched over a river valley and plateaus, and wide-open vistas under an expansive eastern Turkish sky.

Day 3: We're out very early, driving a bit out of the city, to capture herders and nomadic beekeepers in golden early light. This will give us a chance to work on getting comfortable photographing people, fast-moving subjects like livestock and bees and landscapes. We'll return to Kars city mid-morning, pack and hit the road for the drive to Şavşat, a small village small-scale farmers boasting a spectacular setting set high in the lush green hills of Ardahan province, where we will eat dinner and spend the night. On the way we'll stop for lunch and to photograph compelling landscapes, sites etc. After arriving at Şavşat mid-afternoon we'll take advantage of our excellent access to capture moments of village life as the day wanes. Expect characteristic regional architecture (timber houses) and ever-changing light. We'll hike herding routes to photograph cow herders returning for the day.

Day 4: We'll rise early with the village to photograph the sunrise and all facets of the morning routines, from baking bread to milking cows and heading out to pasture with the livestock. After a hearty village breakfast we'll rendezvous with a Şavşat beekeeper to work on detail shots and photographing the honey-making process. Following lunch we'll get back on the road for a drive through breathtaking area valleys where we'll work on nature photography, capturing shadows and light in deep forests and wild meadows as sunset approaches. After dinner, one-on-one reviews of images.



## Itineraries: the Photography Tour

Day 5: Sleep in this morning, if you like, or liaise with Dave for more one-on-one image reviews or question-and-answer. At mid-morning we'll leave for Ardanuç, where we'll climb to the ancient ruins of a castle spectacularly set on a rocky outcropping set over a valley. After lunch we'll continue on to yaylas, collections of rustic (stone or timber) dwellings set at high altitudes that are used by villagers as summer residences and grazing areas for their livestock. We'll meet Turkish cowboys on horseback AND BUTCHERS! in a setting that is a photographer's dream: rough-hewn structures set on an emerald plateau dotted with wildflowers and patches of snow, all beneath a high-altitude turquoise sky. That evening, dependent on weather, we will attempt a star-light evening shoot, attempting to capture this dramatic setting by night.

Day 6: We'll rise early to work on story-telling, photographing the kaşarlı cheese making process. There will be more opportunities to shoot general village life and beekeeping. After lunch we head back to Kars, where you can rest up or join optional activities including a visit to a hamam (traditional Turkish sauna) or a tasting tour of Kars' many cheese and honey shops. Late in the afternoon you'll liaise with Dave for one-on-one reviews and to select images to share with the group during a get-together on our last day. We'll follow with drinks and dinner.

Day 7: We have an easy morning in Kars, to eat breakfast, review photographs, and even submit a few of your favorites for printing. Then we will head to the lakes - Çıldır and Kuyucuk - for photographing birds, wildlife, and an optional hike to a castle. After spending a beautiful day by the water, we will return to Kars, share with each other our best shots from the week, and celebrate your work with drinks and dinner.

Day 8: Departure.

# What To Pack

From David: I pack with the idea that the last thing I want to think about is equipment. To me that means I want to know all the functions of my camera and have redundancy in case something stops working. There will be NO camera stores nearby and the expedition will have little or no back up available so plan on bringing with you what you need. Below are my suggestions.

- Dslr and an optional back up camera and chargers.
- Extra battery(s) – Power will be available everywhere we stay. Plan on having a full day's power supply before heading out each day.
- Memory cards – 50gb of flash storage (CF or SD cards depending on your camera). Expect to download your images each night to a hard drive(s).
- Camera manual – Cameras can be complicated. Bring the manual just in case something unexpected happens or you want to experiment with new settings.
- Filters – I generally carry a .6 neutral density graduated filter and a polarizing filter.
- Tripod – Essential in my book for sunrise/sunset shots and general low light /night photography. Bring a tripod that is sturdy enough to support your camera but light.
- Bag – Make sure that your bag is something that you are comfortable carrying for 4-5 hours at a time. There will be some hiking so a backpack is more comfortable .
- Laptop w/photo processing software – Photoshop, Lightroom, Aperture, Photo-mechanic. Don't forget Charger for laptop
- External drive(s) – 500gb X's 2 – I back up all my shots on two drives every day and would encourage you to do the same.
- Card reader

Notes : Buying new equipment for your trip is fine, but make sure you have some time prior to the trip to get familiar with it and work out any bugs. We want to be prepared to get to the best spots on foot. Staying light and mobile is key to getting those great shots. Turkey is 220v 50hz. Chargers will work in 110/220v 50/60hz. Plugs are C & F types. You should bring 2 adapters with you if your devices use something other than a C or F type plug.

