

experience
Azerbaijan
AUTUMN 21 / WINTER 22
guide

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Welcome!

There is plenty to see and do in Azerbaijan in autumn and winter and we'll show you some of the highlights over the next pages. Autumn brings spectacularly colourful scenery and is a great time to visit lakes, vineyards and picturesque regions such as Julfa in Nakhchivan. You can also travel to Goychay for the completely unique and UNESCO-listed Pomegranate Festival. Winter, on the other hand, is best for exploring snowy mountain scenery. Outdoor enthusiasts can ski at three superb resorts and hike to spectacular frozen waterfalls. For somewhere warmer, visit the "Burning Mountain" near Baku on the Absheron Peninsula to discover some fascinating Zoroastrian heritage. Baku, meanwhile, is always brimming with culture and in this issue we reveal the best modern art venues. Enjoy the articles and plan a visit!

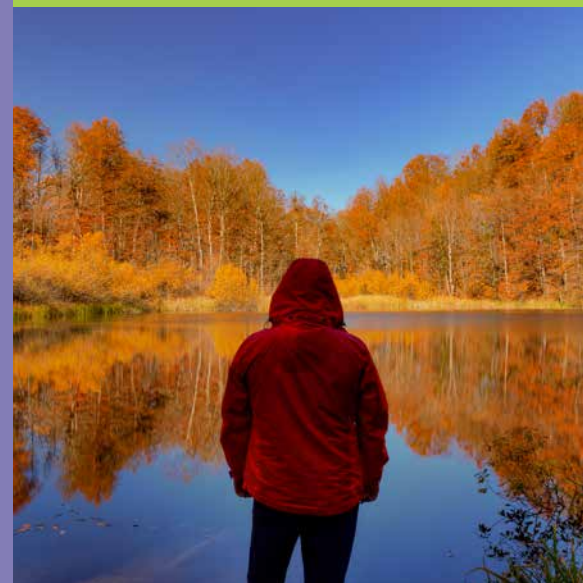
Have something to say?

Send us your feedback by writing to experienceazerbaijan@tourismboard.az. We look forward to hearing from you!



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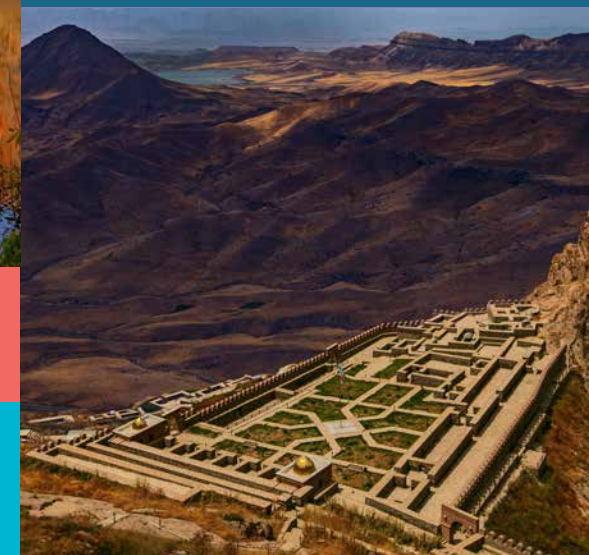
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HIT THE SLOPES THIS WINTER

SKIING IS GAINING IN POPULARITY IN AZERBAIJAN ALL THE TIME, AS THE COUNTRY'S MANY STUNNING MOUNTAINS WITH PERFECT SNOW CONDITIONS AND STUNNING VISTAS ARE TURNING IT INTO A FANTASTIC WINTER SPORTS DESTINATION. THE SKI SEASON LASTS FROM APPROXIMATELY **MID-DECEMBER UNTIL LATE MARCH**, WHICH EQUATES TO ABOUT 100 SKIABLE DAYS. AND THESE THREE COSY AND WELL-EQUIPPED SKI RESORTS AWAIT VISITORS.



Shahdag Mountain Resort

Nestled in the Greater Caucasus Mountains, 29km from the small north-eastern city of Gusar, this is Azerbaijan's first ski resort, which opened in 2012. The resort is developing all the time but currently offers 17km of uncrowded slopes that are mostly a mix of cruisy reds and blues with always-perfect snow conditions ensured by snow guns. More advanced skiers and snowboarders can head off piste. The resort's four onsite ski-in, ski-out hotels (three 5-star, one 4-star) have plenty of cafes, bars and restaurants as well superb spas offering all manner of relaxing treatments, and even a heated outdoor pool with sublime views of the mountains. A host of non-ski activities can also be enjoyed, from paintball to quad tours, and ski equipment rental and lessons for all ages and abilities are both readily available. The price of a ski pass is just 35 AZN for adults and the journey from Baku by car takes about 3 hours.

Learn more at shahdag.az

Tufandag Mountain Resort

Tufandag is located further west across the Greater Caucasus Mountains and is conveniently just 4km from the small city of Gabala, which ensures a wide variety of accommodation and restaurant options. The skiing here features more challenging narrow red and black runs descending through forest, as well as gentle greens and blues for beginners. The resort currently has 15km of slopes and is well-equipped with cable cars, a ski school and ski rental shop. It also includes the luxurious Qafqaz Tufandag Mountain Resort Hotel with spa and fitness facilities and a host of other winter activities (sledging, snowmobiling, tubing, trekking, etc.) are offered to visitors. Moreover, Gabala is only about 3 hours' drive from Baku and has many other interesting places to visit, from the ruins of ancient Gabala to Nij village, inhabited by a historic Christian community called the Udis.

