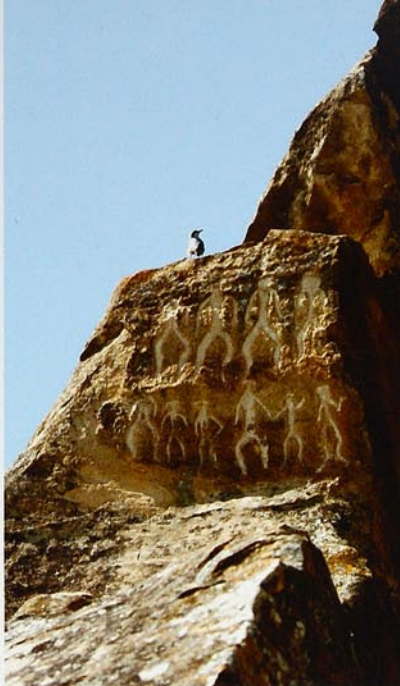


AZERBAIJAN



*english*

## Masterpieces of Azerbaijani Cultural Heritage in the UNESCO Lists

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# Masterpieces of Azerbaijani Cultural Heritage in the UNESCO Lists

(guidebook for tourists)



M.F. Axundov adına  
Azərbaycan Milli  
Kitabxanası



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# PREFACE

It is an honour for a nation to look after its rich cultural heritage, preserve it through to modern times and to pass it on safely to future generations, as all nations benefit from both their tangible and intangible assets.

In this context, the people of Azerbaijan may thus be considered as fortunate. The inclusion of so many of the tangible and intangible assets of our country, which is known as the 'Land of Fire', in the Lists of the Cultural Heritage of UNESCO demonstrates how important they are for mankind. The content of this guidebook aims to provide greater knowledge about the tangible and intangible masterpieces of Azerbaijan, which have, over the years, been included in the UNESCO Lists of Cultural Heritage. Will this guidebook cause you to take an interest in Azerbaijan.....and to thus actually visit the country? If so.....why not make a visit?

If you would like to imagine that you are present during the Paleolithic Age – then you need only visit *Gobustan*.

Whilst there, not only will you have the opportunity to view the ancient rock paintings, but also to listen to the magical sounds of a percussion instrument called a *Gavaldash*. At the same time, should you be determined to "contemplate" the Medieval Period, then you only need to visit the *Icherisheher* in Baku. At this site, one may see the Maiden Tower (XI – XII centuries), the *Mohammed Mosque* (XI century) and the *Shirvanshahs' Palace* (XV century), as well as countless numbers of historical monuments and interesting museums which relate to the Middle Ages. Should your visit take place on the eve of the *Novruz* Holiday, one of the oldest national holidays of Azerbaijan, (i.e. March 20 – 22), then we strongly advise you to visit the *Icherisheher*, as there you would be able to take part in the sumptuous festivities in this historical site – which would include tasting the special *Novruz* sweets. By listening to the masterpieces of the ancient art of Mugham and Ashiq music performed by virtuosos of Azerbaijan, you would not only sharpen your thoughts but also enrich your knowledge of music. This is because these creative activities have been evolving through several centuries.

You might like to consider touching the Azerbaijani carpets which are on display in various museums worldwide. Having seen these rugs in every corner of the country, as well as in the Carpet Museum of Baku, you could then buy one from a local antique shop, and subsequently have the pleasure of seeing it in a favorite corner of your home.

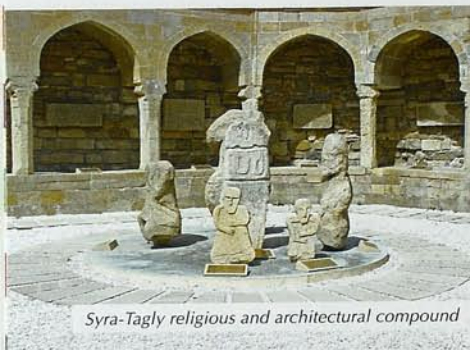
We wish our readers an agreeable and relaxing visit to Azerbaijan – a country well known for its hospitality.

## THE ICHERISHEHER



Goshaga Gates

The word of *Icherisheher* means – ‘Inner City’. This tiny part of the city, whose walls shield it from the buzz and noise of Baku’s streets, has over 1300 families living there. It has eighteen hotels, which, providing comfortable visitor accommodation, are surrounded by a variety of shops. There are also a number of exhibitions at neighboring museums. Dating back several centuries, the *Icherisheher* – the original city of Baku – had been the capital city of the *Shirvanshah* State, which was one of the largest states in Azerbaijan in the Middle Ages. It is regarded as one of the oldest economic and cultural cradles of the entire Middle East. Spanning almost 22 hectares, the *Icherisheher* contains hundreds of historical monuments. Three of them are of international importance, and



Syra-Tagly religious and architectural compound

### SITES TO VISIT

The Maiden Tower (V-VI centuries), the *Shirvanshahs’* Palace (XII century), the *Mohammad* Mosque (XI century), the *Syra-Tagly* Religious and Architectural Compound (XII century), the Chinese Mosque (XIV century), the Archaeological Park, the Small *Karavansara* (XII century) and the *Agha Mikayil Hamamy* (XVIII century) are the most interesting sites to visit in the *Icherisheher*. Also located in the Compound is the world’s first ever private Miniature Book Museum (exhibiting 4350 books from 62 countries), and the home of *Vaghif Mustafazade*, the founder of Jazz Mugham and a prominent Azerbaijani jazz musician.

### WHERE TO STAY

#### Sultan Inn Hotel (\*\*\*\*)

20, Boyuk Gala Street, Icherisheher  
Phone: (+994 12) 437 23 05  
[www.sultaninn.com](http://www.sultaninn.com)

#### Museum Inn (\*\*\*\*)

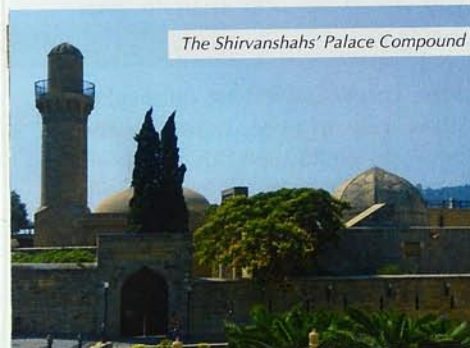
3, Gazy Mohammed Street, Icherisheher  
Phone: (+994 12) 497 15 22  
[www.museuminn.az](http://www.museuminn.az)

#### Noah’s Ark Hotel (\*\*)

Ilyas Afandiyev Street, Icherisheher  
Phone: (+994 12) 437 39 96  
[www.noahsark-hotel.com](http://www.noahsark-hotel.com)

### WHERE TO EAT

<b>Kohne Sheher</b>	phone (+994 12) 492 05 55
<b>Caravanserai</b>	phone (+994 12) 492 66 68
<b>Mugham Club</b>	phone (+994 12) 492 40 85
<b>Gadim Gala</b>	phone (+994 12) 492 34 49
<b>Icherisheher</b>	phone (+994 12) 492 34 49
<b>Art Garden</b>	phone (+994 12) 492 13 31



The Shirvanshahs’ Palace Compound

twenty eight of national importance. The *Icherisheher* gained its status as a Historical Reserve in 1977, and in 1985, was subsequently designated as the State Reserve of History and Architecture. The final change occurred on February 10, 2005 when the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, signed the Decree on Creation of the State Reserve of History and Architecture – the *Icherisheher* was attached to the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Nowadays, the Reserve Management Department is the lead agency, and preserves and promotes the rich cultural heritage of the *Icherisheher*. In 2000, the *Icherisheher* was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List of Humanity together with the Maiden Tower and the *Shirvanshahs’* Compound.

