



SARIKAMIŞ TREKKING ROUTES

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Allahuekber Monumental Sculpture in
memory of Martyrs of Sankamiş

PRESENTATION

The earth is undergoing perhaps one of its fastest and most dazzling eras with regard to economic and social changes. Rapid developments in science and technology made the countries more connected and allowed the emerging information to rapidly spread and be utilized. One of the most efficient methods developed recently for innovative and sustainable development is the conception of local development.

Within the frame of this new approach, today "Regional Development Agencies" operate in several countries. The objective of these organizations is to invigorate the region's economy through the policies developed taking into account the potentials, advantages, problems, opportunities of regions as well as the relevant threats in order to enhance the local competitiveness and contribute to the alleviation of developmental inequalities amongst regions..

Operating in TRA2 Level II Region which covers Ağrı, Ardahan, Iğdır and Kars, our Agency aims to locate the resources and opportunities, thus enhance the socio-cultural and economic welfare of the people in accordance with regional development objectives, as well as allowing region's beauties to be shared with country and world publics.

This guide constitutes the first leg of all efforts that principally aim at fully exploiting the eco-tourism potential of the region in such a way to encompass such disciplines as camping, mountaineering, trekking, mountain biking and cultural and religious tourism to create a serenity and quietness environment for today's people, who are constantly in search of self and his inner world, observing the exploitation-protection balance of the multi-cultural social mosaic and natural beauties and historical structures that carry the traces of ancient cultures while preserving their identities in unity and also making contribution to the socio-economic development of local community through the travel guide services offered to outsiders by local community after receiving the necessary basic training and knowledge and family owned enterprises.

In this respect, this guide book is prepared to provide historical, cultural and natural beauties of our region to the service of humanity without any damage to the nature and I hereby want to thank to anyone who made contributions with the opinions, suggestions and criticism during the work and especially Mr. Ersin DEMİREL for his self sacrificing efforts and the Sarıkamış District Governorate and Sarıkamış Municipality which provided monetary and moral supports to us during printing of direction signs, besides Çamkar and Ce-mar Sarıkamış Toprak Hotel and their personnel for their contribution and hospitality during the works and KuzeyDoğa Society which shared the scientific studies made related with the nature of Sarıkamış and their opinions and thanks to Uğur ÇALIŞKAN, Head of Research, Strategy Development and Planning Department and tourism coordinator of our agency for his self-sacrificing efforts and contributions.

Dr. Hüseyin TUTAR
General Secretary
SERHAT Development Agency (SERKA)



Aladağ from lower slopes of Bayraktepe





Winter in the Centre of Sarıkamış

INTRODUCTION

Can chilly winter weather present a nice scene? Certainly, you will find the answer in Sarıkamış district of Kars. Sarıkamış, one of the highest locations of our country with altitude of 2100 meters takes on snow-white panorama in October. The green feature of the yellow pine forests surrounding the mountains becomes united with white blanket of snow. Pine trees looks like giant scarecrows with the downward needle leaves and appearances turning white. Skiers with colorful clothes slip away through the play of light hidden behind leaves. So to say, with cheerful screams, skiers create a colorful fashion show by blowing snow powders away.

The electricity and telephone poles lying through the whiteness in naked plateaus at the foothills of mountains serve as a guide of roads for car drivers. The only signs of life are houses with smoking chimneys in the deserted villages. Horse-sleighs suddenly appear like a ghost within endless rest. Villagers go for wood-cutting, in the escort of their dogs, by the first lights of the new day right after the dawn. Then every morning, the Eastern Express Train enters the station giving out its long siren that painfully tears apart the resident silence and waking up the entire district from its warm and comfortable sleep. Inhabitants of the city put their skis on their feet even if they are to get out for buying basic amenities from the neighbouring grocery store. With the tilting of the sun above the sky throughout the day, the blunt peaks of the mountains turn into dark purple from white. Nights fall earlier, in Sarıkamış.

Later, the days of walking on streets away from roofs with every precaution taken to avoid any accidental falls of lengthy icicles formed on roof-tops eventually come to an end. Then arrives spring with all its joy. Now the sun rises earlier with a smile that warms the hearts above the skies of Sarıkamış. The wilderness is suddenly crowned by flamboyant flowers, streams start to run flushed with waters of molten ice coming from mountains and the life takes an entirely different stance in its progress, with verdant yellow pine forests.

Sarıkamış, the wonderland covered with snow during the most of the year, is one of the most important ski centers of our country. The town has the potential of fully utilising the advantages of winter sports for a 5 months period. However, it has a real potential for tourism with its untouched landscape, historical places, rich cultural identity, local cuisine, authentic traditions and original values. This guidebook intends to diversify the existing tourism activities of Sarıkamış with trekking, cycling, scenic vehicle road and jeep safari routes and spreading them over twelve months of the year so as to clear the path of this town towards becoming one of the regional development dynamics.





ABOUT SARIKAMIŞ

Sarıkamiş lying on high plateaus with altitude of 1500-3000 meters is located in southwest of Kars. Sarıkamiş at the end of Kars Flatland surrounded by Allahuekber, Soğanlı and Güllü mountains is located at transition point from Anatolia to Caucasus (at Transcaucasia region). The residential area bearing all geographical features of Eastern Anatolia Region is surrounded by Selim and Şenkaya (Erzurum) at north, Horasan (Erzurum) and Eleşkirt (Ağrı) at south, Selim and Kağızman at east and Şenkaya and Horasan at west.

Mountains surrounding the district comprise deep valleys and high plateaus. These mountains evoking admiration of human with great peaks may be listed as Aladağ (3138 m.), Süphan (Sipkaç) (2909 m.), Balıklı (2835 m.), Köseadağ (2599 m.), Bayraktepe (Cıbiltepe) (2634 m.) and Soğanlı (2849 m.). Most of the steep mountains where small lakes shine at peaks covered in snow almost throughout the whole year have a naked land structure.

In the geography where such heights comprise deep corridors, there are valleys as Keklik, Komdere and İnkaya. These deep valleys greened by yellow pine forests almost identified with the name of Sarıkamiş are known with beauty of landscape. Major rivers flowing through mountains are Aras, Kars, Keklik, Zivin and Komdere. The regime of these rivers where ice cubes float on them in winter is irregular. Sarıkamiş rivers getting ill-tempered with melting snow in spring flow with substantially low flow rate in summer. There is only one exclusion; Aras, which flows through the district borders and is one of the most important rivers of our country, does not allow passing to opposite shore without bridges with its crazy flow rate.

The most important lake of Sarıkamiş residential area is Asboğa Lake located between Çatak and Asboğa villages. The lake, surrounded by a naked land cover and farms, gets frozen in winter months. The works for bringing in Asboğa Lake shining with its glamorous beauty in tourism are currently ongoing. We want to note that there is also Büyük and Küçük Turna lakes drying up in summer near the central of Sarıkamiş district. The only remarkable waterfall of the region is in Keklik Valley. Keklik Waterfall falling down valley from an altitude of about 30-35 meter creates an impressive visual feast with its silhouette flowing through rocks. It is quite hard to walk up to the small lake created by the waterfall due to hard land conditions. You can access to the landscape point where you will have a view of the waterfall from top by following the left-turning forest road for 300 meters immediately after passing the salmon facilities at Sarıkamiş Karakurt road. You may take a photograph of Keklik Valley lying before you with the waterfall at right of you at the yard you arrive.

Farms and plateaus comprise most of such high and naked steps while yellow pine forests lay on the other land with their dignified appearance. The main reason of maintenance of transhumance in the region is that the most important source of living of the local people is animal breeding. Buildings are available in some part of plateaus where nomadism with tent accommodation is seen commonly. These low and small residential areas in the form of simple shelters constructed from stones are called as "kom" by the local people. The major plateaus scattering at the foothills of Aladağ and slopes of Soğanlı Mountain are Şehitemin, Çatak, Yağbasan, Karahamza, Yolgeçmez and Yenigazi.

Yellow pine forests spreading throughout the Sarıkamış district creates difference in all respects in the geography of the region. These areas, which make naked plateaus green, prevent hazard of avalanche in the region with heavy winters and comprises the largest forest of the province of Kars, were registered as natural archeological site in 1991 and then were announced as Sarıkamış Allahuekber Mountains National Park in 2004.



Sunflower



YELLOW PINE (*Pinus sylvestris*)

This tree from the pinaceae family of coniferous trees is seen in Caucasus, Siberia and Northern Asia especially in Europe continent. In Turkey, it mostly roots in high parts of Northern Anatolia and it is also seen south slopes of western and northern Black Sea, Sarıkamış in Eastern Anatolia, in Southern Marmara, Yozgat, Sivas, Kırşehir and Kayseri and such regions. Yellow pine that is a high altitude mountain tree and is resistant to cold climates and winds takes its name from the color of body shell. The length of the tree growing in sandy and clayed land may exceed 40 meters in some places.

Sarıkamış located in Eastern Anatolia region has a harsh climate. In the district where summers are cool, especially winter months are quite chilly. In the long lasting winter, temperature sometimes decreases until -40 degree and snow depth reaches to 2 meters in some places. In this residential area that is one of the regions exposed to first snow in our country; snow covers the ground for about 5 months. Natural conditions affect material life style and sledding and ski are preferred rather than automobile for transportation in winter.

Sarıkamış having an economy based on agriculture, animal breeding, forestry and tourism, has gotten its share from migration to the great extent as many regions of Anatolia. In the district, where industry is not developed much, agriculture is based on cereals and people get engaged in small cattle and bovine animal breeding in common. Another economic potential of Sarıkamış is tourism. Especially, the dynamism brought by winter tourism provides a significant monetary gain for local people.







LOCAL CUISINE

Sarıkamiş region hosting different ethnicities for centuries has a rich cuisine culture. Naturally, reflection of an integrated ethnic mosaic on table creates unforgettable tastes. The most famous dishes of Sarıkamiş local cuisine that first come to mind are the spoon salad (made with tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, onions and eleven different types of spices), kusekmegi soup (made with chickweed, green lentils, minced meat, bulgur and butter), casir (*Hippomarathrum microcarpum* spp. – a naturally grown plant that contains vitamin C in high concentrations, denoted for curing diabetes and consumed locally in pickle form after being brined, during winter), tulug cheese (made with sheep's or goat's milk and wet filled in sacs of lamb and goat leather), cecil (dried form of tulug cheese), velibag (a different form of traditional pancake of Turkey known as gozleme, made with potatoes, dill and parsley), hunk (fried dough with stinging nettle infill prepared as dipped in hot oil in a pan), stinger soup, hyngel (Turkish ravioli with onions), noodles with lentils and potatoes, umaç halva and apple dolma.

As in the generality of Kars province, goose meat also has an important place in the culinary culture of Sarıkamiş district. This home-bred flock species known to live for approximately 60 years is fed until the end of first year after birth. When the first snow falls, the mature members of this bird species are slaughtered and stuffed. Then the stuffed meats are marinated and hung on racks outdoors until consumption where climate conditions serve as natural refrigerator during winter. When they are desired to be served on tables, they are washed thoroughly and cooked after removal of all salty content. Consumed as an indispensable nutrient for centuries, due to the energy revealed by its fatty composition, goose meat is grilled in a special stove called tandoori giving off its fats gradually in the form of drips that fall in an underlying bulgur (cracked wheat).



HANDICRAFTS

The most noteworthy element of Sarıkamış handicrafts is carpet and rug weaving industry, which is reflection of a tradition continuing for centuries. Some of the certain examples with different techniques and patterns such as kilim, cerim, zili, sumac and cigi kilim are increasingly endangered. The world famous carpets of Kars province have their origins from the long established transhumance and breeding traditions. Weaving, a practice that is strived to be survived by the District Government through a variety of course programs, not only provides an added value to the region in terms of economy, but also creates employment opportunities for the local community.

The obsidian ore found in the Keklik River Valley, which is located between Sehitemin and Mescitli Villages of Sarıkamış District, constitutes another economic strength for the region. This valuable ore, which had been used in paving asphalt roads until the recent years, is nowadays used by health and souvenir sectors. Thermal spa centres have started to make effective use of the physical and psychological effects of obsidian due to its solar energy drawing properties on human body. Furthermore, it is used as a raw material in jewelry making, thanks to its visual aesthetics and translucent optical properties. A variety of courses and workshops opened at the city center so it can be stated that a new industry is provided.



Woven Carpets of Kars

OBSIDIAN

Obsidian, a naturally occurring volcanic glass, is produced when lava rapidly gets frozen as not allowing crystallization. The most important factor that helps obsidian transformation into glass is the fast cool-down process thanks to its silicon dioxide content. Used as a cutting tool in old ages due to its nature, obsidian today is rather attached to the cutting ends of surgical scalpel blades by making use of its such nature. It is found in green and black colours in nature, this valuable mineral-like matter is known to have been used as a blade in sacrificial rituals of ancient Mayan and Aztec civilisations of Central America.



HISTORY

Sarıkamış has an immense historical background and rich cultural accumulations. Doubtlessly the most important reason of this is that region have been inhabited by different tribes throughout the historical timeline and it has unique geographic allocation along the route connecting Anatolian peninsula to Caucasus Mountains. With a historical background dating back to 9000 BC, the first traces of life in the region roots back to Chalcolithic Period and the early Bronze Age. Later on, the territory is observed to possess the early traces of such ancient civilizations as Khuri, Urartu, Scythians, Med, Parth and Armenian Kingdom of Baghrad, Romans, Sassanians and Byzantine. As of 1048 AD, Turkish domination started over the territory by Saltukid Emirate initially and then Seljuk, Karakoyunlu and Akkoyunlu States and the territory was eventually brought under the Ottoman rule subsequently after the execution of the Treaty of Zuhab between Safavid Empire and Ottoman Empire in 1639 AD. Invaded by Russians in the 19th cc., the territory came under the domination of Turks once again after the Soviet revolution in 1917.

Sarıkamış has a city texture massively populated by Russian architectural structures as a natural outcome of its being held under invasion



of Russians for 40 years after the Russian-Ottoman Battle of 1877-1878 AD. The best examples of this dominance can be observed in buildings once used as barracks and garrison headquarters. The shining star of Sarıkamış city center is undoubtedly the historical place known as Katarina's Hunting Lodge. Presumed to have been built by the command of Tsar Nicola 2nd between 1890 and 1914 AD, the lodge is located at northwest of the town. The most notable aspect of the building, which was originally designed as a wooden structure entirely in a rectangular form, is that it was built completely by the nail-free wooden brick interlocking technique. It is entered into this pretentious building, which was once used for balls and big feasts, passing through a bi-pillared main gate. The lodge brought under strict conservation measures by the Council for the Conservation of Cultural. Opposite to this beautiful building the "Traction Workshops", once used to repair trains and fix rails is located.

One of the most charming buildings of the city center is the Burnt Church (The "Burnt" Church), built in 1907 in Baltic architectural style. With exterior walls embellished in fake columns and arch decorations, the building has three entrance gates. This historical artefact, which served as warehouse building, community home and movie theatre during later periods, has had suffered a major fire in 1970s. It was then repaired and is now in use as a mosque named Kazım Karabekir.

There are many churches, castles, in-rock settlement units and rock-cut tombs spread over the boundaries of Sarıkamış District. The district located on the route of Erzurum-Horasan-Sarıkamış-Kotanlı-Kars, which has been used since the ancient times, hosts a variety of castles built to serve for purposes of protection, defence and surveillance. Micingirt, Visan, Zivin, Hamamlı (Kız), Keklikdere (Kızlar) and Köroğlu are the most significant examples of these castles survived to the present day. The Yağbasan Castle located at 5 km west of Karapınar Village located 8 kilometers southwest of Sarıkamış city center and Kırankaya (a.k.a. Asboğa) Castle located on the Kars – Sarıkamış ring road are the other archaeological sites of the region. The Castle of Micingirt built in the area where ancient Urartu settlement was in Village Inkaya draws much of the attention with all its grandeur. Overseeing the entire valley that extends between Çamkaya and Inkaya at a high rocky heap, this structure was built in a rectangular long and narrow shape. Utilised by citizens throughout the Byzantine, Seljuk, Saltukid and Ottoman eras, it was originally built by the command of Mansur Engin, the Sultan of Saltukids in 1232 AD. Inside the castle Urartian rock-cut tombs and a cistern is encountered, while there is a cupola at the hillside facing Inkaya Valley. Furthermore, there are rock-hewn settling units and cave-churches at the opposite side of Inkaya and in depths of its interior. The church lying in the heart of the cliffy valley, where you can also encounter chimney rock formations, is known as the Church of Girls (Kızlar Church) by the local people. With ochre wall icons partly faded, this temple is approximately 3 kilometers far from the castle.

Another castle that falls within the district boundaries is the Zivin Castle in Süngütaşı Village located on the former Erzurum motorway. Located 3 kilometers away from Karaorgan, the castle is positioned on a steep rocky hill. The majority of cut rubbles walls of this historical place are destroyed over time. Having a view of the railroad where Orient Express Train passes through, this castle has Urartian epitaphs carved on its building stones.



Kazım Karabekir Mosque
("The "Burnt" Church")

Located in Küpkale Hill locality at the foothillsof Keklik Creek near Kars-Erzurum motorway segment, Kızlar Castle rises in an area with a breath-taking landscape facing the peaks of Mount Aladag. The historical structure has a built-in church section and exciting apperance. Opposite the Castle Maiden, Hamamlı Kızkalesi is standing but it is almost entirely devastated

There are numerous churches and chapels in Sarıkamış, belonging to both early and late Christian periods. Most of them are built at strategic locations hidden in blind spots of nature, but still capable of controlling their surroundings, while others consist of the caves carved into rock material. According to various sources, there had been once seven churches in Sarıkamış.Church Alakilise in Şehitemin Village, which is named after Muhammet Emin martyred during the 93 war and another church lying on Sarıkamış-Iznos road have not much left to the present day because they are almost entirely collapsed.The relatively better ones include the church inside Keklik Valley at Kilise locality, the church inside the Castle of Maidens, the İznos Church facing Komdere Valley in the İznos military zone and the Küp (Cubic) Church located at the foothills of Bayraktepe, immediately opposite side of the Iznos Church and the church with numerous ancient tombs in its surrounding in Susuz Plateau of Karakurt town. Especially the Cubic Church is noteworthy for its interesting architectural form built of clay in one part and carved in rock in another part.

The second church which has the best conditions after Yanık Church in Sarıkamış is located in Karakurt village. This outstanding work with external walls standing still entirely waits for restoration and re-introduction in tourism. It is possible to see rock-cut settling units and chapels in the valleys of this region,which served as a settlement for humanity since the ancient times. You can take the photo of such historical places particularly located in Geyiktaş nearby Aras River between Komdere Valley and Karakurt- Kağızman locality.

In-Cave church-Inkaya Village





BATTLE OF SARIKAMIŞ

The tragic loss of the Ottoman-Russian war spread over Iran, Azerbaijan and Black Sea regions in 1914 is referred to as "Cataclysm of Sarikamiş" in history. Allahuekber Mountains and harsh winter conditions determined the outcome of Operation Sarikamiş, which was originally planned as a largescale encircling manoeuvre and assault aimed at annihilating the Russian army. The extremely severe physical conditions such as the prevalent freezing cold and lack of sufficient logistic support in combination with miscalculations and audacity of the senior officers in command at that time resulted in a tragedy where tens of thousands of soldiers perished.

The Allahuekber Mountains extend over a 40 kilometres long and 24 kilometres wide geography forming the borderline between Kars and Erzurum provinces. The highest peaks of these steep mountains, which encompass Selim, Şenkaya and Sarikamiş districts, include Tabyatepe Peak (2540 m.), Cırcırtepe Peak (2521 m.), Büyük Kumru Peak (2847 m.), Çembertepe Peak (2805 m.) and Allahuekber Peak (3120 m.). The territory almost entirely covered with arid and bald hilly contours accomodates surprising geographical formations, although it offers a wide sight of vision. Deep canyons lying through the hills which look as if juxtaposed to one another, abrupt corridors and straits where streams flow through make Allahuekber Mountains impassable especially during winter. The freezing cold caused by snowfalls, blizzards, hurricanes and storms that sometimes prevail over days generates climatic conditions well beyond the tolerance limits of human being capable of adapting fast to any condition.

The Battle of Sarikamiş started in this adverse atmosphere forced by these physical conditions. In fact the reason of the planned battle roots in Treaty of San Stefano of March 3, 1878 and the Treaty of Berlin dated July 13, 1878. During the Russian-Turkish War of 1877-1878, which was recorded in local history as the War of 93 although Veteran Warlord Ahmet Muhtar defeated the Russian Army, the eastern front fell as a result of defeats in other lines of Ottoman Army, in the aftermath of which, the aforesaid agreements were forcedly signed to leave Kars, Ardahan, Artvin and Batum territories under Russian control. On November 1, 1914, the Russian Armies charged an offensive towards Pasinler plain over Sarikamiş but had to retreat, after losing the battle of Köprüköy they fought against the Ottoman Army. When Russians set up a command base in Sarikamiş under the command of Tsar Nicola, the Sarikamiş Operation was initiated at the command Enver Pasha.

From this point forward, a mournful process started to progress fast and in the end, lead to the martyrization of more than 90 thousand soldiers. Mobilised in haste from Arab deserts into the Caucasus front with only sandals on their feet and summertime gears equipped, the troops suddenly found themselves in extremely cold winter conditions with temperatures decreasing to -45 Celsius degrees. When insufficient gears and and subsistence and

lack of logistic support caused by sheer quantities of artilleries and cavalry combined with such adverse conditions as starvation, plagues, sordidness and the dead of winter were added on to Enver Pasha's faulty decisions at command post (he insisted on implementing his plan despite the concerns and disagreement of Hasan Izzet Pasha, Commander of 3rd Ottoman Army and gave his command for attack on December 18 1914), thousands of people froze to death. In addition to those who lost their lives to the dead of winter before firing even a single bullet at the enemy, few soldiers left as survivors of that winter were disabled permanently with their limbs frostbitten. Other troopers turned out to be dead as a result of heat treatment administered by inhabitants of the nearby villages in good faith but without any knowledge. Even after all those years, it is still encountered with the skeletal remains of martyred soldiers on the foothills of Allahuekber Mountains and in the surrounding flatlands and farmlands. Today, there are several martyrdom erected in memory of this sad tragedy in Sarikamiş particularly and Selim District of Kars Province and Şenkaya district of Erzurum Province.



Allahuekber Monumental Sculpture in
memory of Martyrs of Sarikamiş

SARIKAMIŞ SKI CENTRE

Positioned on the foothills of Mt. Bayraktepe (Cibiltepe) with an overall height of 2634 meters, Sarıkamış Ski Centre serves ski lovers with its long ski-run, qualified accommodation facilities, natural yellow pine forests that prevent avalanche hazard, and coarse-grained crystal snow quality which is only peculiar to Alps and this region. Although a major part of the year consists of sunny days, the snow retains its original properties from the day it first falls. Having proudly registered its name in the list of top ski centres of the country recently, Sarıkamış holds ski championships every year. In addition to its suitability for Alpine skiing and cross-country skiing on surfaces covered with approximately 1-meter thick snow during the period between November 15 and April 15, this centre has also routes for ski touring and sled trips in place. Also there is a grand "Cross Country" ski-run with a total length of 5 kilometers, registered by the International Ski Federation (FIS)

The ski routes in Bayraktepe start from an altitude of 2200 meters and climb up to 2900 meters. The total length of the ski runs, which now counts to be nine in number together with the newly launched two, is 25 kilometers. The longest of ski runs with two stages is 3500 meters.



A view of Sarıkamış from Bayraktepe Hillside

There are five ski-runs from the peak till stage one and two more ski-runs running down from there. Additionally there are two other ski-runs extending from the peak to Karanlıkdere. Moreover, there is a 200-meter long snowboard route in this region. The 2400-meter long route in the first stage is reserved for use by ski schools for training beginners. The 2200-meter long second stage has four ski-runs, each having a different difficulty level. The Karanlıkdere ski run at 1610 meters has a 28% surface gradient. This route commonly referred to as "Crazy Run" by Sarıkamış people is only available for experienced skiers.

Access to the aforementioned ski-runs is provided via chairlifts capable of moving 2400 people in an hour. With each compartment designed with adequate space for 4 people, these computerised chairlifts having bottom-heating climb up in two stages in companion with the awesome landscape of yellow pine forests lying beneath. The first stage surrounded by pine forests is suitable for beginners due its low slope. For the second stage, you have to reach at the peak using the chairlift again. There are 4 ski-runs at the summit with a view of Mt. Allahuekber and Mt. Aladağ, and Sarıkamış settlement. Let's remind that there are cafes in both stages for a resting break.

The second skiing facility of Sarıkamış District is Osman Yüce Skiing and Camping Directorate situated in Çamurlu locality on the former Erzurum motorway. It is named after our national champion skier, who lost his life in a car accident in 1967. The facility is located at an altitude of 2100 meters and a 960-meter long route with means of chairlift reaching to the summit in five minutes.





Fall in Komdere Valley



WILDLIFE IN SARIKAMIŞ

Laying on the intersection of Caucasian and Iran-Anatolia warm lands, which constitute two of 34 important biological diversity areas in the world, Kars is regarded as one of the most valuable territories in our country with its location, altitude, wetlands, yellow pine forests, pasturelands and its positioning on the route of migratory birds.. Beside bird and plant diversity, it is also among important natural areas of our country in terms of big carnivores such as grizzly bear, wolf, fox and bobcat which are ecological indicators and effective species taking place on top of the food chain.

In our present day witnessing the gradual increase of urbanisation and destruction of nature, the habitats of big carnivorous predators that need wide areas to sustain their existence are destroyed and in return the number of those living creatures is decreasing increasingly. Therefore, the ecological services offered by these species in eliminating agricultural insects and pests yield no result. The territory has a great potential for ecotourism especially as the grizzly bears are observable easily in this area, , which is not known by local people and local administrations. It is not possible to provide genome-specific efficient protective measures at present and thenumber of these mammals tend to decline day by day for reasons such as poaching, baby-catching practices during spring, vehicular or train hit accidents.

Sarıkamiş is the only district that has a high forestland across the region. The district takes its name from Turkish word "sarıçam" that purports yellow pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) trees it accommodates within its boundaries. This is a rare tree species that naturally grow and live at altitudes above two thousand meters. Sarıkamiş is a unique district in Turkey for the height and size of its yellow pine forests.. There are hundreds of plant and animal species living on the geography, where this forest block is located.



Fox

The Wolf that was put in a Satellite Routing Device for the first time in Turkey



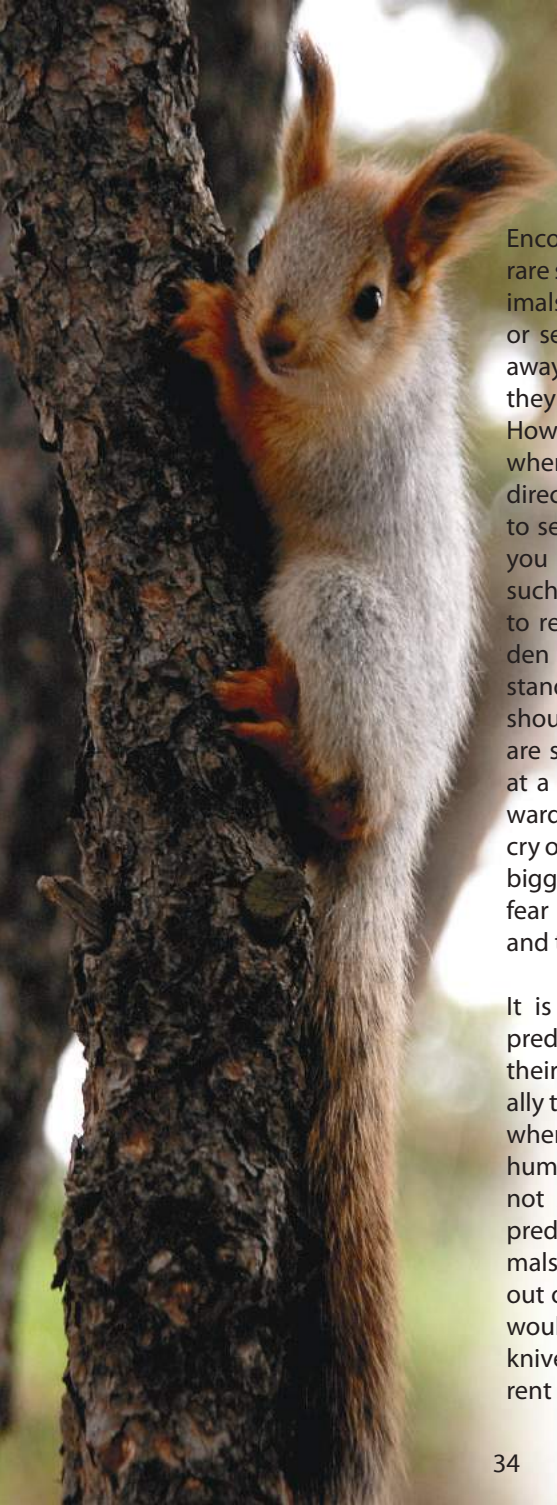
According to the information supplied by KuzeyDoğa Society, an NGO carrying out scientific research at regional level, there has been 13 different mammal species identified up to now in Sarıkamış forests. These include wolves, grizzly bears, foxes, wild boars, wild cats, deer, lynx, and squirrels. Sarıkamış woods also accommodate the wolves that were put in satellite transmitters for the first time in Turkey to observe and monitor wildlife.

The yellow pine forests provide home not only for mammals but also for birds. There has been more than 100 different bird species encountered in the region until today. The most notable among these is the Cinereous Vulture (a.k.a. Eurasian Black Vulture – Binomial Name: *Aegypius monachus*), literally the hugest bird of Turkey with a wingspan of three meters.

There are hundreds of different plant species found in Sarıkamış forests. The natural plant cover of the city is savannahs. Around 1250 types of flowering plants are naturally grown in these forests. A hundred of these plants are rare indigenous species, some of which have apparently chosen Sarıkamış as their main span. To give an example, *Lathyrus karsianus*, a wild pea species, exhibits propagation in open spaces falling to the northern part of Sarıkamış forests and includes the word “Kars” in its binomial name, as it was the district where that species was firstly discovered to exist.

Things to do During Encounters with Wild Animals

First of all, we should remember the fact that we are guests in habitats of wild animals. It will be useful to take action keeping this fact in mind. While we are trying to spend some time in the heart of Mother Nature, wild animals seek for food, partners and shelter as well as exploring new areas.