Learn more at tufandag.com



Agbulag Ski Centre

Located at 2,000m in the village of Agbulag, Azerbaijan's newest ski resort is just an hour's drive from Nakhchivan city, capital of the Autonomous Republic of Nakhchivan. It's also the smallest of the three, with just 1.5km of slopes, however expansion is expected over the coming years. Up here in the Lesser Caucasus Mountains, the snow conditions are idyllic while the resort's infrastructure meets the most modern standards. There is an onsite 38-room hotel plus several two-person cottages, however staying in nearby Nakhchivan city, home to a number of intriguing historical and cultural sites such as the 12th-century Momine Khatun Mausoleum, is an equally good option. In addition to two cafes and a place to rent ski clothes, there are kids' and entertainment parks, an artificial lake and 980m-long cable car. Beginners and pros alike can also benefit from professional instruction (for just 7 AZN per hour!).

Learn more at agbulaq.com





Behold the Burning Mountain

CURIOUS ABOUT HOW AZERBAIJAN CAME TO BE CALLED THE "LAND OF FIRE"? IF SO, THEN THERE'S ONE MUST-VISIT PLACE THIS AUTUMN AND WINTER – **YANARDAG**, THE "BURNING MOUNTAIN." HERE, IN THE VILLAGE OF MAMMADLI, A 30-MINUTE DRIVE FROM CENTRAL BAKU, A 10M WALL OF FLAMES DANCES ACROSS THE BASE OF A HILLSIDE, TESTAMENT TO A TIME WHEN AZERBAIJAN WAS A CENTRE OF FIRE WORSHIP.

Eternal flames

The astonishing natural flames at Yanardag have been burning for many thousands of years and today are among the last examples of a rare geological phenomenon that was once widespread in Azerbaijan, particularly on the Absheron Peninsula, and for centuries wowed travellers along the Silk Road.

Now, of course, we know that "eternal" flames such as these are fueled by natural gas leaking through rocks thanks to tectonic movement, but it's easy to see how they were once perceived as supernatural. Some even say that Baku's abundance of natural fires contributed to the rise of Zoroastrianism, the world's first monotheistic religion, in the days of the ancient Persian empires.

A little later, they attracted the attention of the legendary Venetian traveller Marco Polo as he passed this way in the 13th century. And more recently, of Soviet ruler Stalin, who reportedly sought to extinguish them during World War II lest they aid Nazi planes in targeting Baku's oil fields.

Get in touch

+99455 655 0666
info@yanardag.az

Opening times

Every day: 10.00 – 19.00

Ticket prices

Tourists – 9 AZN
University students – 1 AZN (with valid ID)
Children up to 18 – free
10% discount for groups of 10 or more
Tours – 6 AZN

Getting there

By car or taxi about 30 mins
(from the city centre)

By bus from outside
Koroglu metro station
from Azadlig Square
(next to Park Bulvar Mall)
daily at 11:00 and 15:00.
The tour lasts 4 hours
and costs 25 AZN
(including entrance
to Yanardag).

WHAT TO SEE & DO

Yanardag is a state historical, cultural and natural reserve which reopened in 2019 after extensive development work. The site now includes a well-designed museum that unravels the history of the natural fires and Zoroastrianism in Azerbaijan, as well as a 500-seater amphitheatre where you can sit and gaze meditatively at the flames, much like the ancient pilgrims who ventured here from far and wide in search of spiritual enlightenment.

In addition, there is a cafe, entertainment centre for kids and an open-air exhibition of local archaeological finds dating from the Bronze Age (the Cromlech Stone Exhibition). Helpful guides explain all the relevant history and science, and will happily show you the reserve's other places of interest, including a mud volcano, a natural sulphur spring and the remnants of trenches used by Ottoman troops during the Battle of Baku, a fascinating yet little-known World War I episode.

Dive deeper into the Land of Fire at these other awesome sights:

The **Ateshgah Fire Temple** on the Absheron Peninsula in the village of Surakhani was constructed in the 18th century around a series of natural flames. These were long revered by Zoroastrians, however the temple itself was used mainly by fire-worshipping Indians. It ceased functioning in the 1880s after the flames petered out and since the 1970s has housed a museum dedicated to Azerbaijan's fire-worshipping heritage.



Towering above the city centre, the eye-popping **Flame Towers** are a trio of skyscrapers embodying the three flames on the emblem of Baku. Ranked among Azerbaijan's tallest buildings, they house luxury apartments and offices, plus the 5-star Fairmont Baku hotel. The LED panels they are covered with produce stunning after-dark light displays.



Another geological oddity linked to Azerbaijan's vast stores of natural gas are **mud volcanoes**, which create spectacular lunar landscapes that constantly gurgle and pop. Azerbaijan is home to the world's greatest collection of them, which you can best view in Gobustan, 60km south of Baku, where a Mud Volcano Centre is soon to open.



WATERY WONDERS of autumn

Azerbaijan's many mountain lakes are at their most picturesque in autumn, fringed by sublimely colourful foliage that creates truly wonderful scenery. All of these places are easily accessible (though may require some hiking) and well worth a visit.



1. Goygol Lake near Ganja



3. Khanbulan Lake in Lankaran

Goygol

Backed by the jagged peak of the 3,065m-high Mount Kapaz and ringed by pristine forest, Goygol Lake is one of Azerbaijan's most beautiful places. The lake gets its name, meaning 'blue' in Azerbaijani, from the extreme clarity of the water, which reaches a depth of 100m. The lake is the centrepiece of the national park named after it, which actually boasts eight other crystal-clear lakes. The area is rich in flora and fauna, from the masses of trees and herbs to populations of red deer, brown bear, East Caucasian tur, eagles and vultures.

Garanohur

Located at 1,540m in the Shahdag National Park in the Ismayilli region, Garanohur is a mountain lake surrounded by pristine forest that turns a stunning mix of yellows, oranges and reds in autumn. To reach it you need to complete a moderately difficult hike that leads up, sometimes steeply, through gorgeous beech forest for several kilometres from the village of Talistan. Walking to the lake and back takes 5-6 hours, but plan for a bit longer because it's a great place for a picnic!

