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DILIJAN





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DILIJAN
Դիլիջան

By [Rick Ney](#)
Maps by [Rafael Torossian](#)
Edited by [Bella Karapetian](#)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BACKGROUND

[Introduction](#)
[Problems](#)
[Attitudes](#)
[Ecology](#)

BEARINGS (p. 6)**SIGHTS** (p. 6)

[Monuments & Churches](#)
[Museums](#)
[The Arts](#)
[Theatre](#)
[Film](#)
[Folk Dance](#)
[ART](#) (p. 7)
[CRAFTS](#) (p. 7)

PRACTICALITIES (p. 11)

[In And Out](#) (p. 11)
[Around](#) (p. 11)
[Tour Agencies, Guides](#) (p. 11)
[Communication, Etc.](#) (p. 11)
[Maps, Money, Film, Clinics, Etc.](#)
[Overnight](#) (p. 12)
[Food & Drink](#) (p. 14)

DAY TRIP: AROUND DILIJAN (p. 15)**RESOURCES** (p. 23)**MAPS**

[Dilijan Map](#) (p. 9)
[Lori Map](#) (p. 26)

DILIJAN ▲

(DD 40.73857 x 44.86699)

[Map](#)

✚ **DILIJAN - Դիլիջան** (formerly Hovk elev. 1518m, pop. 20414) is on the right bank of the Aghstev river, 40 km east of Vanadzor and 106 km from Yerevan via Sevan. The town, looking like a Swiss mountain hamlet, has a storied history, from humble beginnings as a simple Stone Age settlement to Bronze Age citadel, Urartian fortress and a royal retreat for the kings of Armenia and Emirs of Persia to its total destruction by Mongols and Tatars and rebirth in the Tsarist period as a health spa and resort for the rich and powerful, then for members of trade unions and factories in the Soviet era. It is still one of Armenia's most popular destinations, for its cool weather, immense forest preserve and Swiss chalet style of architecture.



Surrounded by the Dilijan Nature Preserve, 24,000 hectares of old growth forest (much of which still survives, despite illegal logging), Dilijan has numerous wilderness trails and mountain treks leading to some of Armenia's most enchanting cultural monuments; churches, monasteries and prehistoric citadels nestled amongst thick stands of trees, bushes and vines. Its cool clean air, dappled light and mild summer climate make it a welcome respite from the stifling heat and dusty streets of Yerevan, and a nice contrast to the beautiful but stark alpine country around Sevan. If Yerevan is for business and Sevan for partying, Dilijan is for rejuvenating, for contemplating art, soaking in mineral spring baths, walking through the forests that creep into the heart of the city, listening to nature.

Dilijan is also a city of artists. For 200 years artists and musicians from all over the Russian

Empire and Soviet Union gathered here, drawing inspiration from its idyllic setting (Benjamin Britten, Aram Khachaturian, Dimitri Shostakovich, Mstislav Rostropovich). New artists still spend vacations in the area and occasional exhibitions and sales are held in the town.

Overnight venues, once limited to a hand full of pensionats are now complemented by dozens of B&Bs in local houses, some of which combine local wooden handcrafting with warm hospitality and spectacular views of the forests from balconies.

Background. Prehistoric sites near Dilijan date back to the Stone Age, along the Aghstev river. An Early Iron Age site, Golovino, is 3 km SW of town and another, Late Iron Age site, Redkin Lager, is 3 km NE. Artifacts include pottery, tools, bronze and copper items and animist totems with distinctive sun and astral iconography. During the Urartian epoch, the area was a part of the Etwini or Utikueh tribal region, also known as the Middle Land, a buffer zone between Urartu and the tribes to the north.

During the reign of Tigran the Great (140-55 BCE), the settlement was one of four border zones in Gugark province. Later, as Rome and the Parthia struggled for control over the country, Dilijan was called Hovk, it and the surrounding forests became a favorite hunting ground and summer retreat for Armenia's kings, part of the Arshakuni (Arshacid) Varazhnunk province. The area around Dilijan was called "Kaiyenadzor" or "Dzorapor", the city itself called "Hovk." The Arshakunis established their summer home at Arkunashen in the area, from which their power and the spread of early monasticism in Tavush arose.

Dilijan was not yet a town but rather a trade point on the Asian (Silk and Spice) trail following the Aghstev River canyon, to the Kura river valley, the Caspian Sea and Asia Major. But the beginnings of its development are traced to this period, as Royal favor initiated building fortresses, royal compounds and pagan temples at sites later to become Haghartsin and Goshavank monastic centers and the city itself.

The area's thick forests and abundant wildlife continued to attract the powers-that-were, passing from the Arshakunis to the Parthians to the Arabs and then in the 9th c to the Bagratunis and their vassals the Kiurikians, who established their stronghold in Dzorapor and who played an

important role in resisting invasions of Shaddadid emirs from Gandzak in the 10th-11th cc. It was during the Kiurikian period that the Dzorapor and Hovk entered their golden age, as Haghartsin, Goshavank and the settlement grew tremendously, the monasteries favored by royal patronage and their position on a major trade route between Byzantium and Asia.

The area was lavished with money which was spent on construction and the development of Armenian arts; some to the most beautiful khachkar carvings are at Goshavank and old Haghartsin, as were some of its most beautiful manuscripts and the advancement of science under Mkhitar Gosh and others at Goshavank.



Dzorapor was considered such a beautiful, cultured place that the medieval linguist and scholar Grigor Pahlavuni Magistros (990-1058) wrote, "*If God one day would like to come visit Armenia, I would bring him to Hovk. The difference between Hovk and other beautiful places in the world is here people forget death.*"

The district and town fell to the Seljuk armies of Emir Kizil in 1105, the Kiurikians moving east to establish their stronghold at Berd. It regained its freedom under the Georgian Orbeli kings and the Armenian princes Ivaneh and Zakareh Zakarian in the early 12th c, and a short reflowering of culture began with the construction of monasteries at Jukhtak, Makaravank and expansion of Haghartsin.

The town suffered slaughter and destruction at the hands of Jalai-al-Adin in 1228 and the Mongol hordes in 1238, who laid waste to the region. The Mongol census of 1254 further depopulated the

area, leaving an empty land to later Tatar, Ottoman and Persian invaders (13th-16th cc), who used the area for herding their flocks and for hunting wild bore, much as their Armenian counterparts did in earlier times. The settlement survived somehow, a stop on the Asian trading route, the first time the name Dilijan was written was in 1666 by the French traveler Jean Charden. In the 18th c it was completely destroyed during punishing raids by the Mahmad in retaliation for Armenian rebellion.

Appeals for help from the Russian Empire led to the Russo-Persian wars of the 18th-19th cc, and in 1801 the Georgian treaty between the powers absorbed the region and Dilijan into the Russian Empire. Dilijan became a popular health spa in the 19th century, especially for people suffering from respiratory ailments, who sought relief in Dilijan's clean mountain air, cool, moist summers and "soft" winters. The exact date the city became a health spa is unknown, but letters written in the first half of the century mention the curative properties of the town's air and moist climate, which led to the construction of its first spas, the Russian counterparts to the great health spas of Europe. When the 1899 Tbilisi-Alexandropol-Yerevan railroad was constructed in through Dilijan, its survival was insured.

Dilijan played a key role in the developments of the first republic and was a conduit for the successful retaking of the Armenia by the Red Army in 1920. In early Soviet times textile and light industry were established in the town, and it was not until Khrushchev's time in the mid 1950's that its development as the most popular summer resort in the country began. Resorts, pensionats and hotels began catering to the intelligentsia and Soviet politicos formed a mass migration every summer to escape the stifling heat of the Ararat Valley for Dilijan's cool climes much as the Raj did in India during the days of the British Empire. The most important resort were the Cinematographer's Union Rest Home, the Composers union pensionat and the several Mineral Spas in town, which became enclaves of cultural and political dynamos, often shaping the following years' achievements during late night feasts and long summer "salons."

Facing economic disaster after independence in 1991, the country's recovery and the rise of a nouveau riche class fostered a recovery in Dilijan, not as quickly as Lake Sevan (which is, frankly one

big orgy during the summer months), but substantial and growing nonetheless. Prices, by Yerevan standards are still very cheap, but rising steadily as more and more locals revel in its beautiful surroundings and traditional charms.

Mineral Springs. Dilijan has a lot of mineral springs, one of which drives a booming business in bottled mineral water once named (appropriately) Dilijan Mineral Water. Its new incarnation is Frolova Baltica, the blue-bottled water exported primarily to Russia and Latvia. It is hands down the best bottled mineral water in Armenia and if you find any on your treks, try it. Other springs support the sanatoriums and spas in the area, and still others are found on the Aghstev River, free for the soaking or drinking.



Weather. Dilijan has fantastic weather, its winters are snowy but relatively warm compared to Vanadzor or Yerevan, and summers are cool and moist. The surrounding forests create a micro-climate that protects the area and contributes to a denser oxygen level and a moist climate. Winters can be snowy but mild, the air moist. Springs start early, in March, with wild flowers dotting the landscape before trees bud, and flowering trees blanketing the mountainsides. Summers are cool with frequent rain showers breaking into sunny days. Autumns have warm days, cool nights, and is the most beautiful time as trees change colors into masses of reds and yellows on the hillsides. The tourists are gone and locals celebrate the autumnal passing with feasts made from the fruit of the land, fresh honey, cheese, milk and mountain grown vegetables.

Ecology. Dilijan is surrounded on all sides by the Dilijan Nature preserve, 24,000 ha of old growth forests stretching the Sevan Pass to Ijevan. It was established in 1958 to protect endemic species of oak, ash and elm, as well as recently planted stands of pine. The forest also has wild apple, plum and pear which ripen in early summer, summer mushrooms (be sure to have an expert guide to avoid food poisoning) and wild raspberries and blackberries in late summer/fall.

Wildlife includes bear, wolf, fox, rabbit, various birds, hedgehog, weasel and other animals. The forest has numerous brooks and mineral springs. The water is potable, but you may want to filter sediment out after rainstorms.

The city lies on the right bank of the Aghstev river, a conduit for people and trade for hundreds of thousands of years. Despite illegal logging, the forests still retain much of their density and character. The city is as much a part of the forest as it is an urban area, its unique architecture draws inspiration from the woodlands and steep mountain inclines.

Risks are the forests themselves. As illegal logging continues, the forest that protects the city from erosion, mudslides and desertification is shrinking, and the idyllic setting that makes this city so special, and such a powerful draw from tourists, is at risk of disappearing.

Soma. Among Dilijan's natural delights, and steeped in its ancient tradition, are its mushrooms, including the hallucinogenic soma. Caution must be made in collecting **mushrooms**. Armenia has over 4000 varieties, and some are quite toxic or hallucinogenic. Among the latter is the Amanita muscaria. This mushroom, which contains the powerful hallucinogen muscimol, is traced to Soma, a god, also an intoxicating beverage referenced in some 120 verses of the 2nd m. BCE Indian epic the Rig Veda and Armenian pre-Christian hallucinogenic religious rites and tree worship (the mushrooms are found at the base of aspen, beech, birch larch, oak and pine trees). Besides humans, two other animals, deer and raven, are known to relish this mushroom.



The Armenian highland is one of the places historians hold to be the starting point for the Indo-Iranian (Indo-European) peoples. If so, then the Soma of the ancient Indian Veda scriptures, as well as the mythology and gods of the ancient world, cold well have sprung from here, with the Amanita muscaria one of its fountains. The mushroom is easily detected, it looks like those found in fairytales, a red-capped mushroom with white polka dots. In nature it appears first as a white "egg", with the stalk pushing up under a membrane or veil, the signature orange-red cap appearing from behind the membrane. This matches the description in the Vedas and early Indo-European beliefs.



One view even holds that religion itself was born in the hallucinogenic effects of soma, or the Amanita muscaria. This could explain early Armenian worship of trees, the hallucinogenic mushrooms

are found at their bases, appearing after storms and believed to appear where lightning struck. One would well find trees worthy of respect after a "trip" on mushrooms and its euphoric high. The mushroom continues to be collected and used by locals in the remotest mountain areas, and trees favored by the Amanita are still revered, you can find them on mountain passes and roads, covered with small bits of cloth offered in prayer. Some say the mushrooms found under these "burning trees" are related not just to the Abraham tradition in the bible, but to the birth of Vahagn, the main Armenian god, born of fire with eyes like discs of the sun and hair like fennel (red dots in a veil of white), to the Vedic fire god Agni, and to the Prometheus legend, where fire was given to man from the seed of a fennel.

See [Robert Bedrossian, Soma through the Armenians \(http://rbedrosian.com/soma.htm\)](http://rbedrosian.com/soma.htm).

Bearings The *Dilijan Tourism Information Center* is on Sharambeiyen p. in the Old Center just up the hill from the roundabout into town (tel. 5651, 7250). The city center is on the right bank of the Aghstev river, as is the bulk of the town's housing and shops. Sanitariums and resorts are mostly on the left bank or N side of the town. From *Sevan* the highway will convert to Kamo and Gorki pts. on the south of town. Less than 509 m from the Aghstev River roundabout, Sharambeiyen p. will climb the hills to your right (E). From *Vanadzor*, the highway converts to Kalinini p. as it enters town on the W. From Kalinini p. enter the **town center** via the Aghstev River roundabout/bridge, which links Kalinini (Vanadzor hwy), Tsaturian, the Tbilisi Highway and Gorki p. The **bus stop** is here. Go S on Gorki and in less than 50 m Sharambeiyen p. starts climbing the hills to the left (E). This is the **Historical District or Old Center**, where the Dilijan Architectural Preserve and Museum are, as well as renovated traditional buildings, shops and galleries. From here Governeri and Miasnikian pts. wind uphill to the S and E of the old town. To the east are a number of B&B's, on or around Orjonokidze, Shahumian and Hovsepian pts.

The cinematographer Union and Dilijan Rest Resorts are on Parz Lich Road, east of town on the right (S) bank. The Haghartsin, Ararat and Haik Rest Houses are S, on Kamo p. / Golovino District as is the massive Lernaiyin Hayastan Spa. The Shushan Holiday House and other hotels are on

the left bank, Getapnia p. B&B's are throughout the town, the most beautiful East of the Old Center, on Miasnikian, Orjonokidze, Shahumian, Hovsepian and Gai.

Dilijan is not as easy to walk as other cities, most streets are on an incline. It is excellent exercise, but if you are unaccustomed to walking uphill, you will find it strenuous. The spas and pensionats are outside of town, several kilometers distant. Of course, if you stay in the center, you will find it relatively easy to walk around.

Taxis are available throughout the town, in the center and near cafes. 100 AMD per km is standard but confirm price before starting on your trip.

SIGHTS

The city 's main site is its natural splendor the Dilijan Forest preserve wrapping around the city and even creeping into parts of it. Cafes, parks and a few monuments lie within the town, but other than these (which can be seen a few hours at most) enjoy the nature, the clean cool air, and the local life. The center (Miasnikian, Sharambeiyen pts.) is where you will find the **historical center** and **old alley**, inhabited by 19th c and early 20th buildings, in fine hewn stone trimmed in wooden latticework and balustrades. The buildings house galleries, shops and artists studios where artists and craftsmen create their work using traditional methods. Artists have frequented Dilijan for over 200 years, beginning from the Russian Empire period when many were drawn to the city as a spa, then stayed to capture its natural splendors. The street is the location of the Dilijan Architectural Preserve and Ethnographic museum ([see Dilijan Architectural Preserve-Museum, below](#)).

Near the post office are steps leading to the **rotunda**, an early 20th c structure high above the city overlooking the hills. Now sadly in disrepair, the rotunda is a neo-classical outdoor pavilion with a large semicircular arcade of Greek columns facing the western sky. The view is lovely from here, and one can imagine chiffon-wearing ladies and tuxedoed men at evening summer cotillions, dancing under the stars. In Soviet times it continued to be a favorite place of dances and tête-à-têtes among the young. Over time it has

decayed, and needs a loving hand to restore its former grandeur.