Encounters with wild animals are rare situations in real life. As the animals generally will hear your voice or sense your smell, they will run away fast to leave the area where they conceived your presence. However, on certain occasions where wind blows in the opposite direction, animals will not be able to sense your smell, in which case you may have an encounter. In such cases, the first thing to do is to remain and act calm. Any sudden moves will tease the animal standing in front of you. Then you should leave the spot where you are slowly, taking baby steps, one at a time. If the animal moves towards you, rise your hands up and cry out aloud to make yourself look bigger than it and spread some fear to cause the animal retreat and then run away.

It is hardly possible to see such predators as wolves and lynx in their natural environment. Generally these animals run away quickly when they have an encounter with humans. Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that we cannot predict the behaviours of wild animals exactly. So we need to check out our surrounding continually. It would be wise to have bear sprays, knives, first-aid kits and bear deterrent bells in our travel packs.

What to Do To Avoid Any Encounter with Wild Animals:

1. The most dangerous aspect of an encounter with wild animals and especially with bears is that they suddenly show up in front of us. In order to avoid this, the first and foremost thing to do is to make some noise. The noise you make is an essential action to ensure your safety, although it will disturb the natural rhythm of wildlife environment. You may twiddle or toot or speak with someone next to you or cry out aloud at periodical intervals to make your presence known, in which case bears and other wild animals will stay away, but they will be still following you on the sly, hiding and sneaking in shades. You may also consider fitting a bear bell or other normal bell on your backpack so that you can make noise continuously while on the move.
2. If you are camping, keep your foodstuffs in a properly sealed container in such a manner not to allow their smells released out. Once you finish with eating, bury the leftovers at a spot minimum 500 meters far from your camping site.
3. It would be safer for you to change your route, if you see freshly made footprints or ordure of wild animals along your walking path.
4. If you occasionally encounter with a baby animal during your walk, leave the place immediately. Never attempt to pet the animal or spare time to take a photo of it. It is likely that the mother of baby animal is around and may attack you suddenly. This kind of attacks based on maternal instinct usually result in death.



the place immediately. Never attempt to pet the animal or spare time to take a photo of it. It is likely that the mother of baby animal is around and may attack you suddenly. This kind of attacks based on maternal instinct usually result in death.

Things to Do In Case of Injuries Caused by Wild Animals

In such cases, try to keep the injured person awake and conscious. If there is a bleeding wound, tamp down it and consult to the nearest healthcare institution. Stating that the attack was originated by a wild animal and if known, specifying the name of such animal will help the treatment to progress faster.



Brambles (*Rubus fruticosus* L)

ESSENTIAL SAFETY MEASURES & PRECAUTIONS FOR TREKKERS

1- The trekking routes of Sarıkamış are suitable for every trekker, in general. In the route descriptions, special emphasis is made on those that are meant only for professionals.

2- Sarıkamış gets extremely cold in the winter. The coldest period of the season is between November and March, due to the district's location at a high altitude. During other months, you may easily walk along the routes.

3- Determine whether or not a particular route is suitable for you to walk, by reading the detailed information contained in this guidebook you hold.

4- Never forget to check the weather before starting off.

5- Strictly follow the signboards and symbols located along the route and never leave apart from the route.

6- If you are going to try longer routes, never go alone. Even if you plan to walk a short and easy route, act cautious so as to minimise the risks involved.

7- The hardest part of the trekking routes is the 17-kilometer long route between Keklik Stream and Aras River. We recommend this route only for professional trekkers with adequate knowledge and experience.

8- The most desolate parts of the route are the areas inside the forest. You can find more information about these under the section dealing with wildlife.

9- In almost all routes there are areas where you can find spring or tap water.

10- Do not forget to take a torch with intact batteries with you, before starting your trekking trips in through the forestlands.

11- Always have a garbage bag with you during trekking and make sure that you return all your garbages back with you.

12- When visiting archaeological sites, never harm the historical texture or displace anything. Please do keep in mind that all the ruins and remnants we have in our possession are the property of all humanity.

13- At parts of Bayraktepe facing Komdere and certain sections of Keklik Valley and Komdere Valley, there is no cell phone service.

14- For those who intend to walk on the route at the beginning of winter season or under harsh winter conditions, it is a must to have all necessary equipment in pack. The backpacks should especially include survival blanket (aluminium foils), an extra pair of socks and full set of underwear as well as waterproof matches and spikes.

15- Always engage a travel guide who knows the territory well in order to minimise all kinds of risks.

ABOUT THE ROUTE

Being one of the most important ski centre in Turkey, Sarıkamış impresses her guests with her unravelled beauties. This cute little town of the east, where you will feel the comfort and warmth of a friend's house, presents a real tourism potential with its natural and historical heritage. In addition to its existing winter tourism dynamics, Sarıkamış aims to bring together nature-lovers with alternative tourism activities.

You may get details on trekking, cycling and scenic vehicle road routes brought into service for this purpose through this guidebook you hold in your hands. The trekking routes of Sarıkamış, being the result of one of the works carried out by different people and entities at various regions of Turkey, observing certain standards, reach at a total length of 256 kilometers , on 21 different routes. On these routes which effectively use the valleys of Keklikdere, Komdere and Inkaya along with the generic yellow pine forest texture nearby Sarıkamış, any nature-lover is welcome to walk comfortably without any challenges. The risk of getting lost is almost none on identical routes which are identified with red-white signs on every 50 meters on pathways and every 200 meters on earth roads. You may find the GPS coordinates of the routes which are guided by the signboards on crossroad points in **www.sarikamistrekking.com** website routes Besides, the detailed maps enclosed with this guidebook will contribute for planning your itinerary. The Allahuekber Mountains, which exhibit the harshest geographical conditions of Sarıkamış area, were excluded from the approved trekking routes, taking into account their arid land structure. Let's remind that anyone who wishes to trek in these routes should read the sections regarding warnings and wildlife in this guidebook carefully and thoroughly.

Apart from the trekking routes, we have created cycling routes following forest and village roads. The total length of these routes passing through forestss rich in oxygen reach at 356 kilometers. Moreover, we have brought into service the cultural routes which enablevisiting and getting better understanding of the cultural and historical heritage that fall within district boundaries, in addition to the 428 kilometers long scenic vehicle road, encompassing sceneries of both historical and natural beauties, to serve for the nature lovers.

During the activities you would perform on the routes, you will have the opportunity to fully explore Sarıkamış. The adrenalin that will be secreted by your body while trekking on desolate forests will remind you the fact that you share this world with other living creatures. Sometimes you will be startled with the sound of birds moving their wings departing off big branches of trees. Sometimes you will see a fox's silhouette or find the traces of a rabbit in the snow. You will then immediately grab your camera and

add another photo frame to your collection of treasured memories. When travelling along the scenic vehicle road, you will look through the misty windows of your car and watch snow-covered plains and mountains and feel yourself as if living in the capital of peace. But each time you will take a deep breath in the refreshing atmosphere of eternal serenity and tell yourself "It's good to be here".

Of course what Sarıkamış has to offer to nature lovers is not limited to these. With its fresh and oxygen-rich atmosphere, the district has areas suitable for activities such as horse riding, hunting, golfing, grass skiing, camping and caravan tourism. Transhumance, the most remarkable tradition of Anatolian way of life, is another element of alternative tourism. The district hosts a number of beautiful highlands. At the same time, Sarıkamış is the popular destination of sporters and teams who want to restore body conditions exploiting the unique advantages brought by high altitude. The performers of such sports disciplines as athletics and football prefer Sarıkamış for physical and mental training due to its high performance characteristics, while making use of various accommodation facilities offered by hotel resorts situated at 2000 meters. For fanatics of extreme sports, we may recommend extraordinary activities such as paragliding and rock climbing.

With its skiing facilities and alternative tourism routes, Sarıkamış claims to become the permanent destination of those who want to taste the joy of setting on an adventure, after waking up from the charming magic of a white winter tale.



TREKKING ROUTES

Komdere Valley



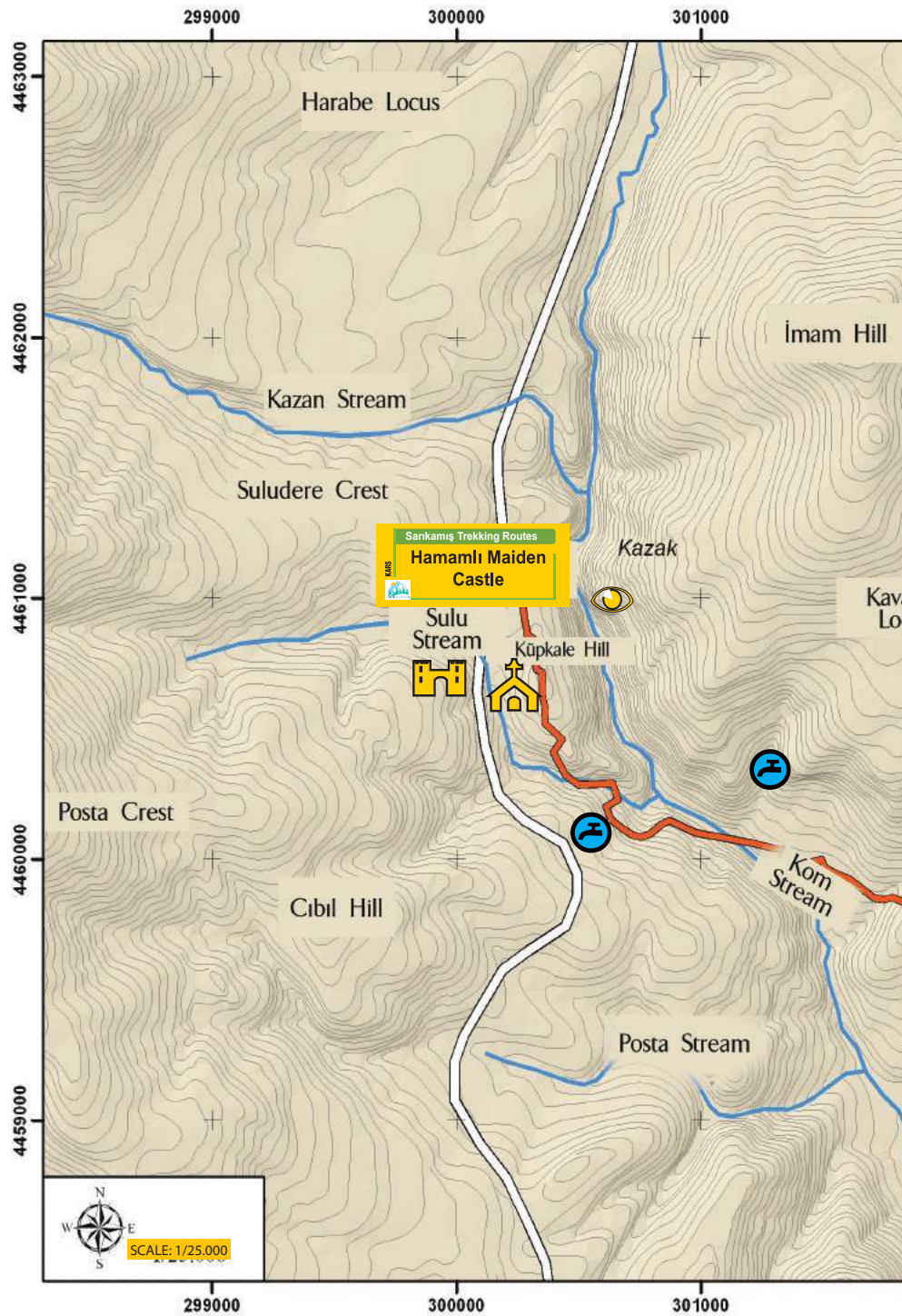


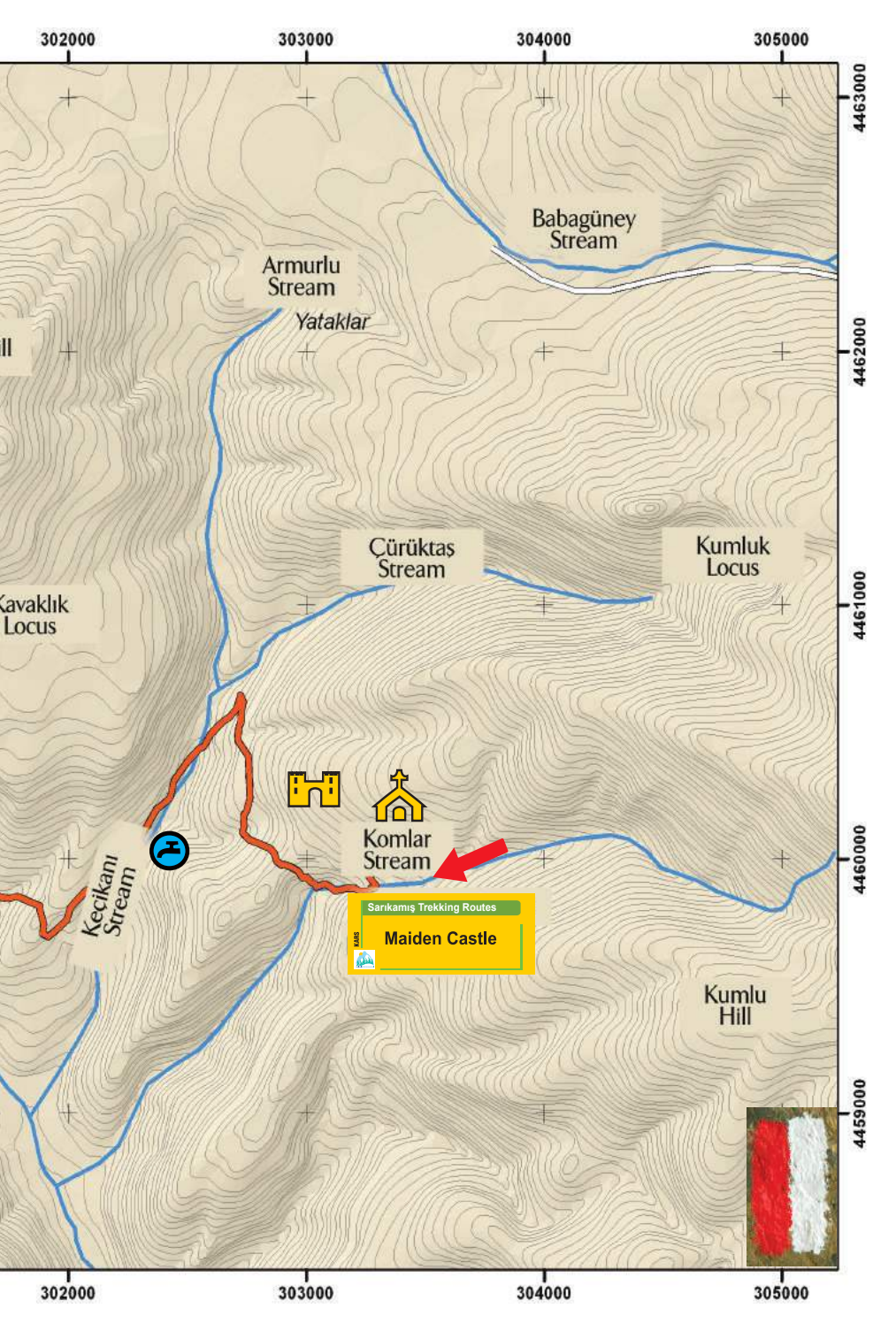
SHORT ROUTES

Route 1: Hamamlı Kızkalesi- Castle of Maidens (5 km)

Located in between Hamamlı and Şehitemin villages, this castle is known as Kızkalesi among local people. We walk on the path running parallel to the road on Hamamlı-Kızkalesi direction. Landing on Çürüktaş locality in through the forest, the route follows the streambed for a while. Then it turns right from the point of intersection of crossroads where a sign appears and enters an earth road. Now we have a short slope to climb up. When we get to the crest, all landscape of Keklik Valley will unfold beneath our feet. You may take a short rest here and enjoy several moments of being alone with Mother Nature. In the junction where the earth road slopes down, we turn right. We keep on walking taking the rocky hills on one side and the valley floor on the other. We climb down Keklik streambed passing by the buildings of an abandoned ranch house and then start to climb uphill heading towards the Castle of Maidens located at slopes of Küpkale Hill.

Difficulty Level : Easy
Max. Altitude : 2241 m
Min. Altitude : 1885 m





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Babagüney Stream

Armurlu Stream

Yataklar

Cürüktaş Stream

Kumluk Locus

Kavaklık Locus

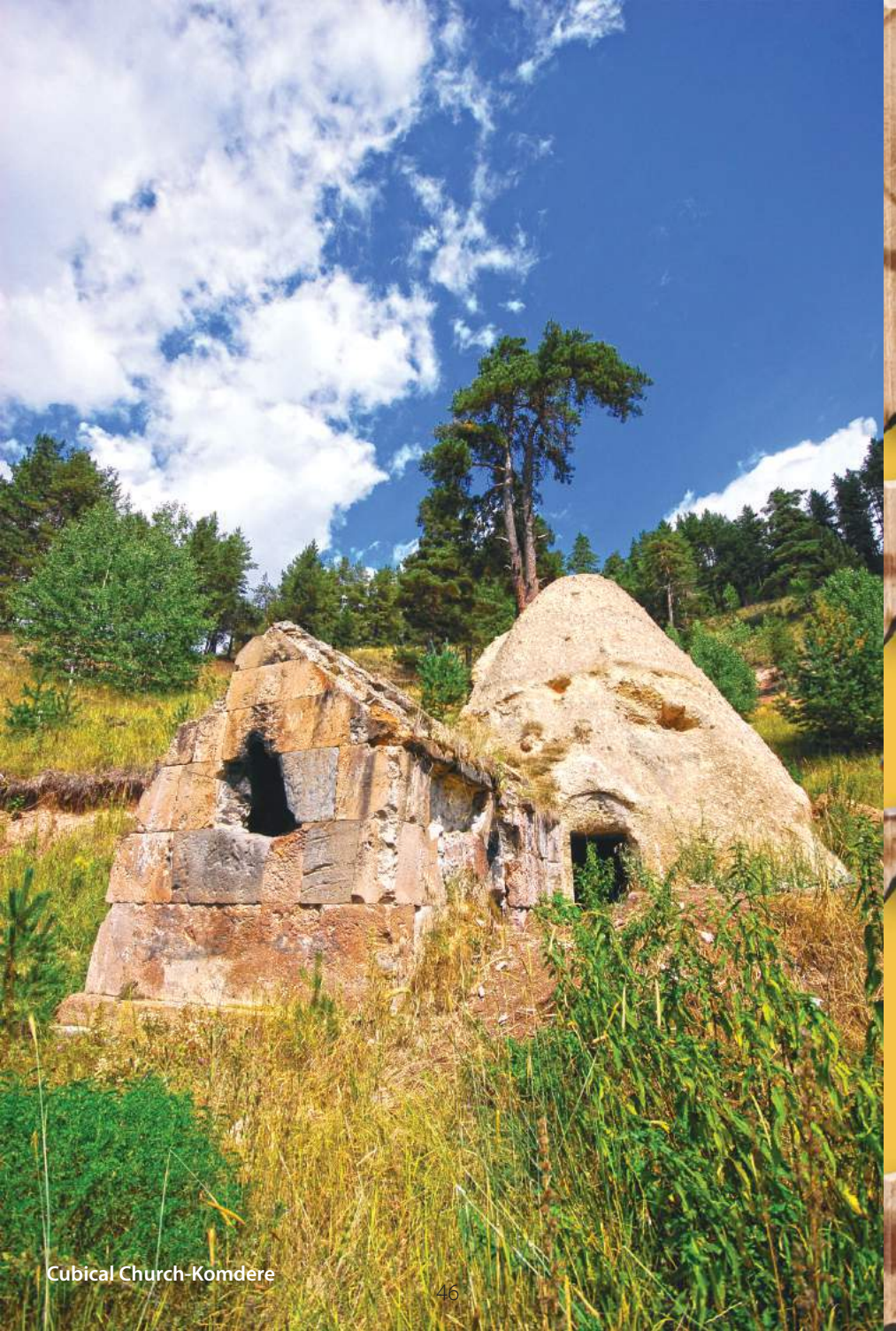
Keciakani Stream

Komlar Stream

Sarikamis Trekking Routes
Maiden Castle

Kumlu Hill





SHORT ROUTES

Route 2: Acisu-Turna Lake-Main Road(5 km)

Starting from the Acisu fountain, the route enters the forest road diverting from the main road, soon. The earth road with the shades of pine trees is the first and only slope we encounter all the way to our point of destination. At the peak that we arrive after approximately 400 meters, we keep walking inside the forest. After walking 1.5 kilometers we leave the forest road and enter into an open space. On this plain, which extends between Turnagöl and Topyolu hillsides, it is possible to see Büyük (Big) and Küçük (Small) Turna lakes. The lake beds surrounded by bushes dry out under the frying hot temperatures of summer. At this point, you may take a break to view the landscape of Mount Süphan rising up with all its glory. Following the directions of the sign post located near the lake, we turn left from the earth road and keep on moving and our path enters the forestland texture again. The route ends where we arrive at the Sarıkamış-Iznos military-motorway.

Difficulty Level : Easy
Max. Altitude : 2260 m
Min. Altitude : 2092 m

288000

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Karahamzanın Upland

Topyolu Crest

Sarıkaş Trekking Routes

Acisu

Büyükturna Lake

Turna Lake

Lisli



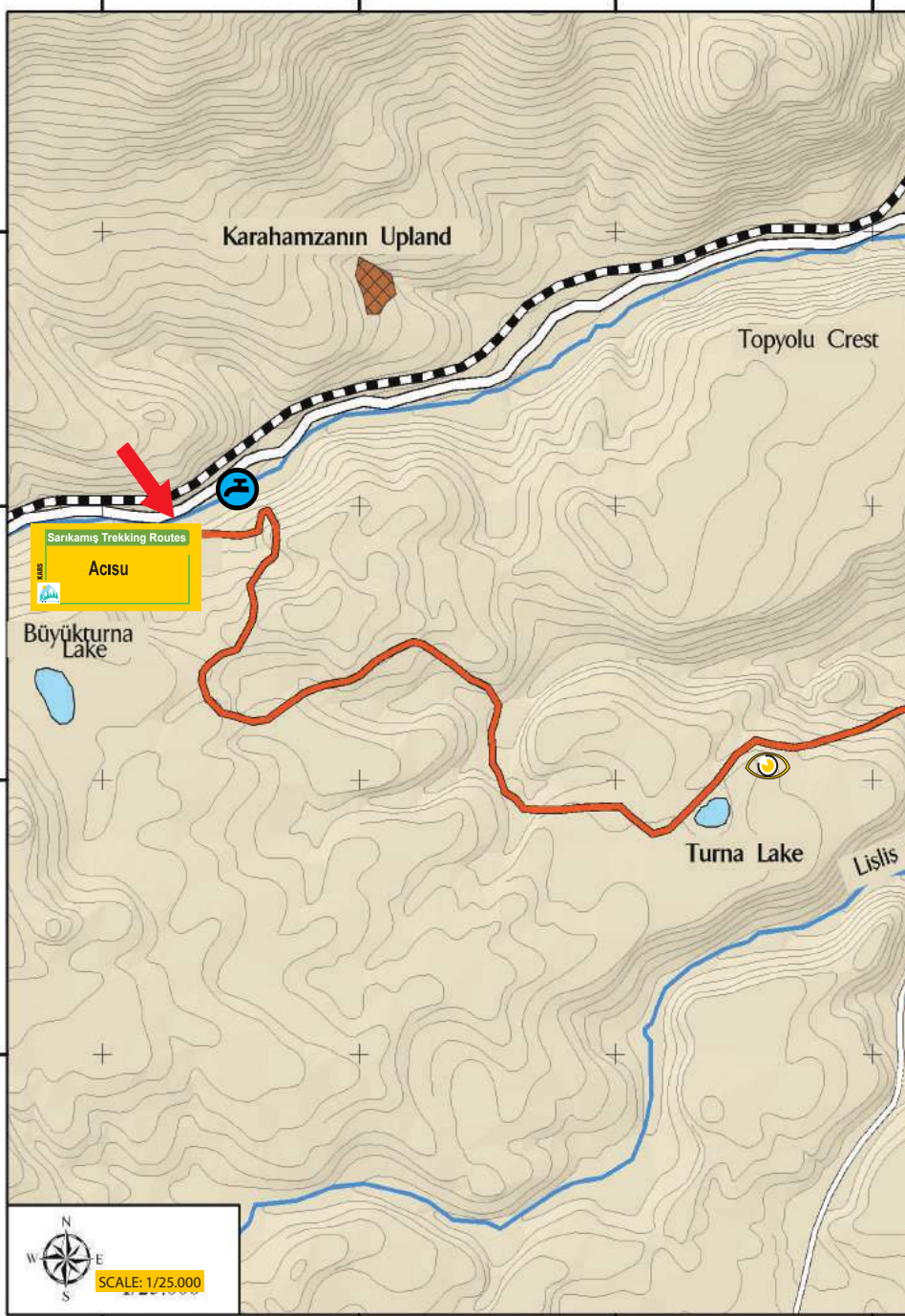
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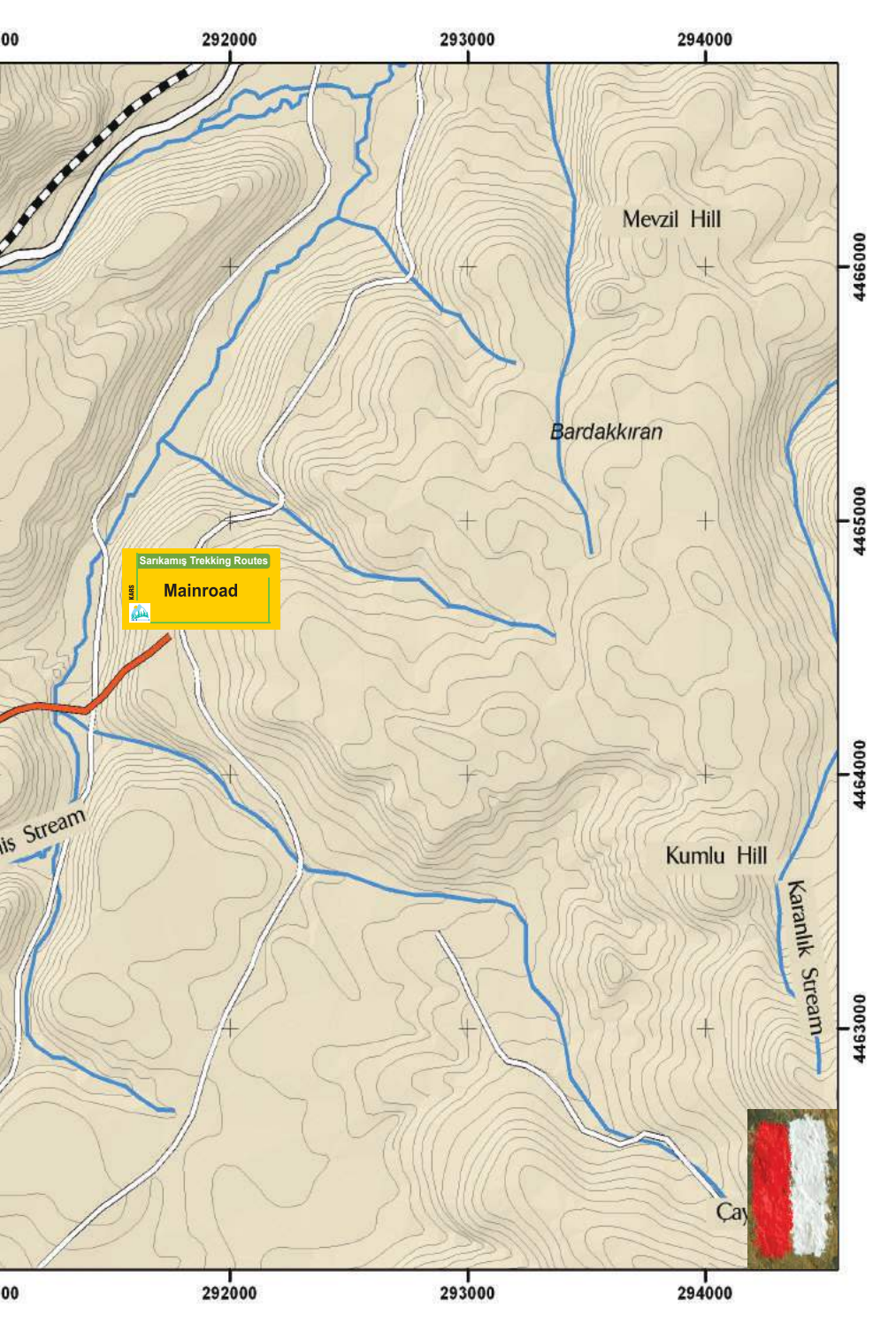
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Sankamis Trekking Routes
Mainroad

Mevizil Hill

Bardakkiran

Kumlu Hill

Karantik Stream

Çay



SHORT ROUTES

Route 3 :