### DO NOT MISS IT

The *Novruz* Holiday, the most ancient holiday of the Azerbaijani people, and symbolizing the awakening of nature, is solemnly celebrated in the *Icherisheher* on March 20. On that day, one can feel the festive air whilst watching the symbols of *Novruz* – such as *Kosa* and *Kechal* playing funny games, breathtaking performances by rope-walkers and entertaining performances by actors, together with many other activities. At the same time, one can taste the various dishes of the Azerbaijani national cuisine – which are special to the festivities – such as *kebab*, *pilaf*, *dolmah* and others.

### HOW TO GO

Distance from the Heydar Aliyev Airport to the Icherisheher is 20 km.

The Heydar Aliyev Avenue – Icherisheher Subway Station, by bus (14)

Bus Terminal, 20 January Subway Station – Icherisheher Subway Station, buses bound to Azneft Square and Bayil District (88, 120, 20)

Taxi order: \*9000 and 189

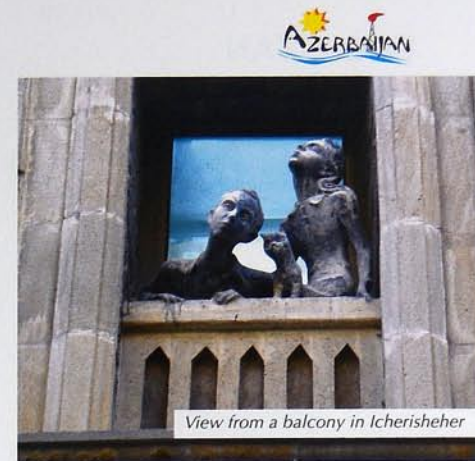
### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Department of the State Reserve of History and Architecture – the Icherisheher attached to the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan

20, Asaf Zeynally Street  
Phone: (+99412) 492 11 75

Working days: from Monday to Friday  
(09.00 – 18.00)

[www.icherisheher.gov.az](http://www.icherisheher.gov.az)



View from a balcony in Icherisheher



Maiden Tower

## GOBUSTAN



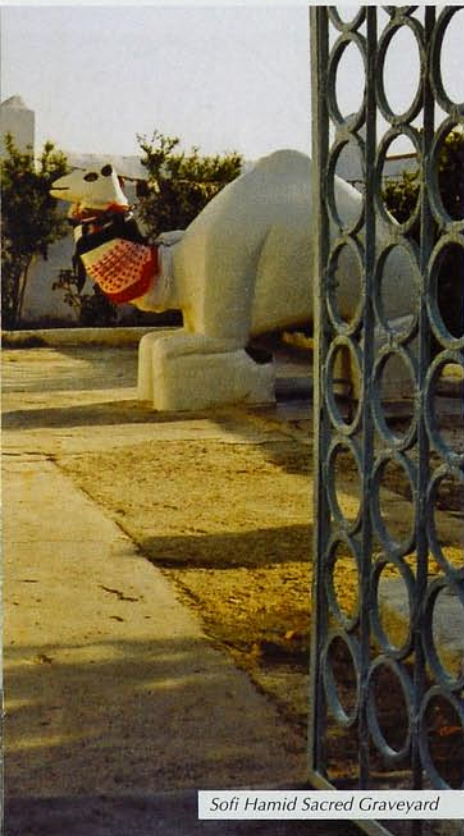
**T**he *Gobustan Reserve* is situated 56 kilometers from Baku.

The word '*Gobustan*' divides into two parts: '*gobu*' or '*hobu*' (hidden or sacred for humans) – '*stan*' (a place). The length of the *Gobustan Reserve* is almost 20 km, and its width is 5 km. The biggest mountain has a height of 400 meters. There are also mud volcanoes in *Gobustan*.

The history of mankind commenced twenty thousand years ago, in the early Paleolithic Period, in the regions of the *Boyukdash* and *Kichikdash* Mountains.

If human life had started in *Gobustan* in the early Paleolithic Period, then the region must have had the necessary climatic conditions for survival. The winter in *Gobustan* is mild, whilst the summer is hot and dry and similar to subtropical regions.

The *Gobustan* rock paintings were discovered for the first time in 1939 by the prominent Azerbaijani archaeologist *Ishag Jafarzade*. He had studied the rock paintings in *Chinghirdag* and *Yazlytepe* in the same year, and subsequently studied in the territory of *Boyukdash* and *Kichikdash* in 1940. Archaeological work in *Gobustan* was halted due to the beginning of World War II, and was resumed in 1947. Currently, the number of monuments registered in the ancient rock paintings' collection of



Sofi Hamid Sacred Graveyard

### SITES TO VISIT

There are many sanctuaries in the *Gobustan* region, and one may there see the temples of both Buddhists and Fire Worshipers... most of which have been forgotten and have faded into oblivion. The images painted and carved on the rocks of skys and heavenly bodies mean that they were mainly connected with Totemism.

The retention of the names of mountains such as *Kargaz*, *Shongar*, *Turagay*, *Kaniza* and *Chinghribaba* prove that there had previously been many such temples in the region. The temples of *Gara Atly*, *Sofi Hamid*, *Hurighyzlar*, *Sary Baba* and *Shykhly Gaya* gain the interest, not only of local people, but also of today's tourists.

*Gobustan* is over 6000, which are on the surface of almost 1000 rocks.

The scenes depicted on the rock paintings of *Gobustan* differ by their variety. Mention can be made of the images of humans, as well as those of animals such as oxen, goats, deer, gazelles, horses, birds, fishes and others. At the same time, these rocks contain many paintings of boats, fishing nets, large two wheeled carriages, camel caravans, swastikas, crosses and suns. There are many Arabic script inscriptions, which relate to the medieval history of Azerbaijan, and also, there is the famous Latin inscription which provides the evidence of the incursion into Azerbaijan of the Roman XII (Fulminante) Legion at the end of the 1st Century A.D.

*Gobustan* covers an area of 4400 hectares, in which, in the *Boyukdash*, *Kichikdash* and *Chinghirdag* Mountains and the *Yazlytepe* site, are located the ancient rock paintings, archaeological monuments and human settlements.