Khanbulan

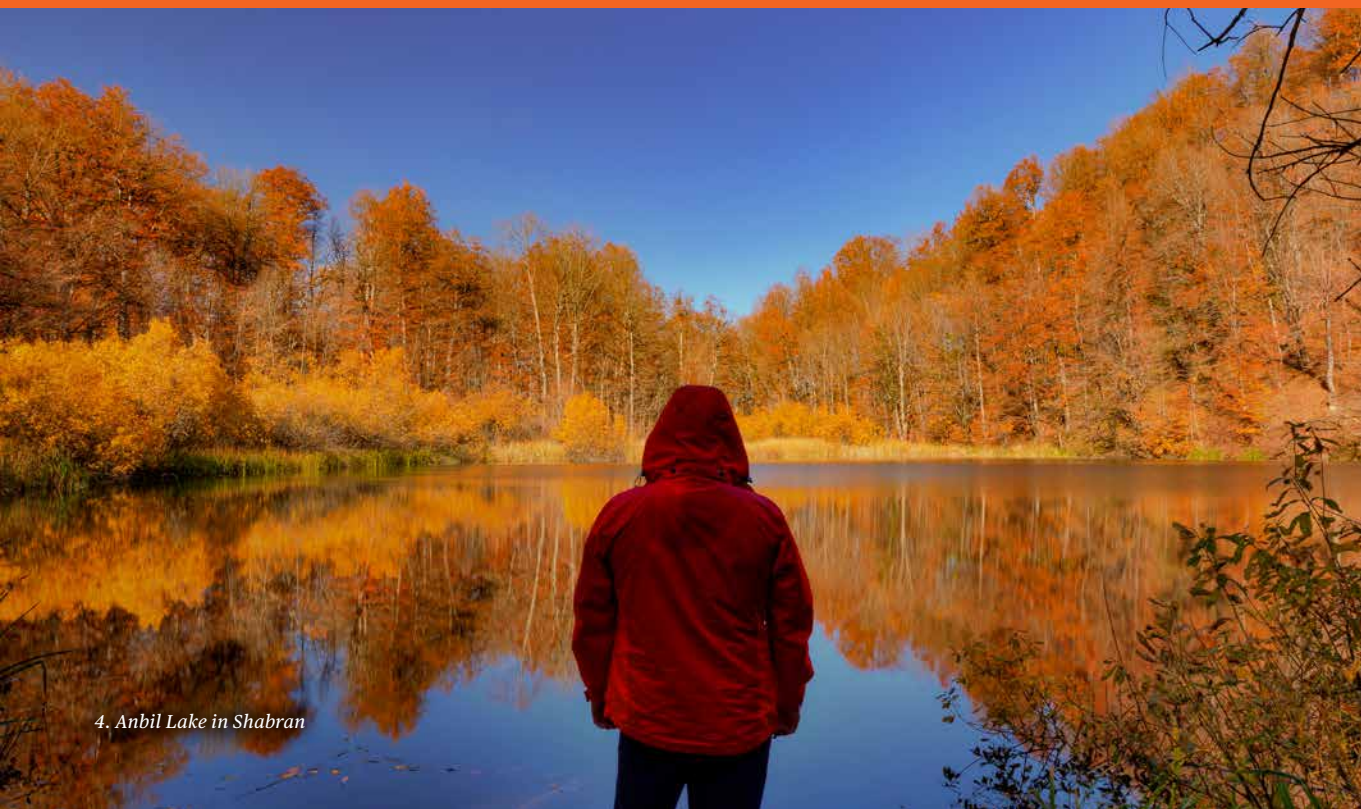
A reservoir located 17km south-west of Lankaran city in the foothills of the Talish Mountains. Khanbulan is surrounded by enchanting forest and is the ideal place to immerse yourself in nature, where you can enjoy stunning views and a peaceful atmosphere while drinking rustic samovar tea or hiking through the forest. The lake is located within the Hirkan National Park, renowned for its wealth of rare flora including iron trees. Nearby are quiet traditional villages inhabited by Talish people, who have their own language and culture.

Anbil

Lying at 940m like a giant mirror reflecting the forest and mountains of the Shabran region, Anbil may be smaller than the other lakes listed here but it is no less picturesque and peaceful. It is a relatively easy 6km hike via the village of Zeyva to the lake, which greets autumn visitors with a captivating kaleidoscope of colours. Incidentally, if you visit a few months later you'll discover completely different scenery, as in winter this lake completely freezes over.



2. Garanohur Lake in Ismayilli



4. Anbil Lake in Shabran



5. Chanlibel Lake in Guba

Chanlibel

Nestled near Nugadi village amid Caucasus mountain foothills of the Guba region, Chanlibel lake is a perfect family outing due to the variety of activities available. From enjoying a quiet picnic on a lakeside meadow to fishing, horse riding, walking, camping and spending time at the idyllic Macara Village Resort, there are plenty of great ways to experience this area of natural beauty. Tip: the lake is especially eye-catching at dawn with mist above the water as the sun rises.

Nohur

At Nohur Lake, which lies at the bottom of the impressive mountains of the Gabala region in the village of Vandam, visitors can enjoy boat rides, fishing and horse-riding beyond simply admiring the stunning forested mountain scenery that turns all shades of golden in autumn. In addition, near the lakeshore is the Gabala Chenot Palace Health Wellness Hotel, an ideal escape for lovers of high-class relaxation and detoxing.