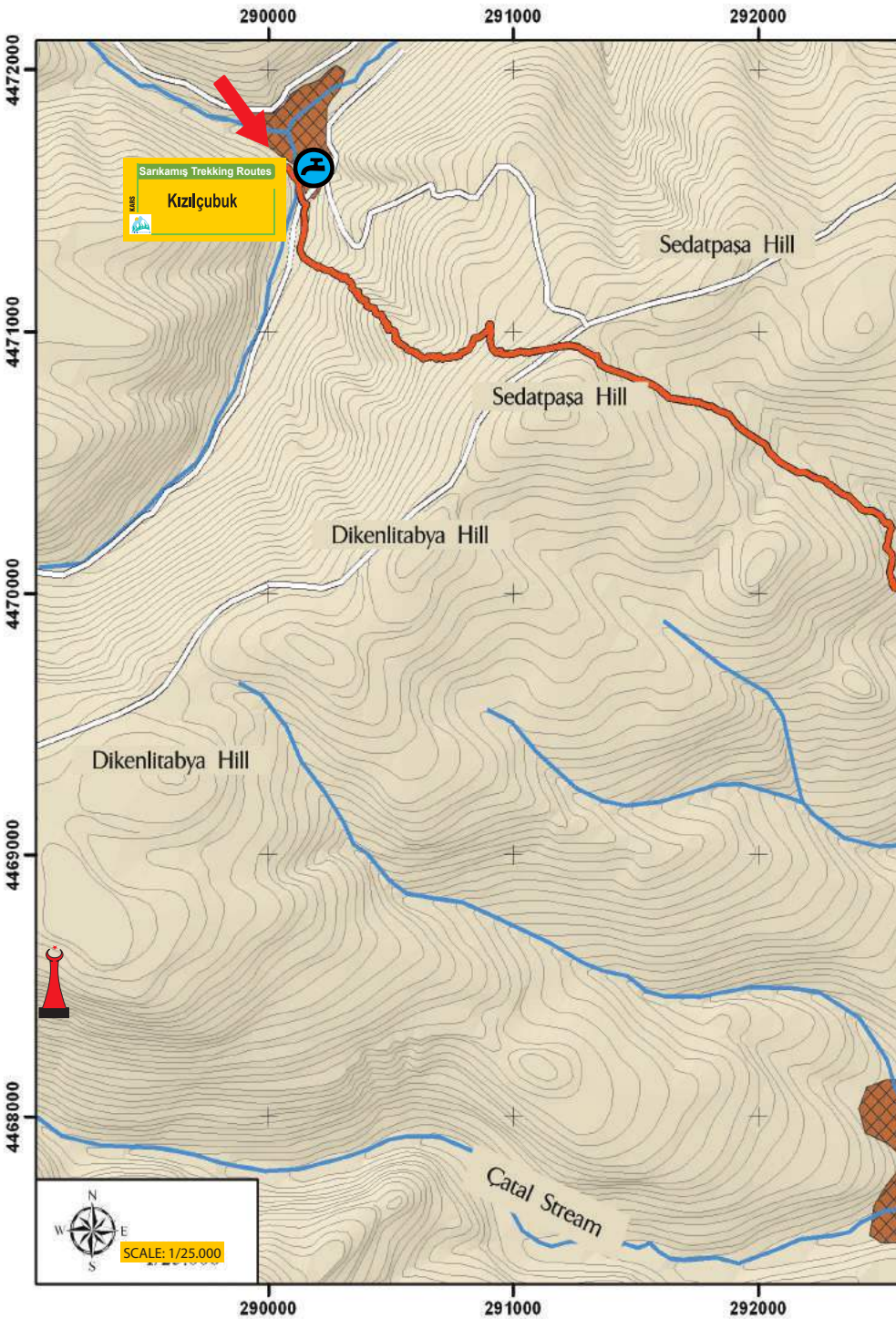
Kızılçubuk-Sarikamiş (7 km)

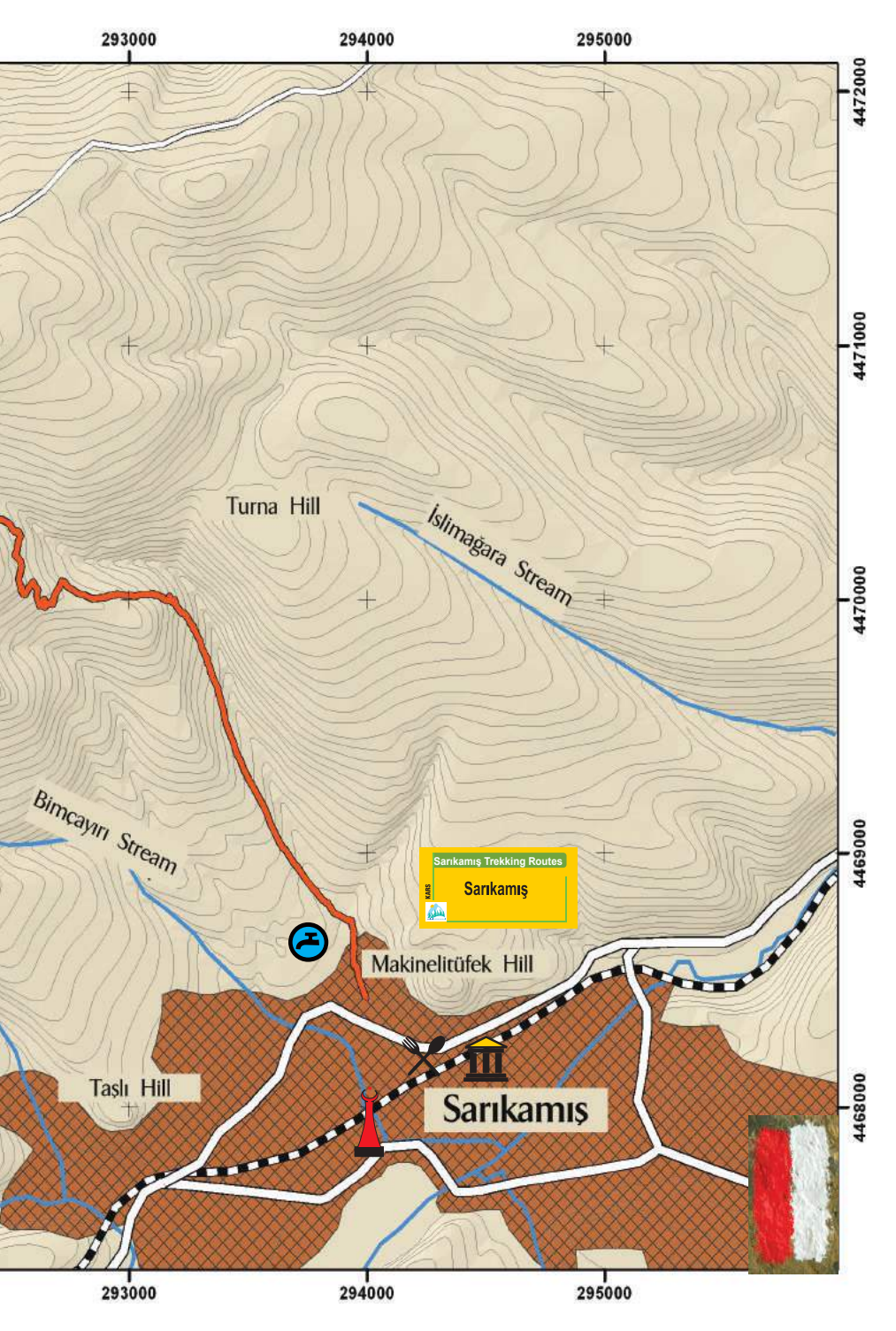
We will follow the former road once used by inhabitants of Kızılçubuk Village, which is abandoned long ago and now lying in ruins, to get access to the marketplace in Sarikamiş district downtown. We enter the walking path which heads to the forest passing the graveyard located immediately after the village. The first part of the route runs uphill until the peak where the name plate of the martyrs cemetery is found. At the crest, the path leaves the forestland behind and starts to progress in an open space that lies between Sedatpasa Hill and Dikenli Tabya Hill. The marks put on the stones on the ground will determine our main route. Slightly slanting downwards, the path crosses a tractor trail and runs alongside with the streambed. Walking along the stream which dries out completely in summer, we finally reach in Upper Sarikamiş and complete our route.

Difficulty Level : Easy

Max. Altitude : 2503 m

Min. Altitude : 2092 m







SHORT ROUTES

Route 4: Sarıkamış-Katerina's Hunting Lodge (8 km)

Starting from the signboard located behind the Sarıkamış State Hospital, our journey passes through pine forests and ends up in front of the hunting lodge that was built in the 19th century. Moving forward on the forest road lying between West and East garrison headquarters, we reach at the old ammunition storage. Now we will follow the forest road steering to the right. After a short walk in parallel to the fencing that demarcates the tree nursery, we arrive in Karanklıkdere Valley. The route follows the streambed for a while, climbing uphill. At the end of this inclination we get in intersection point where it is placed signboard which guides us while entering the forest road. From this spot onwards, the route goes up the hill. Now you have to trace the signs carefully. After about 1 kilometer, the route departs from the forest road and enters into a trail on the right, used by foresters to chop wood. In companion of the lovely scents emitted by dense masses of trees you will climb down. The route ends in front of the Katerina's Hunting Lodge, which provides a top view of Sarıkamış settlement.

Level of Difficulty : Easy
Max. Altitude : 2105 m
Min. Altitude : 2092 m

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Çatal Stream

Taşlı Hill

Ski home

Topyolu Crest

Barda

Çayır Stream



SCALE: 1/25,000

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Makinelitüfek Hill

Bımcavın Stream



4468000

Kardemir Hill

Sankamış Trekking Routes

Katarina's Hunting Lodge



Sankamış Trekking Routes

Sankamış



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Çarşıyır Stream

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Mezvil Hill

rdakkıran

Lazar Hill

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Karanlık Stream



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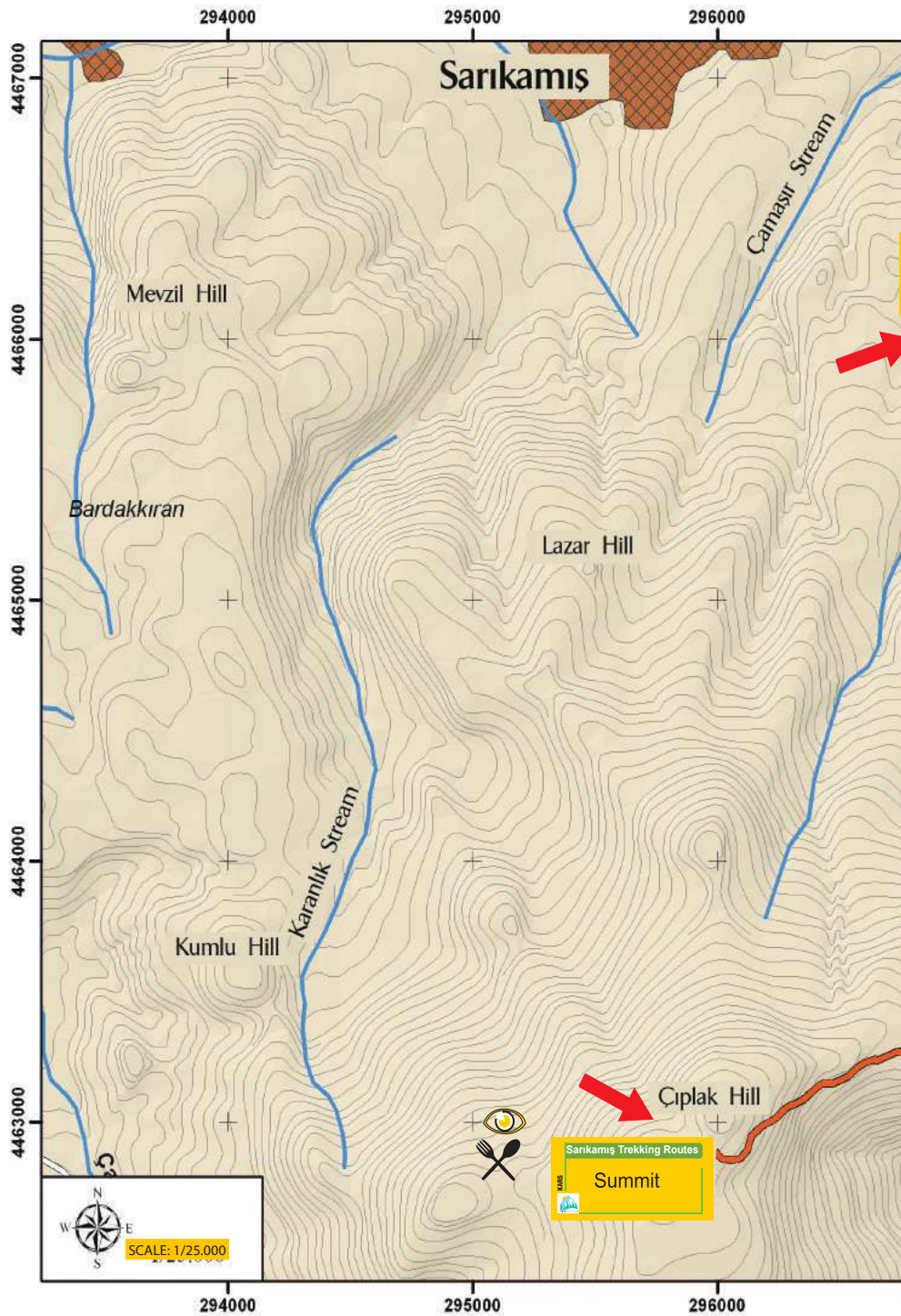


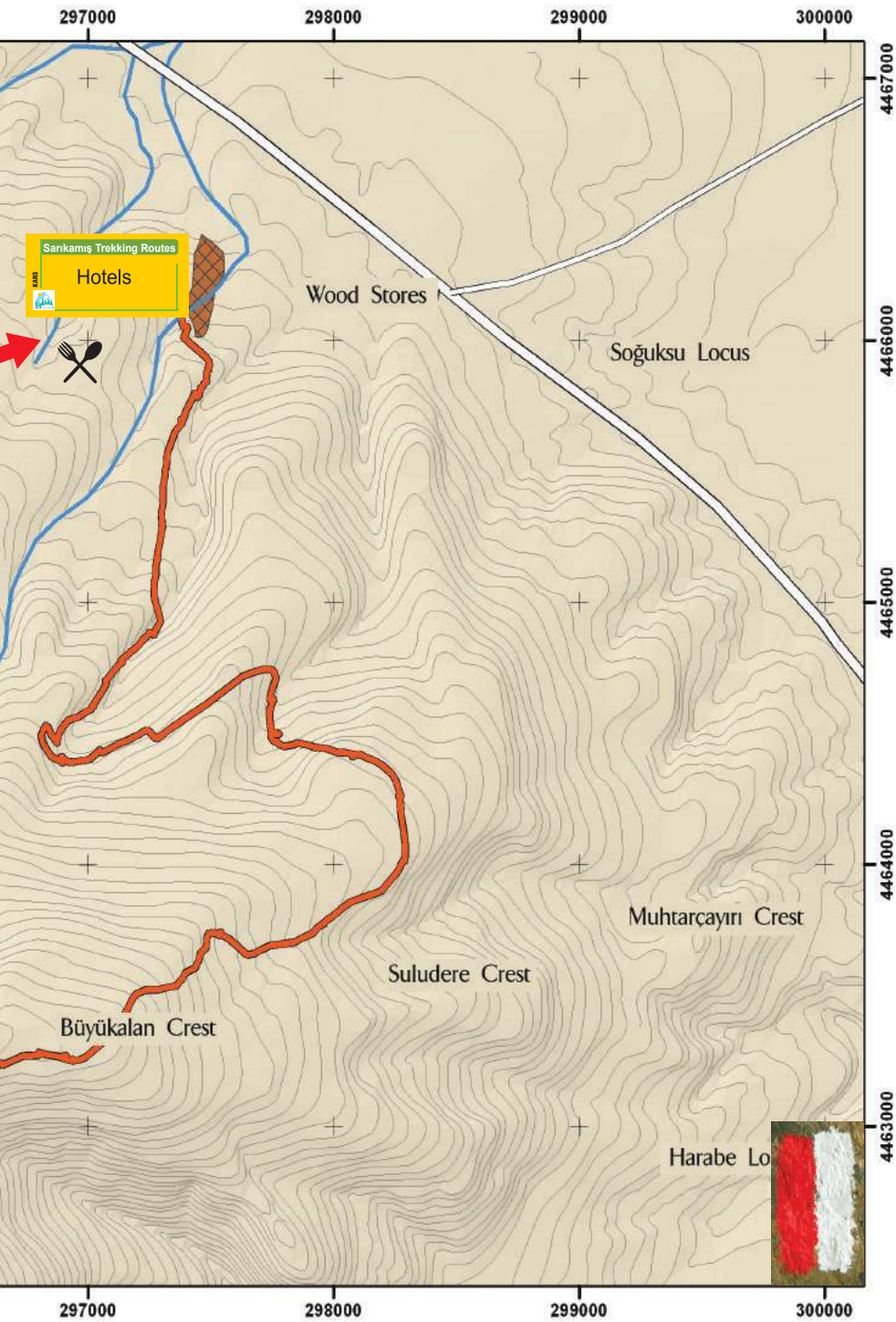
SHORT ROUTES

Route 5: Summit-Hotels (8 km)

After viewing the marvellous scene from the peak of Bayraktepe, which is 2634 meters high from the ground, we start walking down the vehicle lane. About 1 km later we arrive at an intersection, where we turn right under guidance of signs provided therein. This route which constitutes the backbone of our route includes a pleasant downslope pattern covered by oak and pine trees. At the point where the road splits into two, this time we turn left and follow a nice forest road where trees block the sunlight almost turning the area into a tunnel. Soon we arrive at the facility named "Orta Cafe" which serves for ski lovers throughout the cold days of winter. After taking a break there, we follow the forest borderline on the right hand side of the ski-run, continuing with our walk through the trees. After travelling 8 kilometers further, our route comes to its end at Hotels area.

Level of Difficulty : Easy
Max. Altitude : 2634 m
Min. Altitude : 2158 m











Autumn in Sarikamis

SHORT ROUTES

Route 6 : Hotels-Katerina's Hunting Lodge (9 km)

In the first part of this route starting from the Hotels area, we will climb uphill. After walking one kilometer, we arrive at junction of ski-runs where we take a turn to the right and enter into the forest. At this part where the slope gets lower, we bypass the spring that appears in our way and walk down to Çamasirdere Valley. After the sign we encounter nearby the old ammunition storage, we follow the same path as described in route 4 above to reach at Katarina's Hunting Lodge.

**Level of Difficulty :Easy
Max. Altitude : 2158 m
Min. Altitude : 2105 m**

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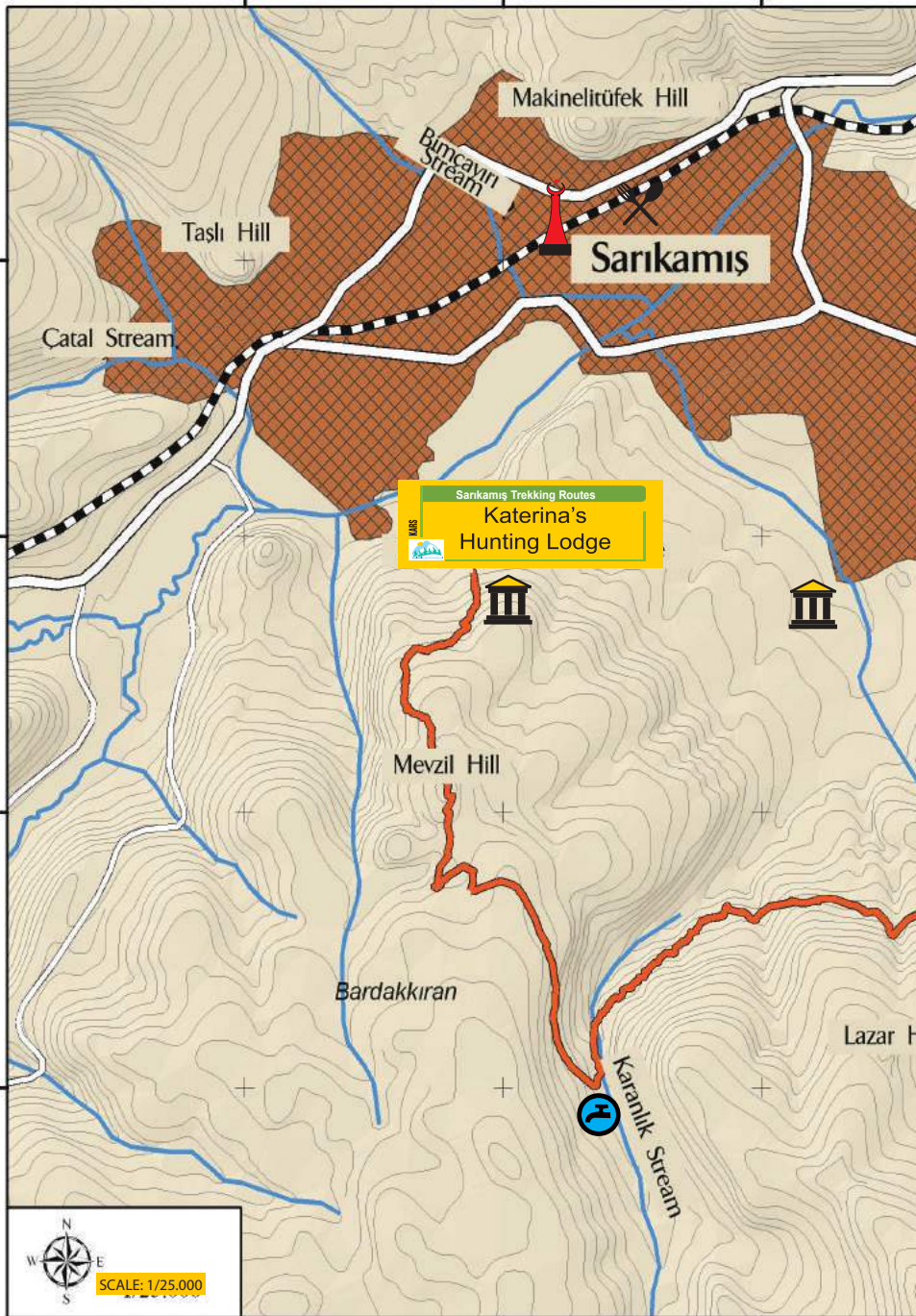
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Makinelitüfek Hill

Bıncıyırı Stream

Taşlı Hill

Sarıkamış

Catal Stream

Sarıkamış Trekking Routes
Katerina's
Hunting Lodge

Mevzil Hill

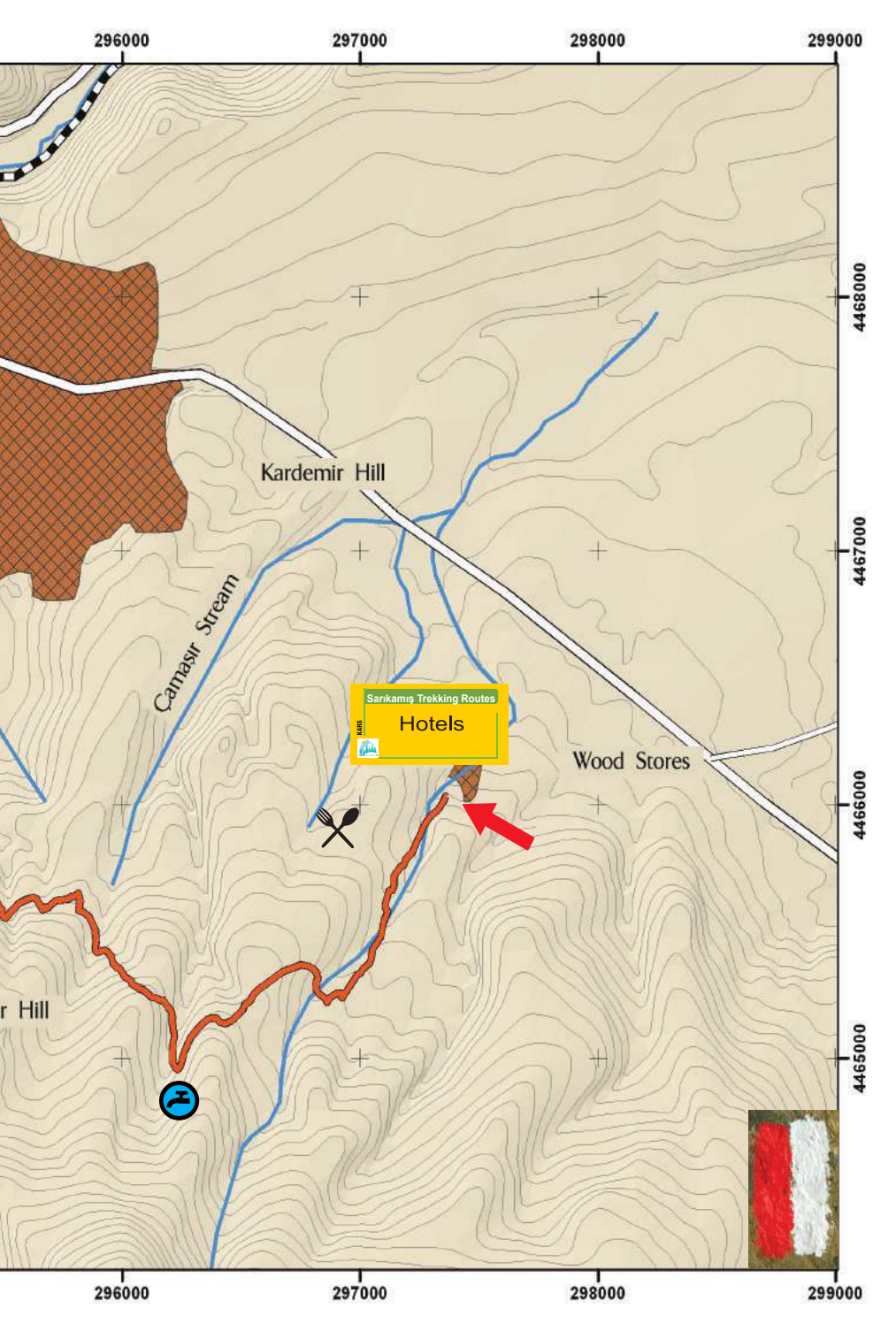
Bardakkıran

Karaklık Stream

Lazar H



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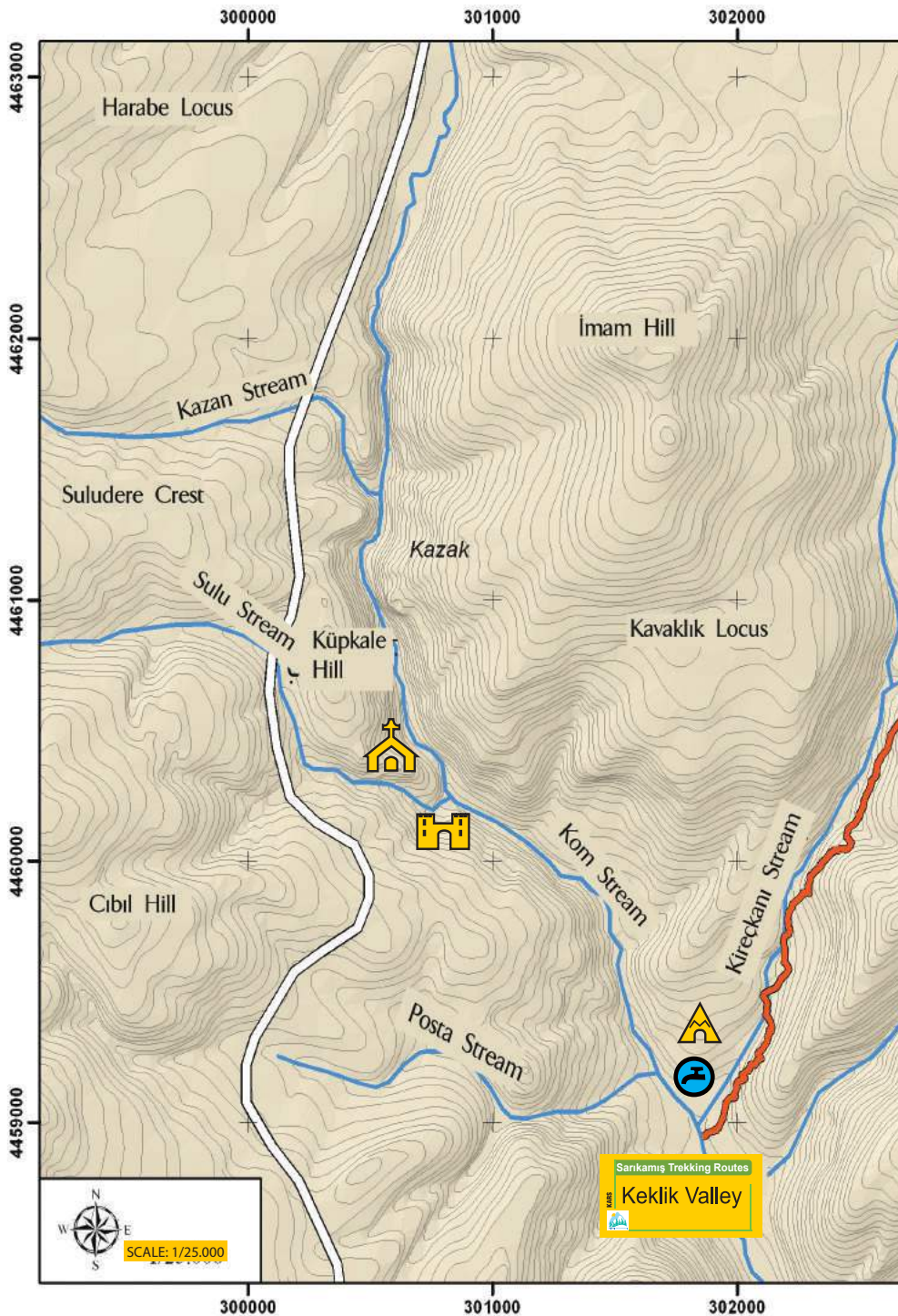
Inkaya Valley Entrance-Çamyazı Village

SHORT ROUTES

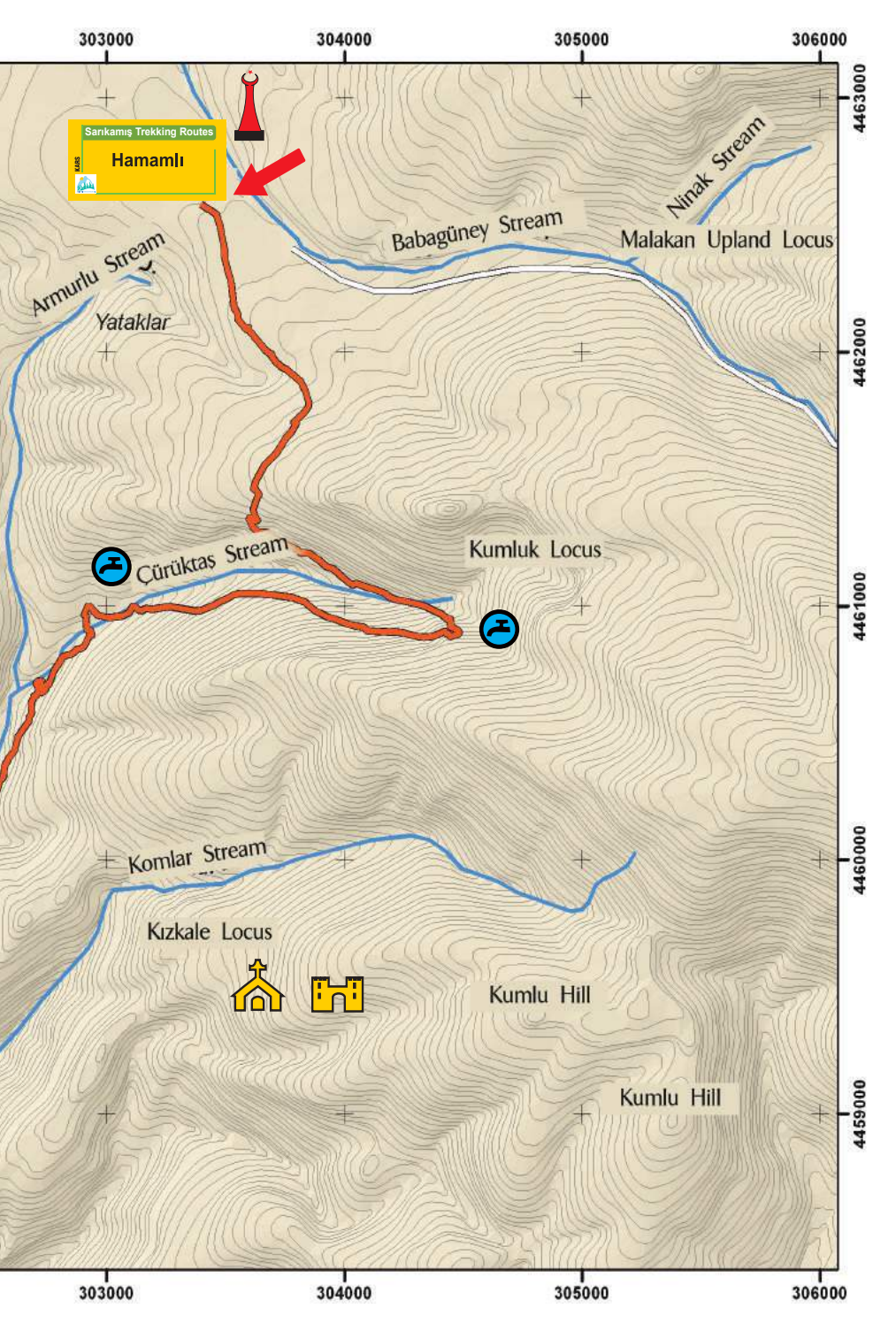
Route 7: Hamamlı-Keklik Valley (9 km)

The forest road that provides access from Hamamlı to Şehitemin Village constitutes the main route of our route. Exhibiting a fabulous harmony of colours especially during autumn, this route runs through the forest. We turn right from the three-way fork passing the Kumluk locality. After getting to the bridge, we leave the forest road to enter Çürüktaş streambed area. The streambed lying inside Kavaklık locality and Kumkale crest lead us to the Keklik Valley.