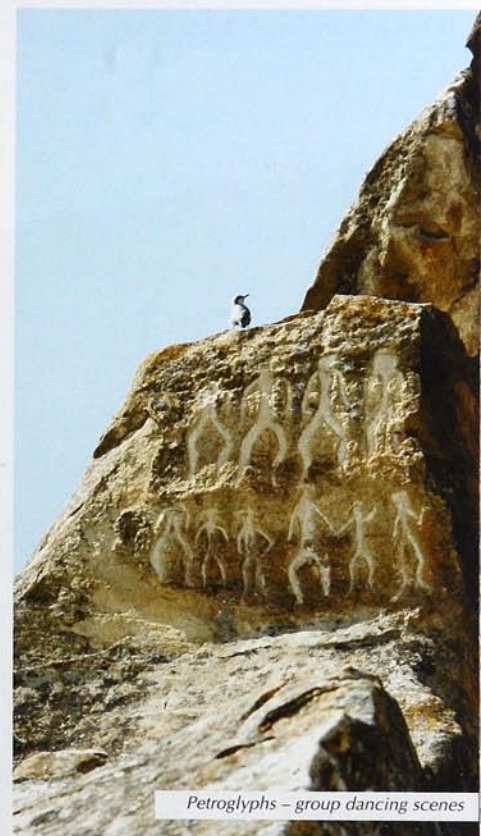
*Gobustan*, together with the rock painting collections of *Shongardag* and *Shykhgaya*, was declared as a National Reserve of History and Art by the decision of the Council of Ministers on September 9, 1966. In 2007, the *Gobustan Reserve* was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List of Humanity.

### DO NOT MISS IT

The stone music facility called *Gavaldash* in *Boyukdash* and *Chinghirdag* is considered as the greatest invention of the ancient *Gobustan* people. The invention of the bow was very important, as it eased the lives of the tribal peoples. The creation of a percussion instrument, called a *Gavaldash*, had to satisfy their musical needs, and was important for use in the arranging of dancing and singing ceremonies.



Mud volcanoes



Petroglyphs – group dancing scenes

# GOBUSTAN

## HOW TO GO

The distance from the Heydar Aliyev Airport to Gobustan is 70 km. From the 20th Quarter of Baku city to the Gobustan Quarter, take the bus 195. Duration of journey: 40 - 45 minutes  
 Taxi order: \*9000 or 189

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### The Gobustan National Reserve of History and Art

The Garadagh Region, Gobustan Quarter  
 Phone: (+994 12) 544 66 23  
 Working days: each day (10.30 - 17.00)  
 Ticket price: 1 AZN  
 Guide services cost 9 AZN  
[www.gobustan-rockart.az](http://www.gobustan-rockart.az)

## MUSEUM

The *Gobustan* Museum opened in 2011. The total area of the Museum and its administrative building is 2460 square meters. Tourists, whilst in the Museum, can view the sequence of the physical changes that occurred in *Gobustan* from the beginning of time and the scale of Man's migration that took place. In one of the rooms, 'Life of Man in the Prehistoric Period', there is a display in 3D with related information about the Period's stone tools and their functions. Various posters show pictures of the tools which are from the Paleolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic Ages together with descriptions of the ways in which they were made. The Hall of the Ancient Period of Art demonstrates the

human perception of beauty and artistic imagination. The Hall of 'Petroglyphs throughout the Centuries' demonstrates the manner in which over 6000 ornaments and rock paintings have evolved. The Halls of 'Petroglyphs' and 'Artists of Prehistoric Times of *Gobustan*' explain the meanings of the *Gobustan* rock paintings. The Museum also has Halls called 'Animals and Hunters' and 'Cultural Landscape of *Gobustan* Rock Painting' which display the bones of the animals then existing in *Gobustan*, and provides information about the hunting of them by Prehistoric Man. Using the 3D video facilities available, one can imagine that one is flying over *Gobustan*.



Gavaldash



Burial Moun

## MUGHAM



Tar



Kamancha

**The Art of Mugham** has very deep roots within the history of the Azerbaijani people, and has a special place in the heritage of the nation's musical culture. There are several shared features of the music, which bring Azerbaijani Mugham close to the Iranian *dastgah*, the Uzbek-Tajik *shashmakom*, the Uyghur *Mukam*, the Indian *ragas*, the Arabian *nuba* and the Turkish *taqsim*. This Mugham music demonstrates the common artistic traditions of music in the East. However, Azerbaijani Mugham is linked by its roots especially to Azerbaijan. The great number of Mugham performers in the country also shows that this type of music remains as a main and permanent source of inspiration for Azerbaijani composers, artists, sculptors and poets. Mugham is considered as one of the fundamental cultural values that form the foundations of the national identity and self-perception of Azerbaijanis.

Commencing from the second half of the XIX century up until modern times, the most popular type of Mugham ensemble is called *Mugham Uchluyu* (Mugham Trio). This trio is composed of two musicians playing the tar and kamancha, accompanied by the *khanende* (singer). Whilst singing *tesniifs* or *rangs* jointly with the ensemble, the *khanende* accompanies

### DO NOT MISS IT

Since 2009, 'the World of Mugham' International Festival has been held once every two years on the eve of the *Novruz* Holiday (14 – 20 March) on the initiative of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation and the Azerbaijan Composers' Union. The International Mugham Contest is organized within the framework of this Festival. On this occasion, world's leading countries send their music experts, researchers and Mugham masters to the capital city of Baku. During the Festival, Mugham performers, representing a variety of nations, play in concerts.

the players of the percussion instruments with a *gaval* (flat drum held in his or her hand).

At the beginning of the XX century, Mughams were mainly solo performances with only a tar being played. Currently, Mugham music is played using the many traditional musical instruments of Azerbaijan as well as European ones. These can include – for example, stringed instruments such as *kamancha*, *ud*, *canon* and *violin* and wind instruments such as *zurna*, *balaban*, *ney* and *clarinet* and finally, keyboard instruments such as *accordions* and – even, *grand pianos*.

The word 'Mugham' means tonality, melody and genre categories in Azerbaijani music. There are seven main and three supplemental Mughams in Azerbaijan. The main Mughams are *Rast*, *Shur*, *Segah*, *Jahargah*, *Bayaty*, *Shiraz*, *Shushtar* and *Humayun*, whilst the three supplemental ones are *Shahnaz*, *Saranj* and the second type of *Jahargah*. This art is also popular amongst such ethnic groups of Azerbaijan as the *Talysh*, the *Mountain Jews*, the *Lezghis*, the *Georgians* and the *Avars*. In 2003, the Azerbaijani Mugham was included in the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

