

Stunning architecture of Baghcheh Juq Palace Museum in Maku

Iranica Desk

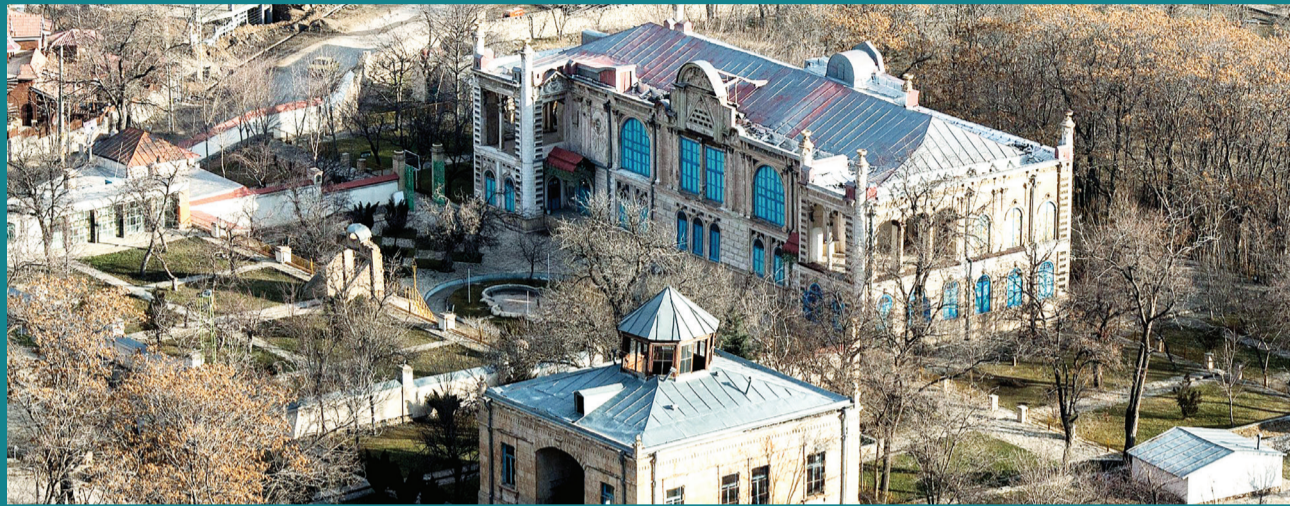
The Baghcheh Juq Palace Museum in Maku is a historical site and tourist attraction in West Azarbaijan Province, dating back to the Qajar era. This palace museum, which includes the palace building and an 11-hectare garden, houses the personal belongings of the commander of Maku. It is officially registered as a national heritage site in Iran on July 1, 1996. Baghcheh Juq is the name of a village located seven kilometers west of the city of Maku.

Construction of the Baghcheh Juq Palace Museum began during the Qajar period under the rule of Timur Pasha Khan and was completed after 30 years under Iqbal al-Saltaneh's rule.

This palace, known as one of the key attractions of Maku, served as the seat of governance for its commander. Notably, the name baghcheh translates to 'garden' in Persian, signifying its lush historical context.

The family of the commander of Maku resided at this location until 1974, after which the government purchased the complex. Subsequently, restorations and renovations were carried out in the palace and its surroundings, and since 1979, it has been open to the public. Since 1987, the palace museum has been managed by the provincial Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization.

The Baghcheh Juq Palace Museum is considered one of the most valuable and magnificent historical sites remaining in West Azarbaijan Province.



Architecture

The Baghcheh Juq Palace Museum features a large 2,500-square-meter building set within an expansive 11-hectare garden. The construction of this building represents a collaborative effort between Iranian architects and Russian design engineers, heavily influenced by Russian architectural styles due to the close relations the commander of Maku maintained with the Russians.

Upon entering the palace, visitors are greeted by a dusty carriage that belonged to the commander, along with his speaking platform. This platform includes a plastered terrace adorned with colorful bricks and a staircase.

The palace is magnificently designed with a symmetrical layout. Its architecture is a unique fusion of Iranian and foreign styles. The Iranian section is elegantly decorated with floral motifs and figures from the Qajar era, while the foreign section features wallpaper reminiscent of 19th-century Russian homes and exquisite European designs. The building's exterior is adorned with plaster statues that embellish the entrances and the plaster railings along the roofedge.

Surrounding the palace, part of the garden is enclosed by cast-iron fences and is home to a variety of trees, including mulberry, fig, walnut, cherry, almond, apple, and apricot.