Level of Difficulty : Easy
Max. Altitude : 2164 m
Min. Altitude : 1802 m



Sankamiş Trekking Routes
MAP Keklik Valley



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Sankams Trekking Routes
Hamamlı

Ninak Stream

Babagüney Stream

Malakan Upland Locus

Armurlu Stream
Yataklar

Cürüktaş Stream

Kumluk Locus

Komlar Stream

Kızkale Locus

Kumlu Hill

Kumlu Hill



Keklik Waterfall

SHORT ROUTES

Route 8: Çamyazı-İnkaya (9 km)

The Inkaya Stream Valley between Çamyazı and İnkaya, which forms our route, is a settlement area used since the ancient times. We reach at this valley invigorated by the İnkaya Stream by walking through a tractor trail from Çamyazı Village. The Zigavin Plain located at the beginning of the valley is dominated by a natural texture covered by shrubs and oak trees. The valley then gradually narrows and gets rugged passing between Sudokülen rocks and Büyükbaba hills. You will see large coves at certain parts of these rocky cliffs. You may visit the church and chapels known as the Church of Maidens to local people. From this point forward, the valley base starts widening, bringing the gorgeous view of Micingirt castle to your sight. Positioned on a slivery heap, this castle was built on a land once occupied by Urartu, in 13th century. At the end of the valley, we leave the streambed and follow the path heading towards the castle. After the activity, you may consider visiting the Micingirt Castle and the Seljuk cupola located in its close proximity.

Level of Difficulty : Easy
Max. Altitude : 2166 m
Min. Altitude : 1762 m

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Sudökül

Çagıt

Eşek Yatağı

Büyük

Toptas Hill

Sankamış Trekking Routes
Inkaya

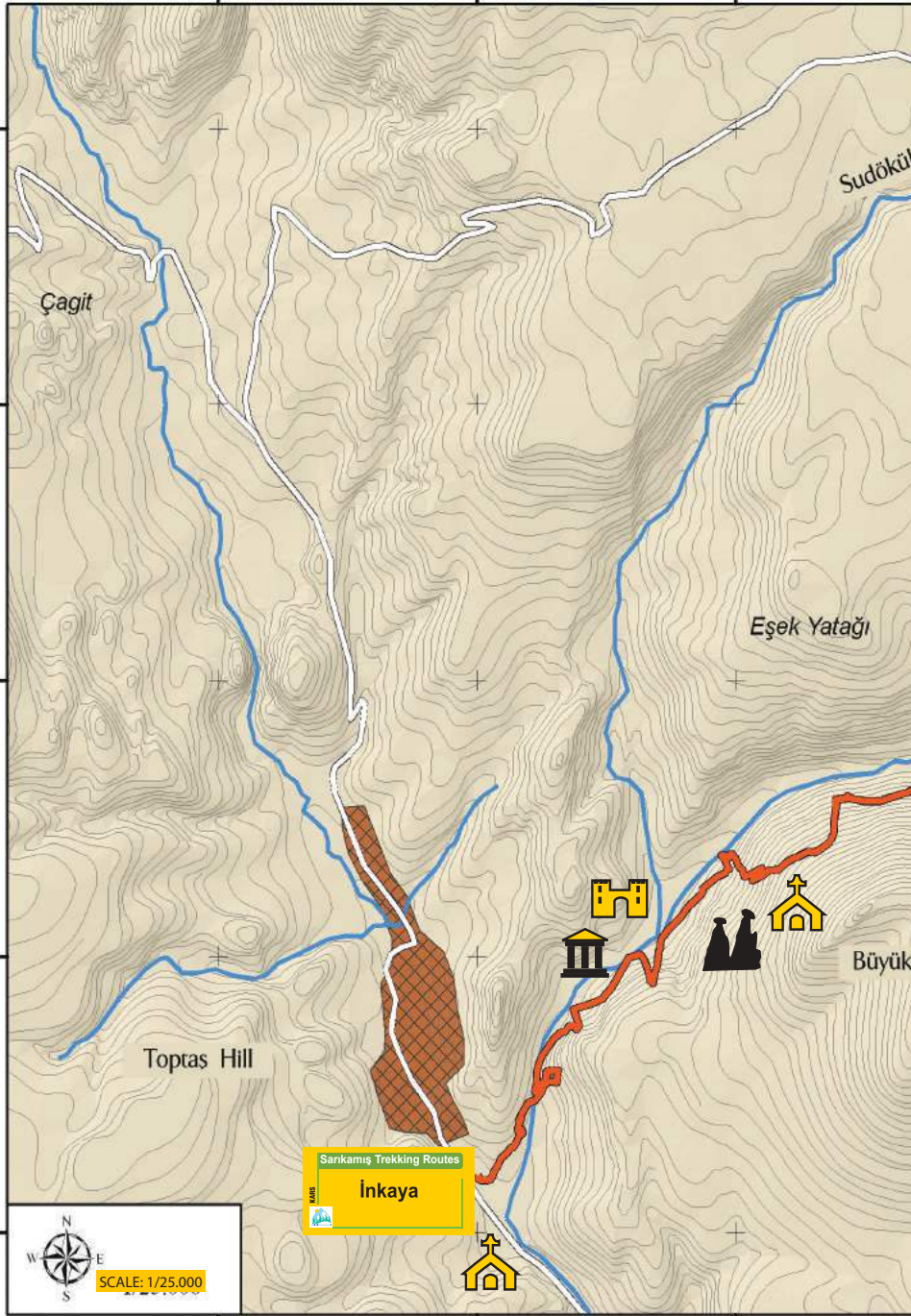


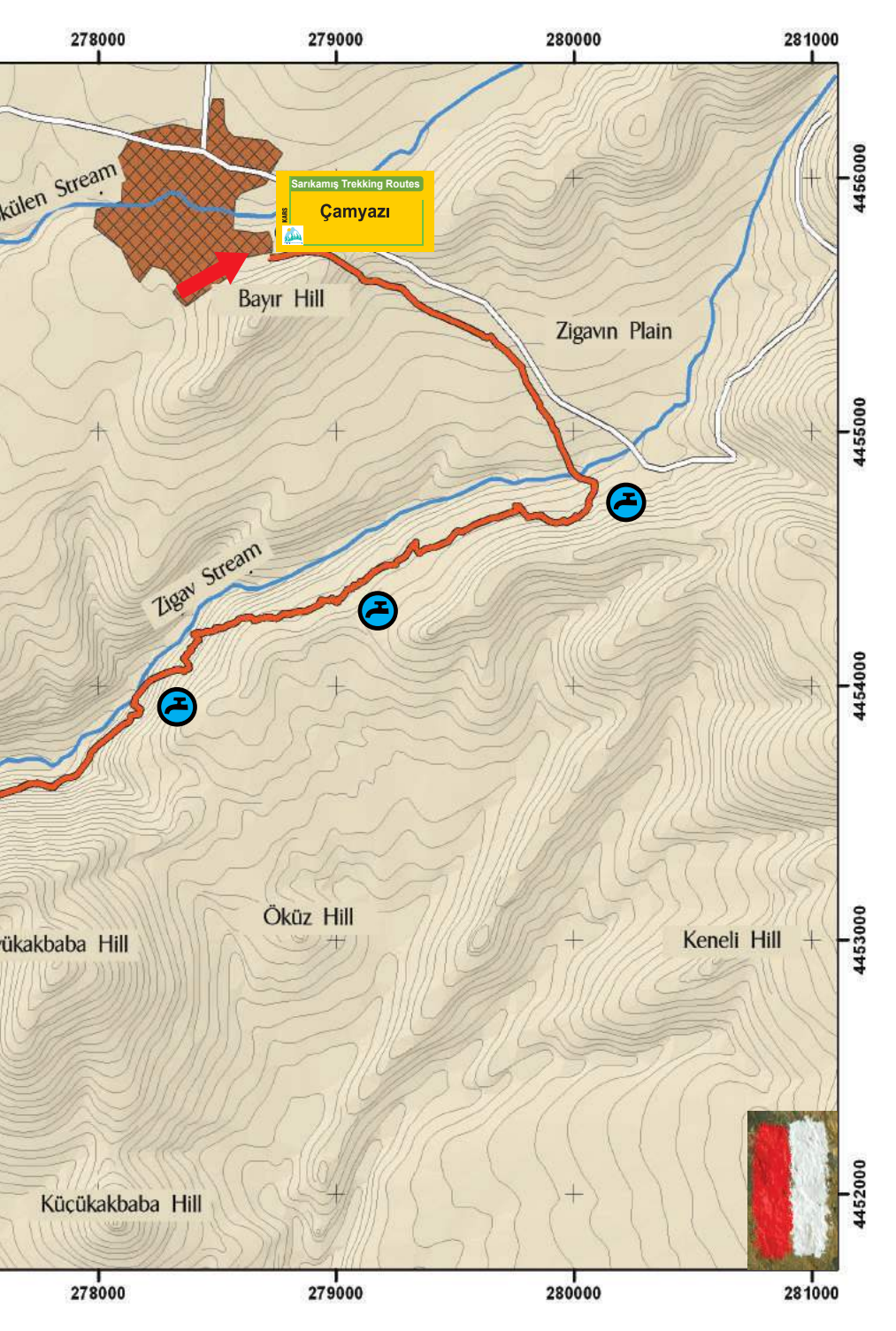
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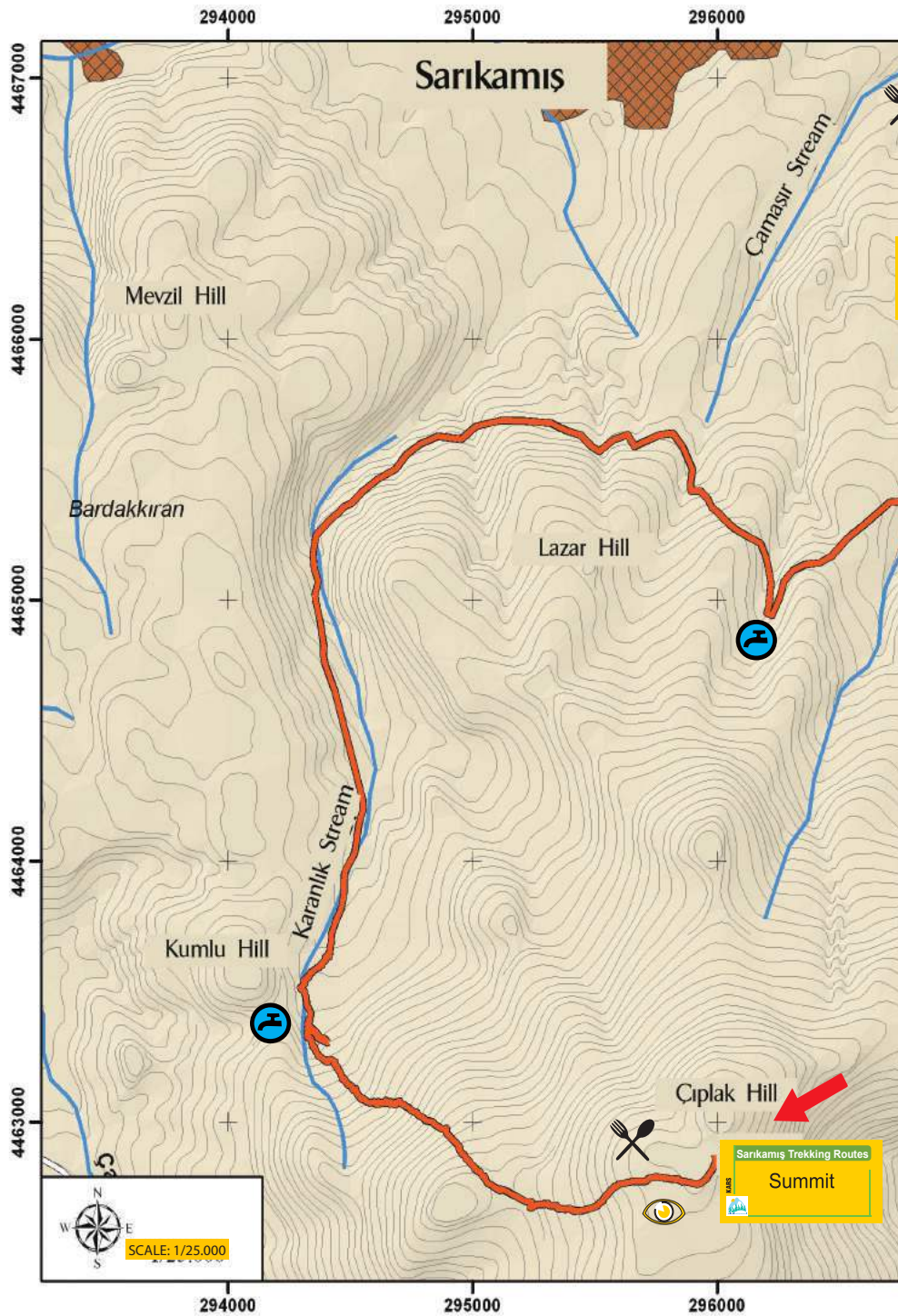
Micungirt Castle-Inkaya Village

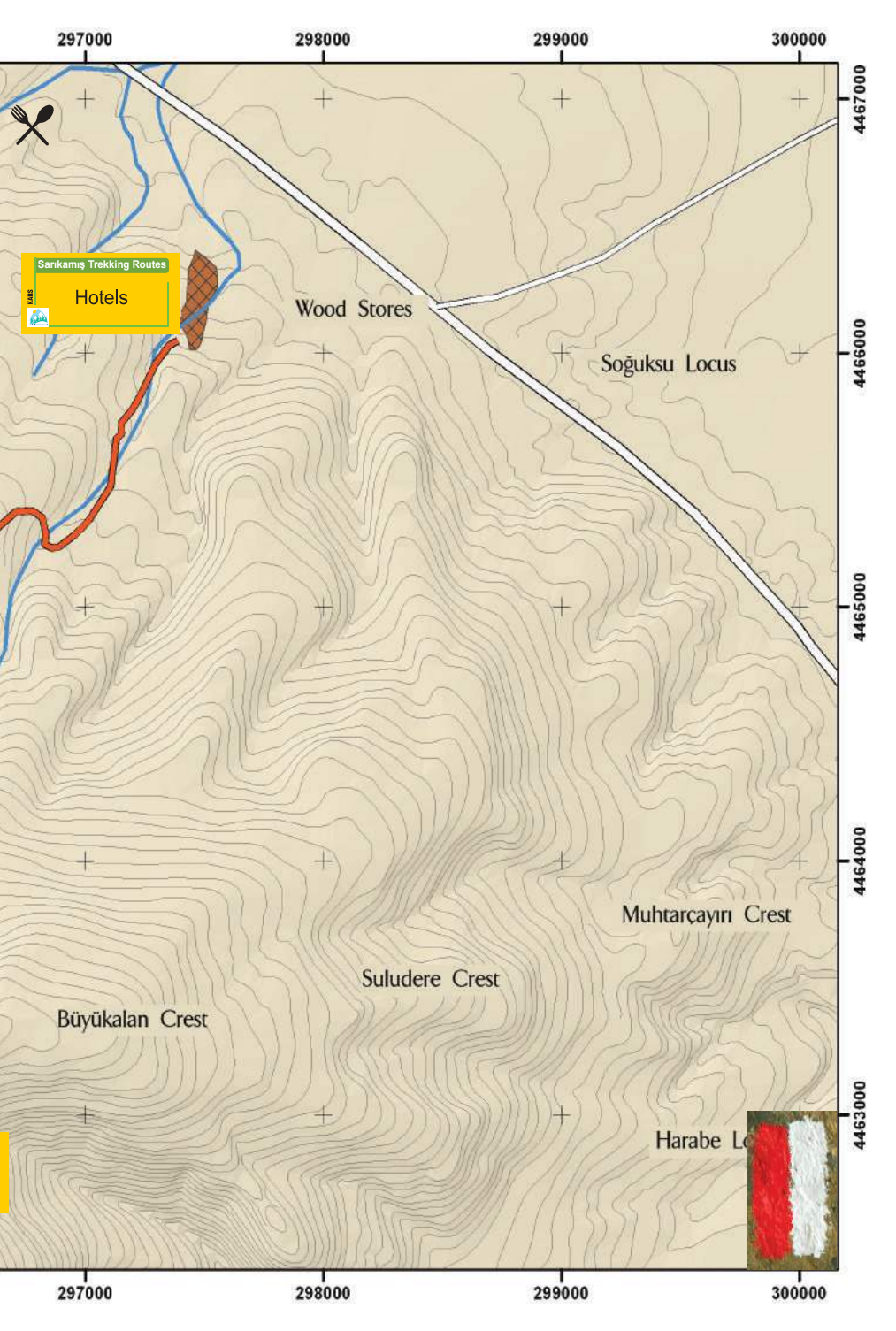
SHORT ROUTES

Route 9: Summit-Karanlıkdere-Hotels (10 km)

Bayraktepe, formerly known as Cibiltepe, will be the starting point of our activity. We enter the forest nearby the ski-run landing to Karanlıkdere and follow the marked path. After a short while, a forest road comes in our way, which we start to take. The entire walkway, which includes a permanently declining slope, leads to the Karanlıkdere recreation site, which forms the 9th ski-run of the ski centre. After a short break, when we resume back on our walk, we prefer taking the declining forest road. After one kilometer, we take a turn to the right from the sign post adjacent to the old ammunition storage and start following the same route as described in route 6 above, to arrive at the Hotels area.

Level of Difficulty : Easy
Max. Altitude : 2634 m
Min. Altitude : 2158 m





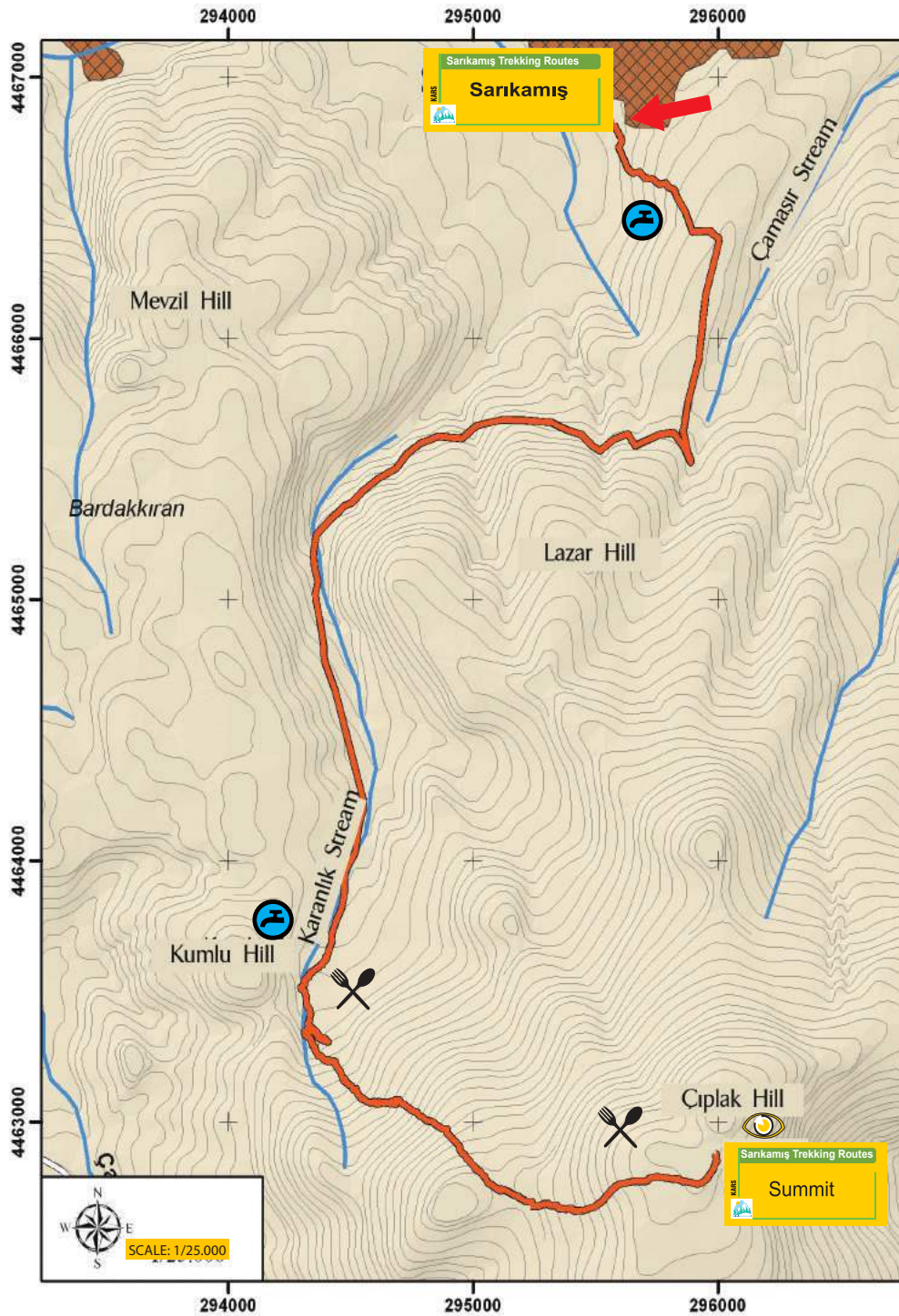


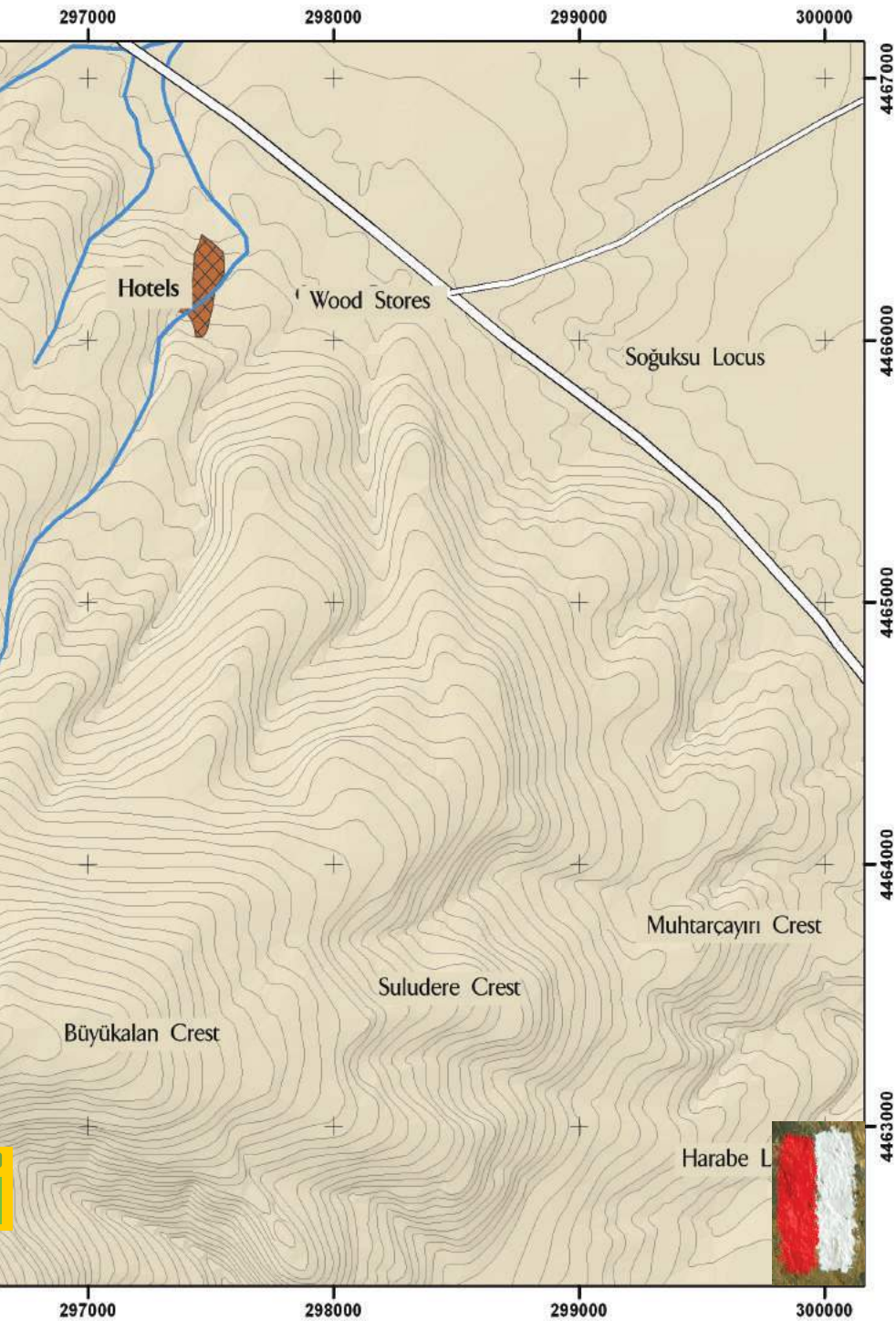
SHORT ROUTES

Route 10: Sarıkaş-Karanlıkdere-Summit (10 km)

This route shares the same starting point with route number 4 and follows a similar path till the old ammunition storage. In order to follow the direction shown by the arrow pointing "Summit" on the sign post you will see there, you must walk along the forest road described for route 9 above. It should be reminded that this route is full of challenges as it involves a permanent inclination between elevations of 2100 and 2600 meters. Therefore, it is advisable that you trek in a slow walking rhythm without hastening but getting the most pleasure out of beauties surrounding you.