### WHERE TO LISTEN

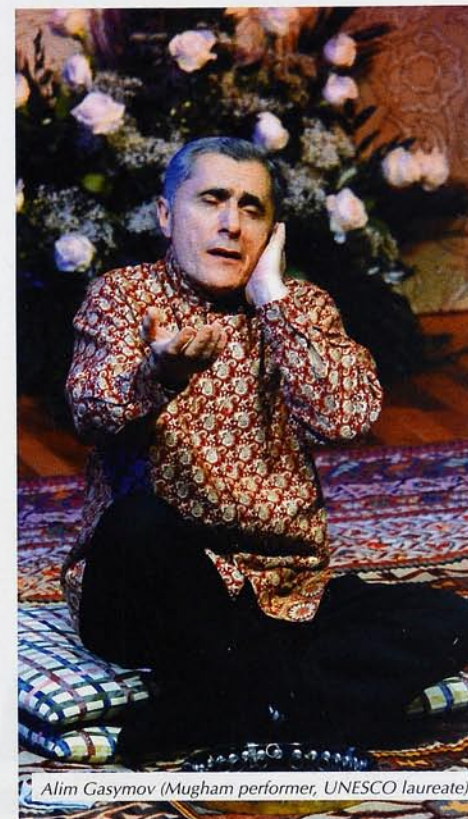
**International Mugham Center**  
9, Neftchilar Avenue,  
Seaside National Park  
Phone: (+994 12) 497 89 70  
[www.mugam.az](http://www.mugam.az)

**The Ud Restaurant**  
9, Neftchilar Avenue,  
Seaside National Park  
Phone: (+994 12) 497 89 70

**The Mugham Club Restaurant**  
9, Rzayeva Street, Icherisheher  
Phone: (+994 12) 492 40 85



Gaval



Alim Gasymov (Mugham performer, UNESCO laureate)

## THE ASHIQ ART

The musical and poetic creativity of *Ashiqs* contributes to part of the oral traditions of Azerbaijani music. In 2009, the Ashiq Art of Azerbaijan was included in the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The origins of Ashiq Art and Ashiq Poetry come from the roots of national folklore and dates from the distant past. At different times, Ashiq has had different names – such as *Ozan*, *Yanshag*, *Varsag* etc. The word '*Ashiq*' has been the title used since the XI-XII centuries. Scholars explain that the word '*Ashiq*' derives either from the Arabic word – '*eshq*' (love) – or the Turkish word – '*ishyg*' (light). An Ashiq performance has always been regarded as a type of professional art, and the accompanying knowledge has always been transferred orally by the Masters of Ashiqs to their disciples. The famous Ashiqs of Azerbaijan are *Dirili Gurban* (XVI century), *Sary Ashiq*, *Abbas Tufarganly* (XVII century), *Kheste Gasym* (XVIII century), *Ashiq Aly*, *Ashiq Alasgar*, *Molla Juma* (XIX century) and others. Examples of the Ashiq art created by these professionals are still preserved by modern Ashiqs.

### TYPES OF ASHIQ ART

The Ashiq Art is a kind of syncretic art. It means that the Ashiq writes the verses and composes the music, and then sings them whilst at the same time playing on a *saz* (musical instrument of Azerbaijan) and dancing. Therefore, the Ashiq Art is a profession that requires fully comprehensive and complementary skills. However, it is very rare to find an Ashiq who combines all such skills as music, poetry, dance and theater. Many performers have gained the name of 'a Performing Ashiq', and they have an important role in the preservation and development of the Ashiq Art. The Master composers, who create the various verses of the Ashiq Art, are recognized as 'Poets of the People' or 'poet of saz'.

Saz

### ASHIQ SCHOOLS

The Azerbaijani Ashiq Art has developed a number of traditional musical styles, which demonstrate the manner of playing, the type of accompanying music and the set of the dastans, as well the features of the choreography. Based on these different styles, there is a wide variety of regional versions of Azerbaijani Ashiq Art, which are known by the names of the following schools: *Ganjabasar* (*Ganja*, *Tovuz*, *Shamkir*, *Gazakh*, *Ghedebe*, *Dashkesan*, *Goranboy* and *Kalbajar*), *Borchaly* (the territory of Georgia – *Bolnisi*, *Marneuli*, including *Bashkechid*, *Garayazy*, *Derechichek* and *Garachop*), *Shirvan* (*Shamakhy*, *Gobustan*, *Ismayilli*, *Salyan*, *Kurdamir*, *Agsu*, *Ujar*, *Gabala*, *Agdash* and *Zardab*). Parts of Iranian Azerbaijan – *Tabriz*, *Garadag*, *Urmiya*, *Savve* and *Zanjan*.

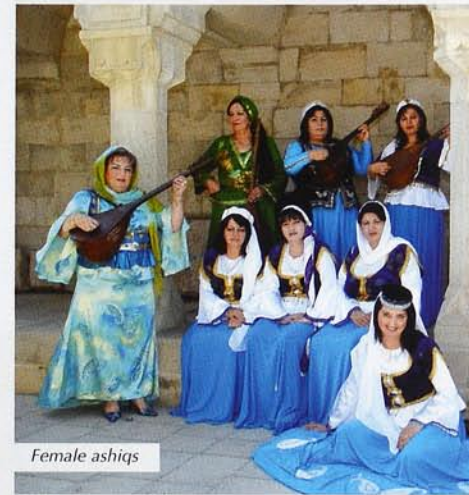
Throughout these regions one may hear the different styles of Ashiq Art during holiday celebrations. Nowadays, Ashiq Art is at a new stage of development. Azerbaijani Ashiqs demonstrate their skills, not only in local festivities held in Azerbaijan, but also at the events organized by UNESCO, TURKSOY and many other international organizations.

### DO NOT MISS IT

Since 2010, the International Ashiq Festival has been held every October once every two years, in the Heydar Aliyev Palace with the support of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Azerbaijani Ashiqs Union. Many Ashiqs come from a number of countries to take part in this International Festival and as part of the events organised, give concerts in various regions of Azerbaijan.



Ashiq Alasgar (XIX century)



Female ashiqs

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Azerbaijan Ashiqs Union  
21, Zarifa Aliyeva Street  
Phone: (+994 12) 493 69 14  
Working days: from Monday to Friday  
(10.00 - 18.00)  
[www.azab.az](http://www.azab.az)



## NOVRUZ

**N**ovruz is a very ancient holiday, and represents Nature wakening, the equal duration of night and day, the start of the sowing season and the arrival of Spring. The *Novruz* Holiday is celebrated each year on March 20-21, and marks both the New Year and the first day of Spring.

Since the earliest times, the people of Azerbaijan, Turkey, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan and Tajikistan have celebrated the arrival of Spring by holding various festivities. This holiday is firmly linked to the historical roots of the Azerbaijani people. In 2009, *Novruz* was included in the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

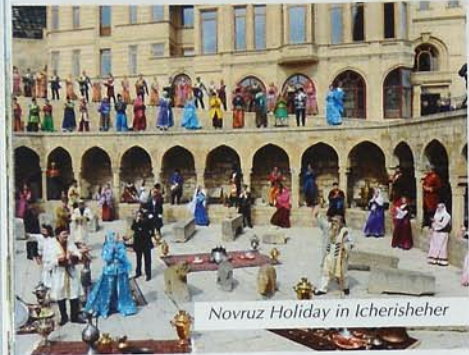
Scientific research has proven that the *Novruz* Holiday dates back to very ancient times – i.e. to the time of the prophet Zoroaster. Scholars claim that the holiday is at least three thousand years, and possibly five thousand years old. It is written in the sacred book of the Zoroastrians – ‘*Avesta*’ – that *Novruz* is the holiday of the people and brings abundance and prosperity. As well as saying that *Novruz* provides health and wellbeing, the book also describes the many rites and beliefs of the Zoroastrians. This holiday has not, throughout the centuries, been influenced by any religion.