The **Genocide Monument** is the large open concrete "tent" you see as you approach the city. The monument is made of three trapezoidal "needles" leaning on each other, with 6 points on their ends for "legs" and "arms". The figure looks vaguely Jetson, though it is meant to commemorate the 1915 genocide of 2 million Armenians by the Ottoman Turks and the Young Turk movement.

Serik Davtian library. The library is named after Serik Davtian, an early 20th c. textiles and art authority. Davtian's research into the origins of Armenian needle lace argues that it originated in Armenia, the threads, dies, needles and hardwood for frames are all traced to the Bronze Age in Armenia (a 3000 year old brooch found in Armenia shows two women wearing head scarves edged in lace similar to those worn by Armenians in the past). Davtian was also an expert in Armenian carpets, showing that Armenian carpet weaving predates Iranian, Turkish and Central Asian carpets by centuries. Davtian was the author of many art books, housed at the library.



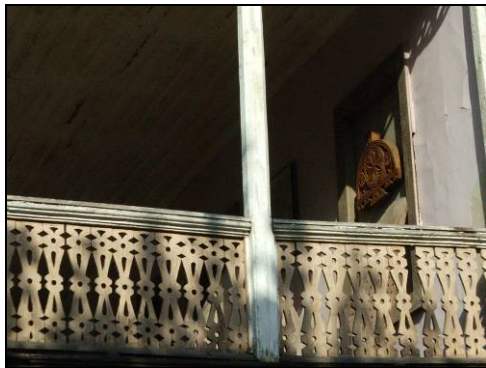
Museums

Dilijan Architectural Preserve-Museum, 2 Sharambeiyen p. (open 10 am – 5 pm, closed on Mondays) was founded in 1983 at the initiative of the artist Vanik Sharambeiyen, and operates under the auspices of the State Department for Preservation of Cultural and Historical Monuments. This unique cultural institution was established in a district of Dilijan built up at the end of the 19th to beginning of the 20th cc with two-story houses that belonged to the merchants Ananov and Badalov. In 1970 the district was restored to its original shape and style. A second renovation is ongoing with funding by Tufenkian Heritage, which operates high-end carpet export and luxury hotels in Armenia.

Reportedly the Tufenkian project is attempting to turn a dry "museum" into a living historical theme park, a demonstration center where local artists and artisans practice their craft for tourists. Unfortunately, during this process, most of the historical buildings are closed and the new area remains one big construction zone, interesting for about 5 minutes, leaving regrets for missing the finished product. A few signs with details of the project, as well as its historic significance, would be nice.



The museum's collection comprises 2,266 items of which 248 were on permanent display (applied art, pottery, painting, wood and metal, jewelry, photographs, etc.). The museum was also a research and information center with a branch in Goshavank (monastery complex not far from Dilijan).



Dilijan Local Tradition Museum, 28 Miasnikian p. (tel. 6075), open 10-5, was founded in 1950 to house archeological artifacts found by a highway contractor (Redkin) and crew working on the Yerevan-Tbilisi road. Archeologists continued excavations at the site, plus another one 3 km S of town. The museum moved to its present building in 1957. The collection of this community museum comprises 8,670 archaeological and ethnographic items. Departments include ethnography, arts, revolution and "modernity." The museum is on

two floors of a dilapidated house, the floors for which lean forwards about 5 degrees beginning with the stairs. The downstairs exhibition hall contains a short history of the region, beginning with the Stone Age, artifacts from excavations, a nice diorama of Haghartsin Monastery and pictures of historic sites in the area. New placards in English have been installed. Upstairs is the **National Art Gallery, Dilijan Branch**, with canvases and drawings by Gevorg Bashinjaghian, Vartkes Sureniants, Martiros Sarian, Hovhannes Aiyvazovski, Rockwell Kent, Shishkin and others. Open 10-5 daily, museum director is Lilitte Ginosian.

The Dilijan Branch of National Museum of Folk Art, 1 Getapnia p. open 11-4, was founded in 1975 at the initiative of Armenian artist Hovhannes ("Vanik") Sharambeyan (1926-1986). The main collection comprises 720 items, mostly antiques and lovely pieces of folk art (1950-1970). The museum director and her staff are mostly intent on selling their local craftwork and can be unhelpful unless you 'hire' them as a guide. It is not really necessary to have a guide for this small collection, though be sure to look for the miniature design you can only see by microscope and the "Lenin Room", with various craftwork adorned by his image. I particularly liked the huge bronze table top with his picture and images of the revolution, as well as the decision to put his items in the same room as a collection of locally knitted socks (on sale, \$10). Prior to the museum's founding, the building was Sharambeyan's home, though it was built in the 19th century and first belonged to Countess Mariam Tumanian.

Art, Galleries, Crafts

Other than the *National Art gallery* Dilijan branch, there is a *gallery* in the Old Center, plus galleries and *artist studios* throughout town. A good place to scout talent is the *Academy of Art*, Dilijan Branch just W of the Old Center roundabout. Students and teachers will have work on display there, plus can direct tour private galleries, studios and exhibitions not open to the public.

Art

Aghasi & Arsen Gogchian, 131 Sayat Nova p. (tel. 2627), ceramics.

Gagik Mazmanian, 14/20 Moldovakian p. (tel. 3363), multimedia.

Gevorg Makvetsian, 56 Maxim Gorki p. (tel. 7003), paintings.

Hreghen Gasparian, 95 Kamo p. (tel. 7261), needlework, drawings, charcoals, tapestry.

Lyova Grigorian, 25b Maxim Gorki p. (tel. 7154), paintings.

Nune Tovmasian, (tel. 4791), artwork, sewing art, drawings.

Victor Harutunian, 12 Miasnikian p. (tel. 5651), iron forging, metal

Another artist to look for is **Ghazar Ghazarian**, 56 Maxim Gorki p. (tel. 7003), a "Realistic Romantic" whose paintings are exhibited in galleries at Yerevan, Moscow, Hrazdan, Dilijan and Martuni, as well as in many private collections abroad. Since 1998 he has been the Dean of the Art Academy.

Crafts

Armine Poghosian, 12/34 Getapnia p. (tel. 5770), paintings, lacework, tapestry.

Ashot Babaiyan, 26 Miasnikian p. (tel. 091-748149), natural art

Evgenia Kerlan, 9 Maxim Gorki p. (tel. 3318), needle work, crocheting and knitting

Grunia Amirkhanian, 80 Gayi p. apt. 24 (tel. 3535), needle work

Hasmik Soghomonian, 85/2 Kalinini p. (tel. 3369), accessory art, needlepoint, sewing, purses.

Karine Davtian, 2/09 Shahumian p. (tel. 4924), dolls, needle point, knitting, sewing crafts.

Karineh Ghazarian, 50 Getpania p. (tel 3332), tapestry

Margarita Harutunian, 12 Miasnikian p. (tel. 5650), needle work, knitting, crocheting

Marieta Kocharian, 62a Kalinini p. (tel. 4700, 4009), wood and needle art, tapestry.

Narine Musaelian, 76 Miasnikian p. apt. 11 (tel. 7192), macramé

Nunufar Ghazarian, 12 Miasnikian p. (tel. 7059), macramé

Nushik Malkhasian, 68/9 Getapnia p. (tel. 3504), lacework, needlepoint, embroidery.

Revik & Grisha Hovsepian, 31 Gayi p., apt. 40 (tel. 3979), wood crafts, vases, khachkars, souvenirs.

Roza Alikhanian, 1st blind alley, Shahumian p. apt 7 (tel. 3504), needle work

Roza Ulikhanian, 84 Getapnia p. apt. 20 (tel. 3662), needle work

Shushanik Manukian, 2nd lane, Andranik p. house 25 (tel. 2791), needle work

Susanna Melkonian, 13 Hovsepian p. (tel. 4058), needle point

Tamara Davtian, 12 Miasnikian p. (tel. 5651), traditional costumes, needle work.

Victoria & Veronica Harutunian, 12 Miasnikian p. (tel. 5651), needle work, knitting, crocheting

Also see [ASCAP Tavush art project: Patkerasah](#) and [Arvesti Link Page](#) (if you cannot read the words, click on links to open art samples from students and young artists in the region).

Cultural Centers, Theatre, Concerts, Cinema

For a city with its first theatre performance in 1880, the theatre scene is sparse, restricted to the occasional performance and folk dance at hotels or resorts. In the summer, the cinematographer's resort shows films, evenings and weekends. Guests are allowed. Check with the front desk (tel. 6139, 2710) to inquire.

Culture Center, 53 Miasnikian p. (tel. 3809), open 8.30-21.00, has concerts, recitals and occasional performances. Check for latest schedule.

Yerevan Fine Arts State Academy, Kalinin p. (tel. 6184), open 09.00-15.00 has classes and occasional recitals and exhibitions.

Art School after V. Sharamberian, 62a Kalinin p. (tel. 4009), open 09.00-17.00 has the odd exhibition and art classes for students of all ages.

Dilijan Music School, 57 Kalinin p. (tel. 7486, 3237, 6027) open 09.00-16.00, has occasional recitals and performances, classes.

Parks

The Children's park is of Taturian p. Next to the roundabout is the *City Park*, with a lake and bridge.

Springs

Near the post office is the *Matinov spring*, with clean mountain water. Others are at the *Dilijan* and *Lernaiyin Sanatorium* (for pay).

The *Dilijan Frolova Balka Mineral Water Bottling Company* is 5 km from Dilijan center (take the Vanadzor highway 3.3 km W of the Old Center

roundabout, then go N about 2.8 km at the railroad bridge). No free samples, but you might get them to reveal the source, 7 km from the bottling factory.

Excavations

There is not much to see at these excavations except mounds indicating significant archeological finds. The *Golovino* excavation is 3 km south of town on the Sevan highway. The excavation revealed Iron Age shaft graves, and later digs uncovered traces of Bronze Age activity. Artifacts

are on display at the Local Tradition Museum. The *Redkin* excavation 6.6 km NE of the roundabout (2.9 km from the NE city limits) on the Dilijan road on the south bank of the river (also Redkin Camp), is named after a highway contractor who, with his workers uncovered iron age artifacts while working on the Tbilisi-Yerevan highway. Artifacts are on display at the Local Tradition Museum.

Churches

See [Haghartsin](#), [Goshavank](#), [Jukhtak](#) vank, [Matosavank](#).

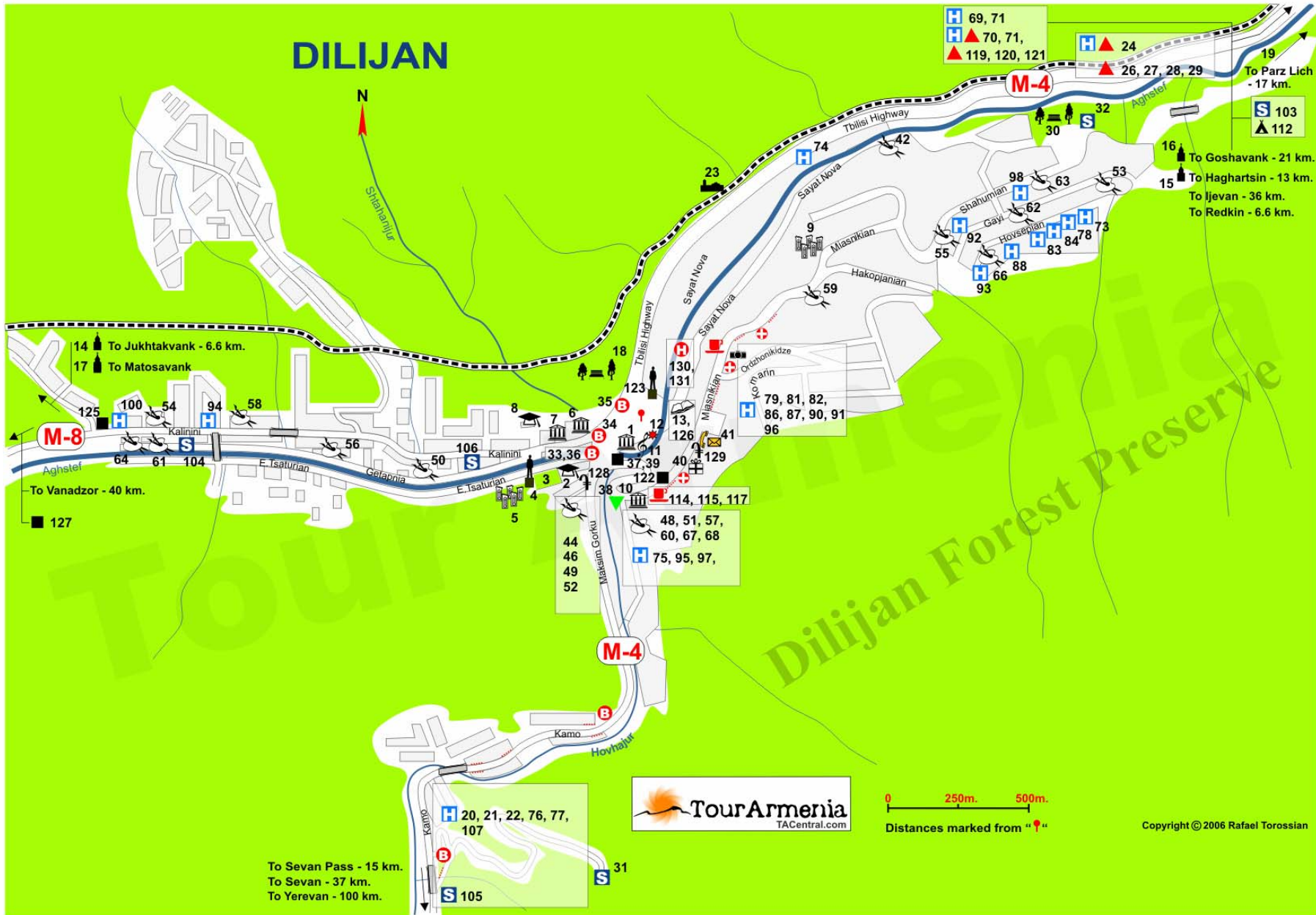
Other

The *Dilijan Human Rights Library*, School N 2, 2nd Floor, HR Library, 137 Kalinin (tel: 2364, e-mail: hrlibrary_dilijan@rin.ru) contains about 850 pieces of literature, mainly on Human Rights, International Humanitarian Law and Armenian Legislation. The library provides periodical press and Internet access to its clients. For further information, contact Anahit Ananian, Librarian.

Nature Trails ▲

Next to the Matinov Spring are some steps that lead to the *Rotunda forest* and *old orchards*. Climb as high as you can for some incredible vistas of the city and surrounding forest.

If you keep hiking into the oak forest you will find various edible *mushrooms* and unique *wildflowers* (*wild Tulips, Iris, Hyacinths, Fritillaria, Orchis, Gladiolus, Calendula*) For detailed information and list of species see [TourArmenia Flora pages](#).