In the western part of the palace, an oval-shaped pond can be found, and remnants of stone paving are visible in some areas. Additionally, a large pool in the garden serves as the source of a water channel that flows through various sections, creating a picturesque landscape.

On the first floor of the palace museum, there is a dining hall known as the Green Room. An interesting feature of this hall is its ceiling, which showcases paintings depicting the Persian table and Iranian men on one side, while the other side beautifully illustrates European dishes and foreign men and women.

Adjacent to the dining hall is a section that served as a waiting area and venue for official meetings. Undoubtedly, one of the most stunning interior spaces of this palace is the *howzkhaneh*, or Hall of Mirrors, which has hosted various events and celebrations. This area features exquisite mirror work on the walls and a water fountain in the center, creating a cap-

titivating atmosphere with the soothing sound of flowing water.

Access to other parts of the palace, such as the bedrooms, office, and royal sitting rooms, can be gained through staircases located on either side of the building. These staircases are adorned with beautiful stone statues. Throughout the second floor, visitors can find sofas, tables, and cabinets crafted by various foreign artists. A notable aspect of this building is the presence of unique double-glazed windows, whose colored glass possesses insect-repelling properties and converts sunlight into ultraviolet light, helping to keep insects away. These glasses were handcrafted by Iranian artisans during the Qajar era.

The palace features elegantly designed wall fireplaces, some adorned with floral motifs, while others showcase intricate stone carvings and plasterwork. These fireplaces were utilized for ventilation in the summer and as heaters in the winter. If you pay attention to the walls on the second floor of the palace museum, you will notice dried natural flowers placed within the walls in glass compartments. The age of these flowers is as old as the palace itself.

Each room in the building is named according to its color. For instance, the White Room served as the public hall, while the Green Room is the dining area. The bedrooms have retained some decorations from that era, featuring Polish furniture, Austrian carved cabinets, French steel furniture, and bronze and crystal chandeliers. Even the vanity table of Anali, the commander's wife, remains in this location.

The Baghcheh Juq Palace currently functions as a museum. The majority of the artifacts on display include the personal belongings of the commander of Maku, which were sent to him by various foreign courts.

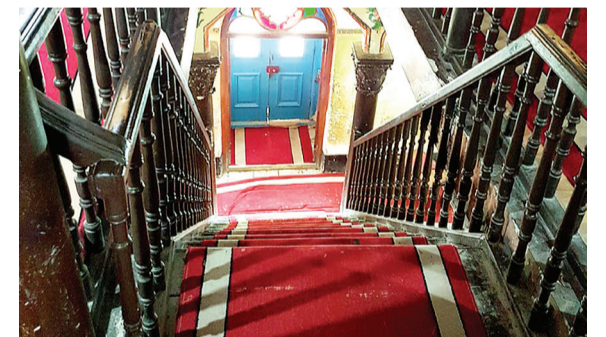
These items can be found on both the first and second floors of the building. The most significant artifacts in this museum include luxurious sofas and chairs made from reeds and rattan, adorned with bronze decorations and velvet upholstery, crafted by countries such as Poland, France, Austria, and Russia.

Restoration

The restoration and renovation of the Baghcheh Juq Palace Museum in Maku took four years, during which the doors were closed to tourists. All costs for this restoration were covered by the Maku Free Zone Organization.

The restoration efforts encompassed the buildings, facilities, and ceiling, with the most significant work focused on the ceiling. In the facilities section, the construction of a boiler room was prioritized. Additionally, in the decoration section, which is

the most crucial part of the complex, various paintings at the entrance, the exterior, and the plasterwork on the eastern and southern sides were restored. Simultaneously, the adjacent stone structure, known as the Kolah Farangi Building, was also renovated.



Maku

Maku is a city located near the border with Turkey. It has a rich history that dates back to ancient times, serving as a significant trade route and cultural exchange point due to its strategic location. Historically, Maku was part of various empires, including the Achaemenid and Sassanid empires, and later became a vital center during the Islamic period.

The city is known for its historical sites, including ancient castles, churches, and mosques, reflecting its diverse cultural heritage. One of the notable landmarks is the Maku Castle which offers insights into the region's architectural history. In addition to its historical significance, Maku is renowned for its natural beauty, surrounded by mountains and lush landscapes, making it

a popular destination for tourists. The city also plays a role in contemporary trade and commerce, benefiting from its proximity to the border and the establishment of free trade zones. Overall, Maku is a city that beautifully blends history, culture, and natural beauty.