6. Nohur Lake in Gabala

Plan a trip

through these local companies:

Aristokrat travel Azerbaijan
+99455 209 6067
www.aristokrattour.com
incoming@aristokrat.az

Discover Azerbaijan
+99450 418 4182
gm@discoverazerbaijan.az
www.discoverazerbaijan.az

Flame Tours DMC
+99455 255 3606
incoming1@flametour.com
www.flametour.com

Galaxy Travel
+99450 313 9560
incoming@galaxytravel.az
www.galaxytravel.az

**Green Apple
MICE & Leisure Travel**
+99412 493 1510
info@greenappleaz.com
www.greenapple-az.com

GreenWich Travel Club
+99412 465 9446
incoming@gwtc.az
www.gwtc.az

Millennium Tourism
+99412 497 5400
gmanager@millenniumtour.az
www.millenniumtour.az

PASHA Travel
+99412 404 1090
office@pashatravel.az
www.pashatravel.az

SF Travel
+99412 497 5571
sales@sftravel.az
www.sftravel.az

Weekend Travel
+99412 465 7062
office@weekend-travel.net
www.weekend-travel.net

Baku's BEST

modern art spaces

AZERBAIJAN'S BUSTLING CAPITAL IS BRIMMING WITH ARTS AND CULTURE AND HAS PLENTY OF MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES TO BROWSE DURING YOUR VISIT. ONE PARTICULARLY FAST-EMERGING AREA IS MODERN ART, AND HERE WE PRESENT A NON-EXCLUSIVE LIST OF **THE TOP PLACES TO VISIT:**



Museum of Modern Art

Baku's Museum of Modern Art holds a collection of over 800 pieces, mainly avant-garde and gathering the finest Azerbaijani painters and sculptors of the last 70 plus years. You can admire the vibrant strokes of 1960s Azerbaijani artists inspired by the landscapes of the Absheron Peninsula as well as works by European masters such as Picasso and Dali. Meanwhile, the two-floor building's sleek design and open space conjures a relaxing atmosphere.

5 Yusif Safarov str.
moma.az

Yarat Contemporary Art Centre

A not-for-profit art organisation founded in 2011, Yarat is an epicentre of emerging Azerbaijani artistic talent. Named after the Azerbaijani word for “create,” the organisation regularly hosts exhibitions highlighting new local and global trends, as well as educational workshops, screenings and talks featuring top local and international artists and filmmakers. Yarat has various venues around the city, the main one being the Yarat Contemporary Art Centre, housed in a former naval ship workshop on the Caspian waterfront.

National Flag Square, Bayil
yarat.az



Heydar Aliyev Centre

An absolute masterpiece of modern architecture dreamt up by world-renowned architect Zaha Hadid, this fabulously flowing building that won the 2014 London Design Museum’s Design of the Year award houses an auditorium, museums and art galleries that regularly host major exhibitions. There is also an amazing collection of classic cars in the basement.

1 Heydar Aliyev ave.
heydaraliyevcenter.az



Gazelli Art House

Located amid gorgeous fin-de-siecle buildings just off the central Nizami Street, this stylish contemporary gallery represents leading international artists working in diverse formats, from painting and photography to graphics and installations, and has exhibition spaces in London and Baku. Despite its international outlook, the gallery has a special focus on promoting understanding of Azerbaijan and the surrounding region.

172 Lev Tolstoy str.
gazelliarthouse.com



Salaam Cinema

Housed in the historic former prayer house of Baku’s Russian Molokan community, this is a creative community space that puts on documentary film screenings, exhibitions and educational courses and workshops. Tackling themes like equality, inclusion and diversity is an important part of Salaam’s mission, along with supporting local filmmaking. The outdoor terrace is a popular meeting place for young creatives.

10 Suleyman Rustam str.
@salaamcinemabaku

ART IN THE OLD CITY

Don’t miss these great art venues dotted around the UNESCO-listed “inner city”:

Yay Gallery

@yaygallerybaku
represents top local artists across generations and hosts lectures, screenings and workshops.

ARTIM Project Space

yarat.az
has an exhibition space with experimental works by the young artistic talent it nurtures.

Qiz Qalasi Gallery

qgallery.net
has been an influential contemporary art hub since 1999.

The Centre of Contemporary Art

@muasir_incesenet_merkezi
displays select works by both established and emerging Azerbaijani artists.

Art Tower Gallery

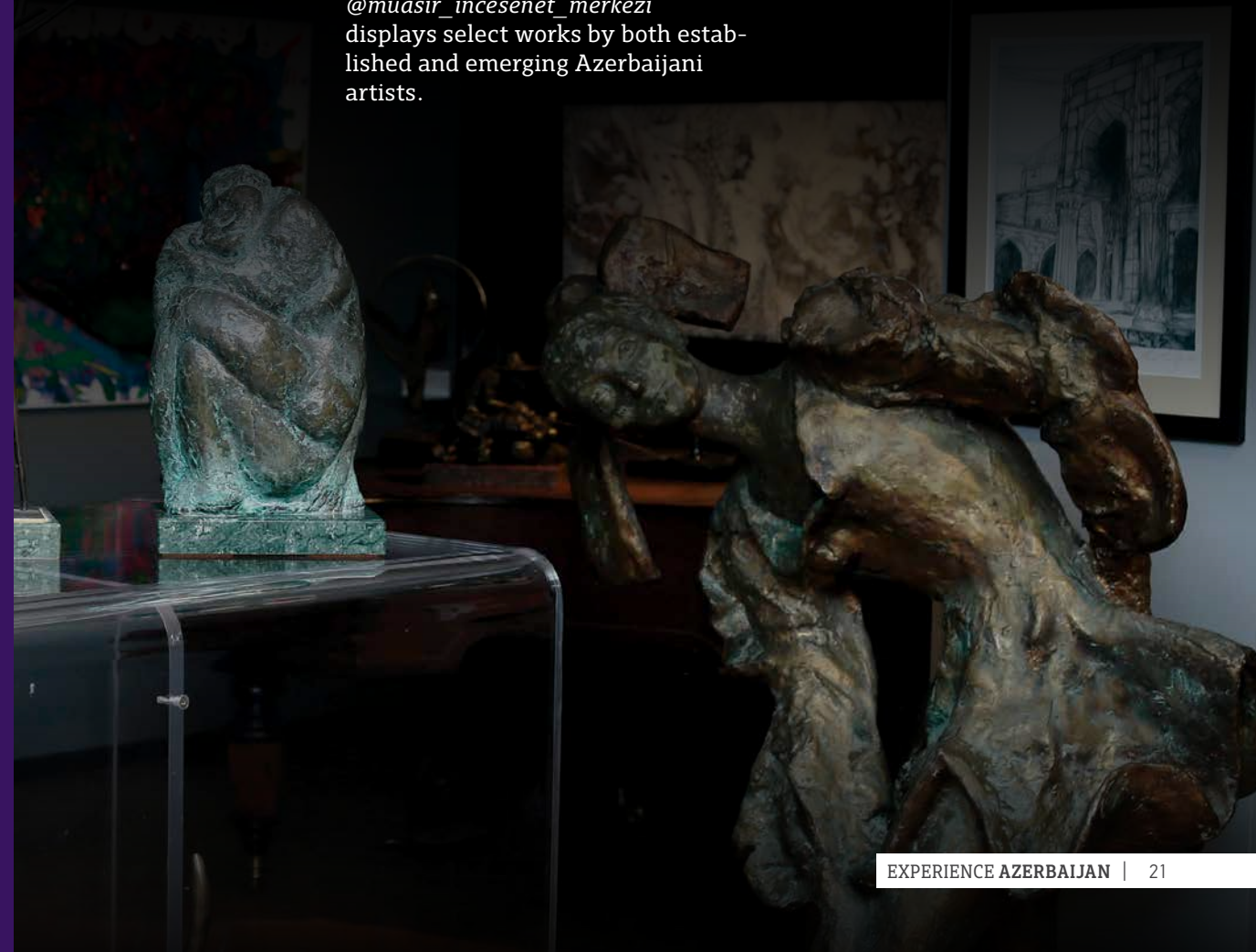
@ArtTowerGallery
is a small, intimate space for exhibitions organised by ArtCouncil Azerbaijan.