DILIJAN MAP KEY

H OVERNIGHT**HOTEL, MOTEL**

- 69. Dzorapor Hotel
- 70. Getap Motel
- 71. Sunk Motel

GUEST HOUSE

- 20/72. Haiq
- 73. Casanova Inn, 63 Hovsepian
- 74. Mush
- 75. Dili Villa, 12 Miasnikian

B&B

- 21/77. Liana Mkhitarian, 203 Kamo
- 22. Anahit, 195 Kamo
- 76. Sofia, 249 Kamo
- 78. Levon Alikhanian, 62 Hovsepian
- 79. Leili, 1st lane, 5 Orjonokidze
- 80. Knarik, 16 Atabekian
- 81. Kakav, 53 Kamarini
- 82. Benik Babinian, 8 Orjonokidze
- 83. Greta Zargarian, 44 Hovsepian
- 84. Gretah Movsisian, 48 Hovsepian
- 85. Hasmik Frangoulian, 8 1st
- 86. Grinya, 1st lane, 1 Orjonokidze
- 87. Hekhineh Alikhanian, 4th lane, 2 Orjonokidze
- 88. Ashot Markarian, 14a Hovsepian
- 89. Arus Davtian, 13 1st
- 90. Anahit Hovsepian, 12a Orjonokidze
- 91. Zina Chiboukhchian, 2nd lane, 19 Miasnikian
- 92. Yeva Santrossyan, 4th lane, 4 Shahumian
- 93. Vrezh Frangoulyan, 3 Hovsepian
- 94. Dilijans, Varazdat Amian, 64a Kalinini
- 95. Tamara, 12 Miasnikian
- 96. Sunrise, 1st lane, 19 Orjonokidze
- 97. Nina's, 18 Miasnikian
- 98. Nunufar Ghazoumian, 1st lane; 17 Shahumian p.
- 99. Tate, 42h, 26 Komisarneri p.
- 100. Lyova Petrosian, 132Kalinini p.
- 101. Hovsepi Hiuratun, 5 lermontov

S PENSIONAT, SANATORIUM

- 30. Dasht Hangestan Goti
- 31. Lernaian Hayastan Resort
- 32. Usanogh Pensionat
- 102. Cinematographers' Union House
- 103. House of Composes and Musicians

- 104. Dilijan Sanatorium, 14 Parz Lich road
- 105. Haghartsin Holiday Home, Getolovino
- 106. Shushan Rest-House, 7 Getapnia
- 107. Ararat Rest- House, Kamo
- 108. Haik Rest House 137 Kamo
- 109. Lernaian Hayastan
- 110. Dash rest Area/Hotel

- 111. Children's Tubercular Sanatorium, Orjonokidze

CAMPING

- 112. Redkin Camp

▲ FOOD & DRINK

- 24. Restaurant/Hotel
- 25. Getap, Ijevan highway
- 26. Aghtamar Restaurant
- 27. Kebab Stand
- 28. Picnic
- 29. Ureni Khorovatz
- 113. Hatsatun, 2 Sharambeian
- 114. Rotund Cafe, 40 Miasnikian
- 115. Khnkalianots Restaurant, 29 Miasnikian
- 116. Sunk, 14 Parz Lich
- 117. Mimino, 30b Miasnikian
- 119. Getik, Parz Lich
- 120. Khortkaran, 104 Tbilisian
- 121. Restaurant Idjevan Janaparin, 158 Tbilisian

☐ CAFÉ**🚌 BUSES -MARSHRUTNI TAXIS**

- 33. Yerevan Buses
- 34. Vanadzor Buses
- 36. Ijevan Buses
- 37. Central Aftokaiyan

🚂 TRAIN

- 23. Railroad Station

🏛️ MUSEUMS, ART GALLERY

- 1. Architectural Preserve-Museum, 2 Sharambeian
- 2. Fine Arts Academy
- 6. Museum of Folk Art, 1 Getapnia
- 10. Local Tradition Museum, 28 Miasnikian p.

🏛️ MONUMENTS

- 4. World War II Monument
- 122. Rotunda
- 123. Genocide Monument

🏛️ CHURCHES

See [Around Dilijan](#)

- 14. Jukhtavank
- 15. Haghartsin
- 16. Goshavank
- 17. Matosavank

🎭 THEATRES, MUSIC

- 11. Culture House

🛍️ SHOPS, SHUKA

- 38. Shuka (Market)
- 39. Shops and Kiosks
- 40. Souvenirs

ARTISTS, CRAFTS, FOLK ART

- 42. Aghasi & Arsen Gogchian, 131 Sayat Nova
- 43. Gagik Mazmanian, 14/20 Moldovakian
- 44. Gevorg Makvetsian, 56 Maxim Gorki
- 45. Hreghen Gasparian, 95 Kamo
- 46. Lyova Grigorian, 25b Maxim Gorki
- 47. Nune Tovmasian
- 48. Tamara, 12 Miasnikian
- 49. Ghazar Ghazarian, 56 Maxim Gorki
- 50. Armine Poghosian, 12/34 Getapnia
- 51. Ashot Babaiyan, 26 Miasnikian
- 52. Evgenia Kerlan, 9 Maxim Gorki
- 53. Grunia Amirkhanian, 80 Gaiy p. apt. 24
- 54. Hasmik Soghomonian, 85/2 Kalinini
- 55. Karine Davtian, 2/09 Shahumian
- 56. Karineh Ghazarian, 50 Getpania
- 57. Margarita Harutunian, 12 Miasnikian
- 58. Marieta Kocharian, 62a Kalinini
- 59. Narine Musaelian, 76 Miasnikian
- 60. Nunufar Ghazarian, 12 Miasnikian
- 61. Nushik Malkhasian, 68/9 Getapnia
- 62. Revik & Grisha Hovsepian, 31 Gaiy
- 63. Roza Alikhanian, 1st blind alley, Shahumian
- 64. Roza Ulikhanian, 84 Getapnia p. apt. 20
- 65. Shushanik Manukian, #25, 2nd lane, Andranik p.
- 66. Susanna Melkonian, 13 Hovsepian
- 67. Tamara Davtian, 12 Miasnikian

- 68. Victoria & Veronica Harutunian, 12 Miasnikian

OTHER

- 5. Cemetery
- 7. Arts College
- 8. Fine Arfts School
- 9. Cemetery
- 13. Serik Davtian library
- 125. Human Rights Library, School N 2
- 127. Dilijan Frolova Balka Mineral Water Bottling Company

🏟️ STADIUM**📞 INTERNET, PHONE, POST****🏛️ GOVT. OFFICES**

- 12. Dilijan Mayor's Office
- 41. Post Office

🏧 BANK, ATM

- 128. *ArmSavingsBank*, 19 Gorki p
- 129. *ASHB*, 60 Miasnikian p.

TRAVEL AGENT

- 38. Air Tickets
- 75. Dilitours, 12 Miasnikian

🏪 APOTEKAS**🏥 CLINICS - HOSPITALS**

- 130. Central Hospital, 7 Sayat Nova
- 131. Polyclinic

🌳 PARKS

- 3. Children's Park
- 18. nature Park
- 19. Parz Lich

🚻 PUBLIC TOILET



PRACTICALITIES

Area Code: 2680

Long Distance: 02680 + local number

From abroad: +(374) 2680 + local number

Mobile Phones: 091 Armentel, 093 Viva Cell

International callers: Armentel +(374) 91 + number, Viva Cell +(374) 93 + local number

Unless otherwise noted, local numbers require the (02680) prefix if calling long distance, or +(374) 2680 prefix if calling from abroad.

IN AND OUT

By Bus, Minivan

The bus is a reliable means of travel, if vehicles are older and worn around the edges, and they tend to pack 'em in. Still, they work and they are cheap. Minivans are more convenient, dropping you off pretty much where you want, though they do not have asset schedule, drivers and passengers can tell you when to expect the next one.

Buses stop at Dilijan on routes from Yerevan, Tbilisi and Sevan. *Yerevan-Dilijan* buses run daily between the Yerevan Northern Bus Station, 1 Sevan Highway and the Yerevan Central Bus Station on Admiral Isahakian pta. and the Dilijan aftokaiyeran (Maxim Gorki p.). 800 AMD. Other routes are Dilijan-Ijevan (300 AMD), Dilijan-Vanadzor (500 AMD).

Minivans (Marshrutni taxis) leave from the Bus Station on Sharambeian p. in Dilijan. Minivans do

not have a set schedule, they leave when they are full and generally run once a day to outlying areas, ask. Minivans connect Dilijan with *Yerevan Northern Bus station* (1000 AMD), *Vanadzor* (800 AMD), *Sevan* (800 AMD), *Ijevan* (100 AMD), *Berd* (500 AMD) and *Noyemberian* (800 AMD).

By Taxi Taxis are more expensive, but the most convenient way to travel (you decide when you go, and you can stop along the way). If you split the price between 2 or more travelers, it is pretty reasonable. Taxis congregate at the Bus Station (Maxim Gorki), Town Center (Miasnikian) and in the old center (Miasnikian).

Yerevan-Dilijan Taxis

From Yerevan, taxis to Dilijan are located in the parking lot beside (*Kino Rossiya*) at the corner of Agatangeghos and Movses Khorenatsi Pts. Taxis normally charge 15000 AMD for up to four passengers, though be prepared to bargain. If your party is less than 4, some drivers will charge the full fare then want to wait for more paying passengers to fill the car! You can also order a taxi by phone. The going rate is 15,000 AMD. Most Yerevan taxi services provide this service, but we called Kalina (tel 010-555-333). Note even the best can go bad overnight, ask around when you arrive for best taxi service.

From Dilijan, taxis to Yerevan are at the *Aftokaiyeran* (bus station) near the Old Center, and at resorts and hotels during summer months. Bargaining is harder here, and gets harder the later in the day, when chances of finding a return passenger are more remote. 15000-20000 AMD. Taxis to Sevan are around 5000 AMD, to Ijevan 1000 AMD, to Vanadzor around 2000 AMD. [See taxi list for call taxi.](#)

By Car Dilijan is at the crossroads of the west-east/northeast Vanadzor-Tbilisi highway and the Sevan Highway to the S. Highways serving Dilijan are the M24 which runs from Yerevan to the M4 in Azerbaijan which is closed at the border (Sevan: 46 km, Yerevan: 99 km, Ijevan: 30 km, Azatamut/border: 67 km) and the A330/M8 (Vanadzor: 40 km). It takes about 1.5 hours to Yerevan, 45 minutes to Ijevan, 1 hour to the border. To go to Berd, connect with the H45 at Ijevan (66 km, 3 hours). To go to Noyemberian, connect with the H46 at Azatamut (35 km, 3.5 hours).

Petrol stations and rest stops/kebab stands proliferate on the entries to town and the Ijevan highway.

AROUND

On foot is a bit of a hike from the Bus Station to the top of the Old Center, but it is convenient for exploring the river valley sites (Fine Arts Academy, Children's Park, Arts College, Folk Arts Museum) and the Old center itself (architectural preserve and Museum, Local tradition Museum, Mayor's Office and Library). It is also the best way to take in the city's atmosphere, and work off those calories from the rich food you are bound to eat. [See Bearings](#) for a layout of the town.

Bus The city bus route carries passengers between Kalinin p. and Karmir Khach Block, buses run every hour or half hour.

Taxis Dilijan has plenty of taxis, in the Old center, the roundabout and at pensionats and holiday houses. The services is good, the driver knowledgeable and willing to show off the city. The rate is 500 AMD to go from place to place in town, add 100 AMD per km thereafter. Taxis congregate at the Bus Station (Maxim Gorki), Town Center (Miasnikian) and in the old center (Miasnikian).



Near Region Taxis Taxis are a good way to explore the near region, and very reasonable if you are two or more and split costs, which are per

vehicle. Negotiate before starting on your journey, figure 500 AMD plus 100 AMD/km as fair, add 1000 AMD per hour for waiting. Taxis can take you from the roundabout/center to Haghartsin (12.5 km), Parz Lich (17 km), Goshavank (21 km) and Jukhtak (5.9 km). Taxi rates in the region are 3000 AMD for up to 50 km, 1000 AMD to wait, and 100 AMD per km after the first 50 km. A full day's trip into region and back should cost around \$15-20, and you buy the driver's meal if you stay out past meal time.

Taxi Services

Look for taxi service ads at the center and area cafes, restaurants, holiday houses and pensionats. We lucked into Merujan Balinian (tel. 4005), who loves to share local gossip and lore while plying the roads of the region. Taxi M&M (tel. 7717, 7817), Universal (tel. 3929), Dili (tel. 2434, 4114), Kristal (tel. 5300), Tzaraiyutiun (tel. 3747).

You might also try Dilitours (tel. 2680) which can arrange travel and touring. Also inquire at your lodging. Most offer the service or will find someone for you.

TRAVEL AGENCIES, BUSINESS CENTERS

Flights Throughout Armenia, 52 Miasnikian p. (tel. 5938), open 10.00-17.00 arranges local and regional tours.

Delta Armenia, 53 Miasnikian p. (tel. 7338), open 9.00-17.00 tickets and local and regional tours.

Aerotour, 54 Miasnikian p. (tel. 7249), open 10.00-16.00 tickets, local and regional tours.

Dilitours, 12 Miasnikian p. (tel. 2680, 7059, cell: +374 91 456164), E-mail: info@dilitours.de, Web: www.dilitours.de, arranges day trips and overnight in their B&B.

Nature Tours. See [Adventure Tour Operators](#).

COMMUNICATION, ETC.

Fire – 101

Police – 102

Ambulance service – 103

Gas emergency service – 104

Trunk Line – 107

Telephone directory information – 109

Phone, telegraphs

Dilijan is covered by both Armentel and Viva Cell mobile phone services. International calls can be made at the *Central Post Office*, 58 Miasnikian p. Two others are at 74 Getapnia p. and 26 Shahumian p. [See HayPost \(HyePost\) site for list.](#) The post office has trunk line phone service, sells phone cards (30 minutes 1500 AMD) and can deliver telegrams.

Additional phone services are around town. They advertise in front of their shops, sometimes with internet.

Internet

Internet is spotty in Dilijan. If you do find it, expect dial up and slow. Venues and prices fluctuate, ask at your overnight for the latest best place.

Internet Access is at *Secondary School #2*, 137 Kalinin p. tel. 21-78, open 1300-18.00, has access for 500 AMD per hour.

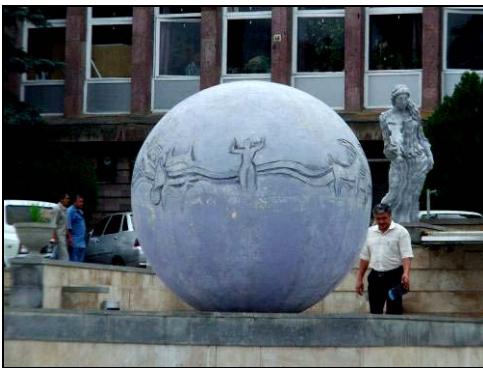
There is also access at the *Human Rights Library*, also at School N 2, 2nd Floor, HR Library, 137 Kalinin (tel: 2364, e-mail: hrlibrary_dilijan@rin.ru), reserved for their clients, but you may be able to beg some for a smile and camaraderie.

Bank, Exchange

Money wires and credit card advances can be done at banks, exchange at banks, hotels and exchange points throughout the town.

ArmSavingsBank, 19 Gorki p., tel. 3732

ASHB, 60 Miasnikian p., tel. 6264, 2342



Shopping

The town has *craft, furniture* and *carpet* shops, some attached to workshops. The venues can change from time to time, so ask around. Home studios will be your best bet, they furnish the larger shops in town and Yerevan.

There are *mterks* and kiosks throughout the town, mostly congregated around the Center on Miasnikian, on Kalinini on the left bank and in residential areas. The *Shuka (market)* is on Miasnikian p. and sells fresh produce, meat and staples. Prices are cheaper than Yerevan, the food fresher in the summer, atmosphere is bustling with good natured haggling.

Aramo Trade Center, 38 Getapnia p. (tel. 4031)

Haik Trading Store, 5 Shahumian p. (tel. 4120)

Nverner Trading Store, 84 Miasnikian p. (tel. 7323)

Continent Clothing Store, 48 M. Gorki p. (tel. 2700)

Film, etc.

Kodak shops are in the center of town, on Miasnikian and Gorki pts.

