Elazığ is a city in Eastern Anatolia, Turkey, and the administrative center of Elazığ Province. It is located in the uppermost Euphrates valley. The plain on which the city extends has an altitude of 1067 metres. Elazığ resembles an inland peninsula surrounded by the natural Lake Hazar and reservoirs of Keban Dam, Karakaya Dam, Kiralkızı and Özlüce. The population of Elazığ consists of Turks. Elazığ initially developed in 1834 as an extension of the historic city of Harput, which was situated on a hill and difficult to access in winter.

The ancient town and citadel of Harput (pronounced Kharberd, in Eastern Armenian, and Kharpert Խարբերդ in Western Armenian) and meaning "rock fortress" in Armenian, was located about five kilometres (3.1 miles) from modern Elazığ. In the early Middle Ages, it was also known by its Byzantine name, Charpete (Χαρπετε). In the 19th century, under the reign of Mahmud II, the governor Reşid Mehmed Pasha started an expansion of Mezre, a suburb located on the plain below Kharput. During the reign of Sultan Abdüllaziz, military barracks, a hospital and a governor's mansion were built to accommodate the seat of a new vilâyet (province). The town was renamed "Mamuretülaziz" (Ottoman Turkish: معمورة الامامز made prosperous by Aziz in Ottoman Turkish) in 1866 on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the enthronement of Sultan Abdüllaziz, although he was not the initial founder. In time the city became known as "Elâzîz" due to its ease of pronunciation. On November 17, 1937, President Mustafa Kemal Atatürk changed the name of the city to "El'azık". However, since this was hard to pronounce in Turkish, on December 10, 1937 the government changed the city's name to its final form, "Elazığ".

History

The city of Elazığ was founded among the skirts of the hill on which the historical Harput Castle was constructed. According to the present historical sources, the most ancient inhabitants of Harput was the Hurrian nation who settled in these parts in c2000 B.C. Harput, and its surrounding region was part of the kingdom of Urartu at the period of its maximum extension. The ancient town and citadel called Kharput (Kharpert), which means "rocky fortress" in Armenian, was built by the first Armenian kings about five km (3.1 miles) from modern Elazığ. However, very little written material about this city reached our day. It is possible that Harput stands on or is near the site of Carcathio-certa in Sophene, reached by Corbulo in A.D. 65. The early Muslim geographers knew it as Ḥiṣn Ziyād, but the Armenian name, Khartabirt or Kharbirt, whence Harput and Harput, was generally adopted in time. William of Tyre wrote that Joscelin I, Count of Edessa (Jocelyn) of Courtenay, and King Baldwin II of Jerusalem were prisoners of the Amir Balak in Harput's castle and that they were rescued by their Armenian allies. William of Tyre calls the place Quart Pierit or Pierre.

Harput and its vicinity fell under Turkish control in the year 1085 as the outcome of the Manzikert battle on August 26, 1071. The Cubukoğulları, Artugids, Sultanate of Rum, Ilkhanate, Beylik of Dulkadir, Aq Qoyunlu, Safavids and Ottomans had reigned in the region. Harput was an important station of the American
missionaries for many years. The missionaries built **Euphrates College**, a theological seminary, and boys' and girls' schools. It operated until 1915 when its buildings were confiscated and used by the Ottoman army as barracks. In November 1895, government backed **Turks** and Kurds massacred, looted and burned the Armenian villages on the plain. In the same month Harput was attacked and the American schools were burned down. During the **Armenian Genocide**, many residents were killed. Harput is still partly settled today, but due to its high elevation and lack of water it is slowly in the process of being abandoned, with most of its residents moving to Elazığ. Harput still has a few thousand inhabitants.

**What To Buy**

You would not return from the city without seeing and even buying orcik and pestil (dried layers of fruit pulp), mulberry flour, orcik candy, cedene coffee or delicious Buzbağ wine produced from the local grapes and walnuts which you can easily carry with you, hand crafted art works, embroideries, local carpets, pileless carpets, copper crafts and colored cotton kerchiefs.