

# Lar village, a nature lover's paradise in Zanzan Province



## Iranica Desk

Zanzan Province is one of the provinces of Iran located in the northwest of the country. It is known for its unique and cool climate, making it a popular destination for nature enthusiasts, particularly during the summer months.

Lar is a village situated in the central part of the provincial capital city Zanzan. A 20-kilometer side road branching off from the 35-kilometer Zanzan to Tarom Road traverses through picturesque and unspoiled landscapes, eventually leading to the Lar village. This route passes through Imam and Yahya Abad villages. The river in Lar village is fed by natural springs and mineral water, ensuring it does not run

dry even in times of drought. The banks of the river are lined with orchards bearing hazelnuts, walnuts, grapes, pears, and apples, creating a welcoming environment for visitors who may safely spend a few nights in this charming locale. The river also offers spots for swimming and public enjoyment. This verdant village is home to one of the most renowned waterfalls in the province. Hashtarkhan waterfall is a stunning natural attraction located in the pristine surroundings of Lar village, within an area known as Hasht Cheshmeh. Cascading from a height of approximately 30 meters, the waterfall gives rise to the Hashtarkhan River and is nestled in the scenic Hashtarkhan Valley. The region derives its

name from its location within a vast plain. The Hashtarkhan Valley is home to breathtaking waterfalls known for their unparalleled beauty and grandeur. This region is particularly stunning in the first half of the year and early autumn, although access to Lar waterfall can be challenging in winter due to the cold weather and difficult terrain. The rocky walls surrounding this waterfall are covered with lush grasses, forming a small pool at the base that eventually feeds the river. The massive rocks and boulders near the waterfall and along the river's path are truly mesmerizing. Tall, verdant trees and various wild plants enhance the surrounding landscape, making

it exceptionally beautiful and unique. This village is a treasure trove of tourism potential, attracting visitors with its fertile and picturesque lands. The ancient trees and pleasant climate make this area highly attractive for tourism. Throughout the region, you will come across numerous tall and sky-reaching trees, including hazelnut, olive, jujube, walnut trees, and mulberry bushes. The hazelnut tree forest along the way adds a special charm to the area, and the overall view of the Ghezel Ozan River and beautiful olive groves along the Zanzan to Tarom road, is very appealing and worth seeing. The interesting elevations of the region have created these unique landscapes for passing

travelers.

The agricultural products of this area, especially rice and olives, are well-known for their quality. Livestock breeding, tree cultivation, horticulture, carpet-weaving, *jajim*-weaving, kilim-weaving, and traditional handicrafts are the main occupations of the women in the village of Lar. Agriculture and animal husbandry are the primary occupations of the men in this village. Every year, many travelers and tourists choose to visit this waterfall for leisure and to experience a moment of life with nature during the warm seasons. The coexistence of trees in these surroundings with clear springs tells a historical story of friendship between plane trees and springs.



## Ilkhanid textiles in Vienna's museums

A systematic and scholarly approach towards the study of the arts from the Islamic world developed in the 19th century. This is made clear by the comparison of the reception of two Ilkhanid textiles present in Vienna. The earliest surviving object from Iran known to have arrived in Vienna is the Ilkhanid burial shroud of Duke Rudolf IV the Founder (ruled from 1358-65), a 14th-century textile from Iran. Made of silk with gold threads, this lampas is one of the most splendid Ilkhanid textiles to survive. Another Ilkhanid fragment, once part of the ecclesiastical vestments in Regensburg, found its way to Vienna's Museum für Kunst und Industrie in the 19th century as part of the important collection. The Museum für Kunst und Industrie included a large collection of samples of all types of textile patterns and objects that could be used as models by artists and technicians working for the Austrian industry.

In the case of the two Ilkhanid textiles, it is clear that the appreciation of similar Persian items had changed over a time span of six centuries. The Duke's splendor was enhanced by his burial in one of the most exclusive textiles



Flying Carpets, Museum of Applied Arts in Vienna

available. The second Ilkhanid textile was also originally used in a European sacred context. During the late Middle Ages, the chasuble out of which this fragment was cut was part of the Christian liturgy, itself endowed with divine magnificence.

In the 19th century a fragment of the same chasuble was collected by the Museum of Applied Arts (MAK) to inspire Austrian textile production. In both cases the textile was admired, but in very different ways. The ancient conception of the sacredness of tex-

tiles met the entrepreneurial spirit of the 19th century. These are of course not the only Persian textiles in Vienna. Documentation in the respective institutions shows that during the late 19th century the MAK, the Orientalische Museum and what is now the Museum für Völkerkunde acquired a considerable number of textile samples, pieces of costume, carpets and the like from different periods of Persian art. Another important group of Persian objects in Vienna constitute high quality weapons that came to Vienna from the 16th to the 19th centuries. Precious daggers and sabres were especially sought after by princely collectors.

Often diplomatic gifts, many of them were delicately crafted pieces of jewelry, decorated with precious stones and niello work, occasionally inscribed with Persian poetry. Some of them were part of the imperial private Rüst-kammer or the Kunstkammer, demonstrating the high regard for these objects.

During the later nineteenth century, they were integrated into the Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien (KHM), where they are now part of one of the

most famous weapons collections worldwide, the Rüst-kammer.

Valuable weapons also continued to be appreciated as diplomatic gifts in the 19th century. Persian jade objects were also transferred from the imperial collections to the public museums in the later 19th century. The KHM houses, among other objects from the Persian world, some splendid stone nephrite objects from the Timurid, Safavid and Mughal periods. These were formerly part of what was left of the imperial Kunst- und Wunderkammern and were integrated into the KHM upon its creation. Large pieces of jewelry like these were used as highly esteemed diplomatic gifts during the late 16th century. For instance, a set of ancient Persian stone-carved tableware was presented by the Ottoman ambassador to Emperor Ferdinand I in 1562. Objects like these found their way into the Kunstkammern, which were accessible at times to the court artists of Rudolf II (ruled from 1576-1612) in Prague. Given the emperor's fondness for vessels made of precious stones, these might have served as models for court artists, such as the Italian Miseroni family.