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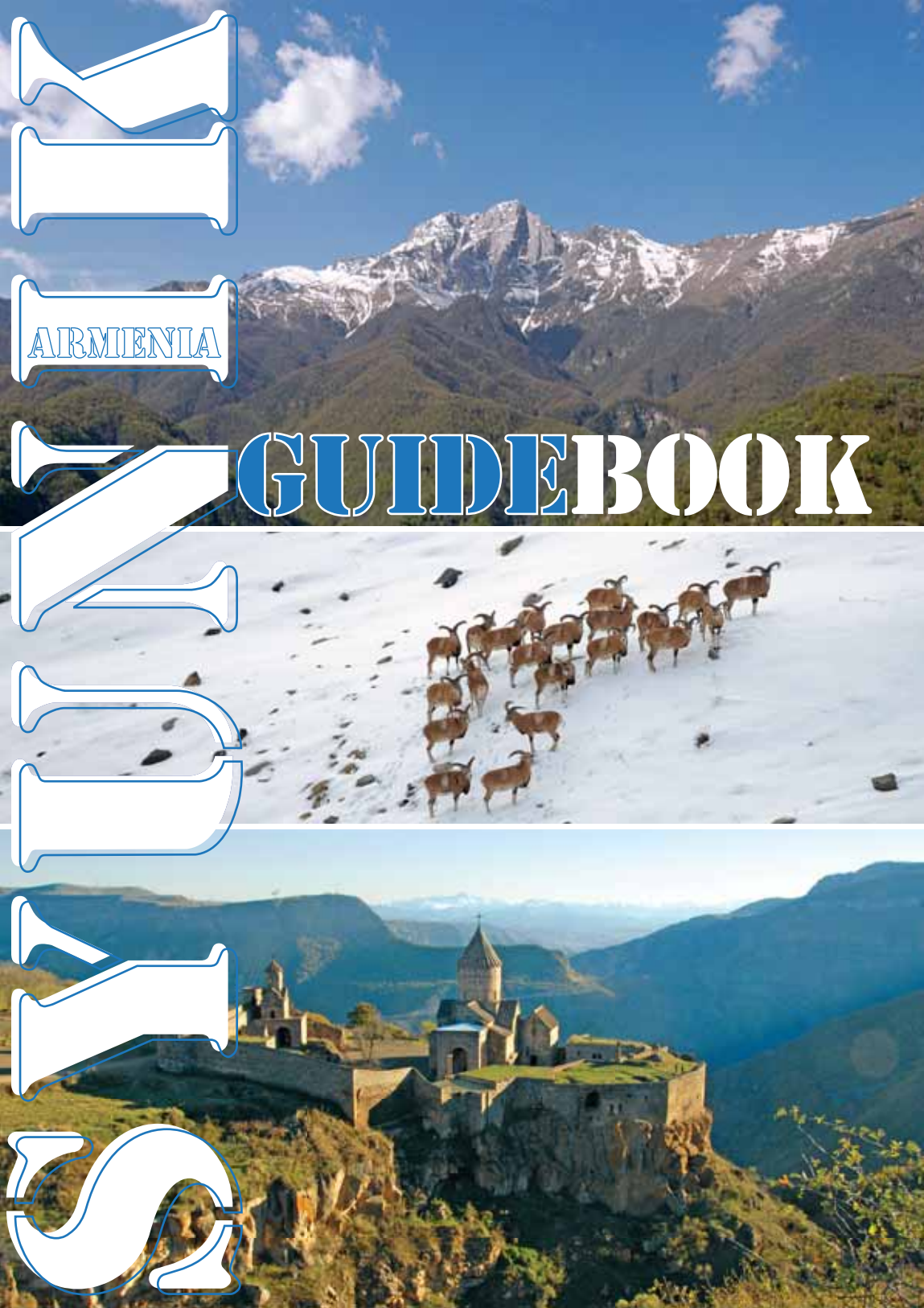
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GUIDEBOOK





USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

EDMC

Enterprise Development &
Market Competitiveness Project

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35/11 Tumanyan St. 0002 Yerevan, RA

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Organization for Security and
Co-operation in Europe
Office in Yerevan

