

Chanteh-weaving: Nomadic artistry from Fars Province



Chanteh or *ayinehdan* is a traditional handwoven product of the nomadic people in Fars Province. It is often described as the "knapsack of the dervish" made of rugs and carpets sewn together in a sack-like form, with leather pieces attached. These bags are worn around the neck and used to carry small items.

In carpet terminology, a *chanteh* refers to a small handwoven weave that is smaller than saddlebags and does not have separate compartments. The primary material used in creating a *chanteh* is similar to that of a carpet, with the main difference being the size. These products are exclusively woven by women and serve as practical pouches for holding various items used in the daily lives of nomadic

A *chanteh* is typically crafted from two pieces of a 30 by 40 rectangular fabric that are sewn together on three sides to create a pocket-like structure. Adorning two sides of the bottom are colorful pom-poms, and a handle made from the *chanteh* fabric allows it to be carried like a traditional bag.

To create a *chanteh*, a loom is only set up when weaving more than five pieces at once due to its narrow width. With one set of loom, a weaver can produce anywhere from ten to twenty *chanteh* pieces featuring various designs. There are multiple techniques for producing a *chanteh*, including methods utilized in weaving carpet, kilim, ja-



jim, saddlebags and others. *Chanteh* weaving incorporates both Persian and Turkish knots, with wool yarns utilized for both wraps and wefts. Typically, white yarn is used for the wraps, while the wefts are dyed using natural pigments in shades like red, gold, blue, and green. The weaving process takes place on horizontal looms. The diversity of motifs and pat-

terns in *chanteh*-weaving is extensive. However, craftswomen often focus on preserving key elements that reflect the ancient cultural heritage of the region. These motifs delve into legendary beliefs and symbols from antiquity, marking the origins of the prehistoric era. Some motifs can be traced back to pottery artifacts from the 4th to 3rd millennium BCE, while others

draw inspiration from reliefs found in the Achaemenid, Sassanid, and early Islamic eras.

In Qashqai weavings, motifs such as peacock feathers, paisleys, suns, goats, birds, eight-petal flowers, zigzags, crosses, anemones, and desert bushes are commonly featured, showcasing a rich tapestry of historical and cultural significance.

Iranica Desk

Gilan Province, with its pristine and beautiful nature, lush green forests and numerous historical attractions, is one of the tourist destinations in the north of the country that attracts many tourists and travelers. Anzali Wetland, Saravan Forest Park, Masouleh Village, Roudkhan Castle are among the attractions of this region. Avisho or Abisho Cave is also one of the notable attractions of Gilan Province, located in Masal in a mountainous area amidst the forests of Shandermand district.

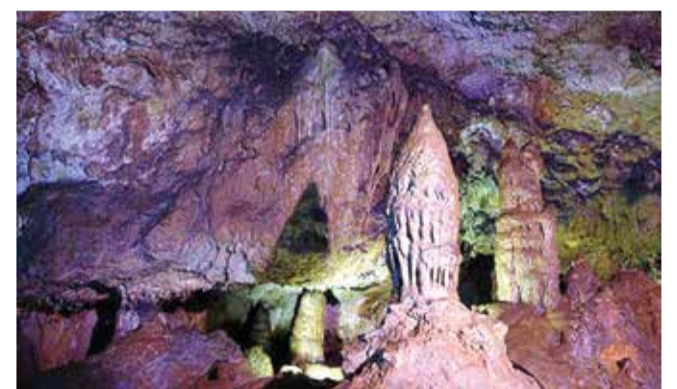
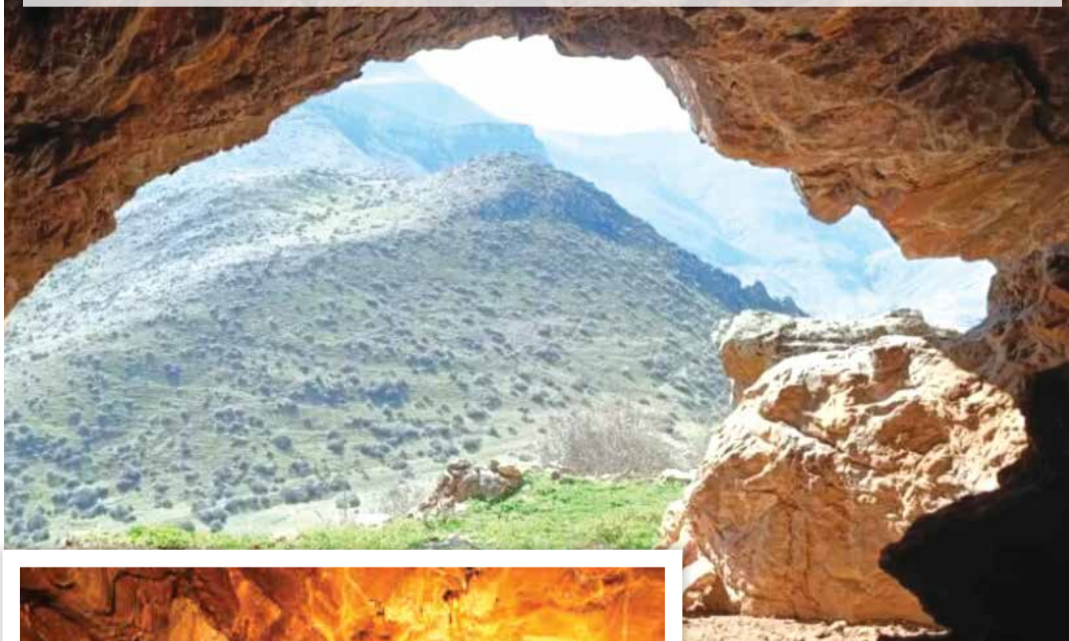
Masal is home to more than 17 large and small caves, with the largest one being Avisho, situated at an altitude of 1300 meters above sea level in a low-water valley.

Avisho is a Talysh language meaning "a place where water falls." It is said that the cave got its name from a spring located nearby.

So far, cavers and mountaineers have explored and discovered about two kilometers of the astonishing depths of this cave. This cave was registered in the National Heritage List in 2010.

Avisho Cave is a limestone and water cave with seven springs and a river flow inside. In such a way that the water flow can be seen from the beginning to the end of the cave, it has nine main shafts and one secondary shaft. Working your way into the cave, you will see unique and diverse

Visit mystical depths of Avisho Cave in Gilan



limestone formations. These formations have been created as a result of the dissolution of limestone rocks in water. The stalactites are among the attractions of this cave, hanging either as columns or located on the ground, and it is interesting to know about the formation of these stalactites, which are ac-

tually limestone deposits. Most caves are formed in limestone and gypsum rocks, which contain calcium carbonate that can easily be dissolved by acid. During rainfall, raindrops absorb carbon dioxide present in the air, becoming acidic and capable of dissolving limestone rocks in them. Therefore, when

acidic water containing limestone drips from the cave ceiling, vaporizing, the limestone deposits remain, forming these spectacular stalactites. On the way to Avisho Cave, you will encounter lush green forests with stunning views and enchanting springs that will make your drive enjoyable.