## TUESDAYS

According to the *Novruz* beliefs, there are four elements that bring life to people and Nature – Water, Fire, Wind (Air) and Land. Thus, *Novruz* festivities start four weeks before the start of a New Year, i.e. the 21st March. The older beliefs relate that one of the four elements of Nature “resurrects” on each of these Tuesdays. Therefore, the four last Tuesdays of the year before *Novruz* are deemed as sacred ones:

Water Tuesday  
Fire Tuesday  
Wind Tuesday  
Land Tuesday

On these Tuesdays, houses and yards are cleaned of dust and waste in the daytime. In the evenings, people cook the national dishes and build bonfires in their yards. Prior to jumping over their bonfires, people will whisper their wishes. The last Tuesday is sumptuously celebrated in Azerbaijan, when bonfires are seen everywhere, and various types of meals are served at tables. A special *Novruz* food – *Khoncha* (a plate containing sweets, nuts etc.) – contains the obligatory seven types of dried fruit.



Novruz Holiday in Icherisheher



Ashiq performance during Novruz



Rope-walker



Novruz Khonchasy

## NOVRUZ RITES

### DO NOT MISS IT

On March 20, *Novruz* festivities are celebrated in all the regions of Azerbaijan, especially in the capital city of Baku, where tens of thousands of people pour in to the streets on the occasion of the Holiday. It is celebrated very solemnly in the *Icherisheher*. The main activities that are part of the Holiday are: – *Kosa* (Long Beard Man) and *Kechal* (Bold Man), who make funny conversations and entertain guests with their games. During this celebration, people play Azerbaijani folk music and exhibit objects of applied art. At the same time, the various dishes of the national cuisine are prepared and offered to visitors. The *Novruz* festivities are celebrated widely throughout the ancient towns and villages of the *Absheron* Peninsula, especially in *Ateshgah* and *Yanardag*.

- Hat throwing – A hat thrown at any house should not be returned empty.
- Fortune telling by overhearing – If you overhear a conversation in any house, and it is a positive talk, then your dream will come true.
- Jumping over bonfire – All people jump over bonfire regardless of age. There is a belief that if you jump over a bonfire, then you will be saved from all difficulties and diseases, as they will be left behind in the fire. As people jump over the bonfire, they say: “*Aghyrylyghym – ughurlughum odda yansyn*” (“All that burdens me should be left on the bonfire”).
- Fortune telling by rings – Girls hang a ring from a thread and plunge it into a glass of water. The number of times the ring hits the sides of the glass will represent the age at which she will marry.
- *Semeni* growing – These are wheat seeds, which people plant on the occasion of Spring’s arrival and the plants’ awakening.
- Egg beating – The winning side in this game ask the defeated side to fulfill one of their wishes.

f-42580

- Being a guest – Usually, people visit relatives and neighbors on *Novruz*, bringing *Novruz* gifts with them and paying tribute to deceased relatives.
- Candle lighting – In *Novruz*, people light the same number of candles as there are family members.
- Reconciling those who have quarreled – Quarrels should not remain during *Novruz*... there should be a reconciliation.
- Yally dancing – this is an ancient dance of the Azerbaijani people and symbolizes human solidarity.
- Cock fighting – special types of fighting cocks are bred for this type of competition.
- Colorful and versatile games and performances are played during the *Novruz* Holiday.

These games and performances – horse racing, fencing with swords, *kemendatma* (belt throwing game), *zorkhana* (ancient type of wrestling), various entertaining games, rope walking, wire strongman, masquerade, *kos-kosa* (*Kosa* is a bald old man who likes having fun with visitors) and other performances. The songs sung in these performances have a particular beat suitable for dancing.



Pakhlava

### NOVRUZ TABLE OF FESTIVITY

One of the important moments of the *Novruz* Holiday is when plentiful and varied food is placed on a table. Sweets such as *shakerbura*, *pakhlava*, *gogal* and others are considered as the symbols of the *Novruz*. Therefore, it is necessary to cook them all. People start to prepare these foods from the previous Tuesday. As well as the foods and sweets on the festive table, one may also note *nogul*, *nabat*, pistachio, almond, dried mulberry, *kishmish* (seedless raisins), hazelnuts, walnuts, almond segments, painted eggs, apples, plums, dried pistacia and other fruits.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Folklore Institute of the Azerbaijani National Academy of Sciences

31, the 8th Kichik Gala Lane, Icherisheher

Phone: (+99 412) 498 81 08

Email: azfolklor@yahoo.com



Shakerbura

M.F. Axundov adına  
Azərbaycan Milli  
Kitabxanası



Yally dance near bonfire

## CARPET WEAVING

The art of carpet weaving has existed in Azerbaijan since the Bronze Age – from the end of the 2nd century B.C. – to the early 1st century B.C. – and historians such as *Herodotus*, *Claudius Aelianus*, *Xenophon* and others wrote about the country's development of carpet making. During the *Sasani* Period (III – VII centuries), carpet making continued to develop in Azerbaijan. Subtle carpets were woven using silk and gold-silver threads. The Albanian historian, *Moses Kalankatuk*, (VII century), wrote about the fabrics made of silk and the multicolored carpets woven in Azerbaijan. *Xuanzang*, a Chinese traveler in the VII century, said that Azerbaijan was the largest center of carpet making. This has also been proven by archaeological researches. A catacomb cave of the VII century has revealed a weaving loom, remnants of wool filaments, various carpet making tools, *cheche* and disintegrated *khaly* and *palas* parts. The ancient text *Hudud-al-Alem* ('World Frontiers'), written in the X century, describes the production of high quality wool products in the Azerbaijani cities of *Marand*, *Ganja* and *Shamkir*. The majority of the items exhibited in the international exhibitions held in 1872 in Vienna (Austria), in 1911 in Turin (Italy) and in 1913 in London and Berlin were carpets and carpet products exported from Azerbaijan.

### IN THE WORLD'S MUSEUMS

The carpets currently kept in the world's museums were purchased by travelers, merchants and scholars who had traveled to Azerbaijan in the past. Azerbaijani carpets are exhibited in many museums, which include – the Victoria & Albert Museum of London, the Museum of Decorative Arts of Paris, the Metropolitan Museum of New York, the Hermitage of Saint-Petersburg, the *Topkapi* Palace Museum of Istanbul, the *Basitan* and *Gulustan* Museums of Iran and the Museum of Decorative Art of Budapest.

The Sheykh Safi carpet or the Ardabil carpet  
XV-XVI centuries  
Victoria & Albert Museum, London

### TEACHING CARPET WEAVING

As an area of both art and science, lectures about carpet making are given at the Azerbaijani National Fine Arts School (named after *Azim Azimzade*), the Azerbaijani National University of Culture and Fine Arts and the Azerbaijani National Fine Arts Academy, as well as in various art colleges. Carpet making is also taught as a profession in the vocational schools and art galleries for children.