Programme Implementation Presence in Syunik region

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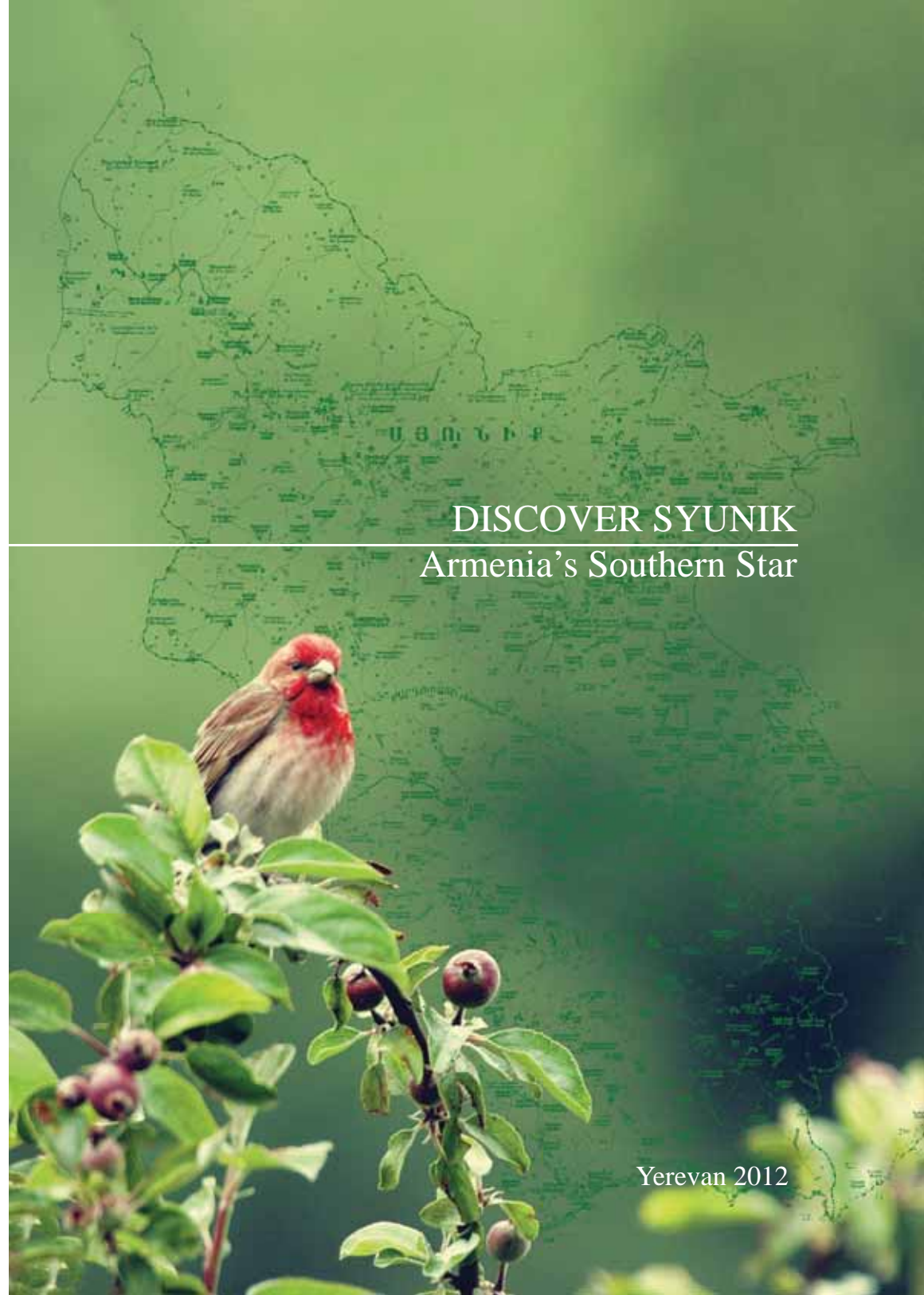
1/60 A. Manoukian Str., Kapan, Syunik, Armenia

Developed by USAID EDMC Project Short Term
Consultant Nadia Pasqual

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DISCOVER SYUNIK

Armenia's Southern Star



Yerevan 2012

Meet Syunik



Syunik Region is a magical place where Armenia's distinctive historical and cultural heritage blend with amazing natural scenery to offer unique travel experiences. In Syunik, 450 historical and cultural monuments and seven protected areas provide numerous destinations and activities to visitors. Wander in medieval monasteries overlooking breathtaking gorges, explore ancient fortresses towering above the Silk Road, hike among pristine forests in national reserves, or climb a mountain for an almost mystical adventure. You can simply enjoy open-air life and greenery with a walk to crystal-clear lakes or a picnic by a waterfall. And when you are done exploring, experience legendary Armenian hospitality with a home-stay to sample organic food and learn about local traditions and folklore.

