



Lar National Park, a magnificent protected area

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The magnificent Lar National Park is located at the foot of the Alborz Mountains, near the southwestern foothills of Mount Damavand. It's between Mazandaran and Tehran provinces, about 70km northeast of Tehran, and has an overall area of 73,500 hectares.

This breathtaking Iranian national park includes two different ecosystems: the aquatic and the montane. Being the natural habitat of various animal and plant species, due to its special features and unique wildlife, Lar National Park is protected by the Department of the Environment, cheetah-adventures.com wrote. There are no cities or villages

inside or in the vicinity of this park, giving you the opportunity to admire the beauties of this intact paradise on Earth. The mighty Damavand summit and its western ridge – the most symmetrical face of the mountain – are visible from Lar National Park.

Furthermore, Lar Lake, or the so-called Lar Dam, is one of the best attractions of this national park, located 20km from the city of Lar.

On clear days, Lar Lake can be seen from the Damavand summit; it is a sign pointing to the west. This beautiful lake is also visible from Damavand's southern route, when you reach nearly 4,000m of elevation.

Wildlife

Lar National Park is the natural habitat of many animal and plant species due to its climate and the existence of several rivers. Almost all animal species found in the central Alborz Mountain region can also be seen in this area. The variety of wildlife in Lar National Park is one of its most interesting features.

Fauna

Lar National Park is home to a total of one hundred bird species, with the most famous one being the golden eagle, a unique bird found only in Iran. Various bird species such as partridges, Caspian snowcocks,

great egrets, grey herons, cormorants, kestrels, cranes, common buzzards, and eagles can be seen in different seasons. This makes Lar National Park a very attractive destination for birdwatching.

Lar National Park is also the natural habitat of many mammals such as red mouflons, sheep, wild goats, leopards, wolves, bears, foxes, wild boars, and jackals. The population of some of these mammals has grown in the past few years as a result of living in a safe environment. Furthermore, many reptiles and amphibian species, and aquatic animals can be found in Lar area such as Latifi's vipers (Lar Valley viper),

meadow vipers, monitor lizards, frogs, lizards, Montpellier snakes, and brown trout, which is a unique species of fish.

Flora

A total of 400 plant species, belonging to 48 plant families, exist in Lar National Park. Among these various species, 338 live in the area permanently and 35 are found only in Iran.

The variety of plants found in Lar National Park is one of its unique and interesting features. Some of these plants are edible and have medicinal properties. In addition, Lar National Park is covered with beautiful flowers such as iris, woolly buttercup, and Lar

poppy, turning it into a stunning scenery. This region is also used for beekeeping due to the existence of meadows and a variety of plants. The beekeeping season in Lar National Park is usually from June to September.

Lar National Park and its surrounding area is a popular ecotourism destination because of its breathtaking landscapes, amazing natural attractions, and wildlife. This region is also used for research projects. If you have some time after climbing mount Damavand, or on your way to Mazandaran Province, don't overlook the astonishing beauty of Lar National Park and Lar Lake.

Art of pottery of Mazandaran Province in danger of oblivion

Iranica Desk

Not much time has passed since the time when pottery made by the artists of Kelagar Mahalleh, the hub of pottery production in Mazandaran Province, were considered the main items of brides' dowries. This is while, presently, these valuable handicrafts remain unnoticed behind the windows of luxury shops.

Not so long ago, a number of pottery workshops, with numerous kilns, were working places of some top local craftsmen including Gholamali Chinisaz, Azizulah Fakuri, Azim Bakhshi, Yousef Talebi and Sobhan Najafi.

The ceramic items made in Kelagar Mahalleh of Juybar had conquered the markets of that time, IRNA wrote.

Today the situation has changed; handicrafts made by local artists, including Ramazanali Chinisaz, have lost



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the competition to new colorful dishes and don't have many customers anymore. But, he hopes, the profession inherited from his ancestors will flourish again.

The earthenware made by him are popular in the world in such a way that, according to

him, a French female tourist tried to find his workshop to come and visit him.

However, what is going on in his workshop makes you wonder. All that is visible is a 50 sq. m. space in the corner of a house's yard, where there is a pottery wheel and a kiln.



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He is a famous craftsman; generations of his family have been involved in this profession for 300 years. He can be considered the last survivor of the skilled potters of Mazandaran Province.

He said that the oldest pottery items of Iran which were dis-

covered in Hotu and Kamarband Caves of Behshahr, a city in Mazandaran Province, date back to 8,000 years ago.

He noted that the motifs of the artworks were inspired by the surrounding nature and landscapes.

The earthenware was carried

on animals to be sold in local markets. The clay used for making the vessels has special properties of removing salt from the water and cooling it. Touching a piece of pottery gives you a wonderful feeling, perhaps because it is a product of the combination of the four elements: earth, water, air and fire. Since all these elements have been found across the world from the beginning of creation, humans have practiced this art since ancient times.

The ancient pottery items that witnessed the development of life and human civilization throughout history tell countless stories of people who have never been heroes, but lived.

Considering Iran's special geographic location, at the crossroads of ancient civilizations, people of almost every part of the country have been engaged in pottery-making throughout history.