Pharmacy

Apotekas (Armenian: deghatuner) can be found throughout the city. One is in the Center, "Dilijandegh". 78 Miasnikian p.

Hospital, Polyclinic

For a medical emergency, dial 103. Ask at your lodging for recommendation.

Central Hospital, 17 Sayat Nova p. tel. 6118, 7679, 6068, 5918.

Polyclinic, tel. 7365.

Dentist

Dilijan has no dental clinic, the nearest is in Ijevan: *Ijevan Dental Polyclinic*, 23 Abovian p., tel. (+263) 2165.

OVERNIGHT

HOTEL, MOTEL

Getap Restaurant/Motel, Ijevan highway, 1.9 km N of Dilijan center, right side of road, (tel. 5614, 4341) has four cottages and three suites in the restaurant building. The restaurant has been around for a dozen years, and serves good food using local produce and mountain mushrooms.

The cottages have 2 doubles, bath and fireplace. Clean. SGL/Cottage at \$10/50.

Dzorapor Motel, Ijevan highway, 3.1 km N of Dilijan center, (90m up the hill across from Dzorapor Restaurant) has singles and doubles are clean and serviceable. Restaurant is across the highway on west side serves Armenian food. SGL/DBL at 8000/10,000 AMD

Sunk Motel/Restaurant, 14 Parz Lich p. (tel. 7496) has 4 rooms in a modern building with wood trim. SGL/DBL at 7000/10,000 AMD.

SANATORIUMS, PENSIONATS

Ararat Rest- House, Kamo p. (tel. 2687, 5675) is basic, but rooms have hot and cold water, bath, lavatory, refrigerator, telephone (in the lobby), buffet, playground, tennis. Doubles/Quads at 5000 AMD per person, +2000 AMD for 3 meals a day.

Bzhzhkakan Hamalsarani Hangestatun (Medical University Rest house), 400 m from bus station (tel. 5566) 24/hr hot water, room heating. Cabins for up to 4 at 10000 AMD.



Cinematographers' Union House, Road to Parz Lich (tel. 6139, 2710) is in a forest clearing, in large lodge built on several floors sloping into the hillside. There are also cottages on the premises. The location is gorgeous, all around are forests. Amenities include cold and hot water, separate bath, refrigerator, cooking facilities, air-conditioner, TV set, telephone (in the lobby), buffet, playground, tennis, billiard, sauna, conference hall, cinema. Usually full July through August, call one month in advance.

Triple/Double/Lux at 6000/8000/10,000 AMD per person. Cottages have same amenities and are \$40 (3-4 persons) and \$50 (8 persons). Three meals a day included in the price.

Dilijan Sanatorium, 14 Parz Lich p. (tel. 3944, 2124) is in a forest clearing, amenities include cold and hot water, heating, bath, TV set and telephone (in the lobby), tennis, billiard, bar, playground. Any room 6000 AMD per person, 3 meals a day included in the price. There are also 6 cottages with cold, hot water, heating, bath and refrigerator at the same price.

House of Composers and Musicians, Kamo p. (tel. 3032, 6241) can accommodate up to 150 visitors in basic rooms (some have hot water and new bathrooms) in a pretty location. Price includes 3 meals a day. Normally full July through August, call one month in advance. SGL/DBL/LUX at 6000/8000/10,000 AMD per person.

Haghartsin Holiday Home, Golovino District (tel. 3756, Yerevan: (010) 533790, cell: (091) 540044), fax: (010) 528856, www.spyur.am/haghartsin.htm, is located just outside of town on the Sevan highway, and offers rooms with hot and cold water, TV and facilities. The resort has a restaurant, tea house, bars, cafes, canteen, Disco, horse riding, mountaineering, walking tours, billiards, soccer, table tennis. Also has a youth camp. SGL/DBL/LUX start at 5000/7500/10000 AMD a day, includes 3 meals.

Lernaiyin Hayastan, Dilijan (tel. 5940, 6632, 5944) has hot, cold water, pretty area. Rooms sparse. Single/Double/Triple at 6800 AMD (tourists), 6200 AMD (locals), Lux (3 rooms) at 15000 AMD (tourists), 9100 AMD (locals), De-Lux - 13000 AMD (tourists), 7800 AMD (locals). All prices per person.

Shushan Rest-House, 7 Getapnia p. (tel. 3793) has rooms with cold water, lavatory, bed, wardrobe and a chair in the basic rooms, Lux has TV, bathroom, refrigerator and hot water. Playground, tennis, swimming pool, billiards, buffet, 3 meals a day included in price. Single/Double/Triple at 4000 AMD per person, Lux at 5000 AMD per person.

GUEST HOUSE

Casanova Inn, 63 Hovsepian p. (tel. 4037, Yerevan: +374-10 561467, 284450), URL:

www.users.freenet.am/~casanova, E-mail: casanova@freenet.am, is a three-story building with wood trim and balconies. There is an exercise room, sauna and bar, dining room and lounge open to a terrace. Lower level has a café and breakfast patio. The third floor has three rooms with their own design, verandas and facilities. Breakfast is included, dinner and supper extra, menus feature Armenian and Georgian food. Hot water and heating, international telephone, fax machine, satellite TV and internet. Sauna, swimming pool by order. Tour guides, cars with drivers available (Chrysler Voyager van, Mercedes sedan, Niva off-road). DBL at \$50, additional bed \$15, lunch \$8, supper \$5.



Dili Villa, 12 Miasnikian p. (tel. 7059, cell. (374 91) 456164), URL: www.dilitours.de, E-mail: info@dilitours.de, is really a B&B run by local artists and the dean of the Fine Arts Academy, Ghazar Ghazarian. The latter shows with the expensive antiques in the house collected during her golden years in the Soviet period. It is a three-story house with a solarium ("winter garden"), loggia with a fireplace, studio and balcony with a views of mountains. 5 bedrooms (2 in attic), 2 bathrooms with constant hot and cold water supply, 2 lavatories, sitting room, dinner available. Some call this living the folk life. I think it's a little too precious; the B&B next door (Tamara's) is much more the real thing at a better price. Still if you like coming half way around the world to hang out with other tourists in a pseudo-village house, this is the ticket. \$20 overnight, \$25 B&B, \$30 half-board, \$35 full board, \$10 lunch or dinner. The house is also the office for DiliTours, a local guide and office.

Haik Rest House 137 Kamo p. (tel. 5237) rooms have hot and cold water, TV, heating, bathroom, toilet, VCR, refrigerator, telephone, tennis, bar, 4 meals a day, AND free excursions to Goshavank, etc. with Doubles at 3500 AMD per person.

Mush, 65 Tbilisi p. (tel. 2455), has decent rooms in a two story white house nestled among some trees. Billiards, TV in central room, small pool. SGL/DBL at 8,000/10,000 AMD.



BED & BREAKFAST

Unless otherwise noted, price is per person. **we liked when we were there.

Anahit Hovsepian, 12a Orjonokidze p., 1st lane (tel. 7533) is located on the slope of the hill surrounded by fruit trees. 3 bedrooms, kitchen bath, lavatory, dining room, natural gas, with water available in the morning, 2 telephones, TV & VCR, iron, teapot and tape recorder. 5000 AMD.

Arus Davtian, 13 1st p. (tel. 7252) two-story located on the edge of a forest in a flower garden. 2 bedrooms, kitchen, bath, lavatory, dining rooms, sport gym, 2 telephones, 2 TVs and other home appliances. 8000 AMD.

Ashot Markarian, 14a Hovsepian p. (tel. 2917) has 4 bedrooms, 1 bath with 24-hour water, kitchen, sitting room, TV, refrigerator. 6000 AMD.

"Ben-Fen", Benik Babinian, 8 Orjonokidze p. 1st lane (tel. 3330) is a two story house overlooking Dilijan and the surrounding forest. The house is provided with natural gas and has a constant hot

and cold water supply. 4 doubles, 3 kitchens, 2 bathrooms/lavatories, dining room, 2 balconies, car garage for two vehicles, 2 telephones, TV. 6000 AMD.

"Dilijans," Varazdat Amian, 64a Kalinini p. (tel. 3147), is in the center of the town and has a small pool and garden. 3 doubles, 1 bath, kitchen, telephone, TV, VCR, tape-recorder, iron, hair drier, car, fax, washing machine. Lunch and dinner are served for additional pay. 7000 AMD.

Gretah Movsisian, 48 Hovsepian p. (tel. 4684) two-storied house with balcony is located near a forest. Fresh fruit served from the adjoining vineyard and orchard. 2 bedrooms, 1 bath/lavatory with constant water supply, kitchen, sitting room, TV, VCR, telephone, iron, washing machine. Meals and hiking expeditions available. 5000 AMD.

Greta Zargarian, 44 Hovsepian p. (tel. 4816) two-storied house is surrounded by trees. Breakfast includes homemade dairy products. 3 bedrooms, 1 bath/lavatory with constant water supply, kitchen, dining room, balcony, TV, telephone, car. Breakfast is made from natural ingredients. 5000 AMD.

Grinya, 1st lane, 1 Orjonokidze p. (tel. 2373) two-story house overlooking Dilijan with a garden. 3 bedrooms, kitchen, dining room, bath (water in the morning), TV, VCR, tape-recorder, garage. Car available. 4500 AMD.

****HALA**, 195 Kamo p. (tel. 2993, +091-498933) is a large house on top of a hill ascended by a series of steps and rose gardens. The house is decorated with mosaics made from local green and white stones, a unique touch. There is a large fireplace in the front room made from stone and marble, as well as wood trim throughout the large rambling house. The 2 floors can house up to 8 people, 2 Baths, kitchen, dining room and balconies overlooking the stunning scenery, the back balcony sidles up to the hill behind the house. Wonderful food and a relaxed, "civilized" atmosphere. 8000 AMD.

Hasmik Frangoulian, 8 1st p. (tel. 7456) three-story house with garden and pavilion for parties. 2 bedrooms for up to 5 people, kitchen, bath, dining room, telephone, TV with a satellite antenna. 10,000 AMD

Heghineh Alikhanian, 4th lane, 2 Orjonokidze Sp. (tel. 2797) is located on the side of a hill, surrounded by trees. Second floor balcony overlooks Dilijan. 4 bedrooms, 1 bath with hot and cold water, kitchen, dining room, TV, tape-recorder, telephone. Lunch and dinner available. 5000 AMD.

Hovsepi Hiuratun, 5 Lermontov p. (tel. 2307) has six rooms in an historic house with a pretty white balcony and steeple. TV in central room, double beds, kitchen. Armenian cuisine, hiking. 5000 AMD

Kakav, 53 Kamarini p. (tel. 2148) is built on a slope overlooking the town. 3 bedrooms, 1 bath, kitchen, TV, VCR, car garage. 5000 AMD.

Knarik, 16 Atabekian p. (tel. 2609) is a two-storied house near a forest and has a garden in front. Balcony, fireplace in sitting room, 2 bedrooms, 1 bath, 1 lavatory, kitchen, computer. 8000 AMD.

Leili, 1st lane, 5 Orjonokidze p. (tel. 2137, 4631) is a two-storied house located on the edge of the woods surrounded by an orchard. 1 bedroom for up to 3 people, 1 bath (water in the mornings), kitchen, dining room, library, TV, VCR, tape-recorder, iron, hairdryer, washing machine. Car available. 4000 AMD.

Levon Alikhanian, 62 Hovsepian p. (tel. 7184) is located in the Kaghni Khach district of town. Pretty views, indoor pool and sauna, park nearby. 3 bedrooms, kitchen, 1 bath, telephone, TV, VCR, tape-recorder, iron, hair drier, car, washing machine. Lunch and dinner are served for additional pay. 5000 AMD.

Liana Mkhitarian, 203 Kamo p. (tel. 5580) overlooks Dilijan. Khachkar in the courtyard, piano, play area. 5 bedrooms, kitchen, 2 baths, 2 lavatories, 2 dining rooms (one large enough for a party of 25), Services: washing machine, telephone, TV & VCR, hairdryer, iron. 4000-5000 AMD.

Lyova Petrosian, 132 Kalinini p. (tel. 4137), has four rooms, fireplace, outdoor garden, near woods. Armenian cuisine, hiking. 5000 AMD.

Nina's, 18 Miasnikian p. (tel. 2330, 623849, 634833) is in a garden and overlooks the town. 5 rooms, play area for children, piano, courtyard

with fireplace. Open year round. Contact Nina Hovhannisian.

Nunufar Ghazarian, 12 Miasnikian p. (tel. 7059) has a flower garden and balcony. 5 bedrooms, two in attic, 2 bathrooms with constant hot and cold water, kitchen, sitting room. Dinner available. 8000 AMD.

Nunufar Ghazumian, 1st lane; 17 Shahumian p. (tel. 5435) is a three-storied house with balconies on both sides and a flower garden in front. Fresh pastries are baked in a separate garden kitchen. 3 rooms, kitchen, 3 lavatories, 1 bath, ironing room. 6000 AMD.

Sofia, 249 Kamo p. (tel. 2366) is easy to find, on the edge of a forest. It has a garden in front and a natural spring. Balcony. English spoken. 1 double, 1 bath/lavatory, kitchen, TV, car, large room for parties available, swing for children. 5000 AMD.

Sunrise, 1st lane, 19 Orjonokidze p. (tel. 7620, 2425) is a two-storied cottage with a garden and balcony overlooking the town. 4 rooms, 2 baths, kitchen, garage, dinner available. The cottage can be rented entirely. 10,000 AMD.



****Tamara & Victoria Davtian**, 12 Miasnikian p. (tel. 5650, 5651), is a treat, a rambling house with large balconies overlooking the forested mountains and a pretty little garden in front. The design is decidedly eclectic, the house has its own mini car (built from spare parts from a variety of cars and carts) and a collection of miniature cars and trains, as well as primitive folk art available for sale. The village atmosphere is complemented by a

collection of folk arts and crafts (Tamara was director of the ethnographic museum before it was closed) and visits by wood masters, lavash bakers and other craftsmen. She also has one of the only complete sets of topographic maps for the area, accurately showing hiking trails and historic monuments on the way. 4 rooms accommodating 8 people, kitchen, 1 bath, large balcony, 24 hours cold and hot water, CD player and music, car, garage, guided hiking tours available. 10,000 AMD includes 4 meals. Food is fresh, and if she knows your preferences ahead of time she will prepare menus to suit your needs. Also has camping space in private woods above the house.

Tate, 42h, 26 Komisarneri p. (tel. 2533) is located in a nice house with a pretty flower garden. 6 rooms, TV in central room, Armenian cuisine, hiking. 5000 AMD.

Vrazdat Amian, 64a Kalinin p. (tel. 3147) has a garden and a small pool, 3 bedrooms, kitchen bath, dining room. Services include TV, VCR, tape recorder, hair dryer, car, fax, washing machine. Lunch and diner available for extra fee. 7000 AMD.

Vrezh Frangoulyan, 3 Hovsepian p. (tel. 4192), e-mail: zarina21@rambler.ru, has a garden with flowers, fruit trees and grape vines and the owners make their own dairy products. There is another garden in front. 3 doubles, 1 bath, kitchen, washing machine, telephone, TV, car. English & Russian spoken. Lunch and dinner are available. 5000 AMD.

Yeva Santrossyan, 4th lane, 4 Shahumian p. (tel. 7648), a two story house, has 2 doubles, 2 baths, TV, hairdryer, iron, car, breakfast, dinner made of natural ingredients available. 4000 - 5000 AMD.

****Zina Chiboukhchian**, 2nd lane, 19 Miasnikian p. (tel. 2504) is located in the center of the town in a wonderful stone and wood fantasy of a house and some wonderful kitsch. 5 rooms, 1 kitchen 2 dining rooms, telephone, TV, VCR, tape-recorder, iron, hair drier, car, washing machine, garage, billiards. Lunch and dinner served for additional pay. 8000 AMD.