Ta(r)dino 6 Art Platform

@tardino6.art
hosts exhibitions, artist talks and other initiatives to help grow Baku’s emerging art community.

Baku Photo House

@bakuphotohouse
stages an engaging mix of photography related exhibitions, courses and creative evenings.





PARTY

with pomegranates in Goychay

Every autumn tens of thousands of visitors swarm the small city of Goychay for Nar Bayrami, or the Pomegranate Festival, celebrated at the beginning of the annual harvest. Created in 2006, this is one of the most unique cultural events in Azerbaijan – as evidenced by its inclusion in 2020 on UNESCO’s intangible cultural heritage list.

Cultural symbol

While it’s not unusual for a food harvest to be celebrated as a festival in Azerbaijan – there is an Apple Festival (Guba), a Tea, Rice and Citrus Festival (Lankaran) and even a Persimmon Festival (Balaken) – the scale and spirit of the Pomegranate Festival is on an entirely different level. Which is no coincidence given the almost sacred status held by the pomegranate in Azerbaijani society.

Since time immemorial, Azerbaijanis have deemed the fruit a symbol of love and abundance, extolling its many virtues in countless poems, paintings and songs. Its popularity also has to do with its medicinal value: packed with vitamin C and antioxidants, eating pomegranates may reduce the risk of developing numerous nasty diseases, including diabetes, cancer and Alzheimer’s. Nicknamed the “king of fruit” in Azerbaijan, the pomegranate is a major national symbol.

Pomegranate paradise

If you're wondering why the festival happens in Goychay, a small and otherwise quiet city in central Azerbaijan, the answer is that this is Azerbaijan's main pomegranate-growing region, thanks to its perfect dry-subtropical microclimate and unusually fertile soil. Azerbaijan is reportedly the only country in the world to grow all the different varieties of pomegranate and pomegranates are grown throughout the country, the annual harvest amounting to about 40-50,000 tonnes. However, Goychay's pomegranates are reputed to be particularly delicious – and there's no better place to put that to the test than the Pomegranate Festival.



About the festival

During the two-day festivities, Goychay's main street turns into a sea of crimson as local farmers proudly display the cream of their crops. Boxes overflowing with pomegranates of all shapes, colours, sizes and types – including popular ones like Veles, Gyulosha, Shirin and Shikhbaba – sit side by side with every type of produce that could possibly be made from pomegranates: juices, compotes, jams, wines, tea (made from the peel), and of course the popular sauce narsharab, a condiment for meat and fish dishes. No part of the pomegranate is wasted: even the seeds are used to tell fortunes.

As much a cultural as a culinary spectacle, sprinkled throughout the festival programme are concerts showcasing national music and dancing as well as a host of competitions to determine everything from the largest pomegranate to the quickest juice-squeezer. Meanwhile, local cafes serve up a variety of national dishes, craftsmen share the secrets of their age-old arts and exquisite souvenirs are sold at stalls of leading national brands.

Plan a trip *through these local companies:*

Aristokrat travel Azerbaijan

+99455 209 6067

incoming@aristokrat.az

www.aristokrattour.com

ENC Tours

+99412 497 4020

info@enctours.az

www.enctours.az

Granit AS travel

+99412 447 4843

info@granitas.az

www.granitas.az

Millennium Tourism

+99412 497 5400

gmanager@millenniumtour.az

www.millenniumtour.az

Online Travel

+99455 224 4442

gm@onlinetravel.az

www.onlinetravel.az

SF Travel

+99412 497 5571

sales@sftravel.az

www.sftravel.az

Weekend Travel

+99412 465 7062

office@weekend-travel.net

www.weekend-travel.net



ICONS OF ICE

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A WHITE WONDERLAND THIS WINTER, THEN HEAD UP TO THE CAUCASUS MOUNTAINS. THERE, YOU'LL FIND TOWERING PEAKS, BEAUTIFULLY BUCOLIC VILLAGES AND BOUNDLESS SPECTACULAR SCENERY, INCLUDING SEVERAL FABULOUS FROZEN WATERFALLS AWAITING DISCOVERY.