Azerbaijani carpet making was included in the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2010.

### CARPET TYPES

By their technical specifications, Azerbaijani carpets are divided into piled and non-piled ones. Non-piled carpets are related to the earliest period of carpet making, and are divided into seven types: *Palas*, *Chechim*, *Kilim*, *Shedde*, *Verni*, *Zili* and *Sumakh*. Non-piled carpets were widely used in the past – these included ones such as *khurjun*, *heyba*, *gashlyg* (all varieties of bags), *chul* (box cover), *yeherustu* (saddle cover), *chuval* (bag), *duzgaby* (salt shaker), *gashyggaby* (spoon bag), *chomchedan* (ladle bag), *chorab* (sock) and piled carpets (*dest-khali-ghebe*, carpet and *ghebe*).

### THE PAINTINGS OF FOREIGN ARTISTS

During the XIII – XIV centuries, many carpets and carpet products were exported from Azerbaijan to foreign countries. The subtle ornamentation, along with the tender and attractive motifs on these carpets drew many people's attention – and thus they are also reflected in the paintings of famous European artists.

These included Dutch artists of the XV century – for example *Hans Memling*, in his 'Virgin and Child' and 'Portrait of a Young Man', depicts the *Mughan* Carpet of Karabakh, and *Van Eyck* drew the *Zeyva* Carpet in his painting of the Holy Madonna. The German artist, *Hans Holbein* (XVI century), in his painting 'Envoy', depicts a carpet of *Ganja – Gazakh*.



Dutch artist Hans Memling (XV century)  
Virgin and Child  
The Mughan carpet of Karabakh



German artist Hans Holbein (XVI century)  
Envoy  
Carpet of Ganja – Gazakh region

## AZERBAIJANI NATIONAL MUSEUM OF CARPETS AND APPLIED ARTS NAMED AFTER LATIF KARIMOV

The study of Azerbaijani Carpet Making as a science, and its contemporary development in the creative activities of modern professionals, are linked to *Latif Karimov*, the national artist of Azerbaijan (1906-1991). The Azerbaijani National Museum of Carpets and Applied Arts established in 1967 is named after this prominent specialist.

This Museum has a collection, not only of ancient types of carpets and applied art created by the Azerbaijani people throughout the centuries, but also various paintings by modern artists and artifacts made by craftsmen. The Azerbaijani National Museum of Carpets and Applied Arts has the largest carpet collection in the world, based on their value and the unique importance.

Anyone who visits the Museum of Carpets may study the various techniques of weaving which are shown in the exhibitions, and also learn about the ten methods of carpet weaving and their other secrets.

A magnificent new building, the Azerbaijani National Museum of Carpets and Applied

Arts, which has been under construction since May 2008, will, in the near future, open its doors to visitors. Located on the Seaside National Park, it will have the shape of a Wrapped Carpet. This Museum, which is being built within the framework of a joint project between the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and UNESCO, will exhibit carpets woven by the different carpet schools of Azerbaijan.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

#### Azerbaijani National Museum of Carpets and Applied Arts named after Latif Karimov

123A, Neftchilar Avenue  
 Phone: (+994 12) 493 66 85  
 Working days: from Tuesday to Sunday (10.00 - 18.00)  
[www.azercarpetmuseum.azeurotel.com](http://www.azercarpetmuseum.azeurotel.com)  
[www.carpet.intangible.az](http://www.carpet.intangible.az)

## CARPET MAKING SCHOOLS

The origins of carpet making schools date to Prehistoric times. This is proven by the Midean carpets of the V century B.C., which were discovered in *Altay* (Russia), as well as the images of carpets, *palases* (flat non-piled carpets), *chuls* (small sized carpets used as a cover) which were found on the surfaces of various examples (the *Zeviye Hasanlu* discovery). Dating from the XIII – XIV centuries, they can be seen on carpets drawn on Tabriz miniatures. During the times of *Gazan Khan* and *Uzun Hasan*, carpets exported from Azerbaijan to Europe were depicted by European artists in their paintings. All these factors provide the evidence of the existence of fully fledged carpet schools.

During the second half of the XVIII century, the northern part of Azerbaijan started to fracture into small feudal *khanates*. This resulted in the creation of a number of classical carpet making schools in *Guba*, *Baku*, *Shirvan*, *Ganja*, *Gazakh*, *Karabakh* and *Tabriz*.

Carpet making became more intense during the period of the *khanates*, when each had its own carpet making centers, and, some even had workshops.



Khurjun



Azerbaijan Carpet Museum



Tar player Ramiz Guliyev



Tar manufacturing



Azerbaijan State Museum of Musical Culture

The *tar* is one of Azerbaijan's oldest string instruments and is a principal component of a mugham performance. The first version of the instrument had five strings; it was improved by the famous Azerbaijani *tar* player *Mirza Sadig (Sadigjan)* in the second half of the 19th century. The construction of the *tar* changed, the number of strings was increased to 11 and afterwards the *tar* was played at the chest instead of on the knee. The famous *tar* players of the 20th century, *Faraj Rzayev, Gurban Pirimov, Mansur Mansurov, Bahram Mansurov, Haji Khanmammadov, Ahsan Dadashov, Ramiz Guliyev* and others, are held in special regard in the history of Azerbaijani musical culture. In December 2012 the *tar* was included in the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

### STRUCTURE

Viewed from above, the body of the *tar* resembles a figure eight; it is in two parts – one large and one smaller bowl. Its relatively long neck has 22 frets. The body of the *tar* is made from mulberry wood, its neck and head from walnut. It is 850 mm long, the body is 165 mm deep and 185 mm wide. The body is covered with the heart membrane from a cow. The *tar* is played with a small plectrum made of bone or ebonite.

### AZERBAIJAN STATE MUSEUM OF MUSICAL CULTURE

5, Rashid Behbudov Street  
Phone: (+994 12) 498 69 72,  
(+994 12) 598 44 79, (+994 12) 498 81 84  
Working days: from Tuesday to Sunday  
(10.00 - 18.00)  
[www.musicmuseum.az](http://www.musicmuseum.az)

### HOW TO EXPORT

To export a *tar* that you have acquired from a shop or workshop, you first need to register it at the Azerbaijan State Museum of Musical Culture. Experts will issue a licence declaring that the instrument is not of museum-standard significance.

### DO NOT MISS OUT

Extensive information about the *tar* is available from the Azerbaijan State Museum of Musical Culture, which has functioned since 1967. Different types of *tar*, as well as the instruments played by famous exponents of the art are on display there. Visitors may also listen to recordings of several famous *tar* players.

### HOW TO OBTAIN A TAR

*Tars* are not made in factories, but by masters in private workshops, where you can obtain a *tar* or watch one being made.