The people of Syunik warmly welcome visitors, and will be glad to tell you stories about their beloved land. To start with, they will tell you why Syunik region (marz in Armenian) is also called "Zangezur," a name that dates back to the 18th century. At that time, a huge copper bell hung on the gates of Syunik border to clang if the enemy approached. A legend tells that one day the enemy intruded into the terrain, built a fire beneath the bell and melted it. When the attack started, the villagers ran to ring the bell, but found it destroyed. Instead of falling into despair, the valiant Syunik people shouted "The bell didn't ring," words that in Armenian sounds like "Zangezur." They then vowed: "We will survive without the bell".

Facts about Syunik

Syunik is the largest and most southerly of Armenia's ten regions. It covers about 4,500 sq.km and includes the districts of Sisian, Goris, Kapan and Meghri that are also the main urban centers. Kapan is the regional administrative center and hosts the regional government authority.

The region is known for its range of altitudes. The Zangezur mountain chain in the East includes four of Armenia's five highest peaks: Kaputjugh (3906m), Gazanasar (3856 m), Siskatar (3826 m) and Parakan (3825 m), whereas the lowest point is the Araks River (375 m) along the Iranian border in the South. Mount Khustup (3201 m) overlooking the town of Kapan is a favorite haunt of climbers and hikers. Tall conical rocks in Goris, the Devil's Bridge over the Vorotan River near Tatev, and Shaki Falls near Sisian, are among the region's most stunning natural attractions.



The main rivers are Araks, Vorotan, Voghji and Meghri, and the region is rich in natural springs and sources of mineral water.

Syunik includes all of Armenia's climatic zones creating a rich diversity of ecosystems: semi-deserts, dry steppes, forests, alpine and subalpine meadows and snowy zones. About 20% of Armenia's forests are located in Syunik and they cover most of the Southern part of the region.





A Glorious Past

Syunik has played an essential role in the formation of Armenian history and in the life of the independent Republic of Armenia, thanks to its endowment of gold, copper, and molybdenum. Distant from Armenia's centers of power, Syunik forged its own distinctive character, while the independent and brave spirit of Syunik's people were crucial in preserving Armenian national identity and local traditions over the centuries. Political and administrative power was wielded historically by local princes and noblemen, whereas religious power was held by local bishops. According to Stepanos Orbelyan, the 13th-century historiographer of the Syunik area - the people of Syunik province became the first Armenian Christians when in 59 AD the apostle Bartholomew preached in Baghik city, the ancient name of Kapan.

Many battles to free Armenia from the Persians and Ottomans were fought in this region during the 17th-19th centuries. Syunik's history is rife with heroes who fought against foreign invaders. In the 18th century general **Davit Bek** battled the Ottomans, and early in the 20th century **Garegin Nzhdeh** opposed the Soviet government and its plans to annex Syunik. At the end of the 20th century, Armenia again faced the threat of losing Zangezur during the Karabakh war, but once again the attempt was successfully resisted. Numerous historic and cultural monuments dotting the region will give visitors a chance to get familiar with Syunik's glorious past.

Kapan – Syunik's Star

Nowhere in Syunik is the heritage of liberation movements as rich as in Kapan and its surroundings. It is here that many battles led by David Bek and Garegin Nzhdeh took place, and Kapan symbolizes the history of the whole Syunik region. In 987 Kapan became the capital of the Syunik kingdom, until its invasion by Seljuk Turks in 1170. In the 18th century, Kapan became the center of Syunik national liberation movement headed by legendary hero David Bek, which repulsed the Ottoman army from the **Halidzor Fortress** in 1722-30. Early in the 19th century, Syunik and Kapan were divided between Russia and Persia over the Voghji River. Kapan fell under the Russian rule until after the collapse of Tzarist Russia in 1918-1920, when it again became the center for the Armenians' fight for independence. The Armenians, having narrowly escaped genocide

and exiled from their historical lands, were on the edge of annihilation. Yerevan was caught between the Turkish army on the one hand, and the advancing forces of the Red Army, quickly establishing its control in the Caucasus, on the other. Nevertheless, thanks to Garegin Nzhdeh and other patriots, Southern Syunik remained Armenian, firmly affirming its independence.

Eventually, however, the borders of Soviet Armenia encompassed also Syunik. During the 70-year Soviet rule, Kapan became a lively mining city and the major cultural center of the region. When Soviet Union collapsed, Kapan again appeared on the first line of the Armenian liberation war. In 1991, the Republic of Armenia won its desired independence, and in 1995 the Marz of Syunik was established with Kapan as its center.



A paradise for nature lovers – things to do

Syunik includes large protected natural areas that were established to preserve the region's environment and biodiversity. To nature lovers they are Syunik's most endearing attractions, offering an amazing natural scenery made of forested mountains, rock canyons and river gorges. They are located mostly in the South and include Shikahogh State Reserve, comprising Plane Grove Sanctuary; Zangezur State Sanctuary and Arevik National Park, and the Boghakar Reserve. Another protected area is Sev Lich Nature Reserve is to be found on Mount Mets Ishkhanasar (3550 m) in northern Syunik. Mount Khustup with its granite peaks overlooking Kapan town will also become a

reserve.