Griz

This is one of the most unique villages in the Guba region, perched at over 2,000m on a rocky plateau in the Greater Caucasus Mountains. It is inhabited by a tiny ethnic group, the Griz people, with their own language and customs. Travel here and you'll witness a little-changed, agricultural way of life that is a stark contrast to the bright lights of Baku. You can also wander to the nearby Gurgur Waterfall, about 2km away, which pours through a grotto into a series of rock pools. The whole scene freezes solid in winter to sculpt an incredibly photogenic ice cave. Walking there and back from Griz village, where homestays are available, takes about two hours.



Ilisu

The Gakh region in the northwest is one of the most naturally beautiful corners of Azerbaijan, which is also worth visiting for its abundance of historical monuments, including relics of Caucasian Albania and the Ilisu Sultanate. The capital of that statelet was the quaint village of Ilisu, located amid verdant foothills and beside the fast-flowing Kurmuk river, which originates in the glacial peaks of the Greater Caucasus Mountains. The village hosts several historic mosques and towers, while a short jeep ride away (or 45-minute hike) is the 25m-high Ilisu (aka Ram-rama) Waterfall, which is most enchanting when frozen in winter. In and around Ilisu there are numerous hotels and guesthouses, and locals will happily taxi you up to the falls.

Laza

A rural gem of the Gusar region, the picture-perfect village of Laza is located just beyond the luxurious Shahdag Mountain Resort at the bottom of a valley in the heart of the Greater Caucasus Mountains. Surrounded by steep slopes rising into craggy cliffs, the scenery here is unspoilt and awe-inspiring. The village is inhabited by Lezgis, another ethnic minority with a distinct language and culture, home to a centuries-old mosque and popular with hikers. However, the main attraction is its twin waterfalls flowing over a dramatic cliff face from an altitude of 2,200m. In summer they attract a daily stream of nature lovers, while in winter they freeze into breathtaking ice monuments and become a playground for ice climbers.



Plan a trip

through these local companies:

