

The background image is a faded, artistic rendering of a horse-drawn sleigh race. It shows several teams of horses pulling sleighs across a flat, open landscape. The sleighs are decorated with various patterns and colors, including red and green. A large Turkish flag is visible on one of the sleighs. The overall tone is muted and historical.

ATLI KIZAK

THE ANCIENT TURKISH HERITAGE OF HORSE-DRAWN SLEIGH RACING

HISTORICAL ROOTS



Central Asian Origins

Rooted in the ancient lifestyles of Turkic tribes, the horse sleigh was essential for survival in the harsh winters of Central Asia before moving to Anatolia.



Military Necessity

Originally used for transportation, scouting, and rapid defense in snowy terrains, the sleigh evolved from a logistical tool into a competitive display of skill.



Cultural Synthesis

Over centuries, the sport integrated with local Anatolian traditions, finding its heart in the eastern provinces of modern-day Turkey.

LAKE ÇILDIR: THE ARENA

Kars & Ardahan

The crown jewel of Atılı Kızak is Lake Çıldır. As it freezes over 15cm thick in winter, it transforms into a natural racetrack where the sound of hooves and bells echoes across the ice.

This region, along with Erzurum and Ardahan, preserves the authentic spirit of the sport, blending competitive racing with folk dances and local hospitality.



| EQUIPMENT & HORSES

The Traditional Kızak

Crafted typically from oak or poplar wood, the sleighs are designed for both speed and durability on snow. They are often vibrantly decorated with traditional Turkish motifs.

Anatolian Breeds

The horses used are specifically chosen for their resistance to extreme cold and their explosive power in deep snow. Breeds like the Rahvan and Anatolian native horses are preferred for their unique gait and endurance.

 Anatolian horses in snow

ELITE SPORTING CLUBS

Şah Dadaş Club

Based in Erzurum, this club is a powerhouse of the sport, known for training many of the nation's top athletes and owning legendary champion horses.

Üç Hilal Club

A consistent top performer in the Turkish Championship, focusing on the preservation of the single-horse sleigh racing technique.

Ovacık Atlıspor

Renowned for their disciplined training and strong showing in regional tournaments across the Eastern Anatolia region.

Governed by the Turkish Traditional Equestrian Sports Federation (TGASDF).

LEGENDS OF THE TRACK



Key Sporting Figures

Ahmet Çalışkan: A premier champion representing the Üç Hilal Club, famous for his victory with the horse 'Karaçocuk'.

Mustafa Özpınar: A pioneer athlete who brought glory to the Bursa Rahvan Riding Club on the national stage.

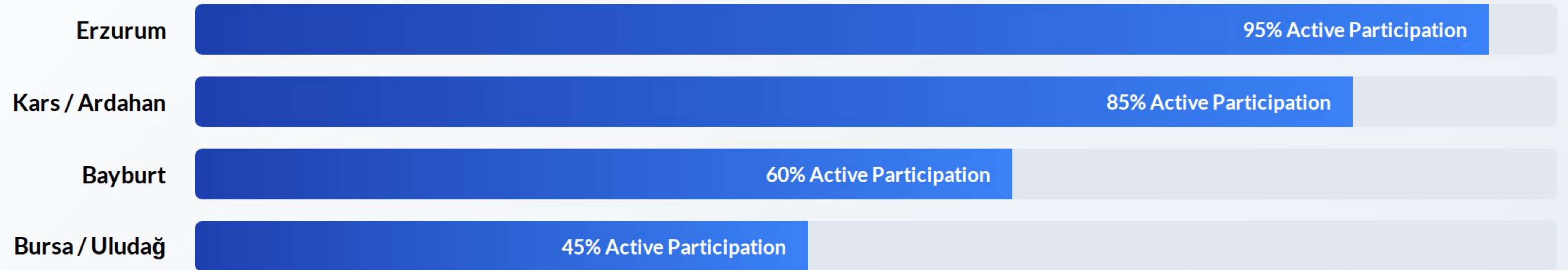
'Dadaş' (The Legend): A world-class champion horse who, despite losing one eye, secured 6 national titles, becoming a symbol of resilience.

COMPETITION FORMAT

-  **Track Length:** Official races are typically held on 400m or 800m straight tracks covered in deep snow or ice.
-  **Timed Heats:** Sleighs are released individually to ensure safety, with the fastest time across the finish line determining the winner.
-  **Attire:** Riders must wear traditional regional costumes, adding a layer of cultural storytelling to the athletic feat.
-  **Safety First:** Strict protocols are in place to ensure the health of the horses and the stability of the sleighs on slippery surfaces.



GROWING NATIONAL PARTICIPATION



Participation rates indicate a resurgence of interest in traditional winter sports beyond the historical heartlands, reaching major winter tourism centers.

TOURISM & FUTURE



Preserving Identity

Atlı Kızak is more than just a sport; it is a vital part of Turkey's cultural tourism strategy. Winter festivals on Lake Çıldır attract thousands of international visitors annually.

Modern Vision

The Turkish Traditional Equestrian Sports Federation (TGASDF) is working to standardize rules further and introduce the sport to international winter multi-sport events, ensuring this legacy survives for generations.

Questions?

Thank you for exploring the snowy trails of Anatolia with us.

TGASDF | www.tgasdf.gov.tr

Traditional Turkish Heritage Series

IMAGE SOURCES



<https://storage.googleapis.com/goturkiyev2-storage/Root/goturkiye/Keep%20Abreast%20of%20the%20Forzen%20Winter%20mobile.webp>

Source: goturkiye.com



x-raw-image:///7a331d40b7725689f2810c21aba2d2110d7e046de5b9cd6661e78bb1fdececff

Source: docs.eaap.org



<https://travelatelier.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/cirit-jereed-turkey-traditional-equestrian-sport.jpg>

Source: travelatelier.com



<https://i.ytimg.com/vi/fp7GpSV2a2A/maxresdefault.jpg>

Source: www.youtube.com



https://useventing.com/_next/image?url=https%3A%2F%2Fuseventingstorage.blob.core.windows.net%2Fassets%2Fimages%2F_AUTOxAUTO_largeHorizontal_center-center_none%2FHolzrichter_RandolphMacon_Intercollegiate_SJ-1.jpg&w=3840&q=75

Source: useventing.com



<https://images.squarespace-cdn.com/content/v1/5a2915cebff20052a88638f2/ceb45a22-fd77-45b9-a120-71b7b6912e48/horse-sleighs-on-lake-cildir-in-kars-turkey-title-image.jpg>

Source: www.moganddogtravels.com