**Master Rashid Mahmudov**  
Phone: (+994 50) 354 52 51

**Master Mazahir Hasanov**  
Phone: (+994 55) 700 03 62

**Master Musa Yagubov**  
Phone: (+994 50) 372 05 34

### ROYAL chain of musical instruments shops

24, Nizami Street  
Phone: (+994 12) 492 83 11,  
(+994 50) 387 73 83  
[www.royal.az](http://www.royal.az)

### SHIRVAN musical instruments shop

113, Ch. Mustafayev Street  
Phone: (+994 12) 596 23 36,  
(+994 55) 327 13 71, (+994 50) 715 64 64  
[www.shirvan-az.com](http://www.shirvan-az.com)

### MELODIYA musical instruments shop

95, Azadlig Avenue  
Phone: (+994 12) 440 85 96, 497 35 93,  
(+994 50) 395 53 61  
[www.melodiya.az](http://www.melodiya.az)

### BAKU musical instruments shop

56, Azadlig Avenue  
Phone: (+994 12) 441 10 01



Tar

## CHOVGAN GAME



*Khosrov and Shirin (XVI century)  
Nizami Ganjavi  
Miniature depicts a chovgan game*



*Guy-o Chawgan (XVI century)  
A Persian miniature depicts a chovgan game*

**C**hovgan, as one of the types of national equine games, has been played for centuries since its inception in the first millennium BC. In the medieval period, this game had also been widely known as a team game in other countries. We can notice various scenes of the *Chovgan* game displayed in petroglyphs, on tombstones and on various household items. Depictions of the *Chovgan* game on enamel pots were discovered in the archaeological excavations near the *Orangala* Monument of the III – V centuries B.C., located in the *Beylagan* region. These discoveries clearly prove that this game had been widely played in that period in the *Karabakh* region. The game of Polo, which today is well known all over the world and considered as the ‘Game of Kings and the King of all Games’, has its origins in *Chovgan*.

Various chapters of the *Kitabi Dede Gorgud* epic refer several times to the *Chovgan* Game. *Khosrov* and *Shirin* are described by the great Azerbaijani poet *Nizami Ganjavi*, in his *Khosrov* and *Shirin* poem as playing *Chovgan*, and this also proves that the game had been played in Azerbaijan, not only by men, but also by women. One of other facts proving that the *Chovgan* is an ancient Azerbaijani game is explained by the repeated depiction of the game in Azerbaijani miniatures. Azerbaijan’s written sources also describe the rules of the game and provide the information about the manner of its development. The *Chovgan* was included in the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding at the 8th session of the UNESCO ICH Intergovernmental Committee held in Baku on 3 December 2013.

### DO NOT MISS IT

Since the year 2006, the *Chovgan* President Cup Tournament takes place in Sheki once a year in December with the organizational support of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Teams representing the regions of *Balaken*, *Zagatala*, *Gakh*, *Sheki*, *Oguz*, *Gabala*, *Ismayilli*, *Agdash*, *Barda*, *Yevlakh*, *Gazakh*, *Agstafa*, *Agjabedi*, *Goranboy*, *Agdam* and the city of Baku participate in this competition. Teams have become more numerous with the increasing interest in *Chovgan* – the national game.

### WHAT DOES THE CHOVGAN MEAN?

The *Chovgan* game has several meanings from an etymological point of view. The main name of the game – the word – *Chovgan* has helped to generate such Turkic words as the verb – ‘*chovutmag*’ – meaning to hit with a wooden mallet.

Other meaning envisages a snowstorm, a blizzard or a storm, stemming out from the concept that the combination of a horseman and a horse creates a storm.

The word – ‘*chovlan*’ – means a galloping horse. The different pronunciation of the game’s name is because of the existence of various differing dialects in various parts of Azerbaijan in ancient times.

### WHERE TO WATCH

**Sheki Equestrian Tourism Center**  
Dashyuz village territory, city of Sheki  
Phone: (+994 044) 277 00 53,  
(+994 070) 409 96 18

### EQUESTRIAN SPORT CLUBS

**Baku State Horse Race Square**  
Crossing of Ziya Bunyadov Street and Azadlyg Avenue, Narimanov region.  
The Horse Race Square is located in front of the Co-operation University  
Phone: (+994 12) 561 91 62

**Bina Equestrian Center**  
Mardakan Highway, settlement of Bina  
Phone: (+994 12) 565 21 52

**Elite Horse Club**  
Mardakan Highway, settlement of Bina, near the Bina Equestrian Center  
Phone: (+994 12) 444 55 66,  
(+994 50) 242 01 65  
[www.elitehorseclub.az](http://www.elitehorseclub.az)

**The Horse Husbandry Club**  
Mardakan Highway, settlement of Bina  
Phone: (+994 50) 266 77 88



*Chovgan game*

## GAME RULES

To play the *Chovgan* requires special abilities: the players should have good riding skills, the ability to maneuver and to be able to accurately hit the ball. A horse should be of medium height, agile and attractive. The *Chovgan* horses usually have compact bodies, and are not shy and aggressive. In this regard, the *Karabakh* horses are the ideal ones with which to play *Chovgan*. Players of *Chovgan* are divided into two teams and try to pass a ball through the opposing team's goal posts using a mallet. The players in each team wear different identifying shirts or blouses. Each team is composed of 5-6 players mounted on horses. The game has two parts which each last 30 minutes (15+15). There is also a 10 minute break. The players wear national costumes which include *papaq* (hat), *chukha* (humeral outerwear), wide and loose trousers (for ease in riding the horse) and a light and long necked boots. To hit a ball, they use an equally long *chomag* (mallet), all made of the same type of wood. A rubber ball of 13-15 cm in diameter is used. In order for a goal to be scored, the ball must be shot from outside the goal crease. Usually, the *Chovgan* game is managed by a mounted referee. Two assistant referees standing on the side lines help him to conduct the game. Players not respecting the rules are either suspended for 2 minutes of playing or sent off for the remainder of the game.



## HOW TO GO

Distance from the Heydar Aliyev International Airport to the city of Sheki is 255 km. Bus ride from Baku (Baku International Bus Station) to the city of Sheki: each day, times of departure 08:10, 09:00, 09:50, 11:00, 12:20, 14:00, 6:30, 17:30.

Distance from the Heydar Aliyev International Airport to the Elite Horse Club is approximately 2-3 km.

Distance from the Heydar Aliyev International Airport to the Bina Equestrian Center is approximately 2-3 km.

Distance from the Heydar Aliyev International Airport to the State Horse Race Square is approximately 25 km.

Taxi booking: \*9000 or 189

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**Azerbaijan Equestrian Federation**  
Bina Equestrian Center, Mardakan Highway, settlement of Bina  
Phone: (+994 12) 565 31 51  
[www.araf.az](http://www.araf.az)



## HISTORY

The *Kelaghayi* is an Azerbaijani form of female headwear; it is quadrangular and made of silk thread. In the western regions of the country it is also called 'chargat'.