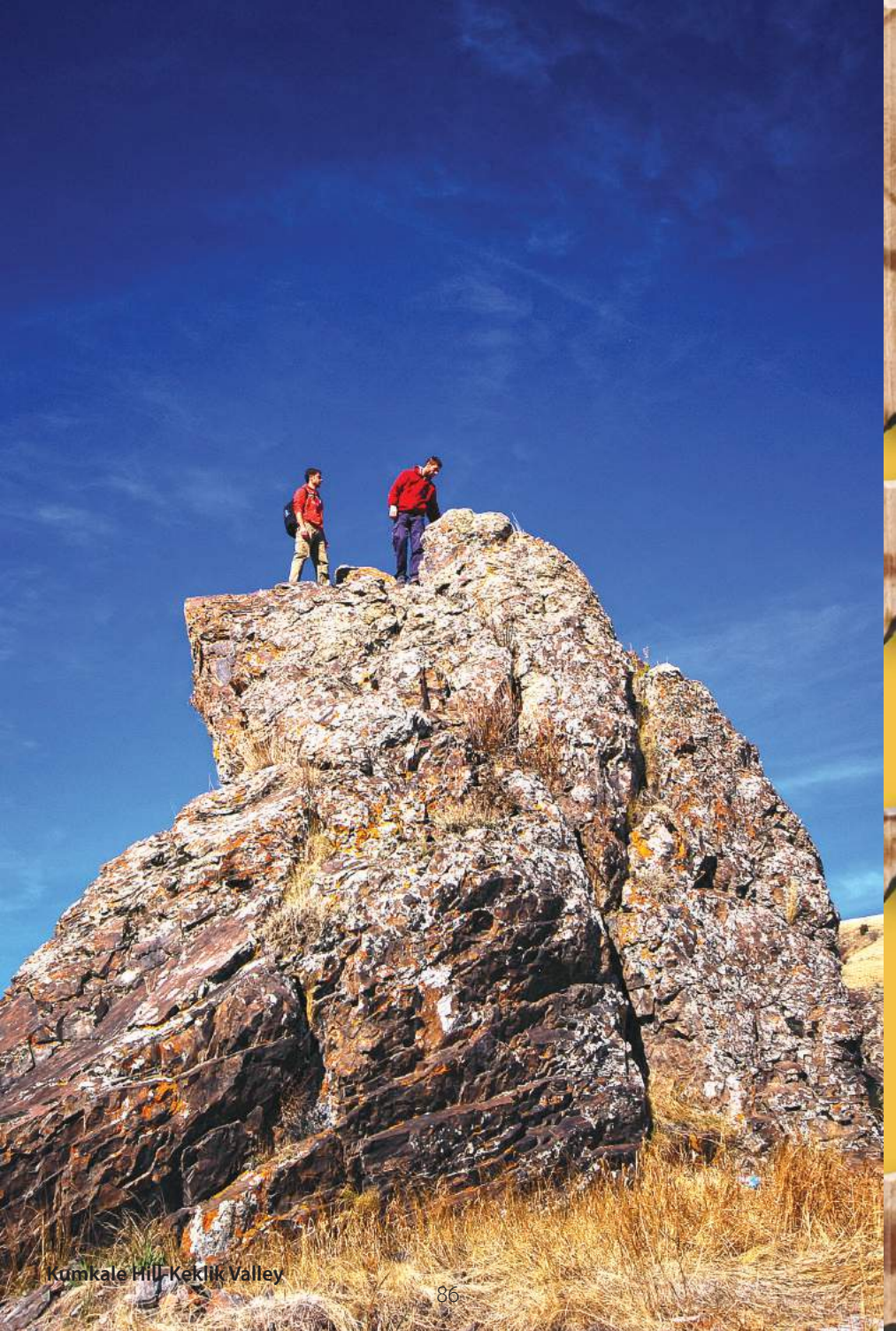
Level of Difficulty: Advanced
Max. Altitude: 2665 m
Min. Altitude: 2092 m









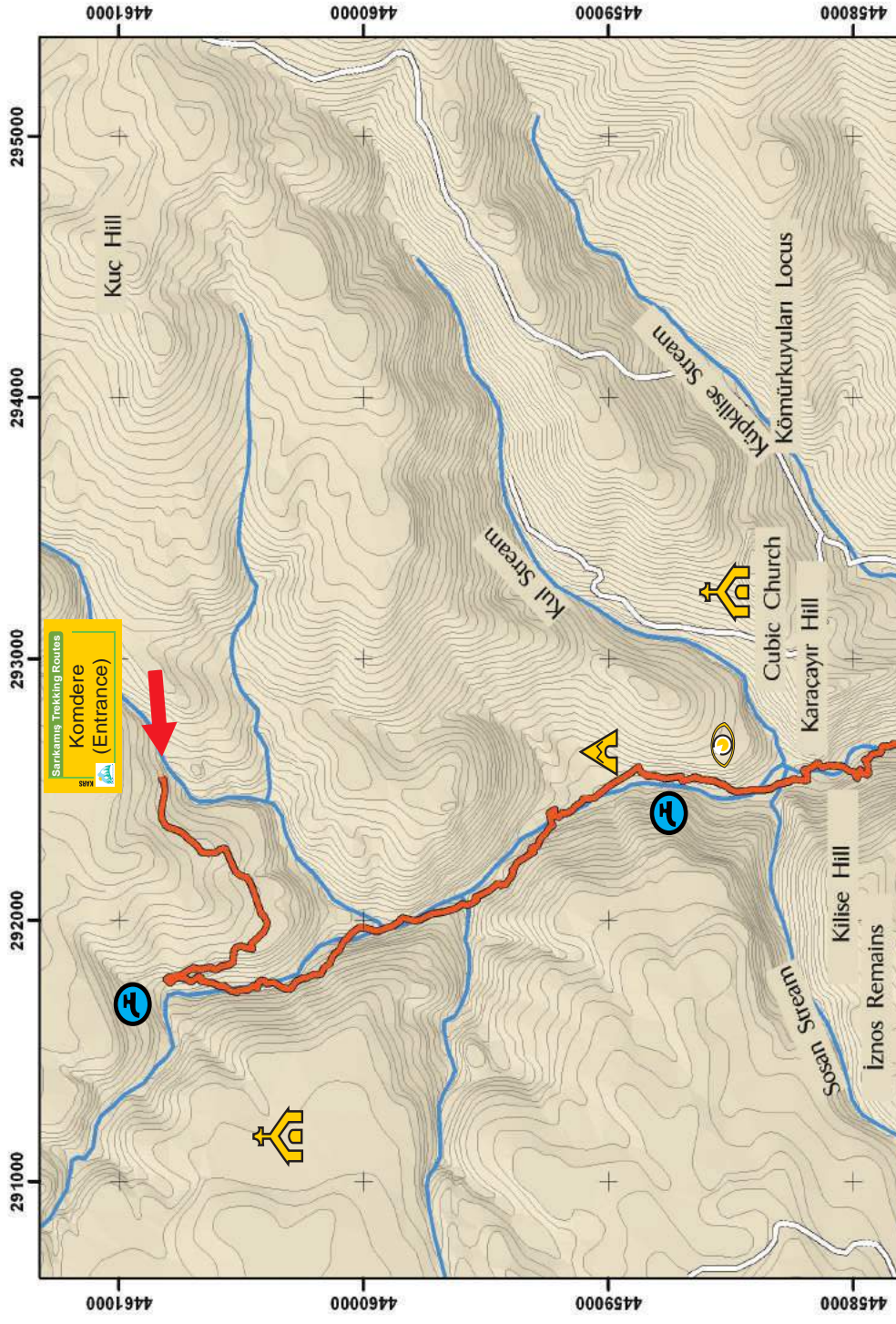


SHORT ROUTES

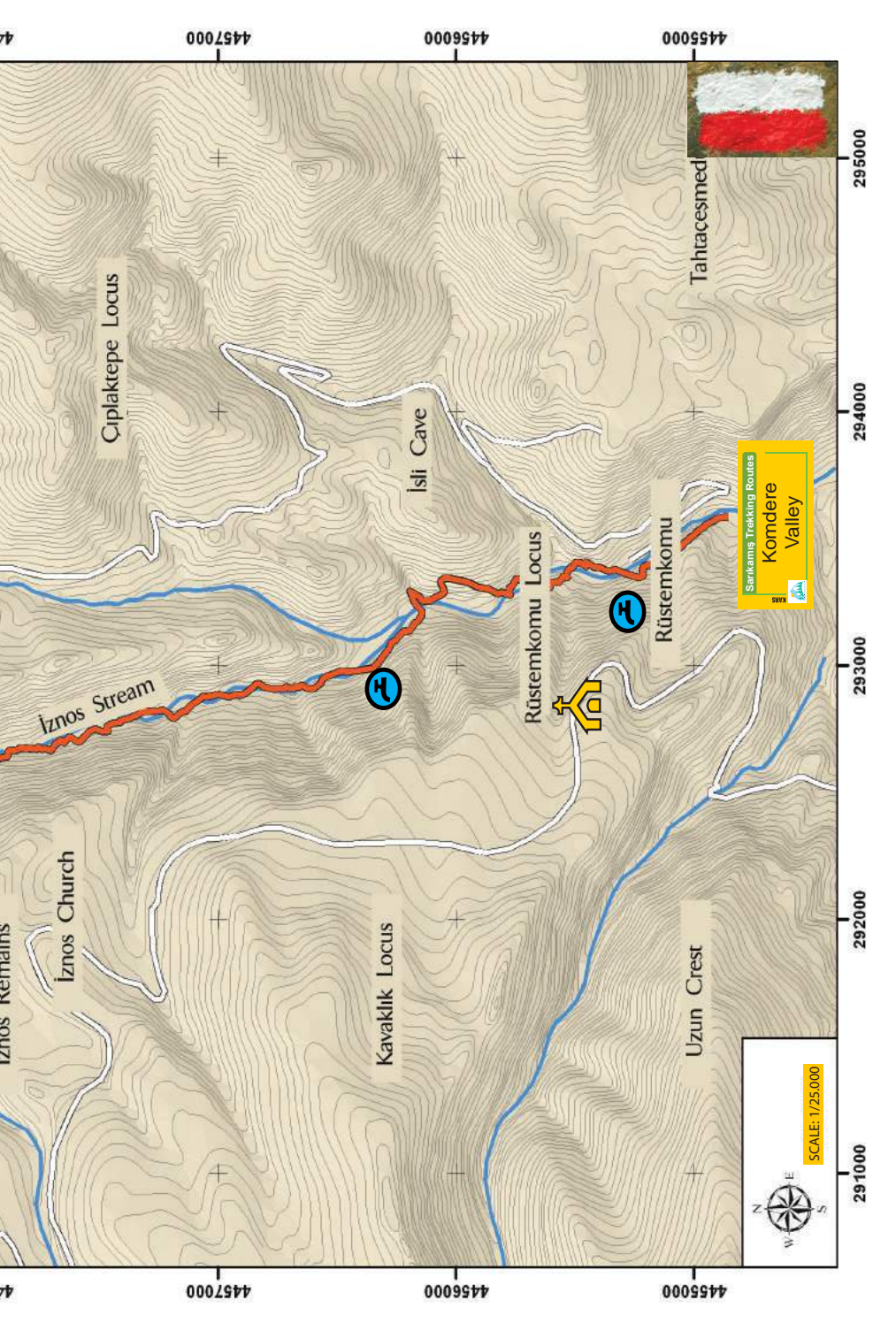
Route 11: Komdere Valley (10 km)

Being one of the most intriguing activities among the trekking routes of Sarıkamış, Komdere Valley charms visitors with its natural and historical beauties. Starting from the İznos segment of the old Sarıkamış – Karakurt motorway, the route runs down the valley through the forest road. Komdere Valley with certain parts narrowing immensely encompasses the flowing currents of İznos Creek, which embraces several streams throughout its journey. The intra-valley trekking trip surrounded by high rocky hills and dense forest cover continues from the left of the streambed. There are few water springs along the route accompanied by the freshening splashing sounds of crystal clear water. The caves and rock-cut tombs once used as living quarters by early settlers on slopes are among the surprises that the route offers. A 10-kilometer walk on the valley base ends at Sarıkamış – Karakurt road crossing that comes in our way once again.

Level of Difficulty : Easy
Max. Altitude : 2258 m
Min. Altitude : 1949 m



Sarikamis Trekking Routes
Komdere
(Entrance)



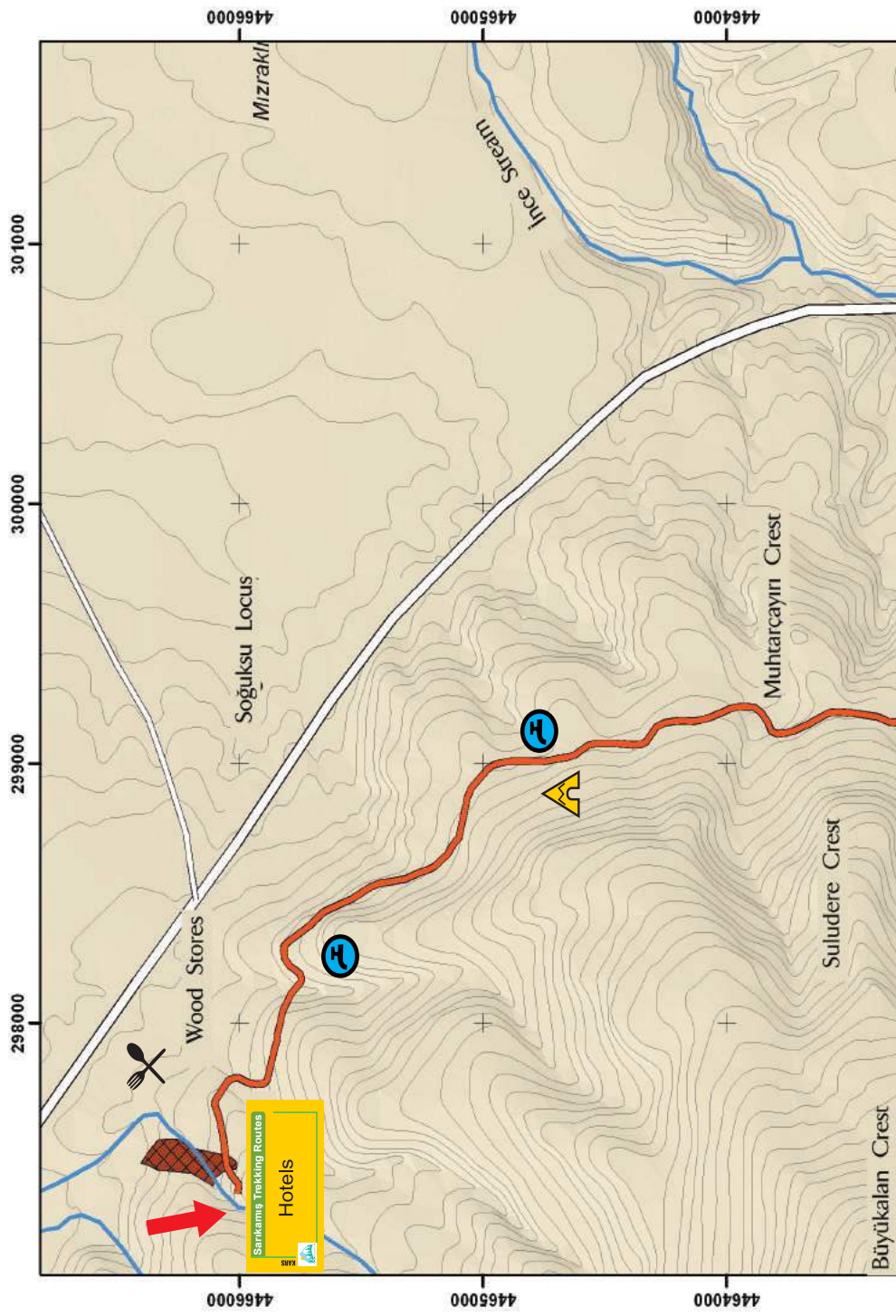


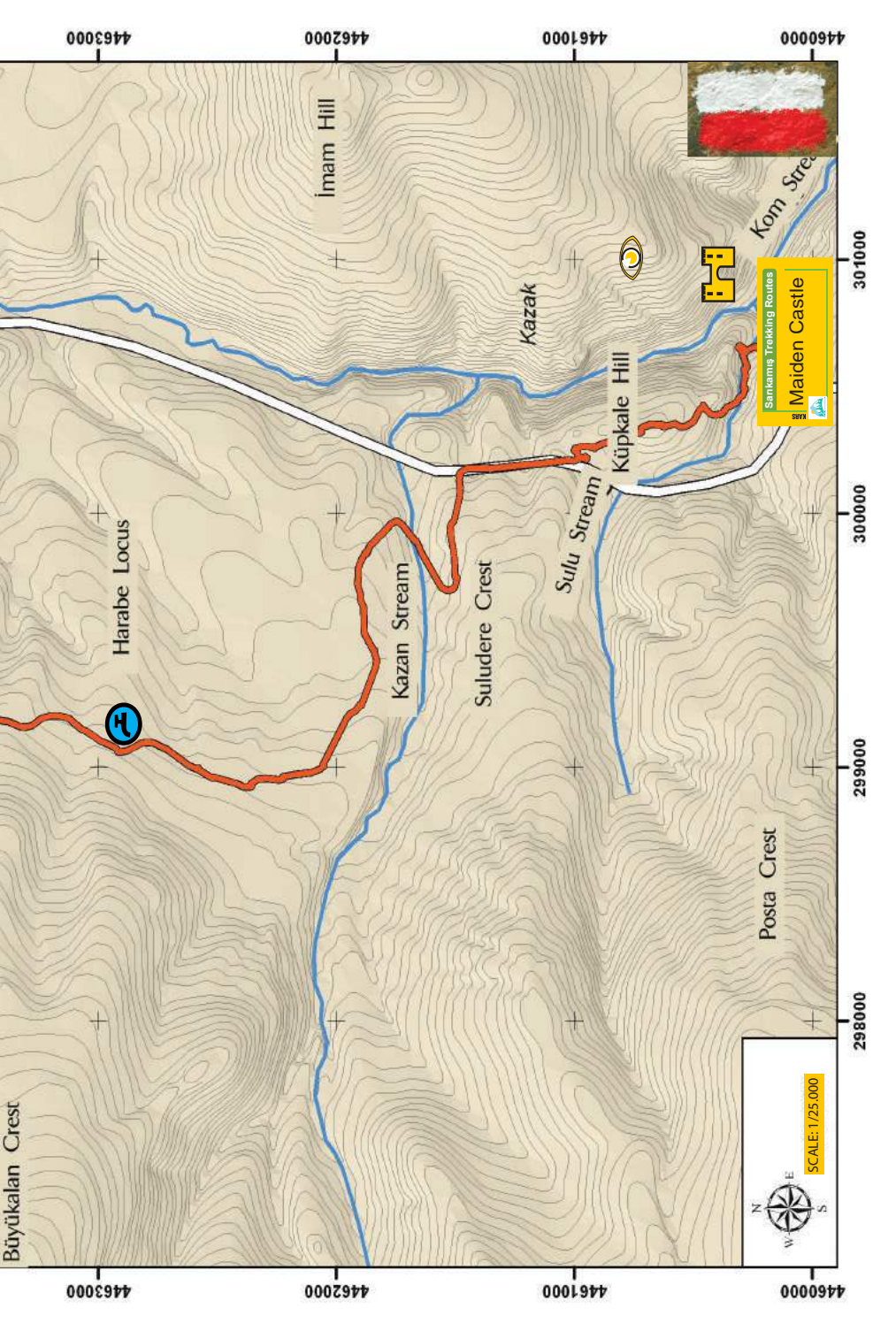
SHORT ROUTES

Route 12: Hotels-Soğuksu- Castle of Maidens (10 km)

This is a nice route walkable by anyone, which proceeds on a straight platform along the forest road. We move forward in the direction of the sign post in Hotels area to meet with old Erzurum-Kars motorway. Hosting massive inrush of picnickers during summer, Soğuksu and Şırşır localities will be our resting places. The journey continues in between pine trees and wildflowers and reaches at the current Erzurum-Kars main highway at kilometre 8. We carefully cross the road and keep on moving under the guidance of signs. At the spot where the forest texture replaces with grassland, gorgeous scenery awaits for the guests, if the weather is sunny. The large panorama encompassing Keklik Stream Valley and Kizlar Castle is also a beautiful photographic image. After paying a visit to the castle, which incorporates an almost completely collapsed old church, we return back in our way along the main road.

Level of Difficulty : Easy
Max. Altitude : 2158 m
Min. Altitude : 1938 m







SHORT ROUTES

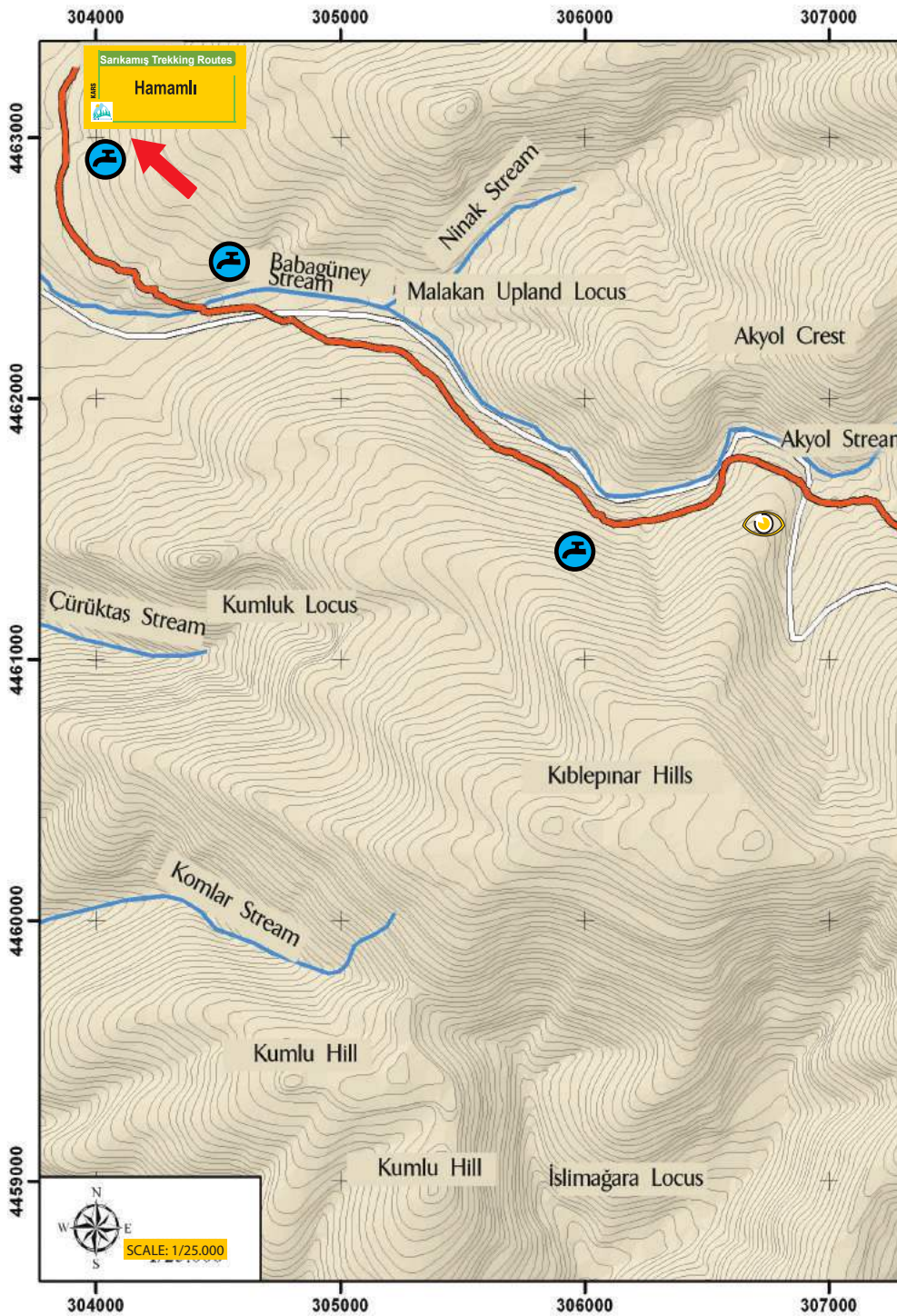
Route 13: Hamamlı Martyrdom - Şehitemin Flatland (10 km)

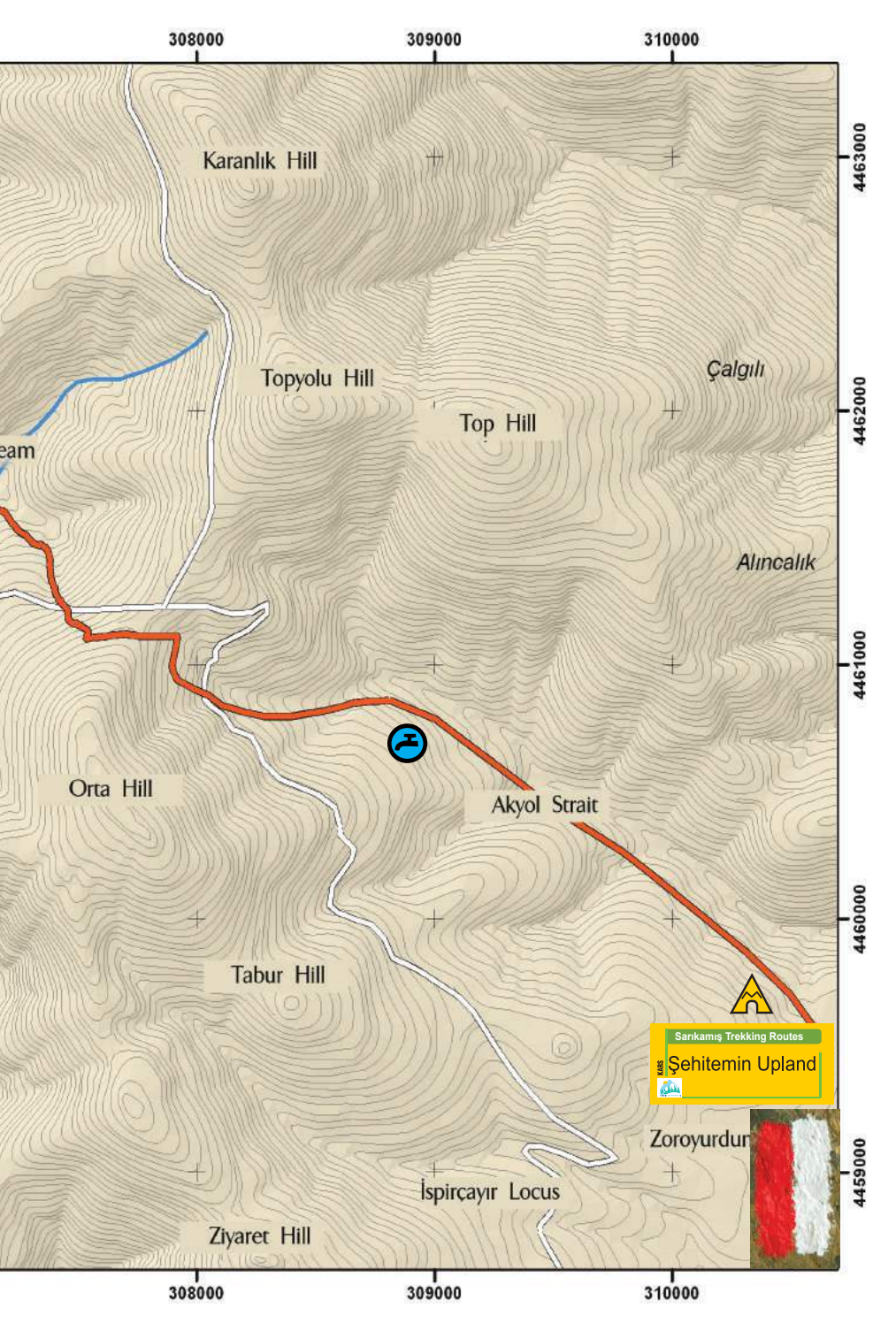
Hamamlı martyrdom, a monument built in memory of those who have lost their lives in Sarıkamış, is the starting point of our activity. We first route down the forest road to reach at Malakan Flatland. then we head towards the Akyol streambed from this area, which is the meeting point of two valleys. The route keeps inclining with our walk intercepted by dense bushes coming in our way, from time to time. At the riverbed formed by two intersecting stream, we prefer turning right once again and enter the forestland a short while later. With the help of signs, we advance through dense tree plantation to meet with the road leading to the flatland. Now we are on the crest located at the summit where Ortatepe and Topyolu hills rise. From this point, we can see the Sarıkamış District and the flatland lying ahead both at the same time. The time comes for walking down to the valley, named as Akyol Strait by local people. We first enter the forest and reach at the streambed. The tractor trail merging with the hiking path on the valley floor leads us to şehitemin Flatland. This huge plain expanding on the slopes of Mt. Aladag is still fairly cold even during summer.

Level of Difficulty : Advanced

Max. Altitude : 2650 m

Min. Altitude : 2241 m







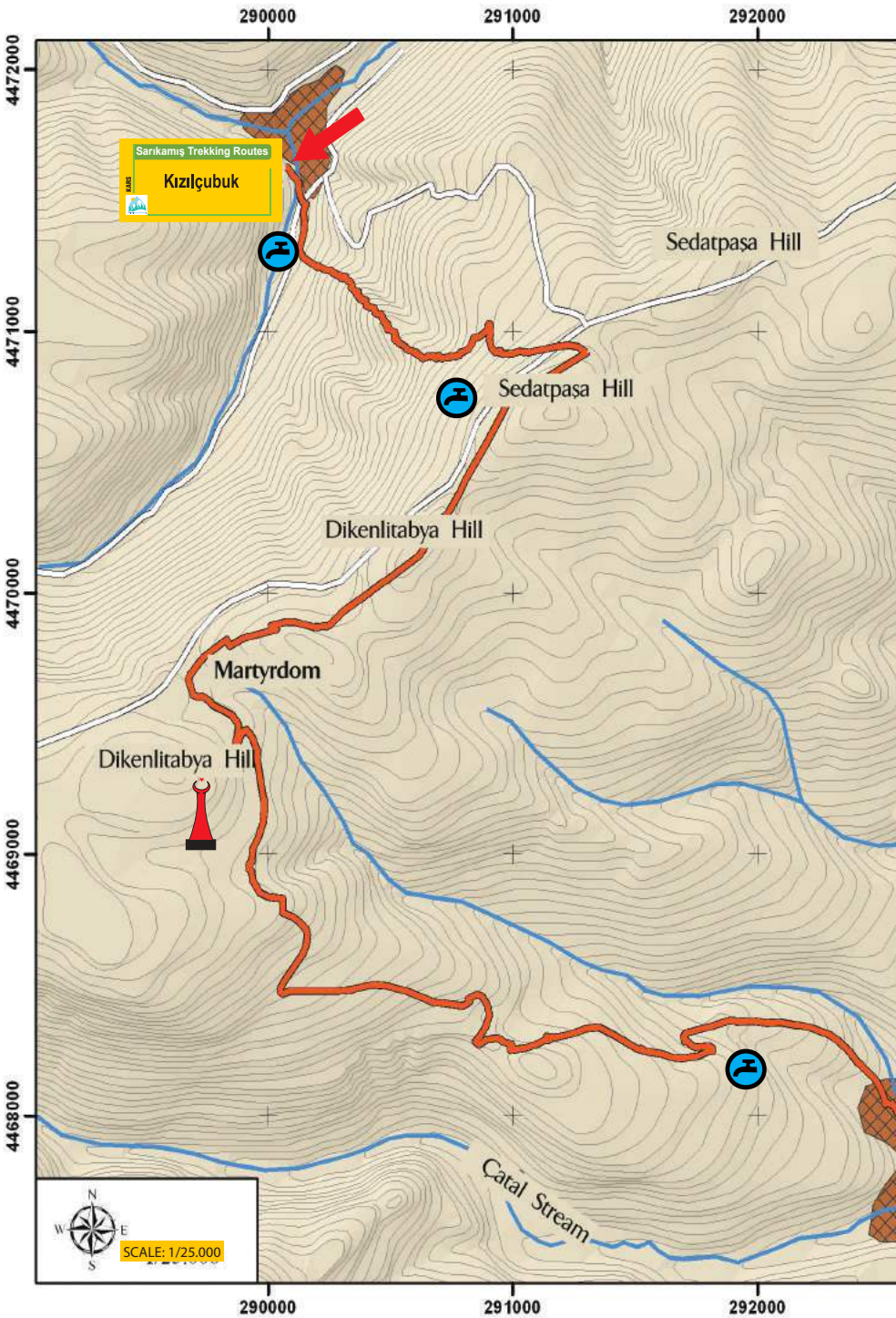
Cowpats used as Fuel

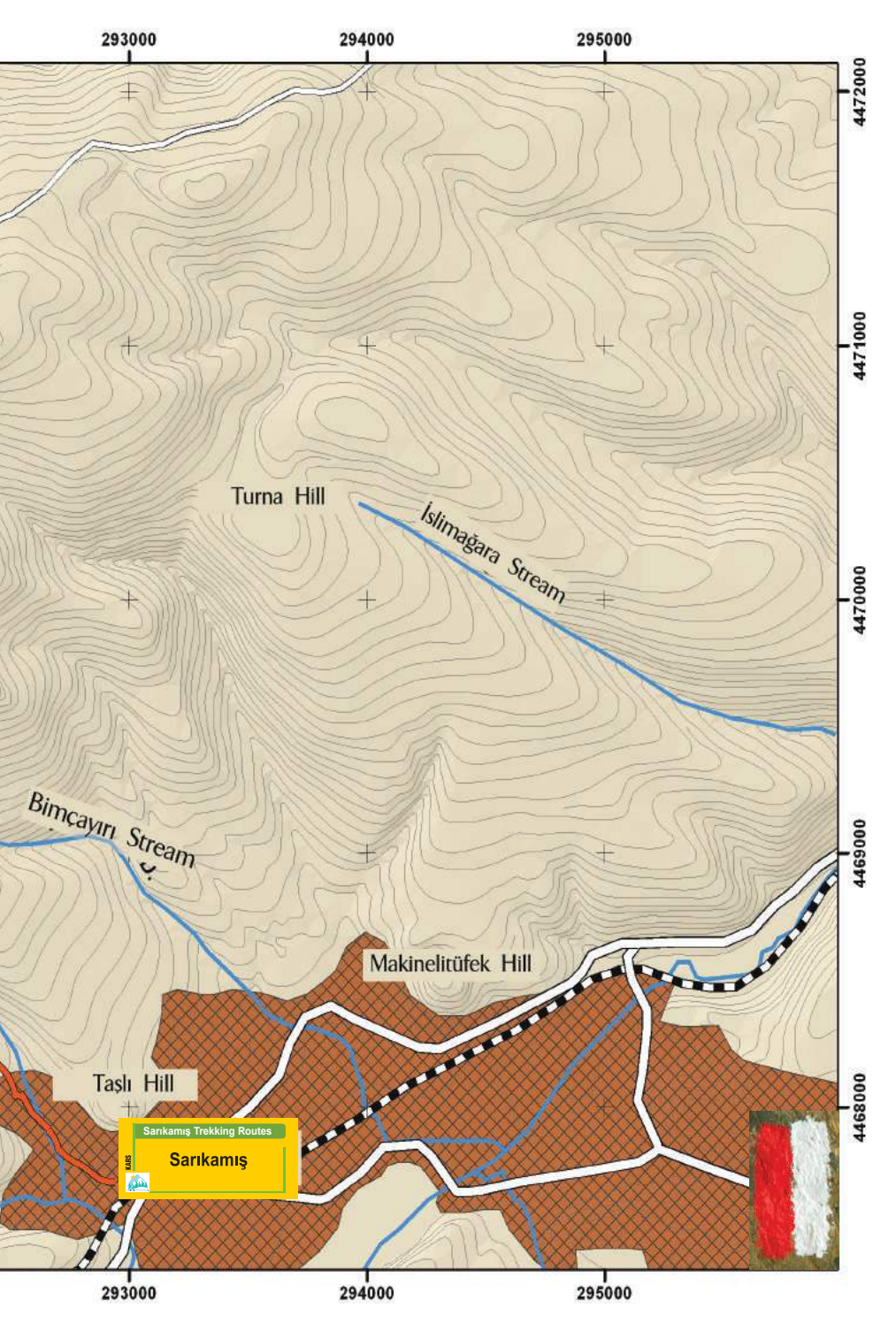
SHORT ROUTES

Route 14: Kızılçubuk- Martyrdom - Sarıkamış (10 km)

This route follows the same route as explained for route 3 above until the sign post at Sedat Paşa Hill and reaches at the summit through the forest road. In the grassland we arrive, this time we enter an earth road after turning right, instead of taking the path. We enjoy the beautiful landscape while moving on a ridge facing the flatland at Sarıkamış's border with Erzurum Province. After walking about two kilometers, we arrive at the Dikenli Tabya Martyrdom passing by the natural gas pipeline. After this plot, the land will decline to Upper Sarıkamış zone along the earth road and our journey will eventually end at the Martyrdom of Unknown Soldiers.

