Izmir Statue, Great Ataturk Statue



When people think of the Izmir statue that stands out most, they usually mean the Ataturk Mask in Buca, Turkey's largest statue. The largest Ataturk statue in Izmir rises 42 meters high, making it the tallest statue not only in the city but in the entire country. This giant face relief set into the hillside has become one of Izmir's best-known landmarks, striking first-time visitors with its sheer scale.

Where Is the Giant Ataturk Statue in Izmir?

The monument is located in the Buca district of Izmir, on a hillside. Its enormous size makes it visible from a distance, and up close the scale of the facial features becomes even more impressive. Easy to reach from the city center, this spot is among the places visitors most want to see when touring Izmir. You can reach the monument by heading toward Buca from the Konak and Alsancak area.

Who Made the Ataturk Mask in Izmir?

The statue was designed by sculptor Harun Atalayman. Construction began after Buca Municipality reached an agreement with the sculptor. Work started in 2006 and was completed in 2009. With a total cost of 4.2 million Turkish lira, the project was regarded as an ambitious public art initiative for its time. The artist took a classic portrait bust and scaled it up to the size of a mountain, creating a work with no equal in Turkey.

How Was the Ataturk Mask Built?

Although it looks as if it was carved into the mountain, this monument was actually built on scaffolding set against the hillside. A steel lattice framework forms its backbone, covered with a concrete relief. This method allows the facial features to be read through depth and shadow while creating a very large surface without damaging the natural rock. Statue making at this scale requires engineering calculations, structural inspection and artistic craftsmanship working together.

Size and Ranking Among the World's Largest Statues

At 42 meters high, the Ataturk Mask is the largest statue in Turkey. It is ranked tenth in the world among relief sculptures. This size makes the work notable not only locally but internationally as well. Below the face, Ataturk's famous words "Peace at home, peace in the world" appear in relief along with his signature. This quotation places the monument's message of peace in its most visible spot.

Meaning and Importance of the Statue

This monument portrays Ataturk not in a battle scene but through his face and his words alone. This choice shifts the message of the work from a story of victory toward peace and lasting remembrance. While equestrian monuments bring a historic moment to life, this face relief makes direct eye contact with everyone who looks at it. For this reason it creates a different effect from an equestrian Ataturk monument statue: the portrait comes first, not the scene.

Izmir was the setting of the final major stages of the War of Independence, so works about Ataturk hold a special place in the city. A War of Independence relief statue that tells the story of the city's past and this giant face relief can be read as expressions of the same memory at different scales.

Museum and Restoration History

On September 20, 2010, the National Struggle and 9 September Museum opened inside the statue. Although the museum was later closed, this effort showed an attempt to make the monument more than a structure viewed only from the outside. Because it is a large structure that has stood outdoors for many years, restoration work was carried out on the statue in the second half of 2018. Regular maintenance of this kind is necessary for giant public works to last for generations.

Contribution to the City and Society

The Ataturk Mask is one of the images most often used to promote Buca and Izmir. Visitors come to the hillside to take photos, while locals embrace the statue as one of the city's shared symbols. Interest in the monument grows during commemorations and national holidays. Works such as a

Republic relief statue, which reflects the founding idea of the Republic, are also among the pieces that keep this shared memory alive.

How Do Monument Statues Shape a City's Identity?

Standing in a city's skyline, monument statues make a place's identity visible. This work in Izmir has stood on the same hillside for years and become one of the city's common reference points. The way people use the monument to give directions and choose meeting places shows how deeply it has settled into everyday life.

Alongside monument-scale works, pieces that keep Ataturk's presence alive in institutions and offices are also popular. An Ataturk portrait office relief, which highlights only the portrait, brings the same symbolic weight to official spaces in a simpler form. The mask is like a mountain-sized counterpart of this approach.

Tips for Visiting the Ataturk Mask in Izmir

You can see the statue at its best in the morning and evening, when sunlight strikes the surface at an angle. At those hours the depth of the relief and the shadows across the facial features stand out more clearly. From a distance you take in the whole, and up close you notice the craftsmanship on the surface. You can combine your visit with other attractions in Buca to make the most of your day.

Known as the Izmir statue, the Ataturk Mask in Buca is one of the city's most remarkable cultural landmarks, with its 42-meter size, its message of peace and its unusual setting on a mountain slope. As the largest statue in Turkey, it holds a unique place in both art and engineering, and it deserves to be passed on to future generations.

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