Boarding/Apartment is a distinct possibility in Dilijan, though most already offer B&Bs. Ask around when you arrive. 5000-7000 AMD with breakfast.

SPA/SANATORIUM

Dilijan Sanatorium, 66 Getapnia p. (tel. 3927, 5142) has hot and cold water (morning and evening hours), TV, tennis, billiards. Double/Lux at 7500/9000 AMD, includes 3 meals a day and treatment (massage, hydrotherapy).

Children's Tubercular Sanatorium, Orjonokidze p. 5th Lane 1 (tel. 7048, 6179, 618, fax: 5892), is a real therapeutic sanatorium, but accepts paying guests to help defray costs. It is in a pleasant location, provides three meals a day and respiratory, tuberculosis treatments. Doubles at 5000-10000 AMD.

CAMPING

Redkin Camp is near the road to Parz Lich. The camp has cabins, dormitories and spaces for tents. Open May-October, space/bed/cabin at 2000/2500/12000 AMD per day, includes meals.

FOOD AND DRINK

Cafes and bistros are throughout the city, as are khorovatz joints in town and on the highway to Spitak/Alaverdi. Food can also be bought at Mterks (food shops) and kiosks around town.

\$ = 2000 AMD or less for meal w/o drinks
 \$\$ = 2000-3500 AMD
 \$\$\$ = 3500 AMD or more

Hatsatun, 2 Sharambeian p. (tel. 5661) has decent food in nice atmosphere. \$\$

Rotund Café, 40 Miasnikian p. has cheap eats in the heart of town. \$

Khnkalianots Restaurant, 29 Miasnikian p, serves tasty and cheap Georgian food including its signature Khnkali. Excellent food, be ready to wait, they make by hand when you order. \$

Sunk, 14 Parz Lich p. (tel. 7496), serves Armenian food in a motel setting. Mushroom dishes. \$\$

Mimino, 30b Miasnikian p. (tel. 4147) is next to the Khnkalianots, a sit down place with excellent Georgian fare. Great prices too, \$-\$

Near Town

Getap Restaurant/Motel, Ijevan highway, 1.9 km N of Dilijan center, right side of road, (tel. 5614, 4341) We first discovered Getik/Getap in 1994

during a monitoring trip to Tavush and have been in love every since. Menu varies by the season, anything recommended by the chef is going to be good. In summer see if the local oyster mushrooms are on menu, always good khorovatz and homemade lemonade. Most of the fresh ingredients come from local farmers. Full meals are around 2500-3500 AMD. \$-\$-\$



Getik, Redkin (road to Parz Lich), is in a beautiful old house off the Parz Lich road about 1.5-2 km after you cross the bridge from the highway (on the left). The restaurant is decked out with traditional folk art and handicrafts, plus some of the Bronze Age finds the owners discovered when digging a water line in the back yard, which happens to be part of the Redkin excavation area. Locals still uncover pots, figures and metal items in the area. The food is incredible, the menu varies according to the season and which foods are freshest. We ate like pigs for around 1500 AMD each and waddled out the door satiated for the rest of the day. Amazing place. \$

Khortkaran, 104 Tbilisian p. (tel. 4844), outdoor khorovatz joint. Tasty and reasonable. \$-\$

Restaurant Idjevan Janaparin, 158 Tbilisian p. tasty Armenian cuisine in bungalows near the forest and river. \$\$



AROUND DILIJAN ▲

Dilijan has several sites nearby that are well worth visiting, including the monastery and royal retreat at Haghartsin, Mkhitar Gosh's monastic masterpiece Goshavank and Parz Lich, one of Tavush' natural splendors. Must see are Haghartsin, Goshavank and Parz Lich. All UPPER CASE sites can be done in one day with one or two of the (side sites) depending on how long you take at each site. Sevan Pass is probably best paired with a trip to Lake Sevan or entry to Dilijan.

- 🏕 camping possible
- 🏠 overnight
- 🍷 food and drink
- ♨ thermal, mineral spring

HAGHARTSIN – **GOSHAVANK** – (Geghatap) – (Aghavnavank) – (Redkin) – **PARZ LICH** – **JUKHTAK VANK** – (Matosavank) – (Golovino) – **SEVAN PASS**

🚩 HAGHARTSIN - Հաղարծին ▲



➡ From the **Dilijan Roundabout**, take the **Ijevan Highway** about 7.5 km to an unmarked paved road to the left (N) at the railway flyover just before **Teghut**, follow that about 5 km as it climbs **Mt. Haghartsin** & crosses the river. The first warning of the monastery is about 1 km from the vank, where a small fish sign announces a "dzukhanots" café on the river. Down the path from the sign is an **open wing cross from the 13th c.** Next you will see the large unfinished funicular tower (DD 40.80390 x 44.09550) and then a little beyond as you round a bend and begin to descend a hill, some **khachkars** on the R and on the L, obscured

by trees, a small **stone shrine and khachkars**. Stop to visit the shrine, and continue on up the hill behind it for a beautiful view of the valley and the monastery, as well as a path to the top of the funicular, with its own observation platform. Continuing on, a little beyond you will see the monastery domes, just before the road makes a sharp steep turn to the monastery at **Haghartsin** (DD 40.80196 x 44.89042) 🏠 🚶

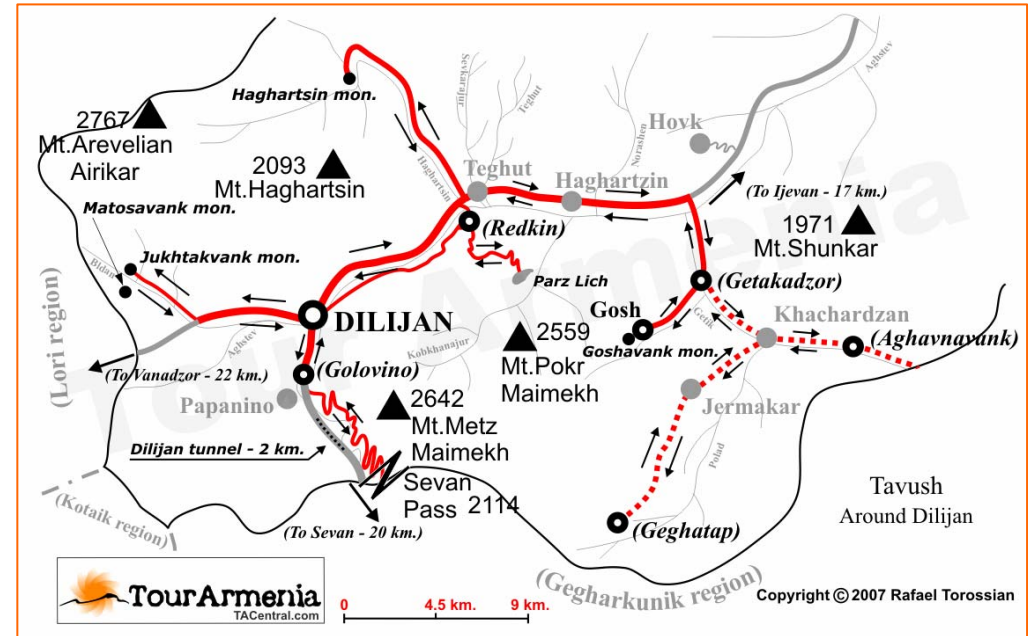
Haghartsin (elev. 1061m, pop. 1542) is one of Armenia's masterpieces of medieval architecture, a collection of buildings nestled in the cleft of the Haghartsin and Ijevan mountains, above the Haghartsin and Mets Aghbiur river gorges. Set in a beautiful natural setting, the three churches comprising the complex are well preserved examples of the mountain monasteries that proliferated in the forests of Northern Armenia. In off season the churches may be locked, see the caretaker (small house down a short path from the monastery, tip 500-1000 AMD).



History

The monastery was built on 6th century churches that were in turn built over a remote pagan temple, part of the Arshakuni (Arshacid) kingdom of Gugark, Dzorapor district. The area was a hunting ground for the Arshakunis, Bagratunis and Kiurikians and Zakarians who ruled in turn from the 3rd century BCE to the 13th c. As a royal church, the complex boasted a royal banquet hall, one of only two in Armenia (the other is at Haghpatt).

The monastery you see today was built between the 11th-13th centuries by the Bagratuni Kiurikian



family, the Orbelis and the Zakarian brothers Ivaneh and Zakareh who are featured in a bas relief on the eastern wall of Astvatsatsin Church in the complex. The most extensive buildings (Ss. Astvatsatsin, S Grigor gavit, S. Stepanos and banquet hall) were built in the Golden Age of Lori-Berd, a brief time when architecture, art and sciences flourished in the region. Only one day's travel from Haghartsin was Mkhitar Gosh's great monastic academy at Goshavank and the monasteries at Jukhtak and Matosavank.

Built in a defensive position in a remote area far up the mountains, it nonetheless was ruined during Seljuk attacks begun in the late 11th c, and rebuilt beginning the mid 12th c. The monastery was able to hold out against the more lethal advances of Jalai-al-Adin in 1228 when the nakharar allegiances that held Gugark together began to crumble. Egged on by the Mongols, Zakarians, Kiurikians and Orbelis fought bitterly amongst themselves, to settle old scores and increase their lands. When a second invasion by the armies of Kublai Khan began in 1238, this time using sophisticated Chinese siege machinery, the allegiances collapsed, Haghartsin survived mostly

due to the political machinations of the Kiurikians, who pledged allegiance to the Khan. This mostly explains the construction of the large royal banquet hall in 1248, well into the Mongol dynasty.



As Tavush crumbled in the 13th and 14th cc, Haghartsin survived, no doubt due to its location in the "royal hunting grounds" now inhabited by Mongols and used by the viziers of Ganjak as their own special preserve. It did not survive the Tatar

invasions of Timur (Tamurlane) though, the buildings were burnt and the monks killed or exiled to Lesser Armenia. By the 15th century when the Ottoman Turks arrived, and the 17th c as Persia took possession of Gugark, the monastery was deserted, except for a few faithful praying at a ruined complex.

In the 18th c the region rebelled against the Shah in Iran, and a punitive expedition by the Persians was thwarted by Russian Imperial troops and the immigration of Armenians from Karabakh. Haghartsin was not renovated until the 1970s, a victim of forgotten lore and the push for modernity by the New Armenians in Tiflis. Ignored by Soviet Armenians until the 1970s the monastery was complete restored and studied as the country began a concerted effort to recover its history and culture.

The Complex

The complex comprises three churches, a gavit,

dining hall, kitchen and service buildings, and sepulchres and cemetery khachkars.



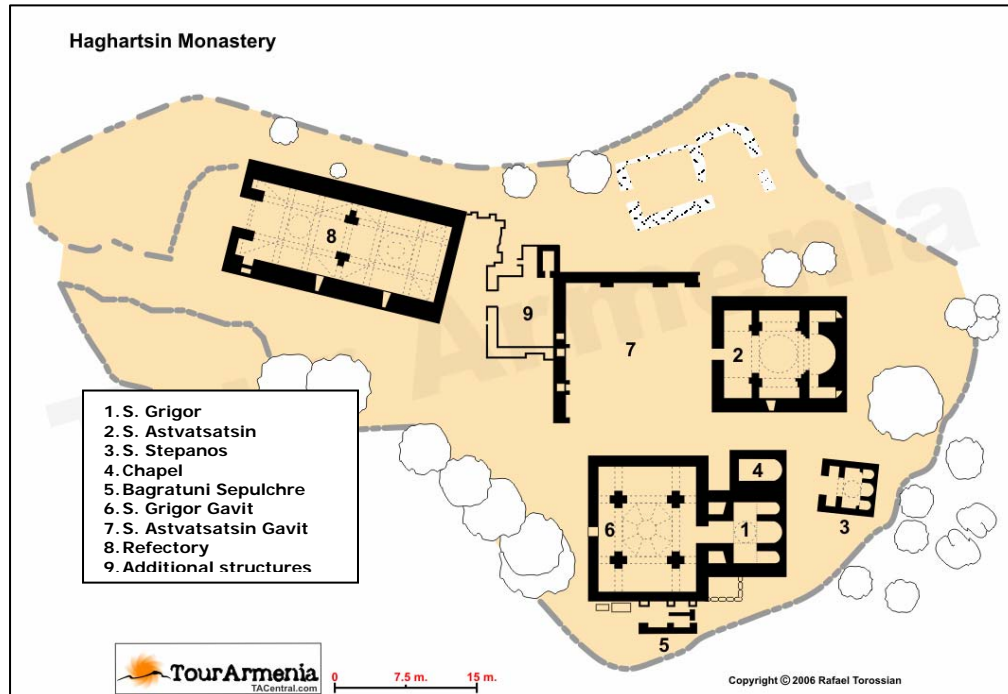
The buildings are covered with inscriptions, which tell something of the history of the monastery, focusing their reconstruction after Seljuk attacks in

the mid-12th c. The inscriptions are also gifts to God, done to venerate Him, and as a kind of "flash card" or Indulgence for the Day of Judgment (a medieval version of 'Hey God, remember me? I'm Ashot, I helped rebuild Haghartsin').

The first building, immediately to the left of the entry is the **refectory**, designed by the architect Minas and built in 1248. The building is a prototype of refectories throughout Armenia, like the one at Haghpat in Lori region. The building is a large hall formed by the joining of two square rooms roofed by four sets of crossed arches with a small skylight at the top. The walls are lined with stone benches and on the western wall, next to the door, there is a broad archway for large numbers of visitors to get in and out. Towards the kitchen area the facade of the exterior ribbing and the gradual curvature of trefoils and quatrefoil stonework ease the transition of the rectangular walls to the octagonal dome. The **kitchen** (in ruins, with working oven) serviced the hall, and was able to cook for very large feasts, judging by the size of the hall, up to one hundred or more.

above the central hall, supported on arches abutting the walls and ornamented corners, decorated with rosettes and sculptures of monks carrying crosses, staffs and birds. The central window is cross-shaped right above the main entry to the church.

Further to the north is the largest church, **S. Astvatsatsin**. The church is dated to 1071 and rebuilt in 1281 for Zakareh and Ivaneh Zakarian, and is a cruciform central dome type with annexes at the four corners. The church is easy to find, overshadowing the others, the dome resting on a tall hex-decahedral drum, faceted with columns and arches on the sides and decorated with bands, trefoils and orbs. The structure is obviously quite heavy, though the protruding arches and columns create an optical illusion of lightness. The original stone roofing on the dome was covered by metal sheets in the 1970's renovation. The border on the southern entry is decorated with rows of trefoils, a popular design motif in the period, symbolically representing the Holy trinity.



The oldest building is the **S. Grigor Lusavorich** church (10th c), built during the Bagratuni dynasty on the ruins of an earlier church. There are some interesting reliefs at the four corners of the roofing, Armenian 'gargoyles.' A small single apse **chapel** (called the **katoghike** or cathedral) is connected to S. Grigor on the N, in perfect alignment.

The standing **gavit** (end of 12th c) was built at the behest of Ivaneh Zakarian in front of S. Grigor. The gavit has a squat octahedral vaulted roofing



The eastern façade of the church has a bas relief sculpture of two monks pointing to a model of the church with a winged dove in the middle. The unique feature of this wall sculpture, and what sets it apart from others (Sanahin, Haghpat, Harichavank) is the attention to detail, to making each figure more than a totem. Both figures are dressed in robes, but the one on the right is more richly attired, as are their faces, eyes and hair. This is a breakthrough in representative sculpture in Armenia, as iconography, while retaining formalized rules of iconography, also introduced a new naturalism and a more direct appeal to human

emotion. In this, 13th c Armenians were exploring their own version of Renaissance Art being perfected in Northern Italy. The figures have been conjectured to represent the founders of the church, the Father Superior and an assistant, but others believe they represent prince Ivaneh, and important donor and patron of the monastery in the 13th c, and either the Father superior or Katolikos. The tent roofing on the model is believed to be the original 11th c church dome, which was replaced with the present one in the late 13th c.