Ecotourism, rural tourism and nature tours are possible in the Shikahogh State Reserve, Zangezur State Sanctuary and Arevik National Park, where visitors can explore pristine nature along trails for hiking, cycling and horseback-riding, as well as by off-road cars along dirt roads leading to crystal-clear springs and mountain lakes. Lovers of bird watching and other wildlife observation will find their paradise on Earth here where they can spot indigenous and rare species of flora and fauna, while Syunik's mountainous terrain offers almost unlimited rock climbing options.



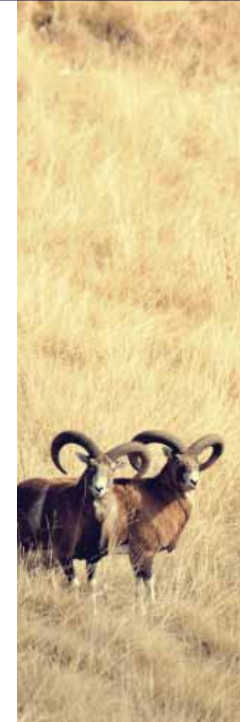
Shikahogh State Reserve

The reserve was established in 1958 to conserve, study and recover unique flora and fauna of the broadleaf forests on the northern slopes of the Meghri Ridge encompassed by the Tsav and Shikahogh rivers. The reserve covers about 29,500 ha, including Plane Grove Sanctuary, and comprises the Shikahogh and Mtnadzor districts. The adjoining villages are Chakaten, Shikahogh, Srashen, Tsav, Shishkert and Nerkin Hand. The Zangezur State Sanctuary is also managed out of the reserve.

Ranging in elevation from 700 m (Tsav riverside) up to over 2000 m (Meghri Ridge), Shikahogh abounds with small streams carrying their rapid waters to the Tsav River and its tributaries, the Shikahogh and Mazra. There are freshwater springs surrounded by swampy habitats. The foothills lower altitudes are covered by dense broadleaf forests that become subalpine meadows at higher altitudes. The reserve is characterized by heights of 1400-1800 m and slope declivities of 30-40 degrees, while parts of the Meghri Ridge feature steep rocky massifs protruding through the forests. Flora of higher plants numbers more than 1,000 species, 70 of which have been registered in the Red Book of Armenia, and 18 in the Red Book of the Soviet Union. Shikahogh is one of three places in the country where the common yew *Taxus baccata* species is still preserved. Fauna include several rare species of birds, reptiles and mammals that are named in the Red Data Book of Armenia, such as leopard, brown bear, bezoar goat, Armenian mouflon, snowcock, viper and hedgehog.

Mtnadzor is one of the last virgin forests that are left in the Caucasus, preserving a unique ecosystem. It is located in a deep canyon adjoining the Tsav village within the Shikahogh State Reserve. The name Mtnadzor means "dark canyon" and refers to the twilight that predominates in the forested gorge, where the sun only shines for a few hours a day due to the north-south orientation and the steep slopes (40 degree) of the canyon. The Mtnadzor forest was made famous by the writings of Armenian author Aysel Bakunts and the waterfall in Tsav gained notoriety because Armenia's former prime minister spent his holidays there.





Plane Grove Sanctuary

The Plane Grove Sanctuary (12,137 ha) is the biggest natural grove of the oriental plane (*Platanus Orientalis*) in the Caucasus comprising over a thousand trees ranging in age from 250 to 350 years, and a few reaching age of 1,000 years, as well as interesting species of flora and fauna. Enormous plane trees up to 45 m high stand along the Tsav River on an area about 10 km wide and 150 m long, adjoining the Nerkin Hand village to the west. According to tradition, plane trees were planted by travelers more than a thousand years ago and then proliferated into a large grove over the centuries. The grove located on the Silk Road, and served as a place for traders to get rest and refreshment. According to an old legend, Armenian King Ara Geghetsik and Babylonian Queen Shamiram trysted in this grove.

