

# Embark on a journey through history, culture, and commerce in Rasht Bazaar



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## Iranica Desk

The Grand Bazaar of Rasht, the capital city of Gilan Province, is the largest open-air market in Iran. This traditional bazaar, a key attraction of the city, features several squares and caravanserais. The architecture of these ancient structures adds to the site's charm. Fresh local foods including fish and native vegetables fill the air with their enticing scents.

Each part of the bazaar represents various aspects of the local culture, making it highly attractive. Spanning an area of 24 hectares, Grand Bazaar of Rasht hosts 14 caravanserais dating back to the Qajar and Pahlavi periods, interconnected by alleys, IRNA wrote. Shopping at the bazaar offers one of the most intriguing experiences in a trip to Rasht. Here, a diverse range of goods, from agricultural products to various types of fish and foodstuffs, awaits. Moreover, the pleasure of visiting the old caravanserais should not be overlooked.

The Grand Bazaar of Rasht comprises

various sections, including:

**Taqi Bozorg Caravanserai:** Constructed in 1903, this caravanserai is situated on the southern side of the Taqi Koochak Caravanserai and the *rasteh* of jewelers (*rasteh* refers to a series of shops in the same occupational group).

**Taqi Koochak:** This caravanserai is located on the northern side of Rasht Bazaar, adjacent to Haj Morteza Mosque, and connects to the Taqi Bozorg Caravanserai.

**Sa'adat Taqi:** Situated near the Grand Square of the bazaar, Sa'adat Taqi plays a significant role in the urban market. Its history dates back to the Qajar period, and it was previously considered one of the important commercial centers of the city.

**Mohtasham Caravanserai:** Built concurrently with other caravanserais, it is located on the northwest side, with the Golshan caravanserai to the west and the Herbalists *rasteh* to the east.

**Chinichian Caravanserai:** In the northwest section of the bazaar, the Chinichian Caravanserai was built by the Chinichian brothers. This histor-

ical site offers a glimpse into the past and is a must-visit for history enthusiasts.

**Malek Caravanserai:** It is another notable caravanserai in Rasht built during the Qajar period. This bazaar-style structure was used for the export of rice to Russia and sending silk to Kashan and Yazd, making it an important hub for trade in the region. The Grand Bazaar of Rasht is a vibrant and bustling market, drawing in tourists with its array of scents and colors. Local food items and snacks, such as *Kolucheh* (a type of cookie) of Fuman and *Reshteh Khoshkar* (a type of crispy sweet), can also be found throughout the market. For those interested in handicrafts, the market also offers a variety of options to explore and purchase.

The market's vibrant and welcoming ambiance attracts countless visitors annually regardless of whether they have any shopping plans. As such, it is highly recommended that you visit this lively and bustling market when exploring charming Gilan Province.

## New archaeological discovery unveils historical importance of Garan Hill

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Iranian archaeologists have unearthed a significant discovery in the Dehloran plain of Ilam Province: a brick inscription in the Akkadian Script, along with inscribed bricks believed to be part of the water supply system of the ancient Elamite civilization. This finding underscores the political and economic significance of the Garan Hill, which is located in the western region of the Elamite settlement area.

According to Mohsen Zeinivand, a seasoned archaeologist with experience in this area, Garan Hill is situated in the Dehloran plain, a part of Ilam Province in the southwest of the Iranian plateau. Positioned three kilometers east of the Doiraj River and 2,800 meters northwest of the Musian Hill, the Garan Hill spans 17 hectares. It comprises a prominent conical elevation in the southern region and several irregular mounds scattered across the east, north, and west, ISNA wrote.

Further elaborating on the site, Zeinivand noted that the main hill stands at a height of 20 meters, while the surrounding mounds range from three to six meters in height. The entire expanse of the main hill is enveloped by a low, uniform plateau approximately 20 meters wide, which separates it from the surrounding mounds. This formation suggests the possibility of a protective moat encircling the hill, providing additional fortification.

He mentioned that Garan Hill, the largest human settlement from the second millennium BCE until the end of the Achaemenid period, holds significant archaeological importance. During a survey of the main hillside, several broken bricks, some with inscriptions, were unearthed. Unfortunately, due to soaking and weathering, the inscriptions on these bricks were illegible, but in one instance, a few incomplete words in the Akkadian language were readable. The archaeologist further ex-



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plained that another remarkable find was a simple yet intriguing piece of brick, featuring grooves on its surface. This discovery is reminiscent of similar artifacts abundant in Mesopotamia, depicting geographical maps, urban planning, temple and palace layouts, irrigation systems, and agricultural lands from the third millennium BCE up to the first millennium BCE. Zeinivand states that the pat-

terned lines on the brick represent four distinct shapes: a river, a mountain, a dam, and irrigation channels. The situation in the northeast of the Dehloran plain, where the Doiraj River flows from the Siahkuh and enters the plain, resulted in water supply issues due to climate change over the past millennia, leading to the deepening of its bed. Consequently, a dam was constructed to raise the water level of the river and

facilitate the flow of water into the channels during the ancient Elamite period.

The archaeologist has also discovered evidence of dams built using reeds or tree branches a hundred years ago on the Euphrates River north of Dezful, which is likely to be depicted on the brick map of Garan as well. It is believed that the irrigation channels branching off from the Doiraj River and supplying the settlements of Garan

and Musian are part of an ancient Elamite civil engineering project, the plan of which was depicted on the brick before its implementation.

This area has attracted attention due to its significance as the main route from Shush to Mesopotamia and its abundant water and natural resources suitable for agriculture. Therefore, the discovery of material evidence related to these components is not surprising.

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