The interior has a bas-relief of the Virgin and Child between two angels.

In front of the main entrance was a huge *gavit*, destroyed in the 15th c. and from which the NW wall remains.

A magnificent 13th c *Khachkar* stands next to the side entrance.

To the east is *S. Stepanos* (12th-13th cc), a cruciform dome type, once connected to the apse of the katoghike with a small colonnaded arcade. The interior is elaborately detailed with delicate vaulting ribbing and ornamental angle moldings.



There is an old nut tree just E of Astvatsatsin, which some say is as old as the monastery itself, others as old as the pre-Christian temple that once stood here. From here there is a fantastic view of the forests, river canyons and the remains of a cemetery including the *Bagratuni patriarchal sepulchres* and khachkars south of S. Grigor.

The burial vaults have two separate chapels, common for the time (10th c).

The *Khachkars* on the road to Haghartsin were made for supplicants to the monastery in the 12th-13th cc. Their position is not haphazard, the road is on the original trail leading into the monastery and faithful would, depending on their spiritual and social position, have their khachkars nearer or farther from the monastery. Done to commemorate a donation, as penance, or in memory of one of the monastery's members, the khachkars are remarkable for both their intricate beauty and their stunning location.

Monastery surroundings are worth exploring, the area is surrounded by forests, a meadow, two river canyons (Haghartsin and Mets Aghbiur) and a cliff side.

Camping is possible in the area, ask the caretaker first (a tip is helpful). Note area is frequented by tourists.



📍 GOSHAVANK - Գոշավանք 📍

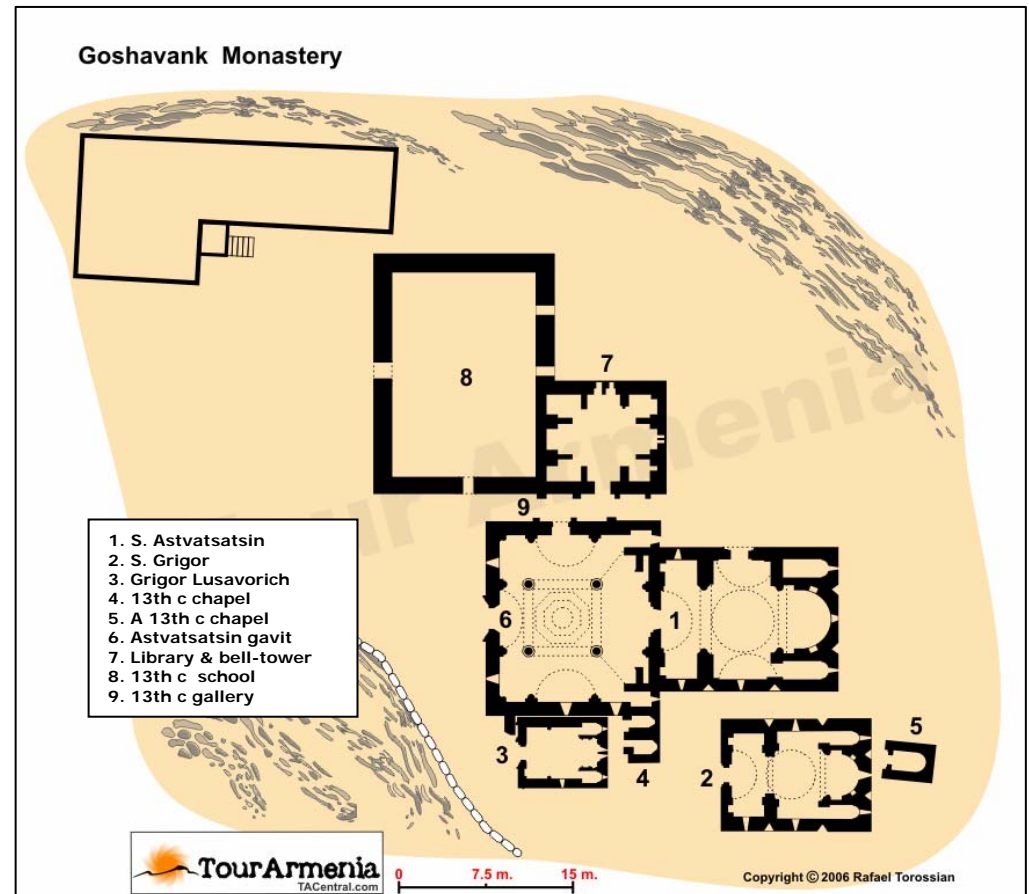
➡ From the *Dilijan Roundabout*, take the *Ijevan highway* NE about 7.5 km past the *Haghartsin turnoff*, continue another 2 km (past *Teghut and Haghartsin Village*) to a R (S) turnoff (signposted: a large sign for "Chambarak" and a small one for "Gosh, 7 km") towards *Nerkin Gosh*. Take that road 2.8 km S into the small hamlet of *Nerkin Gosh* (formerly *Alachukh*) and then right at the sign marked "Gosh 4 km" and continue for another 2 km through a river canyon to *Gosh Village* (DD

40.7225 x 45.033333 elev. 1215m, pop. 1554) limits and a final 1 km to *Goshavank* (DD 40.72932 x 44.99731) 📍 📍 📍

Goshavank (Nor Getik, elev. 1252m) is on the opposite mountain range from Haghartsin, and is famous for its founder, Mkhitar Gosh, scholar and author of Armenia's first criminal code and for its intricate 13th c khachkars and reading room, Armenia's first law library. The monastery is inside The Dilijan forest preserve, but the area has long since been cleared of trees, it sits on a hill slope in a wildflower meadow, starkly different but equally evocative as its sister vank to the north.

History

The monastery was built for the Armenian scholar, legal expert and fabulist, Mkhitar Gosh on the ruins of an older monastery, Getik, which was destroyed by an earthquake in 1188. It is also referred to as Nor Getik. Little is known of Getik, but that it was probably built in the 4th-5th cc, under the patronage of the Arshakuni kings, and may have been erected on a pre-Christian temple or altar. This would be in character with other pagan sites in the region, outdoor altars or shrines that venerated woodland spirits believed to inhabit the forests. Certain mushrooms in the area are



known to induce euphoria and “visions,” and some scholarly study has been done on the influence of these [hallucinogenic mushrooms](#) (p. 5) on ancestral Armenian religion (lucky sod).

Soon after its reincarnation in the late 12th c. as Goshavank, the monastery became one of the most famous religious and scholarly centers in medieval Armenia, led by one of Armenia's most accomplished scholars, legal experts and scientists. Mkhitar Gosh (Mkhitar of Gosh). Mkhitar Gosh (1130-1140? – 1213) was one of the greatest intellectual powers of his day, authoring more than a dozen works including the codification of Armenian law, the *Fables*, a number of prayers, sermons, theological treatises and a chronicle of Armenian history. He was twice awarded the title *Vardapet* (doctor of theology), was confidant and advisor to the most important nakharars and the king of Georgia, and taught a generation of scholars, historians and theologians at his college at Goshavank, a who's who of intellectual thought in the 13th century.

Born in the city of Gandzak (modern Kirovabad) in Azerbaijan, in his early teens Mkhitar was ordained a celibate priest and began his studies with the 12th c. Vardapet Hovhannes Tavushetsi, from whom he earned his first Vardapet. His second was earned when he entered a monastic community on Black Mountain in Cilicia, according to legend being too modest to tell the monks he already had earned one doctorate. From there he lived in Erzerum, where he befriended and became an advisor to Prince Kurd Artsruni of Gugark, who had been exiled by the Georgian king. This wealthy prince was to become one of his most important patrons. Returning to Gandzak, jealous clerics precipitated his leaving to Khachen, where he found patrons in Prince Vakhtank and his brothers.

Prince Kurd Artsruni was reinstated in his lands in Kaiyen around 1184 and Mkhitar joined him, teaching at Getik until its destruction by earthquake. By now renowned throughout Armenia, Mkhitar had the monastery rebuilt with the help of his powerful supporters: the general Ivaneh Zakarian, the Khachen princes and the Artsrunis. An ascetic, Mkhitar lived some distance from the monastery, visiting the monastery to teach and supervise its research.

His era was one of great aspirations for the Armenians, who hoped to re-establish their

hegemony over the Armenian Highlands as the Arshacids and Bagratunis once had. Surviving the Seljuk attacks, Armenians began the process of defeating the invaders and to establish the Armenian kingdom anew. It was also a complicated time of shifting alliances and petty feuds, and Mkhitar was sought on several occasions to resolve disputes and advise councils. In 1205 and 1207, Mkhitar was key to councils called by the Sparapet Zakareh Zakarian, which created the successful alliance of the Georgian kingdom and Armenian princely families to resist and drive Seljuk forces from eastern Armenia. Commander in chief of the joint Armenian-Georgian forces, Zakarian led an expedition that drove Seljuks from all of Eastern Armenia, establishing a new Golden Age in Armenia and the incredible flowering of culture that took place during the next 40 years. His father-confessor, Mkhitar's and Zakareh's lives intertwined throughout this period, one of the most dangerous, heady and exciting of Armenia's history, the military prowess of the Armenians reigned supreme in their new alliance with Georgia, and the sciences, theology and rule of law were expanded and accepted as essential components to society. In one of life's little twists of fate, both men died in the same year (1213).



Mkhitar Gosh was known for many accomplishments, but to Goshavank, none is as important as his compilation of Armenian Law, and establishing Armenia's first law library, organized to rest the rise of Islamic law in the region.

A man of his times, which were, frankly, feudal, Mkhitar stood for order, his work reflecting this

desire for order and rule. His writings reflect this, the codification of Armenian law obviously slanted towards the rich and powerful at the expense of peasants. His *Fables* were a series of lessons, admonishing peasants to respect their betters, the poor the wealthy, the young their elders. Finding divine wisdom on all things, all things led to God through obedience and compliance. Conventional wisdom, they were a product of the times, it is no surprise Mkhitar and the nakharars were so concerned with order and obedience, only by forging allegiance could they hope to rebuild their kingdom after the destruction wrought by the Seljuks. And they were doing it too! By Mkhitar's death, Armenians believed they had survived the worst, that God at last showed favor on them, endowing them with the intellectual, military and culture powers to create the Elysian Fields in Gugark.

To get a taste of Gosh's philosophy, read R. Bedrossian's wonderful translation of Mkhitar's [The Fables](#). And source chronicle for the building of the monastery is Bedrossian's translation of Kirakos Gandzaketsi's [History of Armenia](#).

The monastery was built between 1188 and the late 13th century, and was the work of many talented architects, carpenters and stone masons. Most were not recorded, or lost to the anonymity imposed on them by Feudal tradition and early Church doctrine (the soul is counted by God while the individual is not). Exceptions were made for great masters, and we are lucky at Goshavank that three great masters of their art form are recognized: the architect Mkhitar (the Carpenter) and his disciple Hovhannes and the great sculptor Pavgos, the creator of some of Armenia's most beautiful khachkars.

Patrons of the project are recorded (the rich getting their just rewards, at least on earth), including the Princes Kurd Artsruni and Zakareh Zakarian, along with others: Lord Vakhtang Khachenatsi (Haterketsi), his brothers Grigor, Grigoris and Khoidan, the Prince Vasak, Davit and Sadun (the sons of Kurd) and their sister Arzu Khatun (Vakhtang Haterketsi's wife).

The Complex

The monastery includes the churches of St. Astvatsatsin (1196), St. Grigor (1231), St. Grigor Lusavorich (1241), a scriptorium (1291) and a school (XIII century). Historical sources also

mention the existence of a university and a seminary, where manuscripts were created and preserved.



The chronicles mention that Mkhitar and his supporters began their reconstruction of the monastery not with Astvatsatsin, but by building a smaller church in the name of *Saint John the Baptist*, which location has not been conclusively found, but which some think became the foundations of the small basilica S. Grigor.

Following, they began the foundations of Astvatsatsin in 1191 and a refectory and the university.

The main church, **S. Astvatsatsin** (1191-1196) was built by the founder of the new monastery, Mkhitar Gosh, and belongs to the types widespread in the tenth to the thirteenth centuries — a domed square or cross-winged domed building with annexes in the corners of the central cross. It has one small chapel with a semi-circular apse on the eastern side and vaulted roofing. The façade's niches have quatrefoil and scalloped tops and arched facets. The front portal was added in 1197, built by the architect Mkhitar and is an elaborate mix of protruding columns, archways and frames decorated with conches, rosettes, geometric patterns and an oriental arch above the church door with an elaborate ornamental relief using a stylized sun. The sides of the church are carved with many crosses and inscriptions by supplicants and donors to the monastery.

There is an unusual framed sun dial on the southern façade.



The large **gavit** (1197-1203) overwhelms the church in size, if not height. It is a large square space with arched octahedral ribbing above the central area, braced by four central columns and wall abutments. The squat building and centralized arched roof is close to peasant house of the time ("glkhatun"), a squat structure with tented roofing and central skylight. At Goshavank, the gavit has small annexes in the corners of its eastern end.

Close by and south of Astvatsatsin are two other churches.

S. Grigor (1208-1241) is an almost identical design to Astvatsatsin, except smaller, with a different detailing. Like the larger church is a cross-winged dome with four annexes in its corners, a chapel on the east end having semi-circular apses in its thick wall. It is missing its original cupola, the current is a 20th century apparition.

The remarkable, small **S. Grigor Lusavorich**, church was started in 1237 and finished by Prince Grigor-Tkha in 1241. The church, a single-nave basilica is unique for its time, based on 5-6th c. basilicas (on which it may very well have been built) but set off from the earlier structures by its elaborate decoration.

The *exterior of the church* is richly detailed with spans of arches, spandrels and half-arches topping the building at the corners. This is similar to the motif found at the mina church at Tekhtsenut

vank. Leading historians to believe both churches were done by the same stone masters.

The intricate patterns serve as a transition between the arcature of the facades, and on the western wall the whole thing creates an illusion of size, adding weight and drawing the eyes upward and outward with the spanning arch lines.



The windows on the eastern and western walls are unique, their shape, border and design unlike other structures of the time. Note the tympanum (the space between the lintel and arch) over the western windows. They are filled with detailed carvings and interlacing floral stems and rosettes. Similar patterns cover the lintels themselves, column abaci (slab above the capital), the decorative molding carried around arched wall openings and the border of eight-pointed stars on the portal frame.

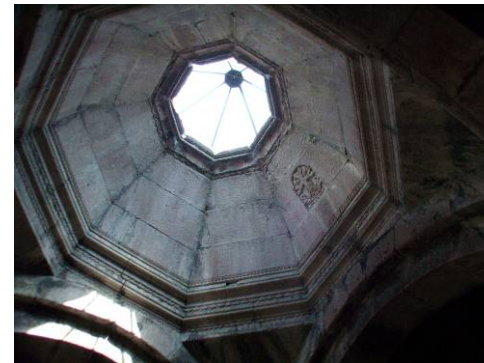
The *eight-pointed star* is a symbolic function, coming from sacred geometry used at the time. Handed down from the time of Pythagoras, the geometric dimensions and designs on sacred edifices were considered spiritually powerful, in older times the shape, pattern and numbering of items were thought to physically evoke the powers of the spiritual world, and while this direct connection with God was less believed in Medieval Armenia, it was respected nonetheless with the number of steps (3, 6 or 9), columns and arches, and their dimensions, carried forth from Classical sacred geometric rules.