## Reviews on Balyolu Adventures

*"Close to the borders with Georgia and Armenia, the area around Kars is known for its cold winters (see Orhan Pamuk's tense, dream-like novel Snow - in Turkish, Kar, the word for snow) but also for its natural beauty and its honey. Balyolu, a community-based tour company set up by NGO entrepreneur Cat Jaffee, takes you on an eight-day rural tour along the Honey Road that promises village stays, soaring mountain views, abandoned churches at Ani, and an insight into the lives of the women who harvest the region's gorgeous organic honeys. Your fees fund precious new opportunities for local communities." - the Guardian*

*"Cat Jaffee who started this program who is the Nat Geo grantee even wants to bring people there on location - creating eco honey tours...there is still a lot of small beekeepers in this area but they are not sure if they can survive because they are struggling to market their honey, but if we can bring tourism in, it can be a big boost to the economy, make a reason for them to have the honey. It's a good program, great for the people of turkey, and overall for the bee population, this is important to keep the bees alive in turkey, and you can do that if you go take the honey road tour." - Boyd Matson, National Geographic Weekend*

*"Every place I go from now on I'll be looking for bees, looking for honey, because it was really an eye opening experience for me." - David Hagerman, 2012 Guest*

*"All across Turkey are people living this way and you never get to see them as an average tourist. You never really get to go into a village and to be able to interact with them and to be able to break bread with them - I think that, to me, is the most important thing. It's the biggest difference about the Balyolu tour." Robyn Eckhart, 2012 Guest*

*"I read a lot of guide books before I came here. I looked up stuff on the internet and so many of them are like "why would you go to Kars? There's nothing out there. There's no tourism, people don't speak as much English. There's not a place for travelers there." And then after one week, not even, how could I go anywhere else? Obviously this is one of the most beautiful regions of Turkey." - Lieschen Gargano, 2012 Guest*

## For All of Our Trips

**Participant Requirements:** Nothing about Balyolu is typical. Our adventures are active, interactive, and rural. The Balyolu traveler is here because they want to learn about food, village lifestyles and the rich traditions of Turkey's Northeast. Our guests stay with families 50% of our trips, sharing a bathroom with their hosts and living in a rural village home. Our villagers speak limited English, so our guests are open minded about people from other cultures, and excited to learn and interact with true locals.