Level of Difficulty : Moderate
Max. Altitude : 2503 m
Min. Altitude : 2092 m





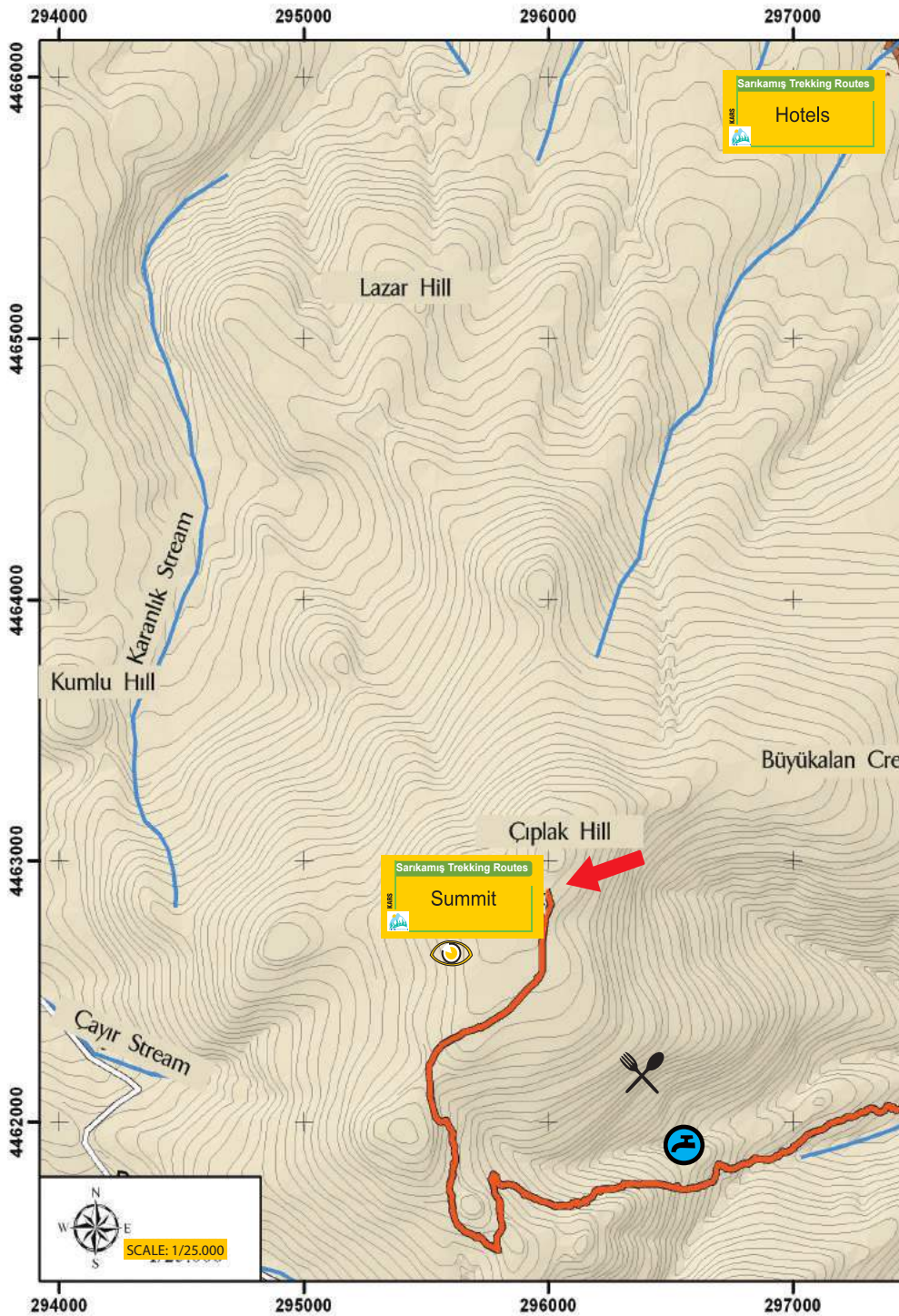


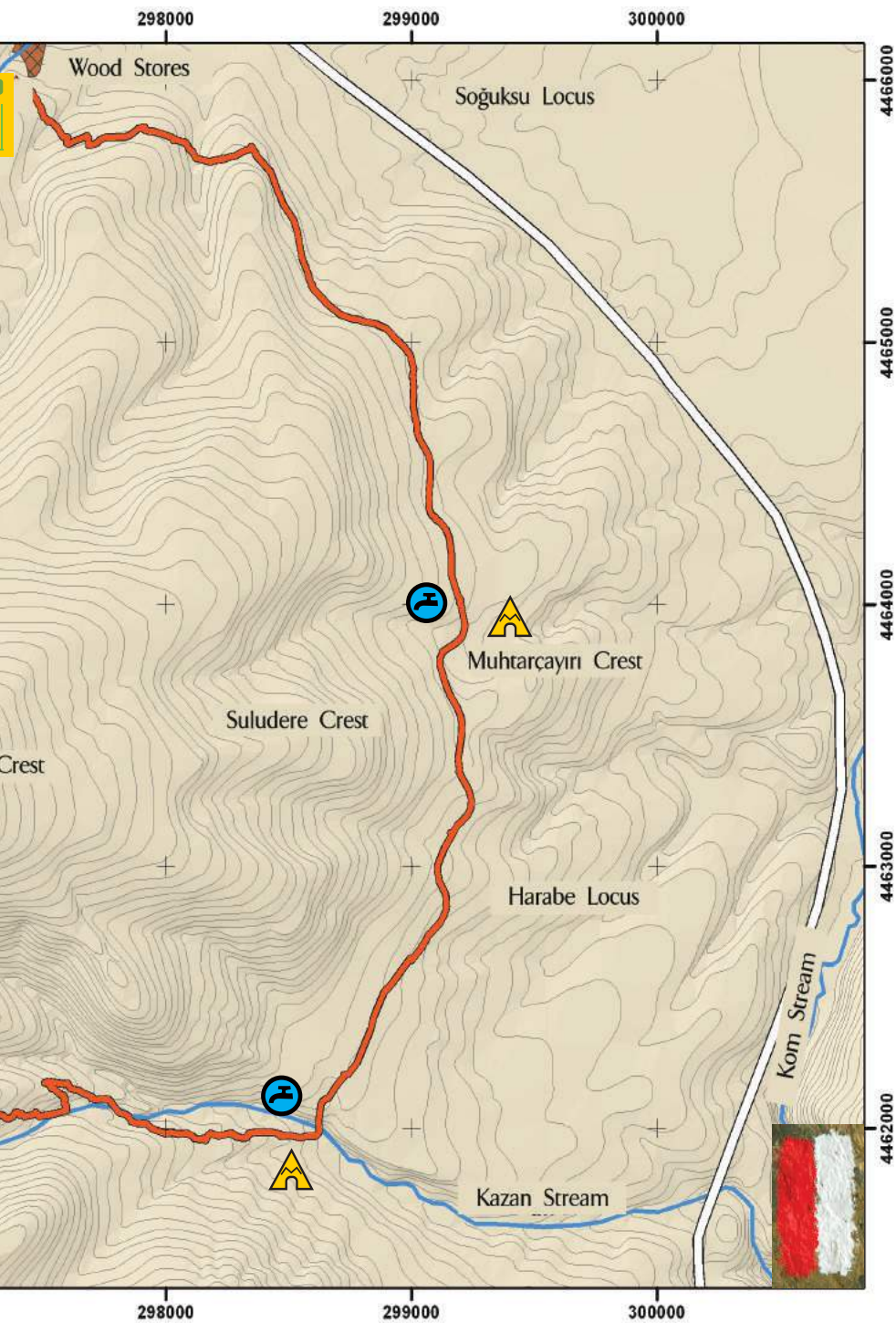
SHORT ROUTES

Routes 15: Summit-Şırşır-Soğuksu- Hotels (12 km)

This route also starts from the Bayrak-tepe summit, being the highest peak of the ski-centre. We first travel on a declining slope for 200 meters and then enter the forest road to the right at the three-way fork. This road, which also leads to Village Mescitli, continues all along the ridge. So we hike in an oxygen-rich environment populated by dense yellow pine trees. After moving about 2 kilometers, we submit to the guidance of red white marks turning to the right. The route then enters a declining stance and twirls and scrambles on a path paved with dry leaves. It is essential here to remind that spots that are not exposed to direct sunlight may be very cold and snowy. This part of the route which meets with former Kars – Erzurum motorway at Şırşır locality is also a nice camping site. The remainder of the route advances on a straight line and passes through Soğuksu picnic area first and then reaches at hotels area.

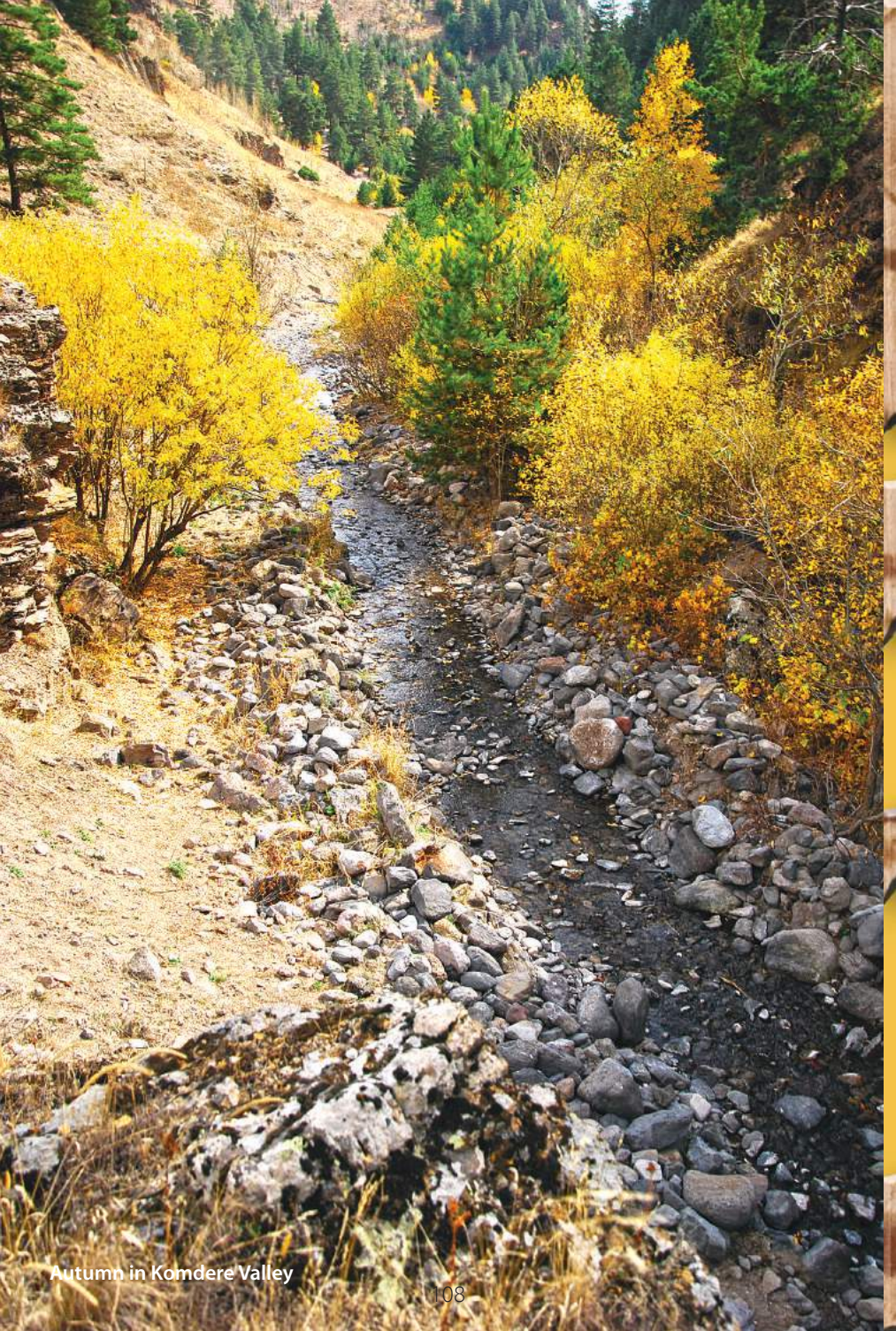
Level of Difficulty : Moderate
Max. Altitude : 2665 m
Min. Altitude : 2147 m











SHORT ROUTES

Route 16: Summit-Hotels-Sarıkamış (12 km)

We have described this route, which requires hiking on a permanently declining slope from the forest road till the hotels, earlier under section dealing with route 5. After the hotels, we take the route 6 partly till the old ammunition storage. The signpost standing at the spot we arrive guides as towards the arrow marked direction of Sarıkamış, so we make the turn keep moving on the forest road and finish our activity at a location close to the Sarıkamış Hospital. We strongly recommend that you prefer this route rather during spring and autumn, because it gets frozen in the winter.

Level of Difficulty : Moderate
Max. Altitude : 2665 m
Min. Altitude : 2092 m

294000

295000

296000

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4466000

4465000

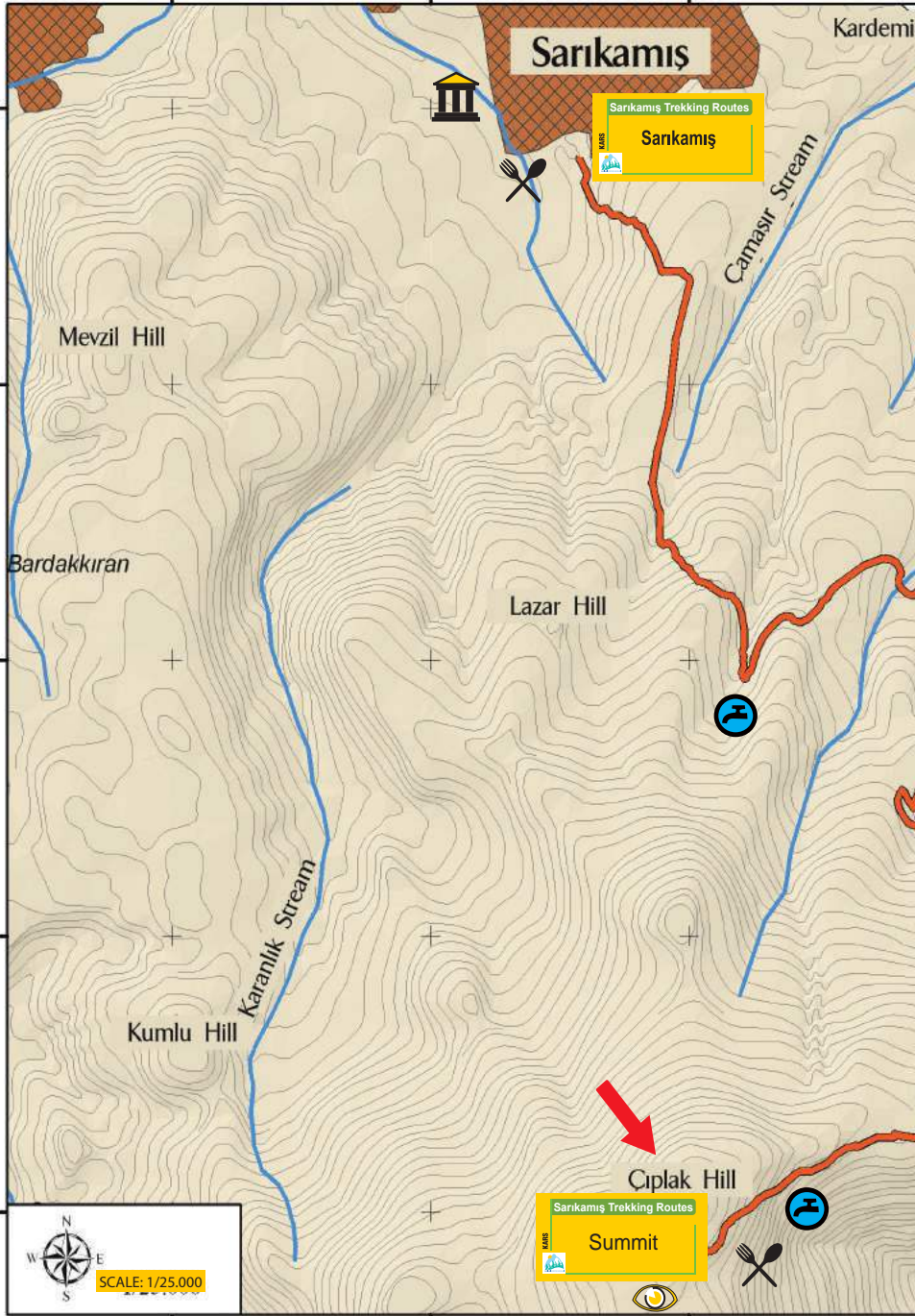
4464000

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Sarikamis

Sarikamis Trekking Routes
Sarikamis

Mevzil Hill

Bardakkiran

Lazar Hill

Kumlu Hill

Karanlık Stream

Çamasır Stream

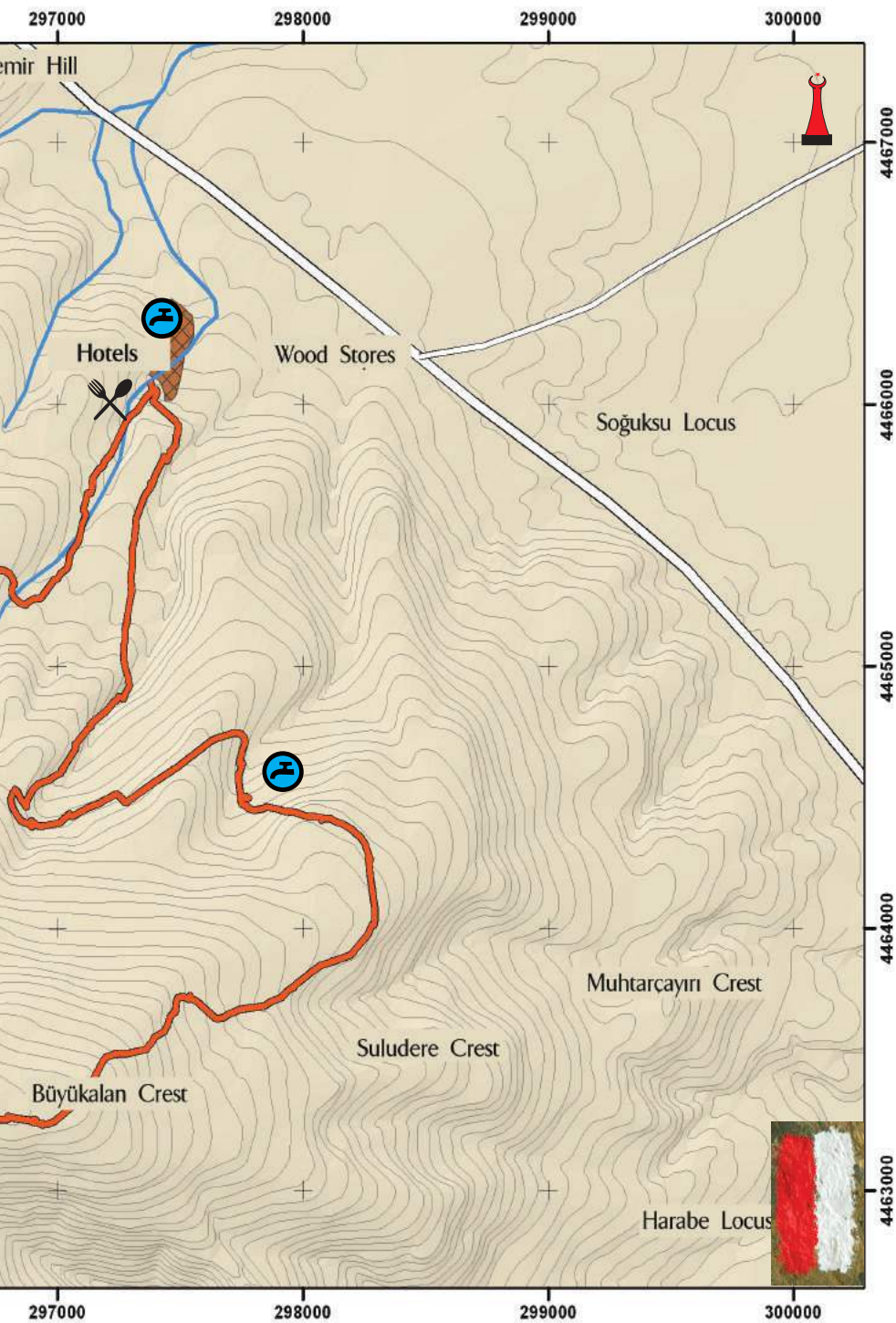
Cıplak Hill

Sarikamis Trekking Routes
Summit



SCALE: 1/25,000

Kardemir





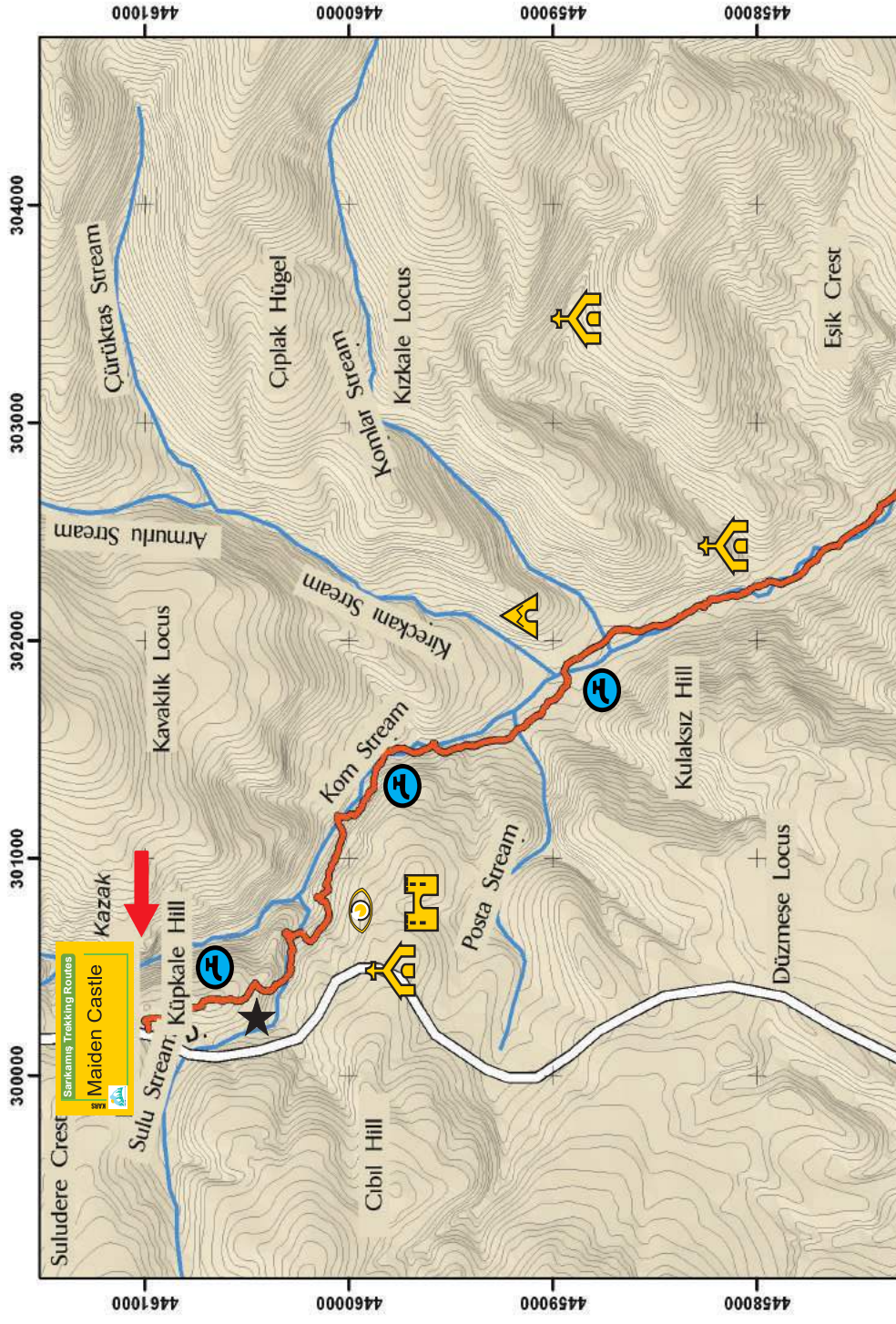
Agyolu Strait-Şehitemin Flatland

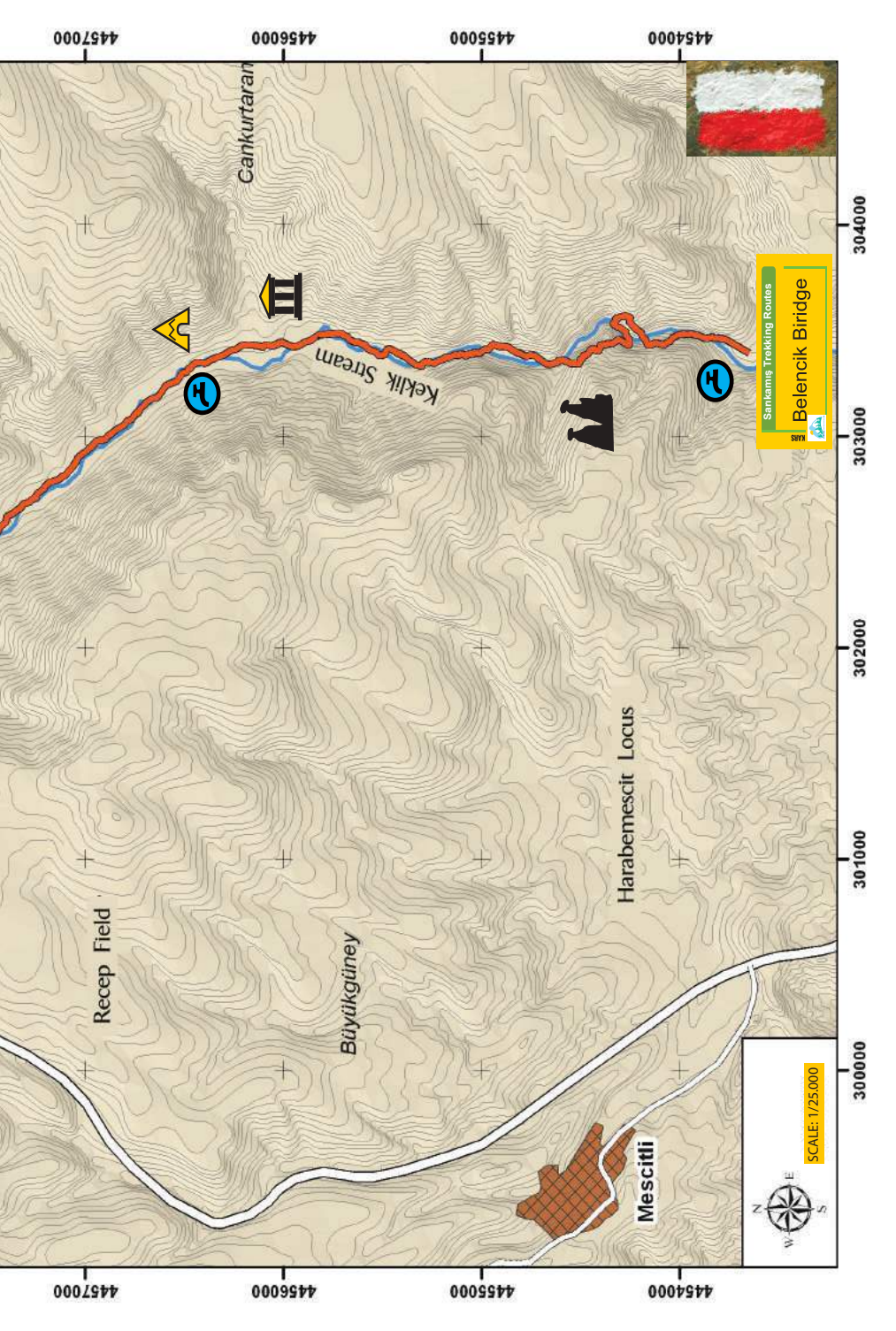
SHORT ROUTES

Route 17: Castle of Maidens-Belencik Bridge (14 km)

How about a journey in the heart of nature that crosses Keklik Valley in part? Having provided homesteads for countless nations since the ancient ages, Keklik Valley is a prominent location with its historical places. The Castle of Maidens, located at a spot dominating the entire valley shall be our point of start. Climbing down a stony pathway, we head towards the streambed at first. After crossing the creek, the highly significant marks on the path will be our guide. Turning to the right nearby the ranch house we arrive, we move towards the valley floor again. After a few stream crossings, we follow a forest road with the streambed left on our right. A short while after leaving the scattered houses and old church at Kilise locality behind, the valley bed starts narrowing in width. On a steep rocky yet visually pleasant terrain, we keep moving and reach at Şehitemin (Alakilise) Village. The valley floor that we re-enter brings us to the Aysan Plain first and Belencik Bridge next, at the end of a pretty decent journey among high peaks.