Following the rules of sacred geometry practiced in Armenia, the eight pointed star was a specific

spiritual sign, the number eight represents rebirth and rejuvenation; eight following seven, which represented completion, the end of a cycle, thus, eight meant beginning again. The resurrection of Christ happened on the eight day of the passion, so the number eight would pronounce to the faithful (many of whom could not read, but were taught signs and the meaning of symbols, much of which came down from pagan times in folklore, myths and legends) that this was the place of rebirth, the home of the one who cancelled death.

See our [Sacred Geometry web site](#) for more information about sacred geometry.

The carving of the exterior is so carefully done, it has the impression of lacework, a painstaking process and one traced to masters like Pavgos, who carved the incredible Lace Khachkar nearby (see below).



Inside the small space, the intricate patterns continue. The wall of the altar apron has an explosion of design motifs; arches, detailed geometric patterns, trefoils and globes. The support columns for the apse, lining its walls are carved with twisted fluting and fillets. Floral patterns continue in the church décor, over doors especially.

The **library / scriptorium** (1241-1291) is north of Astvatsatsin. Built long after Mkhitar's death, it nonetheless is directly descended from a book depository that stood at that spot during his time. The structure is unique. The older building was small with niches in the walls for keeping books and parchments, and was designed in the peasant

"glkhatun" style (arched roofing leading to a central skylight).

Next to it was a very large building probably used as the refectory and as **Mkhitar's university**. Historical sources mention the existence of a **university / seminary** from the early 13th century, and here is where it stood. The university trained a number of important scholars, vardapets and scientists in the next century, among them the Martiros, his student the scientists and historian Kirakos Gandzaketsi (13th c. "The History of Armenia"), Gandzaketsi's teacher Yovhannes Vanakan (d. 1251) and his classmate Vartan Arelveltsi ("Song of Songs").



It was also roofed with wooden beams, and judging by the huge span of the room, was made from three connecting "tent roofs" supported by central columns.

When it was decided to add a two-story **bell-tower**, both structures were rebuilt, the construction done in two stages; eight wall abutments were added to support a new stone roof held by two pairs of cross-arches that covered the new library cruciform superstructure. The second floor was halted (due to Mongol incursions in the area begun in 1238), with barely two rows of stone and half columns completed before construction stopped.

The second floor was completed in 1291, after the nakharars made compact with their now ruling Mongols lords, and, funded by patrons Dasapet and Karapet (inscribed on the walls), was crowned with a small chapel with two altar apses and a multicolumn rotunda belfry, the base for which is

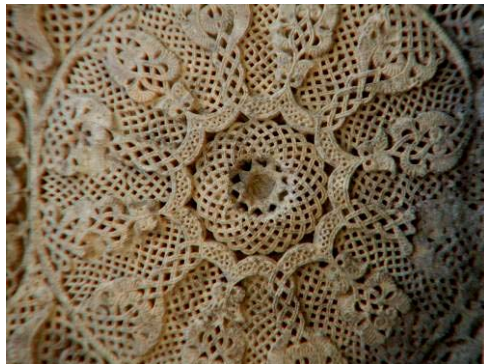
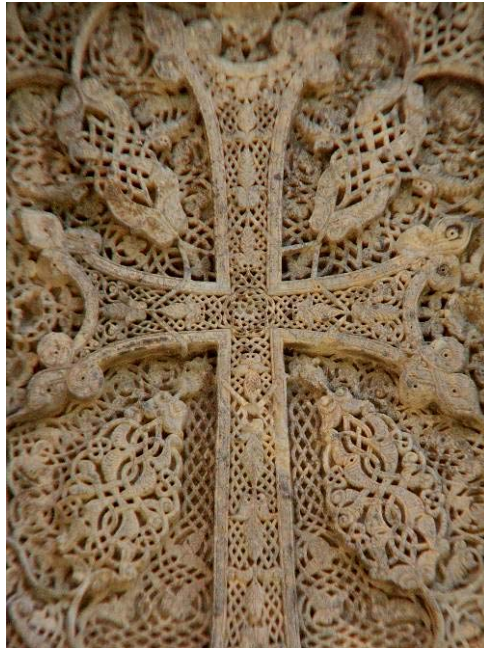
a modified "glkhatun", albeit in stone rather than the traditional wood and its height dominated all other structures in the compound. Entry to the second floor chapel was from the roof of the auditorium on a cantilever staircase.

The library is in a central plan, with annexes on the four corners and each cardinal direction. This gave additional space for various activities: study, lectures and manuscript writing, for which the monastery was renowned. Décor is plain, reflecting the tenuous times and its purpose as a place of work and study. Its rounded and grooved abutments were topped with plain abaci, trefoils on the lower angles their only adornment. The false vaulting above the room is composed of various triangular pieces, a mosaic that ends in the shape of an eight-pointed star.

SW of the main group of buildings is the **S. Hripsimeh chapel** (1254), a domed building, with a square plan of unique composition, the dome drum rising from the square roof, supported by the interior walls of the tiny space. This may be the location of the original S. John the Baptist, but it is under dispute. A khachkar and base are on the front of the building, which is closely in size and form to pre-Christian shrines.

Khachkars The khachkars created by master carver Pavgos in Goshavank stand out among khachkars of the 13th c. The best is the 1291 "Aserghnagords" (embroidered) khachkar with the maker's name carved in the bottom left star. This is a true masterpiece, a stunning work of art. It's lacy pattern and ornaments are carved in layers in a complicated design that seems to lift the stone from its base, the lace pattern delicately shifting as you move around the cross.

The complex pattern delineates the basic forms of the carving, a cross on a shield of rosettes with six-pointed stars on the borders and corners, the cross resting on a mind-boggling solar orb in even more intricately carved lace, the tree of life reduced to four Seed pods also carved as lace, one for each of the evangelists. All of the intricately carved figures and objects are impressive, the lace patterns interwoven between them representing floral and geometrical ornaments never repeats itself. There were originally two copies, the second is in the State History Museum in Yerevan.



In the **village**, W of the monastery, there is a small **museum** with artifacts from the area. The village also has the reputed remnants of **Mkhitar's house** and his **mausoleum**, constructed in his old age.

Hiking: from Gosh, there are a number of hikes into the surrounding forests. From the eastern edge of the village (about 1 km from the monastery), cross the Gosh river at the tributary of the mountain stream and follow the first SE fork up Mt. Gei about 1.7 km to Gei Lich, the deep, clear lake mentioned in the chronicles of the monastery. It's a steep climb, the stream ends about 500m short of the lake. Another mountain hike is S/SW of the monastery, following the S mountain stream then at 500m the S/SE fork to the top of Mt. Maraldag (2126m), or the SW fork to the S (at 1.09 km) fork to the 2357m crown of the same mountain. It is 9.5 km from Goshavank to Parz Lich on the NE slope of Kazakh-Bek.

Camping in the area. **Overnight** possible in the village, very rustic. Note area is frequented by tourists.

SIDE TRIP: (Geghatap - Գեղարթափ)

➤ From **Gosh**, backtrack to Nerkin Gosh, then go S about 4.2 km to the bridge over the Getik River to Kachardzan (old Polad), cross the bridge and in the SW edge of the village take the W mountain road (Jeeps and Vilis/UAZ only) about 3.9 km to Jermakar, continue S through the village and follow the road another 7.8 km or so as it winds along the SE face of Mt. Maraldag to (Geghatap) 🏠

(Geghatap - Գեղարթափ formerly Murtel) is in an alpine village with shepherds to keep you company. The ruined 11-13th c. church nearby is not worth a trip in itself, but the gorgeous alpine meadows, ablaze with poppies, daisies, mountain iris and tulips and black-eyed Susan's in the summer is, especially for hikers and campers. The setting is stunning, you can easily imagine yourself Heidi romping through the meadows or Julie Andrews running across the German Alps here. Cold weather reigns except for the warmest months (late June – early August).

SIDE TRIP: (Aghavnavank - Աղավնավանք)

➤ From **Geghatap** backtrack to Kachardzan (old Polad) and from the bridge proceed E on the larger (but still poor) road about 3 km to (Aghavnavank DD 40.7308333 x 45.0933333) 🏠

(Aghavnavank - Աղավնավանք formerly Salakh elev. 1443m, pop. 1978) is something else, another alpine village, but, situated on the mountain road to Gegharkunik and Lake Sevan, something of a provincial village, locals fancy themselves a little more sophisticated than the shepherds at Geghatap, they are on the road to Sevan, after all! About 200 m south of the bridge into the village, E of the road is the 11th-13th cc **Anapat-Astvatsatsin church**, a cross-form dome type with annexes in the corners. There is also an early (12th c) bridge on the Getik river.

SIDE TRIP: (SE route to Sevan)

➤ On a very rough road (Jeep/Vilis/UAZ), going southeast from (Aghavnavank) it is about 2.2 km to the bridge crossing the Getik river and Dzoravank (old Gharaghaya), 14 km to Martuni and another 11.5 km to Chambarak and from there 15 km SW to Shorzha on Lake Sevan. The road is terrible, but the nature and solitude is incredible. Do note you are close to the Azerbaijan border for much of this route, take precautions.

SIDE TRIP: (Redkin excavation - Ռեդկին պեղում)

➤ Easiest way to the site is to head NE on the Ijevan (Tbilisi) Hwy from the Dilijan roundabout for about 6.7 km to a sign-posted ("Parz Lich", "Cinema House", "Sunk Restaurant/Hotel") R turn to a road that crosses the river and then heads R again (S/SW) for about 1.5 m to the Getik Restaurant (large house with balcony on L) and **Redkin Excavation site**. Alternately from Dilijan, beginning from the town square, take Miasnikian street E for about 5.9 km as it leaves town and winds along the South bank of the river to the Parz Lich exit, and jus nearby, on the R a large house with wooden balcony: the Getik Restaurant and **Redkin Excavation site** (DD 40.76561 x 44.92130)

(Redkin excavation - Ռեդկին պեղում) is actually all around you, beginning from a camp site about 600m S of the bridge. The excavation is named after a highway contractor who, along with his fellow workers, uncovered Iron Age artifacts while working on the Dilijan-Tbilisi road. At the

original spot there is a small monument to the excavation, plus almost invisible evidences of the excavation that revealed a large settlement in the area in the Bronze-Iron Ages.



A 'working dig' continues in the area, albeit unofficially by local dwellers. The Getik Restaurant, about 600m beyond the original site has a number of items found in a large pit (shaft tomb) while digging for water pipes. The finds include ceramic vases and some iron and bronze items. Artifacts are on display at the Local Tradition Museum.

Food. Getik, is in a beautiful old house off the Parz Lich road about 1.5-2 km after you cross the bridge from the highway (on the left). The restaurant is decked out with traditional folk art and handicrafts, plus some of the Bronze Age finds the owners discovered when digging a water line in the back yard, which happens to be part of the Redkin excavation area. Locals still uncover pots, figures and metal items in the area. The food is incredible, the menu varies according to the season and which foods are freshest. We ate like pigs for around 1500 AMD each and waddled out the door satiated for the rest of the day. Amazing place. \$

☒ PARZ LICH - ՊԱՐԶ ԼԻՃ

➡ From the **Redkin Excavation** (see above) go SW 700 m on the Dilijan road and then E on the Parz Lich road about 8.2 km as it winds and switchbacks up the Kazakh Bek mountain to **Parz Lich** (DD 40.75331 x 44.96194) 📍



Parz Lich (Clear Lake) is in a clearing in the forest, and is an ideal locale for a picnic and hiking. The water, unlike its name, is not clear like Sevan, it changes colors according to the season (green in the summer when algae blooms are prevalent, gray or brown in autumn, glassy gray or blue in the stillness of a sunny day). The shoreline is well kept, a Hangestan Goti (Rest Area) with picnic tables, khorovatz grills and a simple café for Saturday-Sunday frolickers. Tables are 5000 AMD, parking on site is 1000 AMD, camping at the rest area is 3000 AMD. You can park before the gate for free and as long as you don't use the table, the lake shore is free. Camp beyond the rest area and it is free too (and more secluded, take the path on the far end of the lake)



Taxis from Dilijan to the site are 3000 AMD, the same price taxi drivers to anywhere within 50 km

from town. Taxi drivers usually charge 1000 AMD extra to wait while you frolic in the woods. One taxi service we found at the site is Meruju Balinian (tel. 40-05), who offered to discount a bit for longer trips.

Hikes. The area is great for the casual or avid hiker. There are trails leading into the forest all around the lake, plus some half day hikes of worth. From Parz Lich you can hike down the NE slope of Kazakh-Bek to Goshavank (9.5 km); NE following the Kobkhanajur river to the Aghtsev river near the village of Haghartsin (3.5 km); and SW across Kazakh-Bek to climb Mt. Mets Maimekh (2559m, 10 km).

Camping at the lake or on one of the mountain trails.

☒ JUKHTAK VANK - ՋՈՒԽՏԱԿ ՎԱՆՔ

➡ From the **Dilijan** roundabout take the Vanadzor highway (Kalinini p.) about 3.3 km to a right fork off the road (a large metal container/kiosk is at the opposite right corner), take that road about 2.8 km (under the tall rail bridge & past the sports sanatorium on the left) to a spot about 100m before the gates to the Dilijan Frolova Balka Mineral Water bottling plant where a large metal sign in Armenian declares the area a nature preserve under the protection of the Soviet Armenia government (forbidding hunting, collecting of medicinal herbs, building campfires, driving over or otherwise spoiling nature—oh, those were the days!) and where a dirt path forks to the right and sharply uphill, leading in about 500m to a dead end (gully wash) and in another 300m by foot to **Jukhtak Vank** (DD 40.75798 x 44.80708) 📍 🏕️

Jukhtak Vank - ՋՈՒԽՏԱԿ ՎԱՆՔ (S. Petros monastery) is in the western forests of Dilijan, on a rump of land surrounded on three sides by a ridge of mountains. To the SW, below the monastery, is the B'l'dan River, running towards the Aghstev. The site is popular with campers and "woodsmen" (read: illegal loggers), both sets of whom leave their marks on the hillside. The site is otherwise dramatic and inviting, with thick stands of trees towering over the ancient sacred site, streams of spring water trickling down the trail.



The name Jukhtak means twin springs, and we're not sure if this reflects two springs on the monastery grounds or the spring-fed B'l'dan River downhill. One of the names for the monastery that comes to us from an inscription on the basilica wall, erroneously used to date the entire complex:

"In the year 1201, in the (Emir's lands) of Lasha and the Khanate of (missing), I Hairapet, abbot of S. Petros Monastery, built S. Astvatsatsin with the hope that every sunrise in both vestibules one mass will be offered for me and one for my brother Shmavon, and in all the churches for my parents."

The churches are in fact built over much older foundations. Note the stepped platforms, their positioning and use of older cyclopean stones in the walls.



The small basilica church, *S. Astvatsatsin*, is finely built using local basalt, a single nave hall type reminiscent of much earlier churches from the 5th-6th cc. It is built on a stele, a hallmark of pre-Christian foundation design; it certainly has the same dimensions as the Hellenistic temples of the early Arshakuni era.



Also note outside the basilica and the main church are some very ancient gravestones, if not of the Pagan era, then just after, strongly pointing to the site's pre-Christian use before the Grigor Lusavorich Brigade arrived to 'straighten things out among the heathens'. On the western wall, either side of the entry are a row of khachkars (11th-13th cc) and the high window has an interesting arch detail, an stylized orb with grooved borders flowing over and aside it, two rosettes on either side at the top. It is most unusual for Armenian art, and almost looks like an Egyptian Ankh.