Zangezur State Sanctuary

Zangezur State Sanctuary (17,368 ha) is a protected area founded in 2009 and managed by the Shikahogh State Reserve. It spreads across the Zangezur Ridge and southern slopes of the Bargushat Ridge, and is bounded by the mining area of Kajaran mining town and the Meghri Ridge in the East. Fauna in Zangezur includes about 200 species of vertebrates, some of which are named in the Red Book of Armenia as endangered species. The Sanctuary is surrounded by the communities of Karut, Nor Astghaber, Ajabaj, Vocheti, Geghi, Kitsk, Verin, Geghavan, Lernadzor and Kajaran. It covers the basin of the Voghji headwaters and that of the left tributary Geghi along the canyons of the Bagurshat Ridge. Local villages have preserved the traditions and customs of rural Armenian lifestyle. It is a mountainous area with narrow and deep canyons, plateaus, high jagged ridge tops, rapid streams, waterfalls, highland lakes, springs, caves, rocks and screes. Hiking tours to Tsaghkar and Gogi Lakes are the most fascinating way to discover the sanctuary, and can be organized by contacting the Shikahogh State Reserve.



Arevik National Park

Arevik National Park, located in the Meghri district, was founded in 2009 and covers an area of 34,401 ha including **Boghakar Sanctuary**, founded in 1989. It was established to preserve the unique biodiversity of Meghri and Zangezur mountain ranges. Its purpose is to protect ecosystems that include broad leaf forest, juniper open woodlands, subalpine and alpine meadows, semi desert and mountain steppes, as well as conservation of natural and historical heritage sites and protection of indigenous rare and threatened flora and fauna species, such as the Caucasian leopard, bezoar goat, Armenian mouflon, brown bear, otter, Caspian snowcock, Caucasian black grouse, Armenian viper and others. It is the largest terrestrial protected area in Armenia, and is the habitat for more than 1,500 species of vascular plants including 24 registered in the Red Data Book of Armenia (RDBA) and 19 indigenous species, about 245 species of vertebrate animals including 49 registered in the RDBA and 12 on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red Data List.



Mount Khustup

Majestic Mount Khustup (3201 m) is a popular destination for hikers, trekkers and climbers located south of Kapan. The Vachagan river flows from the mountain across deep gorges amid breathtaking mountain scenery. The mountain, which will become a protected nature area soon, offers hiking routes of different degrees of difficulty, all leading to the granite peaks of the top and requiring physical strength and training. The route classification below is informal and since there are no road signs, you should not try them without an experienced guide.

1. Easy way. Cross Baghaburj village by car, and you will pass 70% of the upward pathway. The rest (about 5 km) should be crossed on foot, and some difficult sections on horseback.
2. Not difficult. This pathway leads through the left side of the mountain, starting from

Vachagan village, crossing over the river and forests. From there it takes 4-6 hours to reach to the granite rock of Khustup and its peak.

3. More difficult. Go by car from Vachagan to the Koulu ancient settlement, followed by a 6-hour walk to the peak of Khustup, through Tuli-Kar and Khachi-Khut.

Very difficult. This pathway begins from the village of Vachagan, leads to the Koulu ancient settlement, up to Kamhar Mountain through two fields known as Nerqin and Verin Yurd. Kamhar Mountain Kamhar Khustup from the right side and leads upwards. It is possible to travel either on foot or on horseback. The ascent takes 6-7 hours.

5. Most difficult. Through Vachagan village to the river, then go up by the Vordzaki hill, then up to the peak of Khustup. Almost 100% of the road is an uphill incline, traversable in 6-7 hours.



Rural tourism and ecotourism

Rural tourism and ecotourism are among the most interesting ways to explore Syunik and its protected nature areas while fostering local community's development. A range of small hotels and guesthouses in the larger urban centers cater to the needs of the most demanding visitors, while a home stay in a village offers the chance of experiencing the local way of life and traditions.

Shikahogh State Reserve organizes tours for individuals and small groups of up to five in the Mtnadzor area, and up to ten elsewhere in the reserve and Plane Grove Sanctuary. The peak period runs from June to October. There are currently five different routes, most of which are suitable for hiking and horseback riding, off-road vehicles being allowed only within prescribed areas. Daily tours include visits to the main natural and historical sites at the villages within the Reserve. Overnight stays inside the reserve and sanctuary are not allowed but can be arranged in the local villages that also hold tourist attractions such as traditional livelihoods, ancient churches and buildings. Lodging is available at the Shikahogh State Reserve visitors center.

Hovik Nourijanyan organizes expeditions to Khustup from Vachagan village and can provide guides, horses or mules, food, and everything else needed for a one-day expedition. They can also organize seven-day expeditions. Overnight stays can be arranged at Hovik's B&B in Vachagan village or outdoors--up to 20 tents can be provided and set up in Koulu, on the bank of Vachagan River.