Level of Difficulty : Moderate
Max. Altitude : 1938 m
Min. Altitude : 1614 m





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4456000

4455000

4454000

304000

303000

302000

301000

300000

4457000

4456000

4455000

4454000

Cankurtaran

Keklik Stream

Recep Field

Büyükgüney

Harabemescit Locus

Mesciti

Santamsis Trekking Routes
Belencik Biridge

SCALE: 1/25,000





SHORT ROUTES

Route 18:

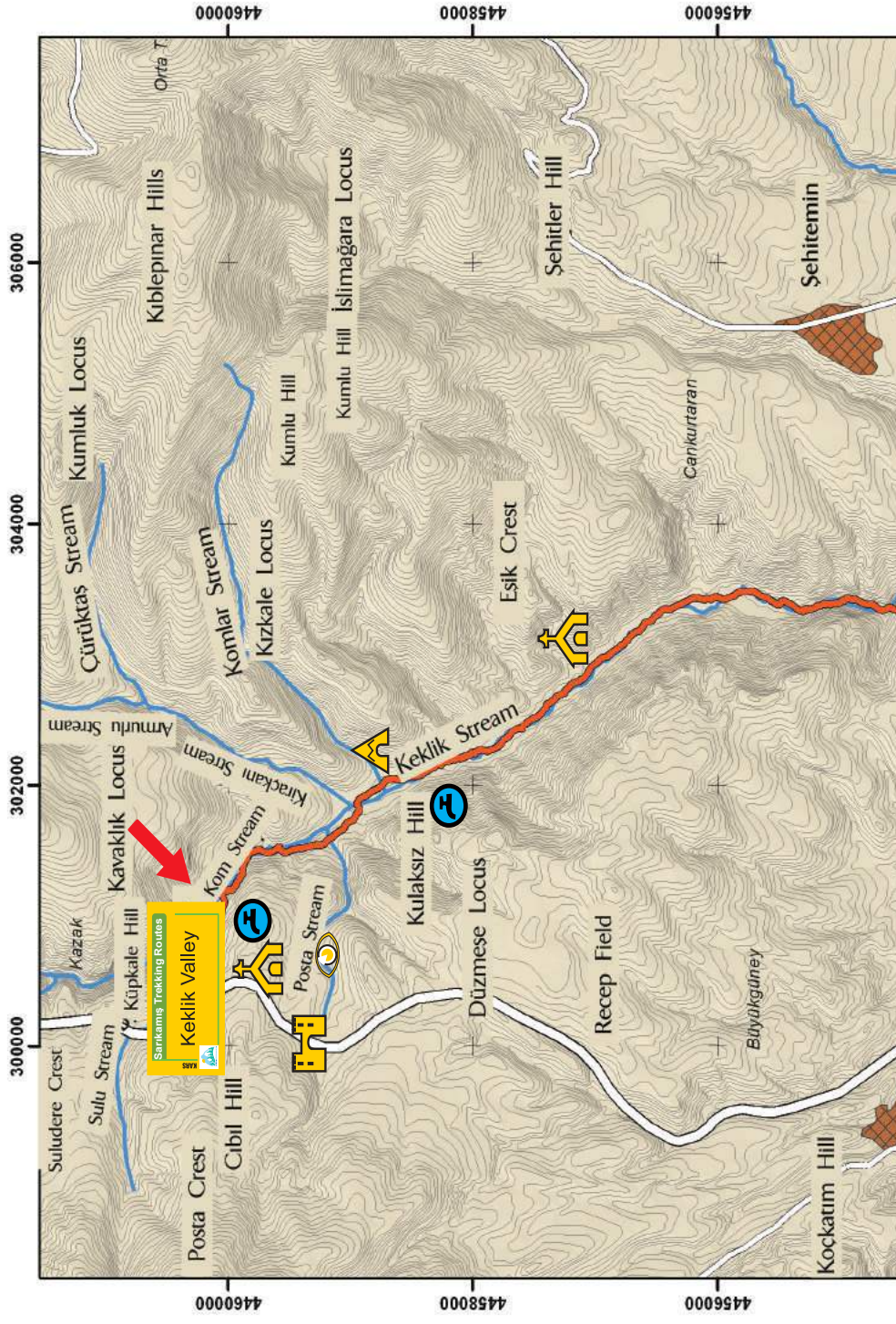
Keklik Valley-Aras River (16 km)

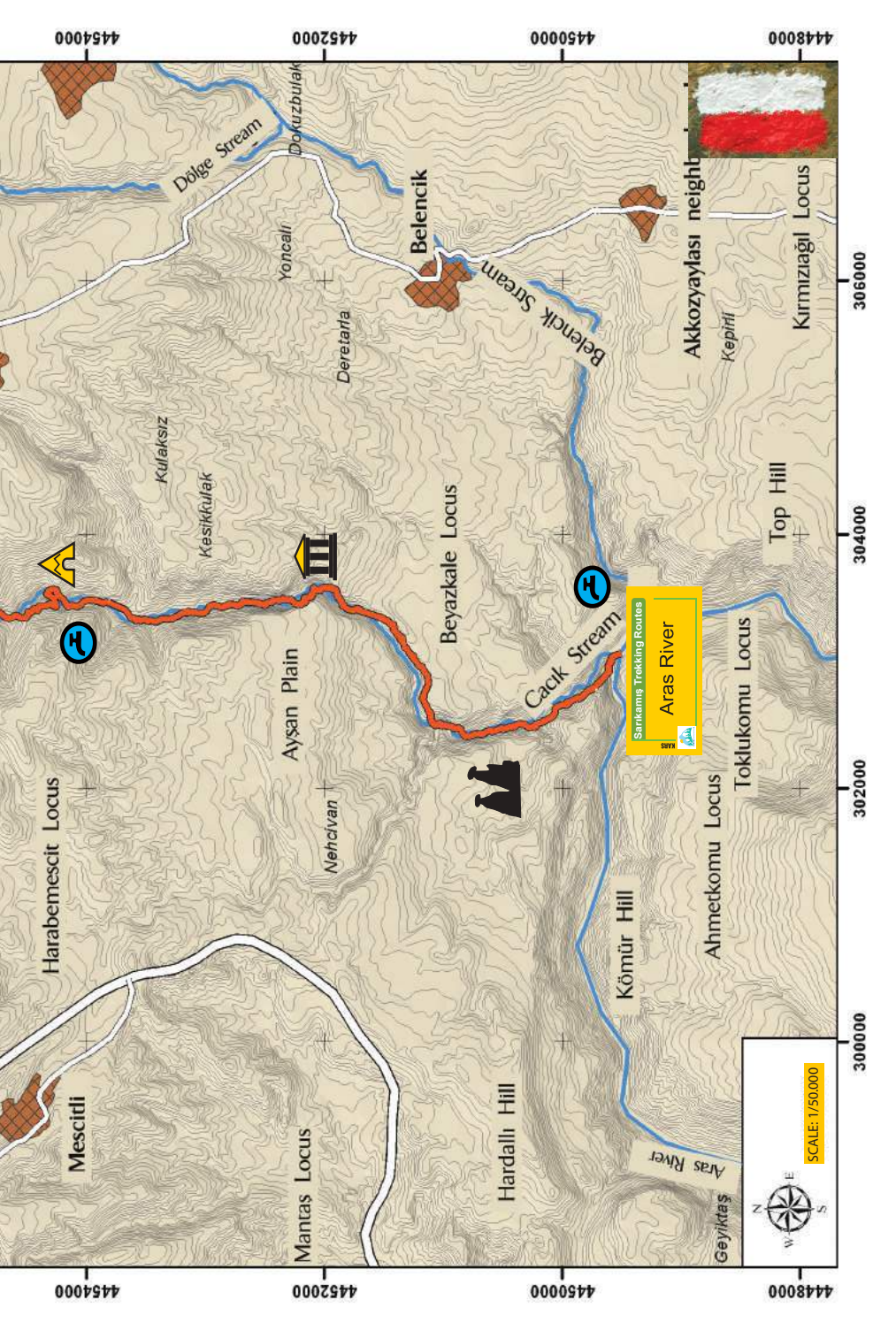
The area where a trout farm is located on route Kars-Erzurum highway, is the starting point of Keklik Valley. As the first two kilometers of the valley are too steep and full of bear hibernation quarters, we recommend this route only to professional trekkers. We move toward the streambed after leaving behind the zone called "Crying Rocks" by the locals at valley entrance. It should be noted that it would be hard to hike in this area surrounded by an extremely dense plant cover. Merging with route 17 immediately below the Castle of Maidens, the route transforms into a wet route due to numerous stream crossings you will be performing until you reach at Belencik Bridge. Due to the levels raising especially during spring, it should be reminded that water crossings will be tough. Extending in a wild and charming geography stuck between tall rock blocks, Keklik Stream meets Aras River at kilometre 16. Having a high flow rate, this river allows passage only at some certain spots and towards the end of summer. Once you pass to the other side, you will directly enter the Kağızman-Karakurt main road. If the river flows crazy not allowing access, the pathway climbing up from the left after 200 meters of valley exit will lead you to the Belencik Village.

Level of Difficulty : Strenuous

Max. Altitude : 1977 m

Min. Altitude : 1427 m





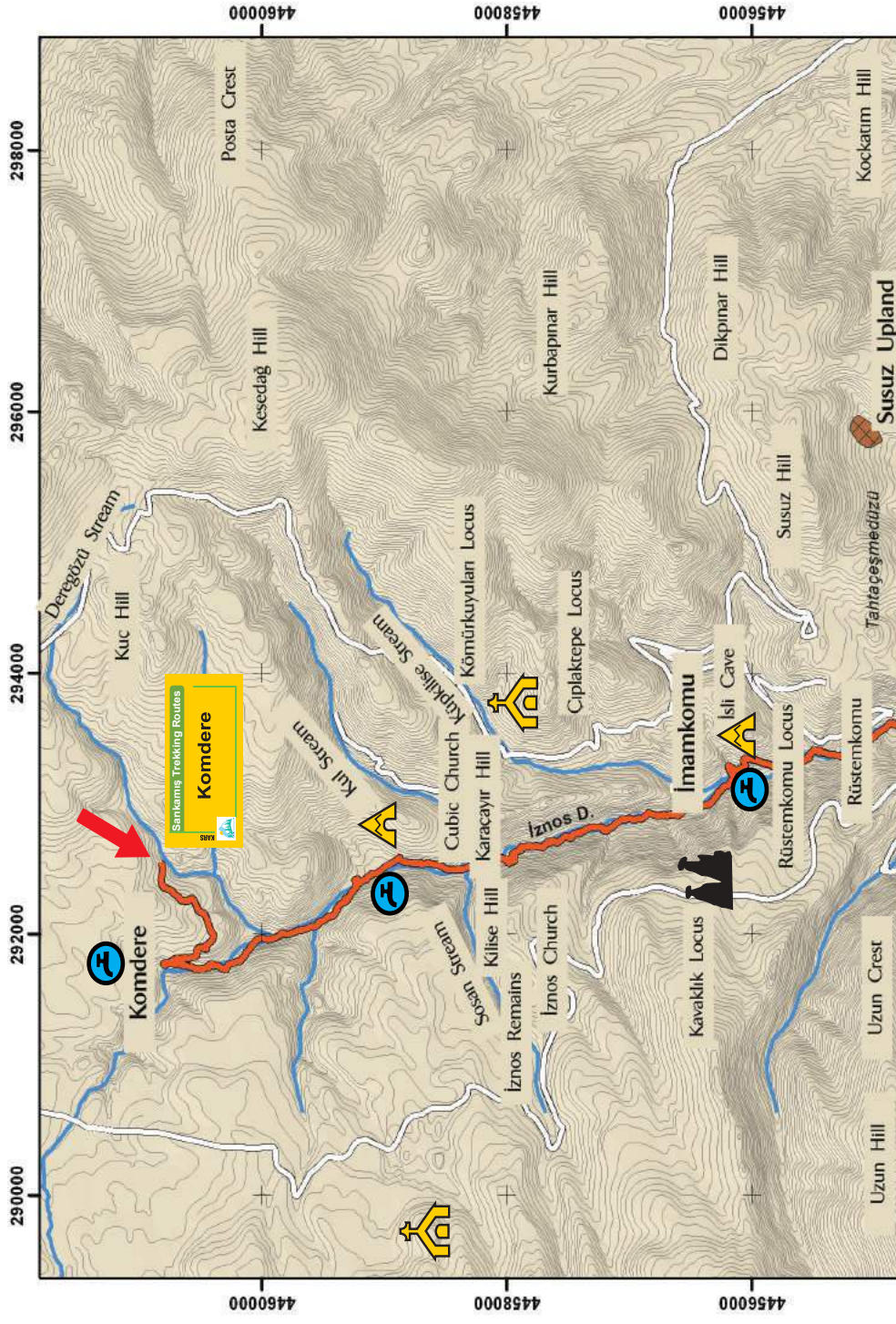


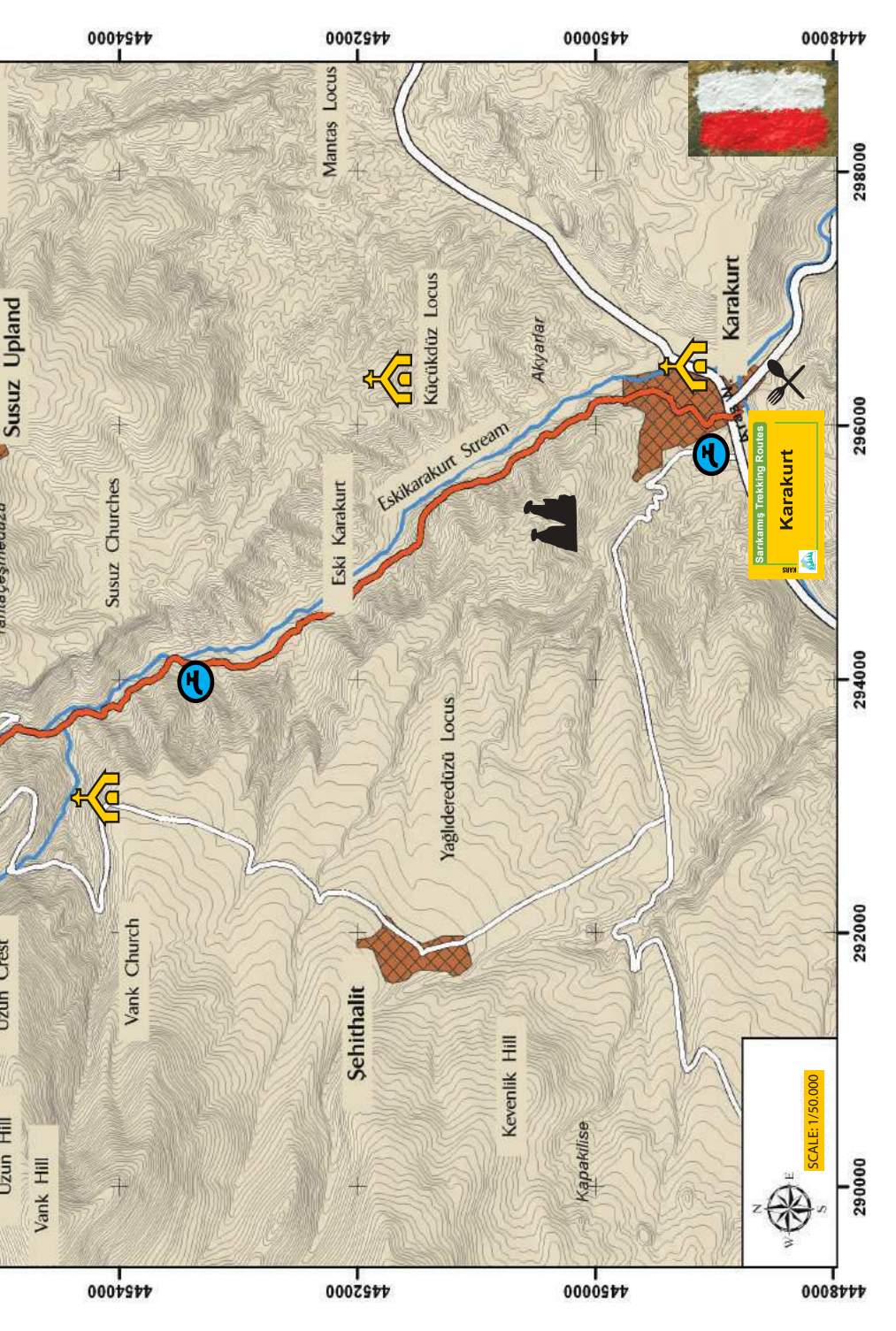
SHORT ROUTES

Route 19: Komdere-İmamkomu-Karakurt (18 km)

This route, which is only advisable to self-confident, experienced nature lovers, is fairly long. This exquisite journey, the first part of which we have explained in Route 11 above, will motivate you with its extraordinary visual beauties during spring season. After the signpost you will meet at 10th kilometer, Komdere Valley starts broadening gradually. This geography, which accommodates historical rock-cut residential units, will expand through an earth road, with streambed on your left. After İmamkomu locality, you will come to coincide with Cappadocia-style capped earth pillar formations. The volunteers may prefer to walk on the pathway shaded by trees, along the stream. There is a church standing intact against time at Karakurt town you will be arriving at 18th kilometre.

Level of Difficulty : Difficult
Max. Altitude : 2258 m
Min. Altitude : 1470 m

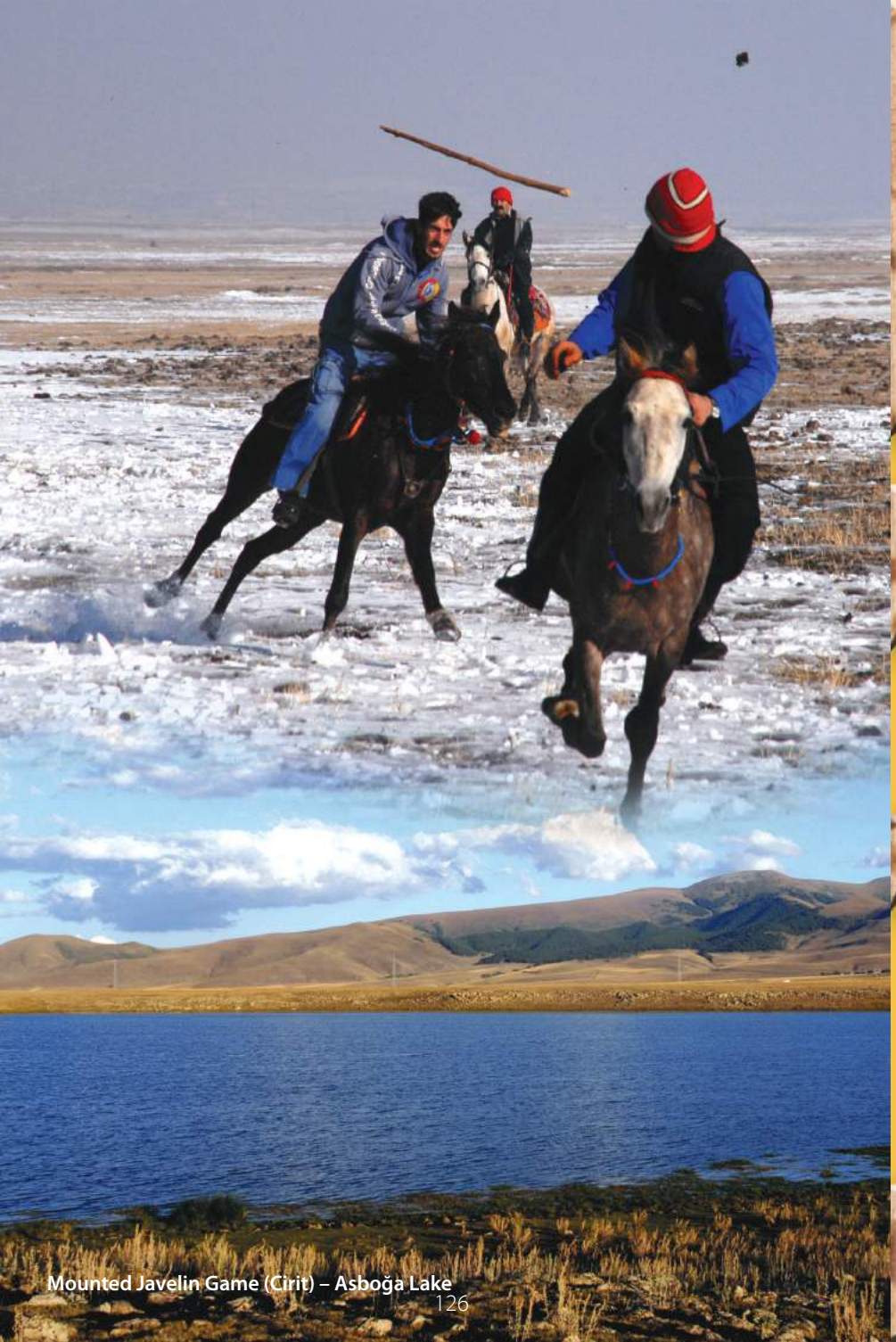






Inkaya Valley





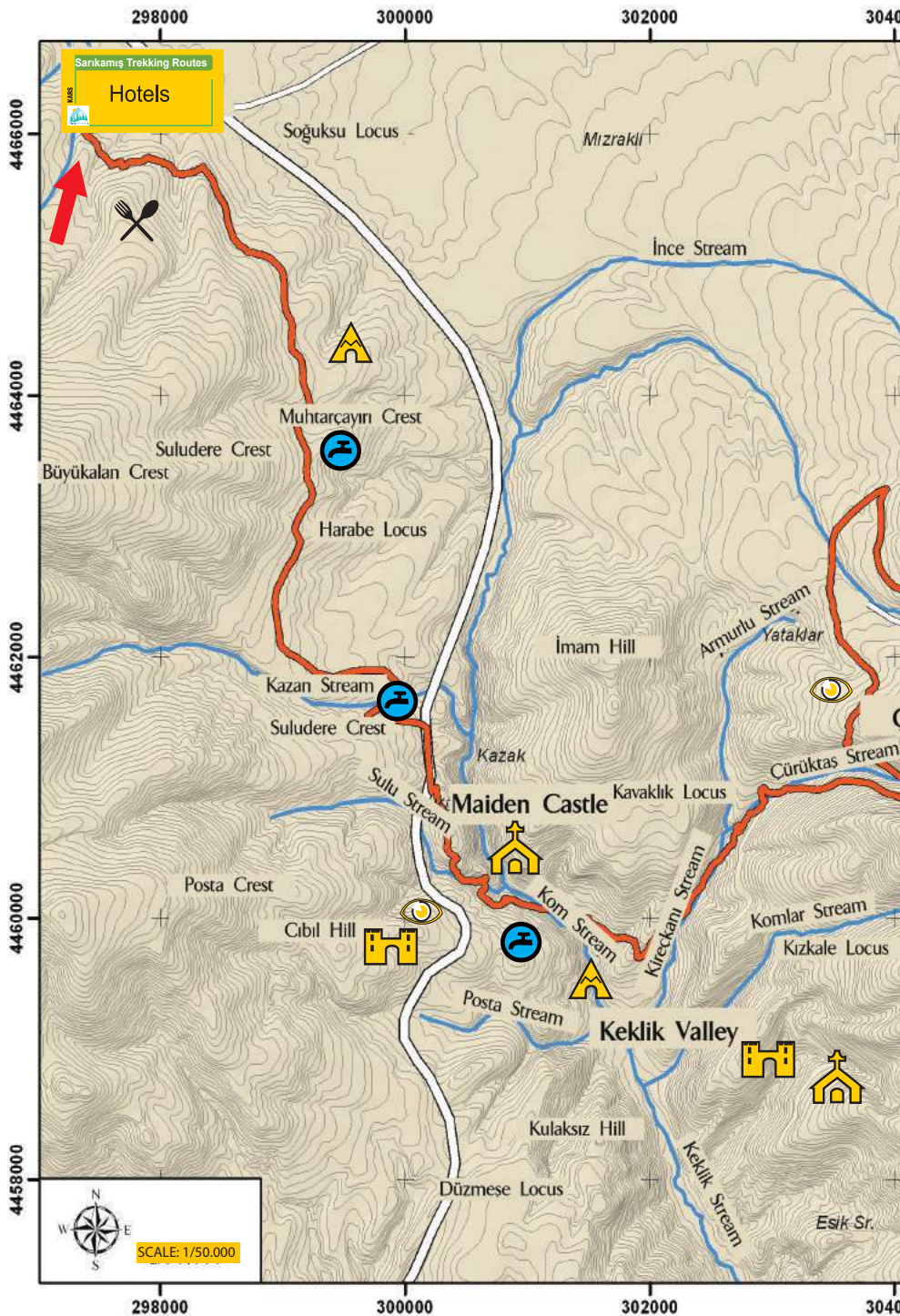
Mounted Javelin Game (Cirit) – Asboğa Lake

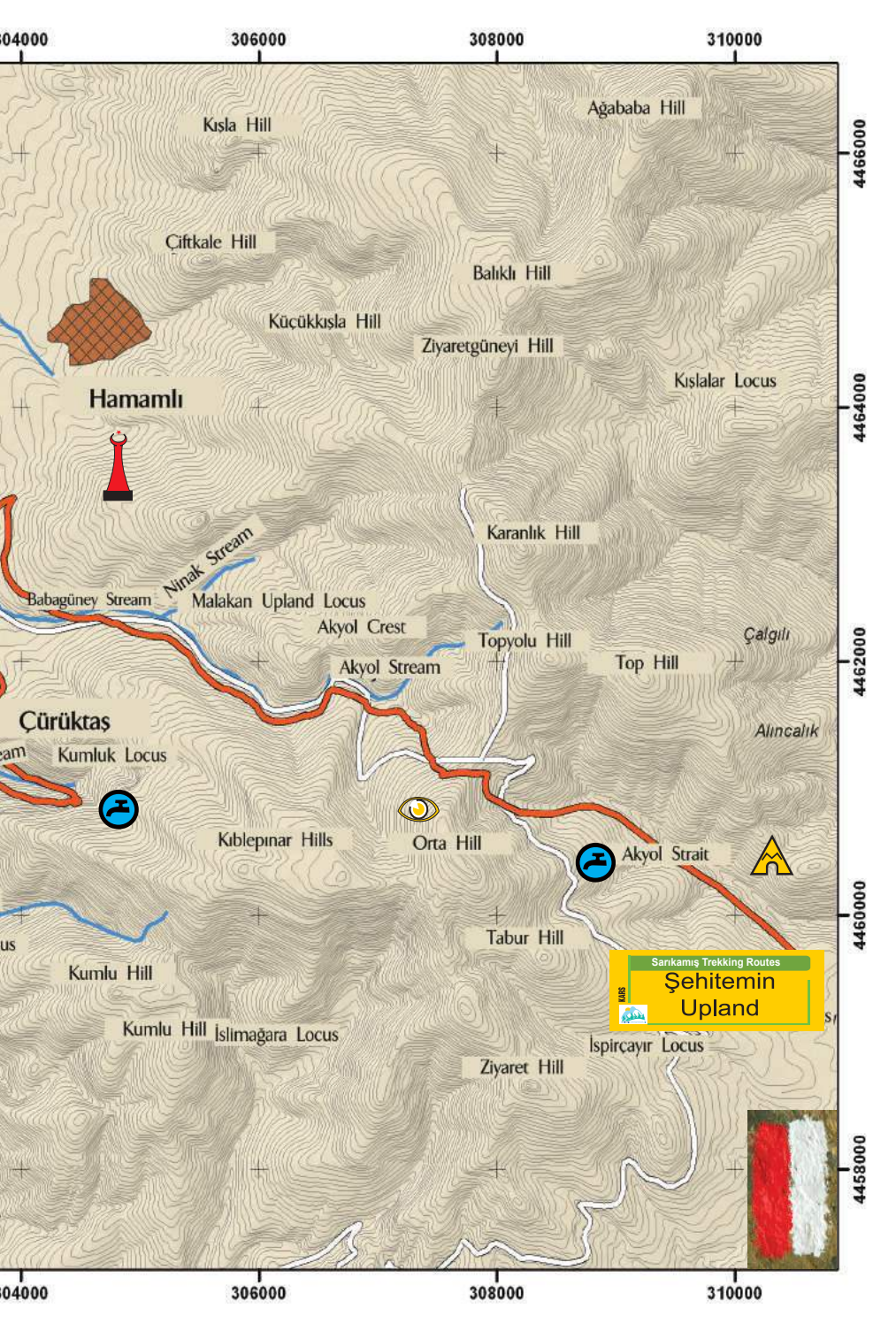
LONG ROUTES

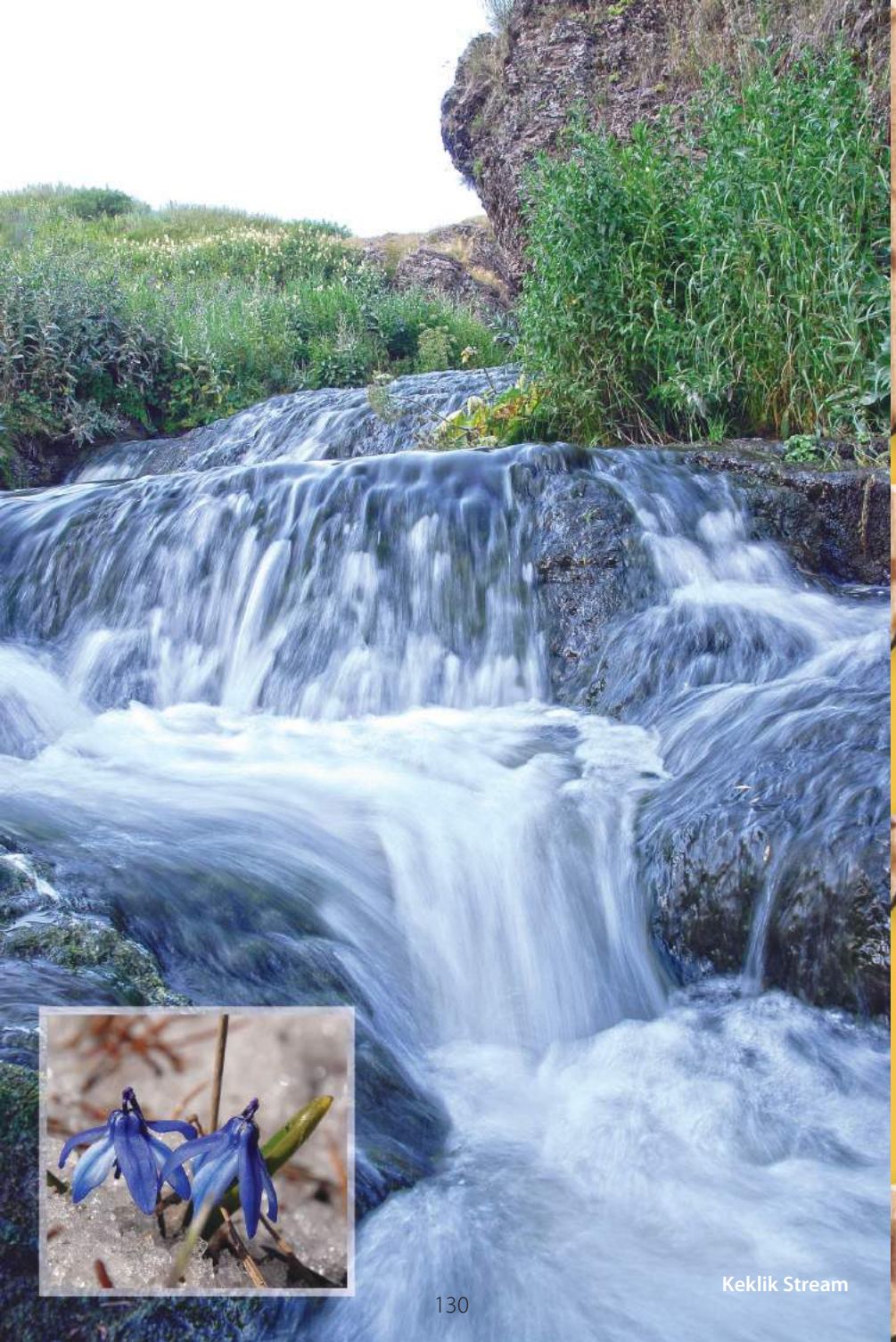
**Route 1:
Hotels- Castle of Maidens-Keklik
Valley-Çürüktaş-Hamamlı Village
Şehitemin Flatland (32 km)**

Designable as a two-day long camp activity, details of this event can be found in previous sections. We recommend that you use Çürüktaş locality or Keklik Valley as the campsite. It should be reminded that the terrain keeps continually inclined after Keklik Stream. The hardest part of this route is the scary steep slope at Hamamlı-Ortatepe climax. You will have a little bit tiring but equally pleasant trekking experience. Please note that people living in the şatlands start moving by the end of August.