Made of silk, the production of the fabric for a *Kelaghayi* is a long process that goes back into ancient history. There is much information about the development of silk in the early 17th century in the Azerbaijani cities of *Tabriz*, *Sheki*, *Ganja* and *Nakhchivan*. However, research has shown that silk appeared first in *Sheki* sometime BC.

Despite the fact that *kelaghayis* are now produced in many regions of Azerbaijan, the art is most popular in the village of *Basgal*, 165 km north-west of Baku, as well as in *Sheki*, some 320 km from the capital, in the same direction.

The fabric was mainly produced in *Sheki* and *kelaghayis* were made in *Basgal*. At different times, the craftworkers of *Sheki* and *Basgal* established *kelaghayi* production in other regions of Azerbaijan and also in Georgia, Turkmenistan, Iran, Turkey, Russia and Uzbekistan. The garment is not used as a hijab or paranja, it does not have a religious connotation. Nowadays it appears in both traditional and contemporary styling.

In 2014 the Azerbaijani *kelaghayi* was included into the UNESCO representative list of intangible cultural heritage of Humanity.

## HOW TO FOLD CORRECTLY

One should fold the *kelaghayi* in half several times. This process seems to refer to existential dichotomy (life and death, morning and night, woman and man, peace and war, love and hate, loyalty and treason, heaven and hell). A *kelaghayi* folded 6 times measures 18-20 cm<sup>2</sup>. The craftworkers call it a 'book'. And here the notion of 'book' equates to 'life'.

## PRODUCTION

A *kelaghayi* 160x160 cm (2.56 m<sup>2</sup>) or 150x150 (2.25 m<sup>2</sup>) weighing 130 gr can easily pass through a women's engagement ring, but it is very difficult to make. Dyeing and patterning a single one can take several days and is traditionally only done by men, because the work involves boiling dyes and heavy stencils. People with a whole range of trades are involved in the production process – these vary from tailors (creators of the *kelaghayi*), dyers, pattern artists (who apply the patterns with template stencils) and designers. The dyer is regarded as the most important actor in the production process. The different patterns are applied to the fabric using special stencils. There are two kinds of stencils – wooden (pear or nut wood) and metallic.

The patterns may be thin or thick, depending on the stencil used. The patterns applied to *kelaghayis* have their own significances and have remained unchanged for centuries, thanks to their strength and profound meaning. The main patterns are the *buta* and *shah*. Traditionally the dyes used are developed from the essences of certain plants, including onion skin, barberries, crab apples, saffron, currants, wild oranges, nuts and others.

## WHERE TO FIND

### National Museum of History of Azerbaijan under the Academy of Sciences

Address: 4, Haji Zeynalabdin Taghiyev Str., Baku AZ1005

Telephone: +99412 4932387

Fax: +99412 4985211

e-mail: [aztarmuzey@azhistorymuseum.az](mailto:aztarmuzey@azhistorymuseum.az)

### Azerbaijani National Art Museum

Address: 9/11 Niyazi str., Baku, AZ1001

Telephone: +99412 4925019, +99412 4926769

### Kelaghayi Silk Museum

Address: *Basgal* Village, *Ismayilli* Region

Telephone: +99420 2876605

Cell: +99450 5355769 (master Nizami)



Kelaghayi



Stencils



## HOW TO COVER UP CORRECTLY

Women of different ages wear *kelaghayis* of different colours and forms. Thus, elder women prefer wearing it as a *chalma* or *dinga* (head-band) and younger women and girls wear them as a kerchief. On days of mourning women wear black or brown *kelaghayis* and usually bright ones for weddings. During a matchmaking ceremony, after receiving the girl's consent, the woman representing the groom's side would present the engagement ring wrapped in a red *kelaghayi*. Moreover, during the henna parties held just before the wedding, they would cover the bride-to-be's head with a *kelaghayi* and apply henna to her hands and feet. They placed *kelaghayis* around the necks of the groom and his friends standing to his right and left. One was also hung on the side window of the wedding car.

In some Azerbaijani families, the deceased is covered with a black *kelaghayi* before burial. The *kelaghayi* can also be symbol of peace. Thus, if a woman throws a *kelaghayi* between two people fighting, the struggle stops immediately.

## PATTERNS

The '*Yelan*' (edges) and sometimes the '*khoncha*' (centre) of a *kelaghayi* are decorated by the '*basmanakhish*' method (stamping) with geometric or improvised patterns. The motifs applied to the edges differ according to the region of production. The '*Shah Buta*', '*Saya Buta*' and '*Khirda Buta*' can be often found on *kelaghayis* from *Sheki* and *Basgal*. The '*Heyrati*', '*Soghani*', '*Istiotu*', '*Albukhari*', '*Abi*' and '*Yelani*' patterns were also popular with the peoples of the Near East and the Caucasus in their time.

Some forms and motifs in *kelaghayi* ornamentation also conveyed substantial meaning. The *buta*, one of the most widely used elements of ornamental art in Azerbaijan has often been a main theme. It is assumed that this design reaches back to Zoroastrian times. It also appears in the decorative and applied arts of Central Asia and the Near East.

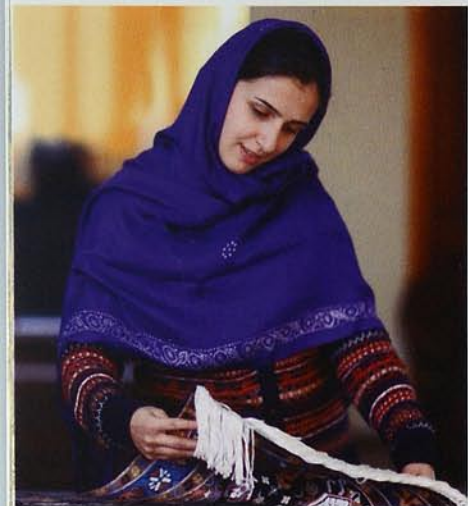
The *kelaghayi's* patterns reflect the daily lives and principles of the local people. An example would be the *Basgal Kelaghayi*. Its patterns spark many opinions about its philosophical significance. The *Basgal* craftworkers say that the meaning embraces the whole universe and human life, which is a tiny part of it.

## WHERE TO BUY Sheki Ipek OJSC

Address: 1 Fatali Khan Khoyski Str.,  
Sheki, AZ5502  
Telephone: +99424 2442922

### Note:

You can also buy *kelaghayi* in any souvenir shop in Azerbaijan.



Patterns



Lm

**NOT FOR SALE**

**Masterpieces of Azerbaijani Cultural Heritage in the UNESCO lists**  
*(guidebook for tourists)*

Editor	Leyla Rahmanova
Text	Ulviyya Heydarova
Translation	Saadat Peart
Proof reading	Ian Peart
Photo	Mammad Rahimov
Design	Aytan Baghirova

Azerbaijan's culture will always be in the limelight, as the country was one of the cradles of civilization. Many of the cultural masterpieces and sites of this 'Land of Fire' are included in the ranks of the most valuable items preserved by UNESCO. This guidebook will help you to better familiarize yourself with the heritage of this ancient land, and we hope that the presentation of Azerbaijan's culture will encourage you to visit our country.

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