

KULA-SALIHLI GEOPARK

Kula-Salihli Geopark, also known as **Kula Volcanic Geopark** and **Kula Geopark**, (*Turkish: Kula Vulkanik Jeoparkı* or *Kula Jeoparkı*) is a [geopark](#), a protected area of geological heritage, located in [Kula](#) and [Salihli](#) districts of [Manisa Province](#), western Turkey. It was recognized by [UNESCO](#) as a UNESCO Global Geopark in 2013, and is the country's only geopark.

The volcanic park is located in [Manisa Province](#) in western Turkey, covering an area of nearly 300 km² (120 sq mi) mainly in Kula district, and stretches in the north into parts of [Salihli](#) district. The elevation of the area rises from 200 m (660 ft) in Salihli to 600 m (2,000 ft) in Kula.

In November 2011, an application was made to the [European Geoparks Network](#) and [UNESCO](#). Kula Geopark became Turkey's first geopark candidate of European Geoparks Network and UNESCO in March 2013. In September 2013, it was accepted as the country's first and only geopark by the European and the UNESCO-assisted [Global Geoparks Network](#).

In June 2013, the geopark was opened to tourism after construction of facilities including walkways and a [visitor center](#). The more than 12 km (7.5 mil) long trails equipped with information panels connect the most interesting geosites in the geopark. The visitor center is an information center for tourists and a natural history museum for education in geology.

There are 80 [scoria cones](#) and five [maars](#) in the geopark. The height of the small-sized scoria cones does not exceed 150 m (490 ft).

[Lava tubes](#) or caves were formed by [lava flow](#) along its way. Lava tubes are formed when an active low-[viscosity](#) lava flow solidifies and forms a hard crust roof above the still-flowing lava stream. While some lava caves are easily accessible, others can be entered only with specialized [caving equipment](#).

There are [hoodoos](#) situated on the [İzmir-Ankara](#) state highway [D300/E96](#) near Yurtbaşı village. They are formed when relatively soft rock is topped by harder stone; the softer rock is washed away by atmospheric factors, leaving a capping of the harder material which is more resistant to erosion. The formation process is ongoing, and while some hoodoos fall down, new ones are being formed.

In 1954, during road construction works near the Çakallar Volcanic Cone, more than 200 [fossilized footprints](#) were unearthed. Only a few of these footprints remain on the scene. It is considered that the footprints belong to three people walking on a slope. The age analyses indicate that the footprints are 10,000–12,000 years old corresponding to the [Mesolithic Anatolia](#).