Level of Difficulty :High
Max. Altitude : 2650 m
Min. Altitude : 1802 m





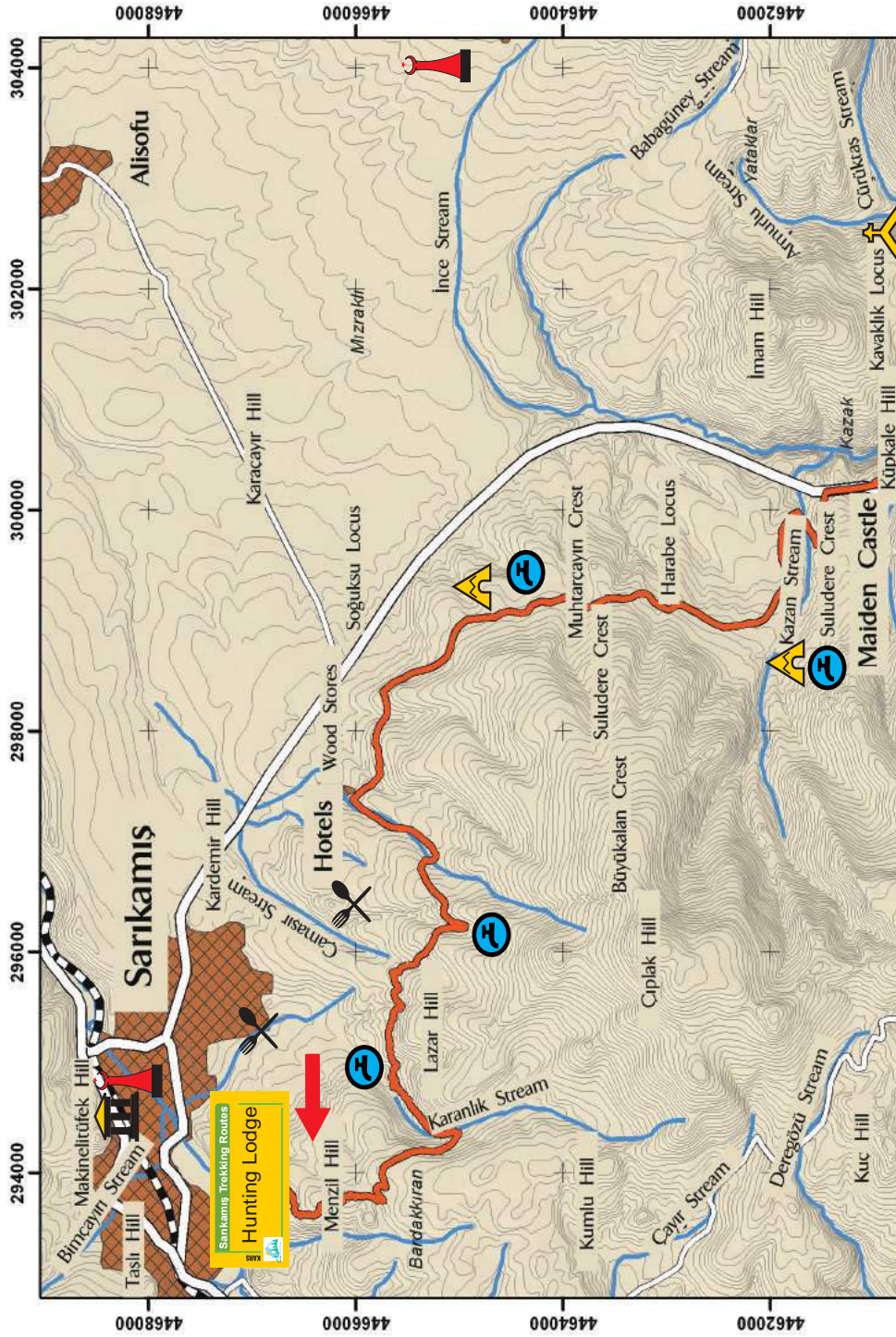


LONG ROUTES

**Route 2:
Hunting Lodge-Hotels-Summit-
Şırşır- Castle of Maidens-Keklik
Valley- Belencik Bridge (32 km)**

This is the longest route amongst Sarıkamış trekking routes. It is an activity that lasts in a total of 3 days, presuming that it is planned with one-night accommodation and one-night camping. Anyone is welcome to try this route, which doesn't pose many challenges. The only attention should be given to the water passages on Keklik Stream.

Level of Difficulty: Difficult (
Because of length)
Max. Altitude : 2158 m
Min. Altitude : 1614 m





CYCLING ROUTES



Route 1: Hotels-Karanlıkdere-Katerina's Hunting Lodge-Hotels (18 km)

Drawing a large circle, this stage of cycling route follows the forest roads until Katarina's Hunting Lodge. Later on, it passes through Sarıkamış downtown and reaches at Hotels area. It should be reminded that two parts of the route between Hotels-Karanlıkdere and Karanlıkdere-Katarina's Hunting Lodge consist of slopes. After these inclinations you may use little refreshment breaks to enhance your motivation.



Route 2: Sarıkamış-Hotels- Bayraktepe-Cubic Church-Katerina's Hunting Church-Sarıkamış (25 km)

This route, which will potentially tire up your muscles to their limits with lots of ups and downs it covers, starts from the downtown. You will finish the line between Sarıkamış and Bayraktepe, climbing up a steep slope. Even if you would have to force your limits a bit due to the grade, you will immediately be rewarded thereafter. You may take a break at peak and take photographic snapshots of the unveiled gorgeous landscape. Then shifting to a declining slope, the tour will proceed on the forest road, pass through the historical sites and reach at Sarıkamış back again.

Route 3: Mescitli-Bayraktepe-Hotels (27 km)

This cycling route which partly covers the former road used by villagers in Mescitli to get access to the marketplace of Sarıkamış completely passes through the forest. The part between Mescitli-Summit and Cubic Church-Bayraktepe includes highly challenging slopes. It should also be noted that all cycling routes may be covered with snow during winter and mud during spring.

Route 4: Hotels-Hamamlı Village- Martyrdom -Keklik Valley-Soğuksu-Hotels (28 km)

This day-long biking activity takes place inside yellow pine forests, under an oxygen-rich atmosphere. Especially the part of route which extends to Keklik Valley passes through a pattern of densely accumulated forest trees. The first part of the starting point of this leg and the area between Keklik Valley and motorway are upgrading. You may find fountains at road-sides along the route. You should keep your body hydrated drinking plenty of liquids while pedalling.

Route 5: Hotels-Bayraktepe- Cubic Church-İmamkomu- Karakurt (28 km)

We will try a different version of the cycling route described in Route 7. This time our goal will be to reach at Karakurt town, starting from the Hotels Area. We should especially note that this route should only be attempted by bikers with top physical conditions since there is quite a plenty of gradients between Hotels and Bayraktepe. Do not forget to taste rosehips and blackberries that you will find around as a gift of nature, all along this leg, the remaining part of which is a continuously declining slope. Enjoy pedalling in the middle of loneliness.



Route 6: Sarıkamış-Katerina's Hunting Lodge-Cubic Church-Mescitli (28 km)

Entirely following the former market road between Mescitli and Sarıkamış, this route starts from the town square. We push on pedals hard in the forestland coming after İznos road. After visiting the Cubic Church having interesting form, we hit the road once again. Now we are in the most challenging part of this leg. We pedal slowly on the forest road climbing uphill with bends. We stop by at the climax we reach finally to drink plenty of liquid and then we are set to release the pedal and enjoy the permanent downward slope till we arrive at Mescitli.



Horse Sleigh and Geese

Route 7: Sarıkamış-Katerina's Hunting Lodge-Komdere-Cubic Church-İmamkomu- Karakurt (29 km)

This biking route, which had been used as the former market access road of Karakurt town, until not long but about 20 to 30 years ago, offers a pleasant journey. You will cycle in an environment having almost no challenging slopes but including rather straightforward and declining parts. Along the tour which proceeds inside a forestland, the route will expose the Cubic Church, Komdere rock-cut settling units, earth pillars and the natural and historical beauties of the route.

Route 8: Sarıkamış Martyrdom -Asboğa Lake-Çatak-Kızılçubuk-Sarıkamış (31 km)

Blended with historical and natural beauties, this route has a part between Sarıkamış and Martyrdom which is tarmac. Later on we depart from Kars-Erzurum highway and get to Asboga Lake. Let's remind that this segment may get muddy, under rainy weather conditions. Passing the lake, we land at Çatak Village and enter the earth road. We climb uphill at a slight angle of inclination to arrive in the long abandoned Kızılçubuk Village. Following the village is a challenging slope. Once you get to the ridge, the route starts to descend and ends in Yukarı Sarıkamış neighbourhood.

Route 9: Sarıkamış-Hamamlı-Şehitemin Flatland-Şehitemin-Keklik Valley- Soğuksu-Hotels (36 km)

This is a longer version of our cycling route number 4, which follows the same route with the latter, except the part between Sarıkamış and Hamamlı Village.

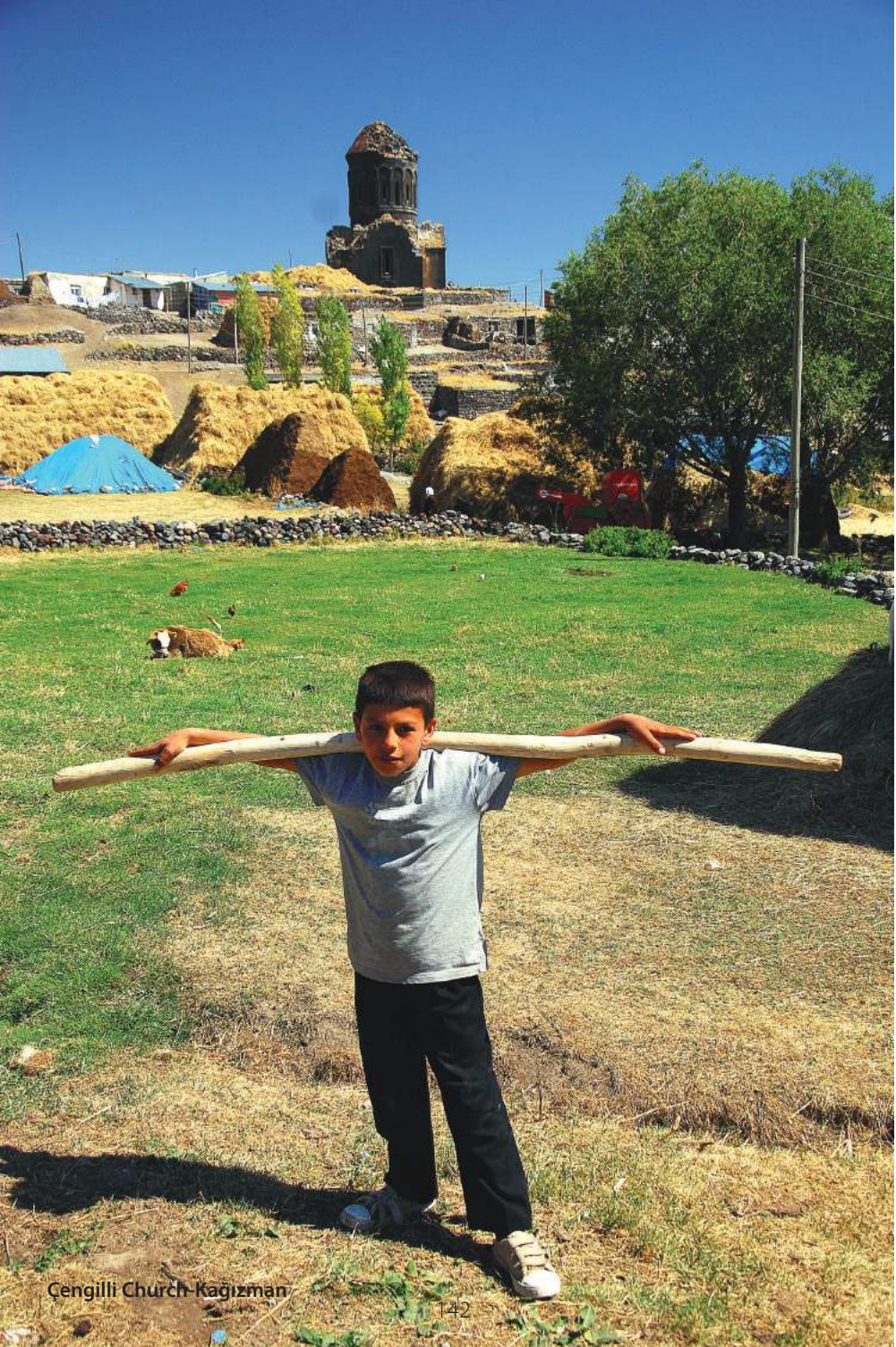
Route 10: Sarıkamış-Handere-Zivin Castle-Micingirt Castle-Karakurt-Sarıkamış (106 km)

Generally following tarmac village roads, this is an astounding route for you to discover the historical and natural beauties of Sarıkamış. Although the cycling route does not have much inclined slopes, we recommend that only bikers with high level of self-confidence try it, because of its length. After visiting Zivin Castle, where we made our way along the tarmac road, we return by 3 kilometres on the same route we have formerly left behind to enter Altınbulak Village, from Karaorgan. This part of the route is an earth road. The route again transforms into tarmac road on Kars-Erzurum motorway and passing through the Hotels Area, turns to Sarıkamış. This route can be planned as a 2-day activity. It is perhaps a little bit longer cycling route but when you think of all the beauties you would have seen until the finish line, you will see that it is worth doing it.



JEEP SAFARI-SCENIC VEHICLE ROAD





Route 1: Sarıkamış-Asboğa Lake-Çatak-Kızılçubuk-Divik Flatland - Çataldere- Sarıkamış (42 km)

Following the former Kars motorway at its initial part, the route reaches at Çatak Village, over Asboğa Lake, which presents potential for becoming an ecotourism destination in future. The route turns in to an earth road and moves towards the flatlands. Stopping by some of the flatlands of Sarıkamış such as Divik, Yenigazi, Yolgeçmez, Yağbasan etc., the scenic vehicle road passes by Dikenli Tabya Martyrdom and reaches at Sarıkamış, once again.

Route 2: Sarıkamış-Çatak-Kızılçubuk-Divik Flatland-Selim Flatland- Karahamza Flatland-Handere Road-Sarıkamış (66 km)

This is a delicate route, which climbs up to almost 3000 meters and extends between lakes, martyr cemeteries and pastoral meadows. All parts of the route except Sarıkamış-Çatak and Handere Road-Sarıkamış pass through earth roads. This route, which we recommend you to complete only during summers and springs, also presents examples of interesting details of local culture.

Route 3: Sarıkamış-Hamamlı-Şehitemin-Odalar-Çengilli-Denizgözü-Çiçekli- Kalebaşı-Karakurt (84 km)

The route which passes through earth village roads until Denizgözü Village advances in a forestland in its part falling between Hamamlı and Şehitemin. Later on we pass through the flatlands and villages spread on the foothills of Mt. Aladağ, one after another, eventually reaching at Çengilli Church. The breath-taking beauty of Deniz Lake which shines as a tiny blue pearl at mountain peaks will charm you. Subsequently, we go down to Kağızman-Karakurt link road. While moving on our way upstream the Aras River, you may take photographic snapshots of the earth pillar formations and rock-carved churches you will be noticing.

Route 4: Sarıkamış-Handere-Zivin Castle-Altınbulak-Micingirt Castle-Karakurt-Aras River-Kağızman-Paslı-Selim (236 km)

The first target of the route is primarily Castle Zivin, which is located close to the Karaorgan town on route the former Erzurum motorway. Then we visit the Micingirt Castle, moving over Altınbulak. The tarmac road which advances in a parallel line with Aras River between Karakurt and Kağızman reveals a different beauty at almost every kilometer of its line. After completing the route with numerous bends, we arrive at Kağızman district, the fruit granary of the region, from where we cross Aras River and head towards north. Crossing over a canyon with sharp bends, the route ends at Selim District after Paslı town.

CULTURAL ROUTES

Route 1: Sarıkamış-Katerina's Hunting Lodge-Zivin Castle-Micingirt Castle- Karakurt church-Aras River Valley - Earth Pillar Formations and Rock Settlements-Kağızman-Çengilli Church-Deniz Lake- Çamuşlu Cave Paintings- Keçivan Castle-Selim-Sarıkamış Martyrdom (294 km)

Drawing a large circle on Sarıkamış-Kağızman-Selim alignment and making a mysterious journey in time, the route visits almost all historical places of the region. This route, which can be planned as a two or three-day activity, may be supposed to include temporary accommodations in Sarıkamış and Kağızman. It should particularly be kept in mind that the Kağızman-Çengilli Church-Çamuşlu Cave Paintings-Keçivan Castle part of the route consists of earth roads interconnecting villages.

Route 2: Sarıkamış and Allahuekber Mountains Surrounding and Martyrdoms Route

There has been several martyr cemeteries built in both Kars and Erzurum provinces in memory of the Sarıkamış tragedy described in detail in the foregoing pages. These martyrs' cemeteries which are spread over a wide area extending from the slopes of Allahuekber Mountains to village and district centres are designed in the form of mausoleums with sculptures.

The Allahuekber Mountain Martyrdom located on route Kars-Erzurum motorway segment is the starting point of the route. Next we visit Hamamlı Village Martyrdom located in the village directly on the opposite side and then return back to the district centrum. Here we visit to West Barracks and Sarıkamış cemeteries in Yukarı Sarıkamış neighbourhood, the Unknown Soldiers Cemetery in İnönü neighbourhood and Millet Bahçesi Martyrdom in İstasyon neighbourhood. Again in Makineli Tüfek location of İstasyon neighbourhood, our attention is drawn to the cemetery area with artillery battery and bastion ruins as a historical heritage site.

Later on, we advance on our route to finish the other laps, consisting of Dikenli Tabya, Askerderesi, Turnagöl, Bardız Geçidi (Şehit Halit), Kaynak-Çermik Yayla, Mescitli Village Deliktaş locality, Soğanlı, Karaurgan-Köroğlu Village Çakırbaba, Bozat Village Akbaba, Yağbasan Village and Yayıklı Village Divik (Kırklar) martyrdoms. Covering the martyr memorials that fall within the boundaries of Sarıkamış district only, this route does not have a pre-determined length in kilometers. Neither does the route start and end at definite spots. It is necessary to go to certain villages and monuments and then return back. In this sense, you may visit all or any optional group of the aforementioned cemeteries. It is worthy of noting that some martyr cemeteries are found in flatlands, access to and from which can really be hard. It is of course not our intention to recommend the use of this cultural route in winter. Also the readers should be reminded of the fact that during December or January each year, "Marches in memory of Sarıkamış War Casualties" are organised in the region.

Route 3: Kars City Center and Ani Ruins

It is naturally unthinkable for a guest of Sarıkamış to leave the town without stopping by Kars City centrum. The old city texture formed up of arteries bunching around the castle and vertically cutting each other is among the places where the town memories are transformed into photographic frames. Once you complete the whole-city exploratory tour, next place to visit is Ani ruins. Located on the Turkey-Armenia borderline, Ani is one of the largest and most important historical sites of our country, together with the ancient city of Ephesus. This resplendent archaeological site which is 42 kilometers far from the city centrum will give you the opportunity to see many historical artefacts such as the Great Cathedral, St. Pirkich Church, Kızkalesi and Priory of Maidens, Church of Maidens, Ebul Menucehr Mosque and Seljuk Caravansary.



Basaltic Rock Sediments- Keklik Valley



TRANSPORTATION

The City of Kars is located 1424 km far from Istanbul, 1076 km from Ankara, 1655 km from Izmir, 1449 km from Antalya, 436 km from Trabzon and 202 km from Erzurum cities. Those who wish to get to Sarıkamış by land transport means may take either one of Giresun-Tirebolu-Torul-Erzincan-Erzurum-Sarıkamış or Trabzon-Erzurum-Sarıkamış or Hopa-Artvin-Ardahan-Kars-Sarıkamış motorway routes over the Black Sea region. Those wishing to get to this place over Central Anatolia should follow the Ankara-Yozgat-Sivas-Erzincan-Erzurum-Kars route. Transportation from Erzurum and Kars cities to Sarıkamış is provided by means of minibuses and coaches.

The total travel distance between Kars and Sarıkamış is 55 km, while inter-district travel distances are as follows:

Sarıkamış-Selim	25 km.
Sarıkamış-Kağızman	63 km.
Sarıkamış-Arpaçay	96 km.
Sarıkamış-Digor	96 km.
Sarıkamış-Susuz	108 km.

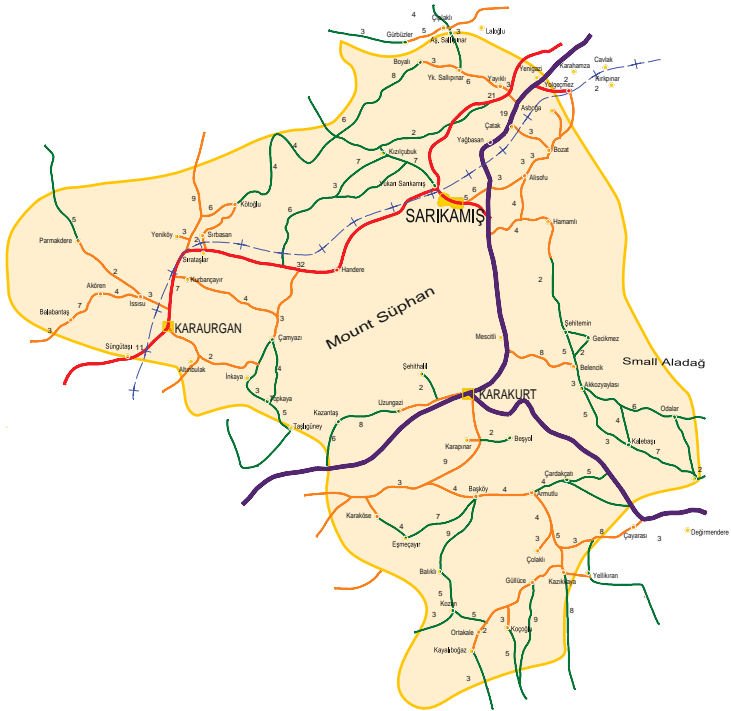
For those who wish to access the site by airways, Atlasjet, Sun Express and Turkish Airlines (THY) arrange daily flights from Istanbul and Ankara to Kars. Passengers from Izmir are carried to Kars city via connecting flights organised from Istanbul/ Ankara Airports daily by THY and directly twice a week by SunExpress.

Kars Airport Phone	: 0090 474 2135667 – 68
SunExpress	: 0090 444 0 797 (www.sunexpress.com)
THY	: 0090 444 0 849 (www.thy.com.tr)

The other means of transportation to Kars is train. The Eastern Express promising a nostalgic journey to its passengers on Anatolian geography performs full bidirectional runs between Istanbul and Kars, every weekday. The rolling stock departs from Istanbul at 9.00 a.m. every morning and from Kars, at 11.55 p.m. every evening, which offers you a 23-hour long fabulous journey on rails. The train stops at Sarıkamış station. Boarding tickets are available for on-line sales at www.tcdd.gov.tr.Biletleri www.tcdd.gov.tr adresinden satın almak mümkün.

TCDD(Turkish State Railways)	
Information Phone	: 444 8233
Istanbul Haydarpaşa Station Reservation	: 0090 216 3364470 0090 216 3362063 0090 216 3360475
Kars Railway Station	: 0090 474 2234398
Sarıkamış Railway Station	: 0090 474 4134962
Bus Enterprises	
Doğu Kars	: 0090 474 4134262
Turgut Reis	: 0090 474 4138301
Serhat Kars	: 0090 474 4134868

SARIKAMIŞ





RENT A CAR

Baran Rent a Car : 0545 2118183
Yavuz Rent a Car : 0474 4134474

ACCOMMODATION

Sarıkamış Toprak Hotel (5*)

Phone : 0090 474 4134111
Fax : 0090 474 4137970
e-mail : salessarikamishotel@toprak.com.tr
Web site : www.toprakhotels.com

Hotel Sarıkamış Dolina (4*)

Phone : 00474 413 66 66
Fax : 00474 413 60 00
E-Mail : info@dolinasarikamisotel.com
Web site : www.dolinasarikamisotel.com

Çamkar Otel (3*)

Phone : 0090 474 4135259 – 4136565 – 4134444
Fax : 0090 474 4136242
e-mail : camkarotel@gmail.com
Web site : www.camkarotel.com

Kar Otel (3*)

Phone : 0090 474 4135152
Fax : 0090 474 4135051
e-mail : sarikamiskarotel2007@hotmail.com
Web site : www.sarikamiskarotel.com

Hotel Bildik (3*)

Phone : 00474 413 76 76
Fax : 00474 413 76 51
E-Mail : info@bildikotel.com
Web site : www.bildikotel.com

Alpina Sarıkamış Konaklama Evleri

Phone : 0090 474 4137383
e-mail : info@alpinakonaklari.com
Web site : www.alpinakonaklari.com

Hotel Aras (2*)

Phone : 0090 474 4138080
Fax : 0090 474 4138080
e-mail : info@sarikamishotelaras.com
Web site : www.sarikamishotelaras.com

Sarıkamış Anatolian Hotel Management and Tourism Vocational High School Practice Hotel

Phone : 0090 474 4137081
Fax : 0090 474 4134604

IMPORTANT PHONES

Police	: 155
Gendarmerie	: 156
Emergency Service	: 112
Forest Fire	: 177

INFORMATION AND GUIDING

GPS coordinates and information : www.sarikamistrekking.com
info@sarikamistrekking.com

Zakir AKIN : 0541 2103175
zakir-akin@hotmail.com

İshak ALASERHAT : 0554 7684793
akademik_olgu@hotmail.com

KuzeyDoğa Society : www.kuzeydoga.org
emrah@kuzeydoga.com











REFERENCES

1- Kars City Cultural Inventory, 2009

2- Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Culture and Tourism Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums, Kars City Sarıkamış Martyrdoms, 2005

3- Kars City Guide, City Council 2007

LEGEND

	MARTYRDOM		VIEWPOINT
	CASTLE		CAMPGROUND
	HISTORICAL SITE and MUSEUM		CHIMNEY ROCK
	CHURCH		RESTAURANT
	WATERFALLS		FOUNTAIN