The NGO Women's Resource Centers located in Goris, Kapan and Meghri are another way to connect with local communities and foster sustainable rural development. These centers provide tourist information, organize tours to local attractions, and sell high quality handicrafts, carpets, souvenirs and arts produced by local women. Tours to workshops of local artists and artisans can be arranged.

www.syunikwrc.net - www.homelandhandicrafts.org (?)

Tourist attractions – what to see

Northern Syunik – Sisian and Goris

In Northern Syunik the most popular tourist attractions are near **Sisian** and **Goris**, two pleasant towns offering a range of accommodation establishments and restaurants. After entering the Gates of Syunik at the Vorotan Pass (2344 m) the Spandarian Reservoir is a well visible landmark, blue waters stretching for 7 km amid beautiful mountain scenery. Before getting to Sisian, **Shaki Falls** is a nice stop in a green river valley. The 18-meter-high waterfall flow is at its peak when it is - not being diverted to feed a nearby hydroelectric plant, but the falls are imposing anytime. Bathing and swimming in the hollows at the waterfall's base is very refreshing of a hot Armenian summer day.

Sisian is a small pleasant town ranging north and south of the Vorotan River. Offering several inns and restaurants, it is a good starting point to explore Northwestern Syunik. In town you should not miss **Sisavank** – the 7th-century church is one of the earliest and best-preserved examples of the typical Armenian church style with domed cruciform shape. The small **Adonts Sisian History Museum** in the center has a fascinating outdoor collection of petroglyphs carved with different animal shapes, as well as other stone works such as capitals, carvings and khachkars (cross stones), from the Bronze to the Medieval Ages. Three rooms exhibit

archaeological artifacts including vases, pots and jewelry, carpets, furniture and photos, many of the items dating back to the Bronze Age.

Located just three km north of Sisian, off the main highway leading to Goris, is **Karahunge**, known as Armenia's Stonehenge, one of Syunik's main attractions. This prehistoric astronomical observatory is made up of 204 basalt stones placed vertically in a circular shape. Some have holes near the top with a variety of shapes. Precise dating is difficult, but the site is certainly more than 5,000 years old. Some studies even claim that Karahunge is older than Stonehenge, and dates back 7,000-7,500 years.

From Sisian an interesting half or full day excursion can be organized to **Ughtasar Petroglyph Field**, which is located at 3,300 m and can be reached only by special four-wheel car. From Ishkhanasar village, Mount Ughtasar can be reached following car tracks, which can be barely visible at times, for 15 km up to an altitude of 3,000 m. You then need to walk the remaining 500 m to the petroglyph field. The trip can be undertaken only in July and August, during good weather conditions. An experienced driver and guide are necessary to reach the site, and explain the most interesting



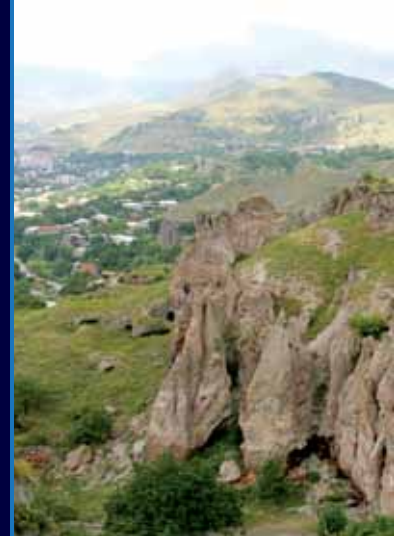
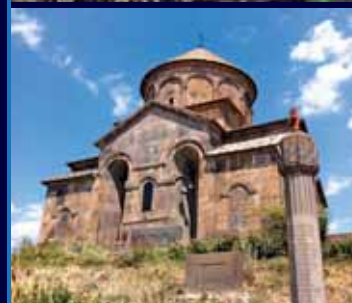
designs. The place is enchanting--more than 2,000 rocks carved with different designs, dating to between 12,000 and 4000 BC, are scattered around in an area set amid mountain crests and small glacier lakes. Most of the designs represent animals, human beings and symbols.

From Sisian, follow the impressive **Vorotan River** gorge to the southeast, and find a peculiar 7th-century funerary monument in **Aghitu**. Little is known about this mysterious and unusual two-tier structure supported by columns mounted on an arched base. Further along the same route, about 9 km from Sisian, **Vorotnavank monastery** rises on the edge of the impressive Vorotan Gorge surrounded by magnificent scenery of rocky mountains. The monastery complex, founded in 1,000 AD by Queen Shahanduk, was restored recently, and its fortified wall encircles two churches, several service buildings and gravestones. About 4 km from the monastery the notable 19th-century "Melik Tangi" bridge leads to **Shamb Hot Springs** where locals enjoy bathing in a large pool of natural hot spring water. South of Sisian, along the Sisian River, a panoramic road and a nice walk lead you to the ruins of **Tanahat Monastery**, located across the river, comprising a 5th-century church and a cemetery.

