Gilan Province, home to historical castles and bridges

Lisar Castle
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Gilan Province, in northern Iran, not only boasts natural attractions but also features historical sites, scattered throughout the region, which draw the interest of numerous tourists. Throughout history, this province's strategic location has led to the construction of several fortresses for the Islamic era, with archaeological digs revealing that the majority of them date back to the Safavid period.

Roudkhan Castle

Roudkhan Castle is located in Fouman, Gilan Province, and is the largest historical military structure in the region. This castle, with an area of about seven hectares, consists of two sections, Seljuk and Safavid. The foundation of this structure is made of stone materials, while the upper part is made of brick with sarooj mortar. In the past, this fortress housed royal dynasties. In the travelogue of Aleksander Chodźko, mention is made of a stone inscription at the entrance of this building describing the restoration and reconstruction of the castle. This historical building is now one of the tourist attractions in Gilan Province.

Lisar Castle

Lisar Castle is one of the most historical and beautiful castles in the Gilan Province. Situated in the town of Lisar, it is located 15 kilometers away from the road between Talesh and Astara. The castle covers an area of about 5000 square meters and is constructed using materials such as stone and brick. Lisar Castle is visible from a distance, and one of its notable features, due to being abandoned after a war, is the castle's dominance over the surrounding environment.

Perched on a hill with an approximate height of 90 meters, this Seljuk-era castle is considered a valuable historical site and is registered on the national heritage list. It is regarded as a local and provincial tourist attraction.

Historical bridges

Gilan, being the rainiest province in Iran, features numerous small and large rivers flowing through its landscape. As the most densely populated area in Iran, there is a substantial demand for constructing multiple bridges to facilitate the movement of people and goods across these rivers. All the bridges in Gilan Province are constructed using mineral materials like brick and sarooj.

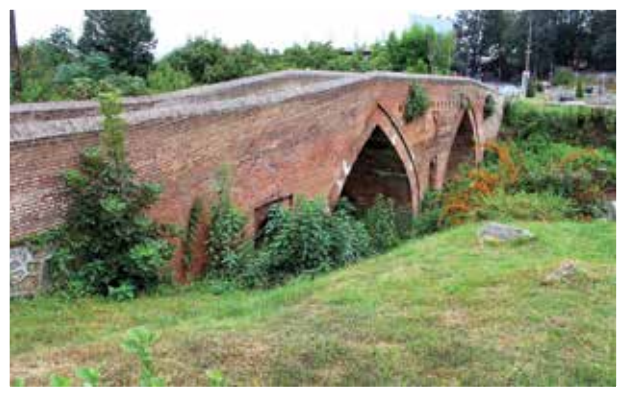
Given the watery environments in which these structures were built, resistance to moisture from the flowing water was a critical factor in ensuring the longevity of these bridges. Additionally, the application of engineering principles in bridge design was crucial. For example, the incorporation of breakwaters in the foundations of historical bridges, providing the highest resistance to fast-flowing waters, has played a key role in preserving the resilience and durability of many of these bridges over time.

This is in stark contrast to modern bridges made with contemporary materials, which often succumb to floods, highlighting the meticulous craftsmanship and robustness of traditional Iranian architecture evident in the historical bridges of Gilan Province.

In terms of historical periods, most of these structures are attributed to the Qajar era, with some remnants dating back to the Safavid period, such as the Loshan Bridge positioned at the southern entrance of the province over the Shahroud River.

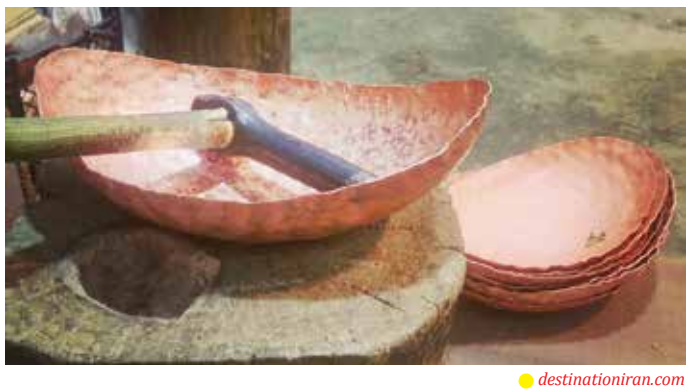
Gilan Province boasts a collection of at least 400 historical bridges, although some have unfortunately succumbed to destruction. Despite the aging beauty of these bridges, Gilan Province stands out as the hub of historical bridges in Iran. Examples include Lahijan's Brick Bridge, Astaneh Ashrafiyeh Bridge, Chaboksar Bridge, and the composite bridges of Anzali. Over the past forty years, following the victory of the Islamic revolution, one of the tallest bridges in Iran—a 700-meter marvel—was gracefully erected over the Sefidroud river.

Roudkhan Castle
rasekhoon.net



Lahijan's Brick Bridge
wikipedia.org

Davatgari, the art of crafting metal utensils



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Davatgari is a type of forging that involves the craft of creating utensils and tools from metals like copper, brass, silver, gold, nickel silver, and others through hammer forging. During this process, skilled smiths start by bending metal plates precisely and methodically through hammer strikes, before adding components like handles or bases. They then secure these parts using soldering or welding techniques to form the tools in their entirety. A key indicator of the creator's expertise is ensuring the final product is without any holes and maintains consistent metal thickness throughout.

The art of davatgari was historically widespread throughout Iran, with contemporary strongholds found in cities like Tehran, Isfahan, Shiraz, Tabriz, and Arak. Davatgari, or cold forging, is considered one of humanity's earliest professions, dating back thousands of years. Initially, craftsmen shaped cold metals using rocks to create basic utensils and objects. Today, three methods are employed in utensil production, integrating modern technology: one-piece (seamless), multi-piece (with seams), and a method utilizing metal bending machines.

In the one-piece method, the metal plate is cut into circles with a radius at least equal to the height of the desired object. The plate's center is then placed on the anvil, and consistent hammer strikes are applied from the center outward to shape the plate into a bowl. Next, the plate is repositioned, and by striking the edges, the opening narrows, transforming the product into a vase or similar object.

In the multi-piece method, the artisan begins by cutting the metal into rectangular shapes. The height and width of this rectangular piece are determined to be suitable for the maximum height and circumference of the desired object. Subsequently, the edges of two adjacent pieces are thinned to half their original size through hammering.

In the third method, a machine called the "*seh nezam*" or Three Jaw Lathe Chuck is utilized. Similar to the first method, a circular plate is cut and placed into the machine alongside a cast iron mold shaped like the intended product. As the machine operates, the plate and the mold rotate in unison, while metal bars measuring fifty centimeters in length push the plate against the mold, shaping it accordingly. Trays, large plates, bowls, mirrors, and candle holders are among the various products crafted through davatgari.