Alison Travel

+99450 494 9499
info@alisontravel.eu
www.alisontravelgroup.com

Caspian Breeze Travel

+99450 205 4242
nurana.hajizada@cbtravel.az
www.cbtravel.az

ENC Tours

+994124974020
info@encours.az
www.encours.az

G5 travel

+99412 310 1292
info@g5travel.com
www.g5travel.com

Granit AS travel

+99412 447 4843
info@granitas.az
www.granitas.az

Green Apple MICE & Leisure Travel

+99412 493 1510
info@greenappleaz.com
www.greenapple-az.com

Mondo Travel

+99412 567 2372
incoming@mondotravel.az
www.mondotravel.az

Rayda Travel

+99412 310 0311
office@rayda.az
www.rayda.az

Silk Row Travel

+99412 437 4720 / +99470 437 4080
info@silkrow.az
www.silkrow.az



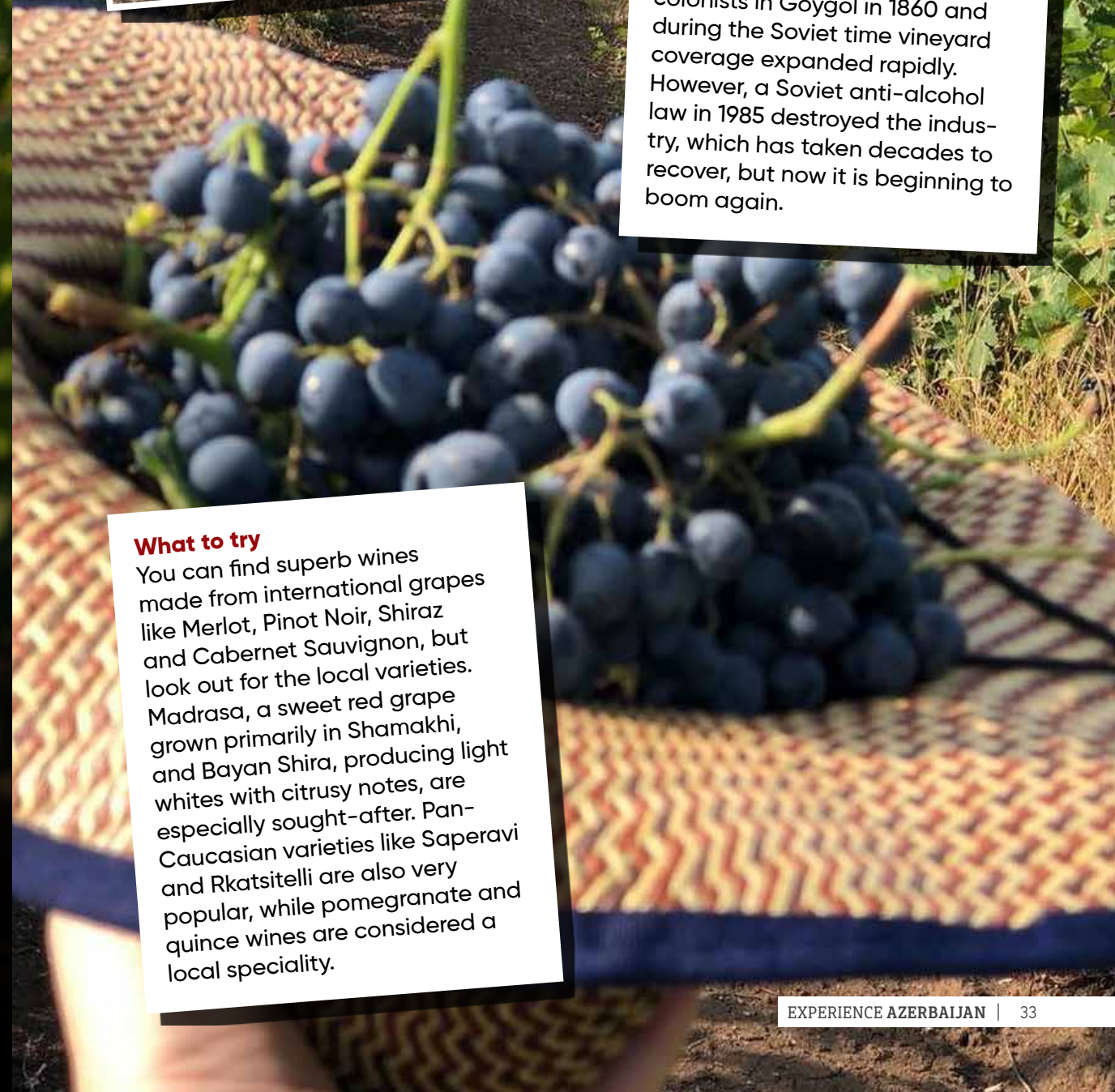
a quick guide for wine lovers

AUTUMN BRINGS COLOUR AND HARVESTS TO VINEYARDS ACROSS THE COUNTRY, SO THERE IS NO BETTER TIME TO EXPLORE AZERBAIJANI WINE. HERE IS WHAT TO KNOW AND WHERE TO VISIT.



Brief history

The Caucasus is considered a cradle of winemaking and archaeological finds suggest wine was made in Azerbaijan as early as 6000 BC. The first modern winery was founded by German colonists in Goygol in 1860 and during the Soviet time vineyard coverage expanded rapidly. However, a Soviet anti-alcohol law in 1985 destroyed the industry, which has taken decades to recover, but now it is beginning to boom again.



What to try

You can find superb wines made from international grapes like Merlot, Pinot Noir, Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon, but look out for the local varieties. Madrasa, a sweet red grape grown primarily in Shamakhi, and Bayan Shira, producing light whites with citrusy notes, are especially sought-after. Pan-Caucasian varieties like Saperavi and Rkatsiteli are also very popular, while pomegranate and quince wines are considered a local speciality.

5 VISIT-WORTHY WINERIES

SPRINKLED AROUND THE MAIN WINEMAKING REGIONS (CASPIAN COAST AND FOOTHILLS OF THE GREATER AND LESSER CAUCASUS MOUNTAINS), THESE WINERIES OFFER DIVERSE VIEWS AND TASTE EXPERIENCES:



Savalan

in Gabala produces high-quality wines branded Savalan, named after the valley where the winery is situated which has similarities with southern Italy. The winery has its own wine museum.

savalan.az



Chabiant

in the nature-rich Ismayilli region boasts over 250 hectares of vineyards backed by the Greater Caucasus Mountains, plus a guest-house and outdoor pool. The winemaking focuses on local grape varieties.

[@chabiantwinery](https://www.instagram.com/chabiantwinery)



Goygol Wine

(aka Xan 1860) in western Azerbaijan, at the foot of the Lesser Caucasus Mountains, traces its origins to Azerbaijan's very first winery, opened by German settlers in 1860. The original cellar provides an atmospheric setting for tastings.

en.xan.az



Az-Granata

in the Greater Caucasus Mountains foothills of Aghsu produces a wealth of wines from local and European grapes, however it's best known for its superb wines from pomegranates.

azgranata.az



Shirvan Wines

in the historic Shamakhi winemaking region offers fabulous scenery and produces several organic assemblages from a mix of European grapes. Excellent local food is available at the onsite Abgora restaurant.

shirvanwines.az



5 BAKU WINE BARS



UNABLE TO VISIT THE WINERIES?

THESE BAKU WINE BARS OFFER A TASTE OF AZERBAIJAN'S DIVERSE TERROIRS:

KEFLI Local Wine & Snacks

Has a relaxed vibe, knowledgeable staff, tasty snacks and extensive wine list — a great place to learn about local flavours.

*4A Tarlan Aliyarbeyov str.
@kefliwinebar*

Double Eleven Bistro & Winebar

A trendy new place in the city centre with lots of live music, dance evenings and unlimited wine days.

*6C Zeynalabdin Taghiyev str.
@doubleeleven.baku*

Saqi Wine Bar

Just minutes from Fountains Square with delicious local wines and appetizers accompanied by live music.

*12 Azerbaijan ave.
@saqiwinebar*



Room Fine Art & Wine

Excellent wines and snacks in a convivial atmosphere with the occasional art exhibition or live DJ music.

*22 Tarlan Aliyarbeyov str.
@roomfineartwinedine*

Boho Tea & Wine Room

Has a delightful courtyard, laid-back atmosphere and fine selection of teas, coffees, cakes besides the wine list.

*84 Hazi Aslanov str.
@bohoteaandwine*



Discover more at azerbaijanwine.com



Gems **JULFA**

Often described as one of the world's oldest inhabited places, Nakhchivan abounds in sights of historical, cultural and religious significance. This is especially true of its Julfa region, where you can visit a number of fascinating places.

Gulustan Tomb

This delightful tower-shaped tomb near Gulustan village, on the right bank of the Araz river, was recently restored and originally dates back to the 12th century. It was constructed from red sandstone in a similar style to Nakhchivan city's iconic Momine Khatun Tomb, built by the great local architect, Ajemi Nakhchivani. The 12-sided body, richly decorated with geometrical ornaments, sits upon a solid foundation and the entire structure is lovingly illuminated at night.



Ashabi-Kahf Cave

This is a site of huge religious and cultural significance which is shrouded in spirituality and legend. The cave is actually a large complex extending deep into a mountain and is considered sacred due to its connection with a miraculous story known as the Seven Sleepers, mentioned in both Islamic and Christian traditions. In it a group of young people escape persecution by sleeping in a cave (claimed to be this one) for some 300 years, guarded by a dog sitting at the entrance. For centuries, local people have made pilgrimages to the cave, where they perform a variety of rituals to boost their health and fortune.