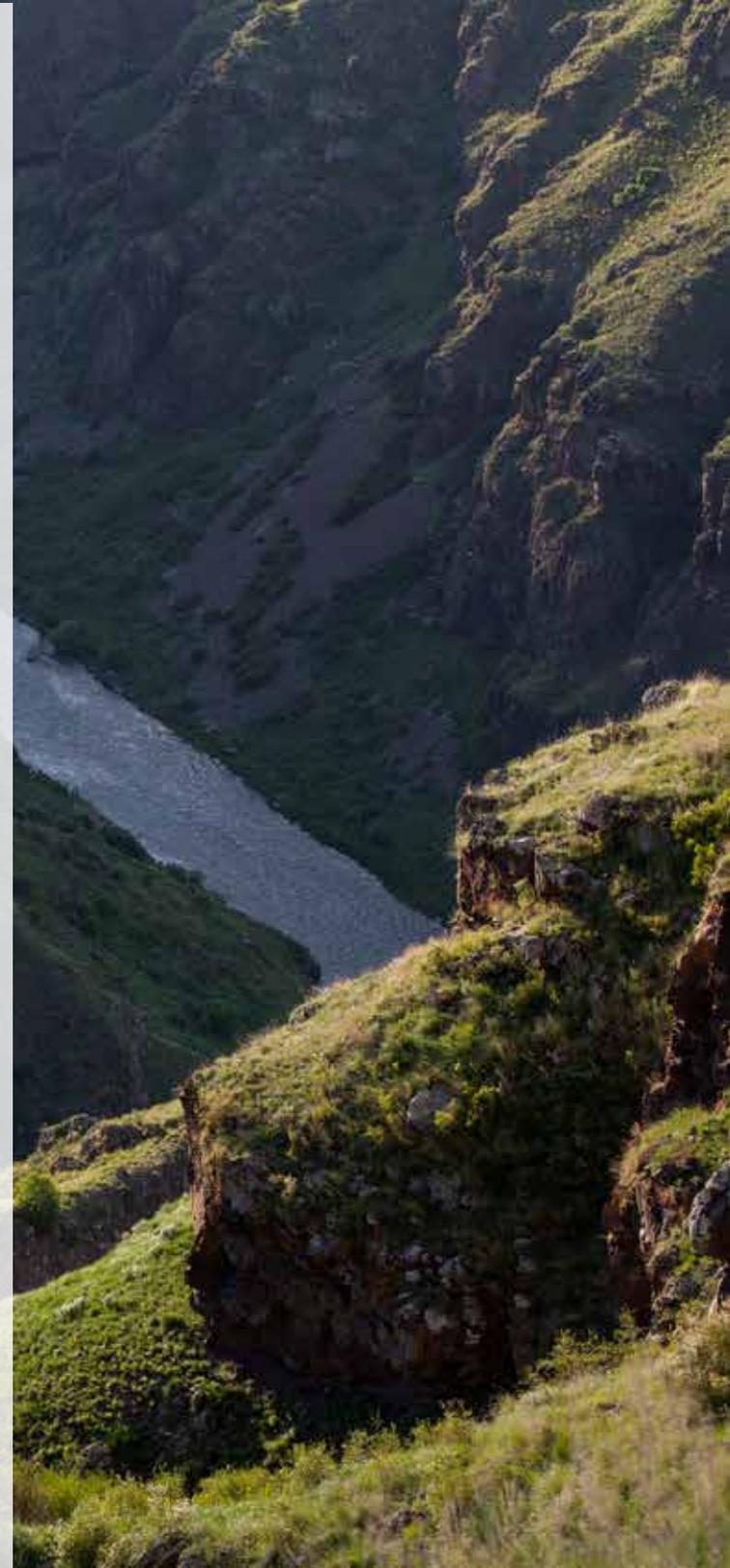
**Clothing and Gear:** Sunglasses Sun hat Light gloves and hat (for evenings), Warm fleece and layers, Hiking clothes (less cotton is better, short/long sleeves, shorts/pants everything quick drying, laundry is optional on longer trips), 1 Liter water container. Sunscreen, Water-proof hiking/trekking shoes (that you have previously broken in), Rain gear , Quick dry socks, Toiletries, Small hiking pack, Journal, Camera\* (for photo trips see unique packing list). Optional: Small Turkish Dictionary, optional "Gifts" (ex: shells, small containers of hot sauce, honey, maple syrup, photos, something local about where you are from that you can talk about) small binoculars.

**Weather:** Weather shifts dramatically. Days can range between 80-30 F with bright sun, fog, rain, and cold all as weather possibilities. This is mountain weather, so plan accordingly, and be ready to wear layers depending on the movements of the clouds.

**Price includes:** Everything from the start to the end point in Kars is included (transportation, guides, hotels, accommodations, food, tastings, workshops, lectures), consulting of side trips before and after the tours, 24 hour support.

**Price doesn't include:** Merchandise gifts, transportation to Turkey and starting point.

In addition to our photo expedition, Balyolu offers 4 day tasting journeys (\$1,000) and an 8 day honey expedition (\$2,500). To learn more and book now, contact us today - [balyolu@gmail.com](mailto:balyolu@gmail.com)





## Why Balyolu?

We have a dream - to create an experience-based travel model that connects people from the most rural parts of Turkey to travelers from across the world through traditional food products and life-changing rural experiences.

We want to make lives fuller - and we are starting with the food we eat, the way we travel, and how we live.

We are young, dynamic, and we want to be the kind of adventure you choose - not because you want to "check-out" during your vacation - but because you want to become connected to a new perspective and way of life.

## Come Join Us!

Balyolu: The Honey Road

<http://www.balyolu.com>

Facebook: Balyolu

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