

Kerem Gokhan

Senior Software Engineer · Backend & Distributed Systems

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SUMMARY

Senior backend engineer with 13 years of experience, 11 at Booking.com across Personalization (Accommodations), Connectivity, Catalog, and Search (Attractions). Track record of designing distributed systems, owning customer problems end-to-end, leading cross-team delivery, and using experimentation to drive measurable business outcomes. Strong experience with Java, AWS, OpenSearch, microservices, A/B experimentation, and AI-assisted engineering workflows.

EXPERIENCE

Booking.com B.V. — Software Engineer, Attractions

Amsterdam

Dec 2018 – Present

Attractions Search (2025 – Present) — backend on OpenSearch

- As part of a 4-engineer pilot team experimenting with AI-first software delivery practices, delivered Booking.com's **Early Booker Deals** campaign — designed the discount-configuration model, shipped the first prototype across multiple services, then drove the Search domain end-to-end including integration with a cross-sell platform owned by another engineering organization. Delivered ahead of schedule through broad production rollout, using experimentation to validate the change.
- Led the multi-year **Attractions Perl deletion taskforce** as its original strategy author. With the team, built and iteratively refined an AI-powered deletion workflow over 20+ iterations. Drove retirement of a large volume of legacy Perl code and scheduled jobs at organization-wide scale — clearing a major prerequisite for the cloud database migration. The strategy and tooling are now used by other engineering organizations and business units.
- Led the shift of the **POI** ↔ **product mapping V2** launch from a risky cutover to a 3-phase non-inferiority experiment. Convened the supply data-science team and Geo partners to fix upstream data quality (triggered a Geo data-cleanup effort). Replaced a static mapping with a daily-refreshed model that substantially expanded coverage.
- Drove broad adoption of **AI-assisted workflows**. Created a one-step setup wizard that installs Claude Code with the Search API's Model Context Protocol (MCP) server and the organization's shared AI plugin out of the box; maintain that plugin repository as a library of core skills used across multiple business units and roles, and standardized AI-readable engineering practices across many team repositories.
- Built an internal desktop client for Claude Code adopted by designers, product managers, content managers, and engineers; coordinated testing, packaging, and contributions across multiple teams.
- Helped migrate geographic search from static city-to-product mappings to latitude/longitude geo search; built **Multilingual Autocomplete** to improve search recall and destination discovery; designed and implemented the backend for POI landing pages; shipped a substantial expansion of SEO landing-page coverage.
- Other Search work included extended availability-window improvements and Genius cross-sell scaling.
- Delivered the first Dropwizard → **Spring Boot 4 / Java 25** migration in the engineering organization; now templated as a shared skill used by other teams for their migrations.

Attractions Catalog (2022 – Jan 2025)

- Designed and pitched a **serverless machine-translation system** from scratch. Secured the engineering director's buy-in, planned the rollout, and led 3–4 engineers to deliver on time. First production launch covered a major supplier catalog.
- Two years on, the system runs reliably across the full Attractions catalog and all supported content languages, and was extended to LLM-based English content generation for long-tail suppliers — unblocking many additional products, reducing dependency on manual content operations, and improving supplier-content scalability.

- Co-designed the **Canonical Model** (provider-agnostic raw content) and a serverless AWS pipeline (Lambda / CDK) that distributes raw content into Search, Product Catalog, and Distribution. Validated through experimentation before full rollout.
- Unblocked a previously stalled **supplier-automation** initiative; enabled large-scale automated supplier-catalog ingestion, turning a limited manual onboarding path into a scalable catalog-growth pipeline.
- Designed and built the **visibility-history layer** + automated product return-to-online flow: reduced manual recovery work and improved product return-to-online reliability.

Attractions Connectivity (Dec 2018 – 2022)

- Built and maintained **9 third-party API integrations** with major travel-experience suppliers and connectivity partners, covering inventory import, availability/rates caching, reservation, and cancellation flows. Stack: Java, Dropwizard, Kubernetes, MySQL, Kafka, Redis, Hive/Spark, GitLab CI.

Booking.com B.V. — Team Lead & Software Engineer, Accommodations (Personalization)

Amsterdam

Aug 2015 – Dec 2018

- Led a cross-functional team of **5–10** across backend, frontend, mobile, and UX (2017 – 2018). Owned the hotel comparison experience and persuasion-messaging surfaces (urgency, scarcity, social proof) on Booking.com; ran A/B experimentation strategy.
- Hands-on people management: 1:1s, mentoring, performance reviews, hiring loop (programming & system-design interviews).
- Earlier years (2015 – 2017): graduate-program rotations across internal tooling, mobile API infrastructure (Google Now integration), and product experimentation. Stack: Perl, Python, Java, MySQL, Spark, Hadoop, Redis.

Earlier roles

- **Comodo** (Ankara) — Software Engineer, Browser team. Android and Chromium-based browser development. Oct 2014 – Jul 2015.
- **Semantica Inc.** (San Francisco, remote) — Frontend Developer. Favogue, a fashion social network (AngularJS, Ruby on Rails). Jun – Sep 2014.
- **GamaPrime Studio** (Ankara) — Product Designer & Android Developer. Augmented-reality treasure-hunt game on Android. Oct 2013 – Jun 2014.

PERSONAL PROJECT

Vanavond — Co-founder & Software Engineer · vanavond.app · 2019 – 2022

- Sole engineer on a discovery platform surfacing alternative and niche events in Amsterdam (web, Instagram, WhatsApp). Built the public site, content / admin pipelines, and integrations with Instagram, Facebook, and Mapbox APIs. Stack: Python 3, MySQL, jQuery. Stepped back in 2022; the platform continues under the other co-founder.

SKILLS

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| Languages | Java, Kotlin, Python, TypeScript / JavaScript, Perl, SQL. |
| Distributed systems & infra | Microservices, REST API design, AWS (Lambda, CDK, Aurora, FIS, CloudWatch), Kafka, Redis, OpenSearch / Elasticsearch, Kubernetes, Snowflake, MySQL. |
| Frameworks | Dropwizard, Spring Boot 4, Node. |
| Practices | A/B experimentation, observability (Graphite, Mimir, CloudWatch, Honeycomb, Grafana), chaos testing (AWS FIS), incident response, GitLab CI/CD, mentoring, system-design interviewing. |
| AI / agentic workflows | Claude Code, OpenAI Codex, Cursor, Windsurf; Model Context Protocol (MCP) servers; agentic skill design; AI-readable codebase practices (AGENTS.md). Maintain an internal cross-tool AI-skills marketplace (Claude Code, Codex, Cursor). |
| Languages spoken | English (fluent), Turkish (native), Dutch (basic). |

EDUCATION

Middle East Technical University (METU) — B.Sc., Computer Engineering. Ankara, Turkey · 2009 – 2015.