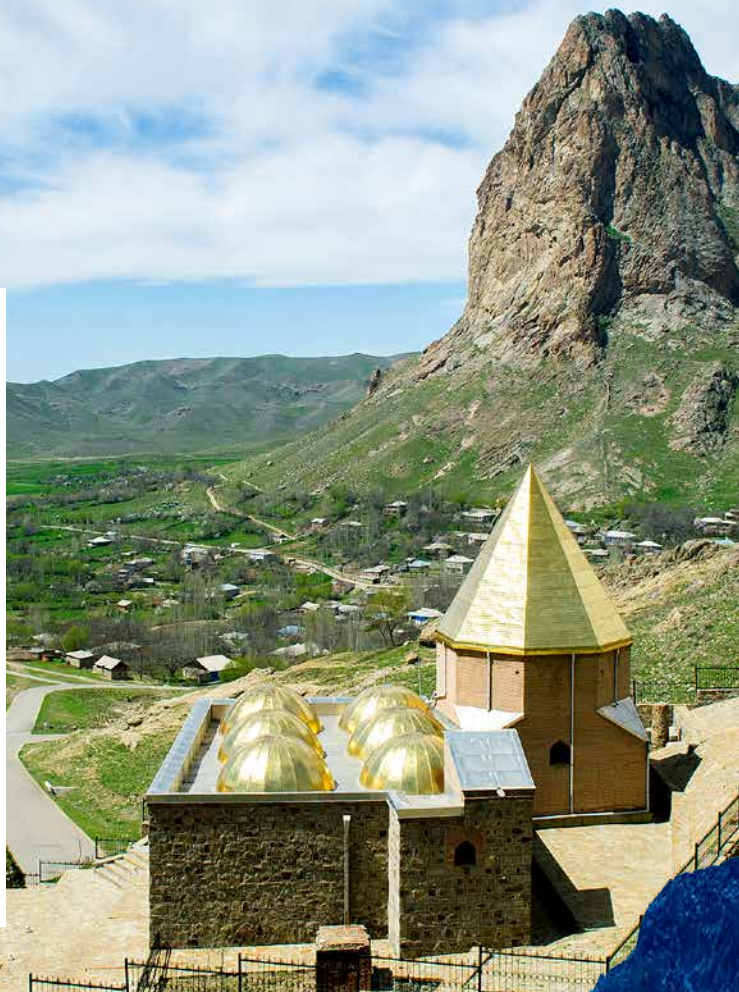
Alinja Castle

Dubbed by some as “the Machu Picchu of Azerbaijan,” Alinja Castle is a recently reconstructed mountaintop fortress dating back to at least the 8th century. The castle sits atop a mountain overlooking Alinja village and was long famed for its invincibility. One person to conquer it was the mighty Mongol ruler Tamerlane in 1401, albeit only after 14 years of laying siege to it. Centuries earlier it housed the treasury of the powerful Atabey dynasty. About 2,000 steps lead up the mountain to the castle. Climbing them is exhausting but well worth it for the sublime views at the top!



Khanegah

This architectural complex sits by the Alinja river in the village of Khanegah and consists of a tomb, mosque and other buildings dating back to the 12th-13th centuries. The site served as a religious retreat for dervishes who lived and worshipped here. The tomb contains an unnamed grave believed to belong to Fazlullah Naimi, the founder of Hurufism (a branch of Sufism), who was imprisoned in nearby Alinja Castle and executed for his religious views. The complex has been lovingly restored and is well worth a visit both for the history and the terrific views.



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Mt Ilandag

A symbol of Nakhchivan, Ilandag is a 2,415m-high mountain in the centre of the Julfa region best known for its connection with Noah. According to local legend, it was he who created Ilandag's cleft peak by crashing through during the Great Flood before coming to rest on Mt Gemigaya in Ordubad and then founding the city of Nakhchivan. Interesting, "Ilandag" translates as "Snake Mountain" and no one knows quite why – perhaps due to the serpentine shape of the peak, or perhaps it's an evolution of "Inandag," an earlier name meaning "Faith Mountain" ascribed to Noah, who is said to have seen his collision with the mountain as a sign that the flood was ending.



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ON INSTAGRAM

are you a keen photographer?

All over Azerbaijan you'll find amazing views that are bound to get you likes and followers on Instagram.

Here we present our favourite autumn and winter posts using our very own #ExperienceAzerbaijan hashtag.



A scene from the stunningly rustic village of **Sim** nestled in the Talish Mountains in the far southeastern region of Astara, very close to the Iranian border. This village is visit-worthy year round but its Hirkan Forest location makes it particularly ravishing in autumn, when the forest's giant trees are dressed in all shades of gold, amber and crimson. Hidden among trees and fields, simple houses like this are highly instagrammable.

Photo by
[@nijats.photo](#)

An awesome shot of a skateboarder along the scenic road to the remote and utterly unique village of **Khinalig** — populated by a separate ethnic group speaking a language spoken exclusively in this village. Travelling to Khinalig takes you deep into the Greater Caucasus Mountains, which are rather magical in winter.

Photo by
[@kazzimli](#)



As this shot shows, the **Shahdag Mountain Resort** is not just an excellent place to perfect your skiing or snowboarding skills in winter (read more on p.9), but a beautiful mountain retreat with all the necessary facilities, such as this fabulous heated outdoor pool with mountain vistas, to zone out and boost your wellbeing.

Photo by
[@veter_v_g0l0ve](#)

summer hillsides *winter slopes*



One of the travel gems of Azerbaijan, Baku's **Old City** (aka Icherisheher) is home to iconic landmarks and a labyrinth of narrow alleys hiding art galleries, museums, mosques, hammams and theatres. Following the summer heat, autumn is a lovely time to explore this UNESCO-protected site, as having browsed all the main sights you can still relax at outdoor restaurants and cafes.

Photo by
[@marizanikolic](#)



Here is a capture of another winter hotspot for nature lovers: **Gabala**, a city in the northwest situated at the foot of the Greater Caucasus Mountains. Gabala has many relaxing resorts near the snowy forest-covered mountains where you can go for wintery walks, warm up with a hot chocolate and enjoy quality time with your loved ones.

Photo by
[@nagehanabdullayeva1](#)




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