The main church, *S. Grigor* (12th-13th c), is a cruciform dome type in its latest incarnation, with annexes in the four corners. The dome, which rested on the walls and four arch spans in the central hall has long since fallen with nary a stone remaining to show its existence. Probably succumbing to the same earthquake that toppled Getik Monastery 17 km to the east, the loss of the dome and continued earth tremors weakened the walls of the building so they must be held together with iron bands. Placed in the latter 20th c. In having this problem, the church reveals some of the engineering prevalent in Armenian churches at the time. Domes did not merely rest on their central walls, they were an integral part of the building, acting like keystones in a window arch.



The arch distributes the force of the wall away from the window hole, allowing it to remain open.

Domes certainly depended on their support walls and abutments, but they also served to spread weight evenly across the substructure, as well as tying the walls together, preventing them from leaning outwards. Without the dome, *S. Grigor*'s walls were susceptible to both the elements and to their natural outward force, in effect pulling the walls away from each other.

The church was built with finely hewn stone, the western wall features a full arch way over the portal, framed with a rectangular set of bands. The eastern apse on the inside displays a nicely carved 12th c khachkar on the altar floor, the tall central arches rest directly on the walls of the space, with two sets of false columns to act as transition from one wall to another. The high eastern window has a scallop arch, but the walls are otherwise simple, even severe, there are no signs of frescos or decorative carvings. A multitude of stone khachkars adorn the eastern walls, testaments to the faithful and donors to the church. Without its dome, grass and wild flowers grow in the upper crevices of the church, adding to its forlorn, poetic nature.

There are picnic tables on the monastery grounds. **Camping** possible, on the premises or in the nearby forests.

SIDE TRIP: (Matosavank - Մատոսավանք)

➤ This Monastery is on the hill **opposite Jukhtak**, if you cross the river and begin climbing up the vehicle path, you'll have to wind about 5-6 times, then (if you're looking up the hill) go left about 120 m and you should find the hidden **Matosavank Monastery**.📍

Matosavank was a walled monastery butting against a hill slope of Mt. Bunduk. Not much remains of the monastery, the forest has all but claimed this outcropping of religious life in the mid 13th century, except half-ruins showing its former grandeur. Inside the monastery, the smaller church, *S. Astvatsatsin Pghendzahanki* (1247) was built during the first years of the Mongol suzerainty in the area, for Avak, the son of the great Zakarian Prince Ivaneh.

Facing superior numbers and Chinese siege machines, Avak, like so many of his counterparts, surrendered rather than face annihilation, making separate peace with the Mongols and serving with their armies as they moved westward in their invasion. Often betraying their own cousins, they nonetheless retained their lands, sometimes expanding their holdings. Mongols, keenly aware of their ambitions and the tenuous nature of the nakharar (princely) alliance, used this to their advantage, feeding jealousies and egging them on in their petty fights. It is said the Armenian's worst enemy in these times were not their invaders, but rather themselves. Avak himself became, like his uncle the great general Zakareh, head of the Georgian/Armenian army, only rather than fight for freedom as his uncle had, he fought instead for Mangu Khan, grandson of the great Genghis Khan.



Despite his high position, Avak must not have had much faith in his situation, building Matosavank in an even more remote location than Jukhtak. His fears were correct, the monastery did not long survive the Tatar attacks during the 14th and 15th centuries and was already deserted by the time the Ottomans appeared on the scene.

The church is succumbing to the seeping soil, its cross form with elongated hall and gavit partially submerged on one side. Inside you can get a better feel for the church, which was admittedly smaller and less grand than its cousins at Haghartsin and Goshavank. What is

most remarkable about the place, and what makes it worth the trudge up the ravine, are the numerous and intricately carved khachkars in and around the church. They proliferate, one large khachkar outside the entry, numerous on the walls of the interior. The half-ruined walls, covered with lichen and the encroaching forest grass, are a romantic yet sad reminder of the last golden age of Armenia's history, twilight of culture and science in a country about to be doomed to 400 years of subservience to outside invaders.

Camping in the area, no one will bother you.

SIDE TRIP: (*Golovino excavation - Գոլովինո պեղում*)

➤ From the **Dilijan** roundabout take the South road to **Sevan** (Gorki, then Kamo pts.) about 3 km to **Golovino** district. The excavation is on the side of the road.

(*Golovino excavation - Գոլովինո պեղում*) has not even a mound to show where the famous excavation revealed Iron Age shaft graves, and later digs uncovered traces of Bronze Age activity. Artifacts are on display at the Local Tradition Museum.

✧ **SEVAN PASS** - Սևանի Լեռնալցք [▲](#)

➤ From **Golovino** (see above), continue S on the **Sevan** highway about 12 km (15 km from the **Dilijan** roundabout) and bypass the new tunnel to take the road as it winds and switchbacks up the W face of **Mets Maimekh** to **Sevan Pass**

Sevan Pass. The mountain pass is at 2260 m above sea level, but the trip up is one of the most beautiful and exhilarating in Armenia. If you are going to **Sevan** in a hurry, take the new tunnel, which cuts 45 minutes off your drive, but if you want to see the top of **Tavush**, take the mountain road rising through the forests in a steady climb with 15 switchbacks (count 'em) to the top. As you near the top, the forests give way to mountain meadow and even a bit of alpine country, a dramatic contrast of geographic zones, each fostering its own flora and fauna; forest flowers quickly give way to mountain daisies, tulips and iris as you ascend hills and where the woodpecker

and owl give way to the red hawk and mountain eagle. Looking back you can see the entire **Dilijan** valley.

At the tunnel entrance you will find the "Barrel" - a cold spring and local farmers selling seasonal fruits and boiled corn. Make sure you try the water, it is very cold and refreshing. On the other side of the tunnel you will find more roadside sellers hawking fresh and dried fruit, grilled food and handmade souvenirs, and, in **Semenovka** village (Russian **Molokan**), there is a cold spring famous with locals, who swear by its healthy properties.



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ABOUT THE AUTHORS ▲

Rick Ney (*author*) first came to Armenia in 1992 to work at the American University of Armenia. In 1993 he began his work in humanitarian aid and development for USAID-funded projects at the Armenian Assembly of America and Fund for Democracy and Development, the latter as Caucasus Region Director. This morphed into writing about Armenia for various publications, which became the first English language complete guide to Armenia in 1996 (online) and 1998 (CD-ROM). It has since become an online resource, visited by more than 24 million unique visitors (www.TACentral.com and www.TourArmenia.info). Rick is passionate about Armenia's deep history, amazing ecology, and making the country accessible for independent travelers, whom he believes will be the basis of Armenia's entry into the open world. In 2000 he began dividing his time between Armenia and caring for a parent in Texas, both of which he considers the richest experiences of his life.

Rafael Torossian (*research, maps, and graphics*) has been collaborating with Rick on TourArmenia since 1996, providing some much needed reality checks and commentary along the way. In his other life Rafael designs flash sequences, ads, graphics and web sites for TWRI, for a variety of sites and content management projects. In a previous life Rafi was a field and track athlete, setting the All Armenia record (still unbroken) for the 60 meter dash, then as Assistant to the Minister for Sports, serving (surviving) 6 ministers, before meeting Rick, when they worked together on several humanitarian aid projects managed by the Armenian Assembly of America and Fund for Democracy and Development. In a world where engineers are taxi drivers, Rafi became the finance manager for these projects, creating the first multi-denomination accounting system for USAID projects in the Caucasus, tracking currency that inflated at one time 150% per day. Rafi is an Honored Coach of the Republic of Armenia and lives in Yerevan, a proud Yerevantsi who did not leave during the dark years of 1991-1995.

Bella Karapetian (*Editing, Translations, Russian Edition*) first met Rick in 1993 when she came to the American University and worked in his office as Faculty services Manager and Special Events Coordinator. There she had the chance to use her remarkable patience and good humor with wide-

eyed professors wanting to know where the nearest shopping mall was (God give us patience and a good dose of Pantalgin). She then worked at the World Food Program in Armenia as administrator and Program Officer. In her previous life Bella worked with International architects at ArmStateDesign Institute as an information program assistant and translator. She is currently Executive Director of the NGO Historic Armenian Houses. History and architecture are her true loves and she has traveled to China, Thailand, Malaysia, Italy, Germany, and Lebanon and throughout the former Soviet Union. Bella tops this off by maintaining her membership in the World Esperanto Association. *Saluton!*

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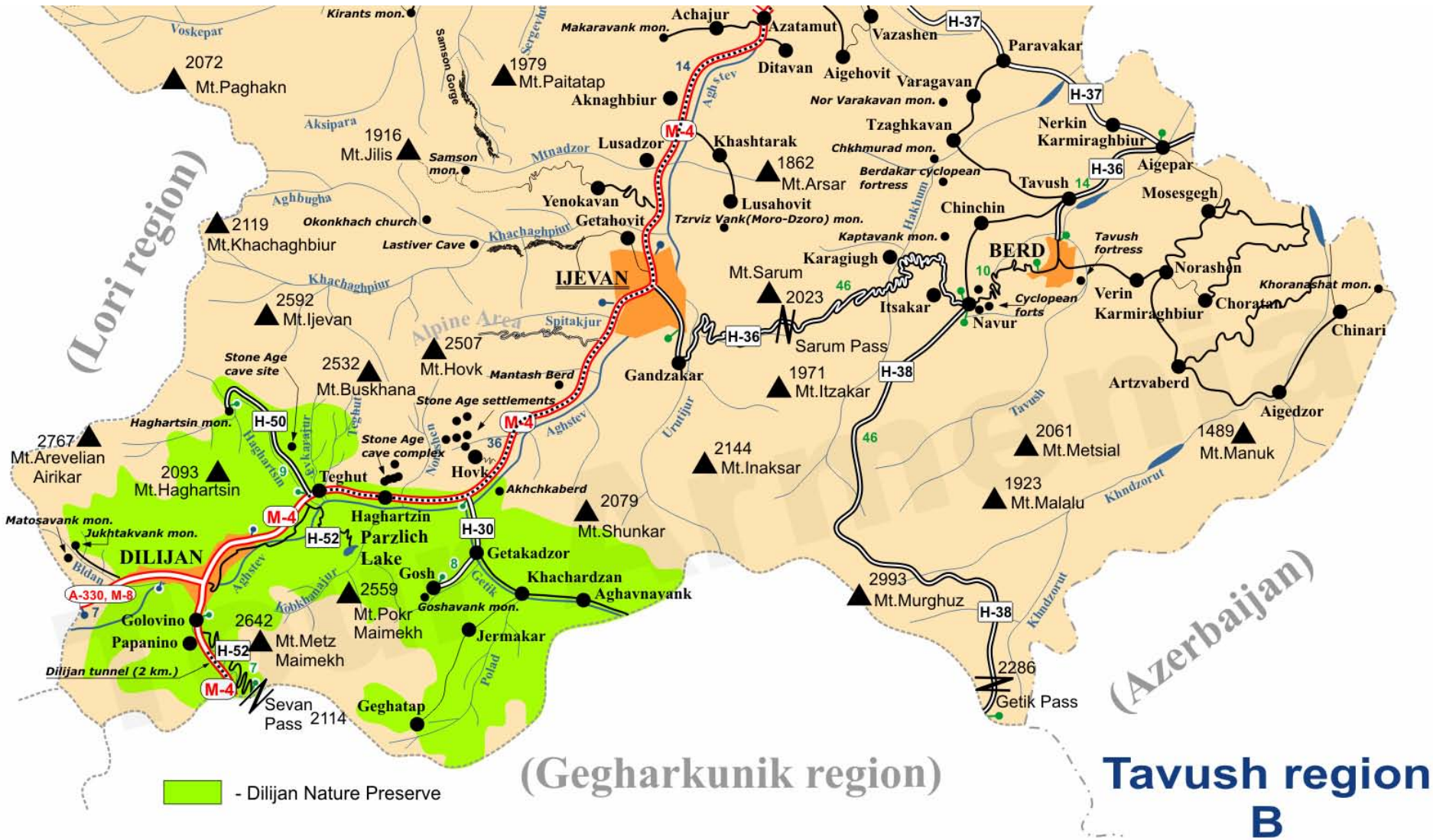
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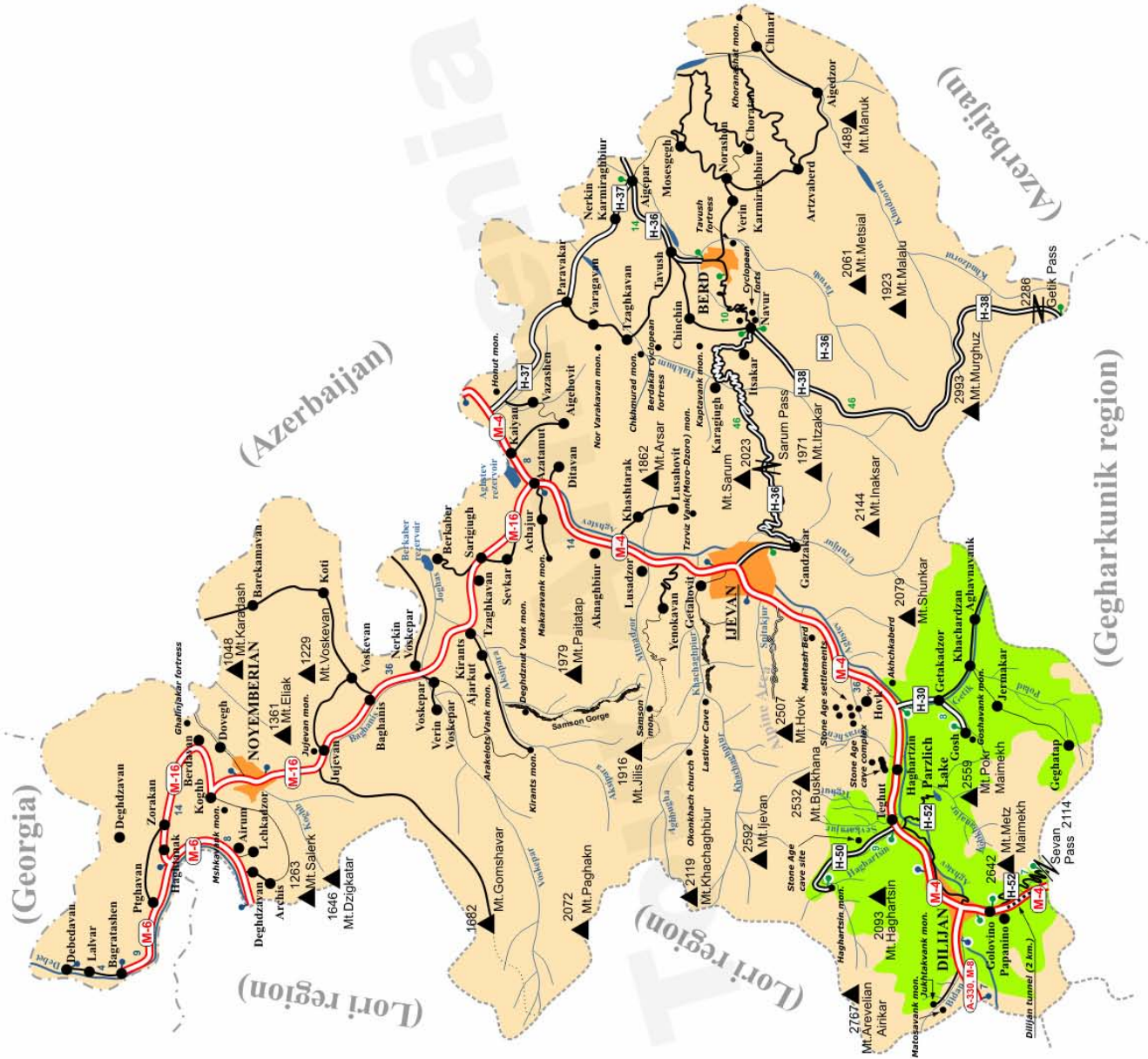
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