Goris (32 km east of Sisian) is an old town of 25,000 characterized by the regionally representative architecture of the houses and its long tree-lined avenues. Tall conical rock formations--some of which host cave dwellings--surround the basin where the town was founded in 1870. Goris has several interesting museums, such as the **Aksel House Museum**, commemorating an Armenian author, the **Goris City Gallery** displaying works of Armenian painters and artists from different regions, and the **Archaeological Museum** housing more than 500 exhibits including bronze weapons, jewels, household items, metal and stone works.

Tatev Monastery, located 30 km south of Goris on an imposing rock spur protruding over the Vorotan River Gorge, is Syunik's wonder. On the road to the monastery along the Vorotan River, a stop at the **Devil's Bridge** natural formation is a must. Next to the rock bridge, hot and fresh water springs formed colorful pools, waterfalls, caves and stalactites. The site is protected by WWF, and is a popular picnic spot. A quick way to return is by the "**Wings of Tatev**" cableway connecting the monastery to Halldzor village. It is the longest reversible aerial tramway (5.7 km) built in one section, and it appeared in the **Guinness World Records Book** as soon as it opened in 2010. The Tatev fortified monastery complex, founded in 9th century, was Syunik's religious and cultural center. It comprises several churches and service buildings that hosted hundreds of monks and scholars. The medieval oil mill called "Dzit-han" was restored recently, and includes a seed grinder and panels explaining the process of oil pressing. The picturesque monument located in the monastery yard is called Gavazan and it is an ingenious piece of engineering dating back to 904 AD. It is formed by an 8-meter pillar built with overlaying stones, surmounted by a khachkar (cross stone). It would oscillate in case of an earthquake or an enemy army approaching, and then return to its standing position.

Don't miss the **Old Khndzoresk cave village** (Hin Khndzoresk) about 19 km east of Goris, an ancient settlement with thousands of cave dwellings located near the deep Khndzoresk valley. In June 2012 a 160-meter-long metal **swinging bridge** was opened to provide easy access to the village. The bridge rises 63 meters high above the river and offers breathtaking views over the gorge adding to the adventure of exploring this amazing place. Most of the caves were carved in the late Iron to medieval period, but the village continued to grow until the 19th century. In 1913, 3,000 families still lived in cave dwellings and some of



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ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD

BASEN HOTEL & RESTAURANT

9 A. Manukyan Str., Sisian
 Tel. 0283 05264

DINA HOTEL

35 Sisakan Str., Sisian
 Tel. 0283 03330
 E-mail: sisiano@mail.ru
 www.dinahotel.am

LALANER HOTEL & RESTAURANT

29 Sisakan Str., Sisian
 Tel. 0283 26600 / 2560
 E-mail: info@lalahotel.am
 www.lalahotel.am

OAZIS HOTEL & RESTAURANT

Shaqi-Sisian Highway
 Tel. 077787870, 093226677

ZORATS KARER B&B

29b Nelson Stepanyan Str., Sisian
 Tel. 0283 04242, 093 988809, 055 988800

E-mail:
 suren@tourism-sisian.com
 www.tourism-sisian.com

QARAHUNJ B&B

Ishkhanasar village, 1 bld., Sisian
 Tel. 093 847704










JRAHARS RESTAURANT

Israyelyan Bridge, Sisian
 Tel. 094866808

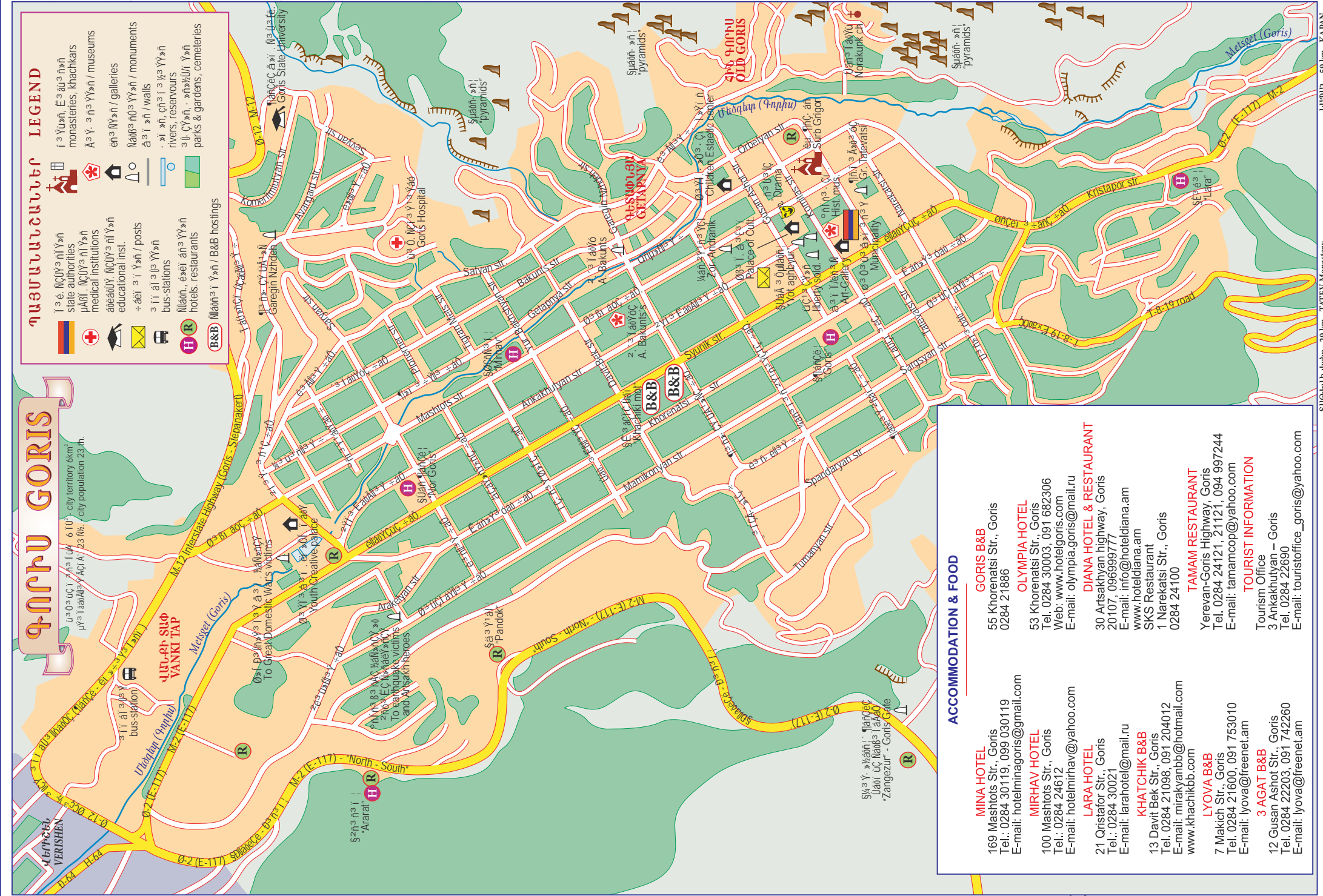
KANTEGH RESTAURANT

1a, Israyelyan Str., Sisian
 Tel. 055111193, 0283 26447

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|  | Ինքնիշխանության հանրություններ / state authorities |  | Եկեղեցիներ / monasteries, khachkars |
|  | Բժշկական հաստատություններ / medical institutions |  | Պատմամշակութային հուշարձաններ / museums |
|  | Երևանի ինքնիշխանության հանրություն / educational inst. |  | Երևանի պալատներ / galleries |
|  | Փոստային տարածքներ / posts |  | Պատմամշակութային հուշարձաններ / monuments |
|  | Ճանապարհային կայաններ / bus-stations |  | Ճեղքվածքներ / walls |
|  | Հյուրանոցներ / hotels, restaurants |  | Ստորջրյալներ, լճեր / rivers, reservoirs |
|  | Հյուրանոցային տներ / B&B hostings |  | Պարկեր և այգիներ, գերեզմանատեղեր / parks & gardens, cemeteries |





ACCOMMODATION & FOOD

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E-mail: hotelmirhav@yahoo.com
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E-mail: larahotel@mail.ru
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www.khachikbb.com
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Tel.: 0284 21600, 091 753010
E-mail: lyova@freenet.am
- 3 AGAT B&B**
12 Gusan Ashot Str., Goris
Tel.: 0284 22203, 091 742260
E-mail: lyova@freenet.am

- GORIS B&B**
55 Khorenatsi Str., Goris
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53 Khorenatsi Str., Goris
Tel. 0284 30003, 091 682306
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- DIANA HOTEL & RESTAURANT**
30 Artsakhyan highway, Goris
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www.hoteldiana.am
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0284 24100
- TAMAM RESTAURANT**
Yerevan-Goris Highway, Goris
Tel. 0284 24121, 21121, 094 997244
E-mail: tamamcop@yahoo.com
- TOURIST INFORMATION**
Tourism Office
3 Ankakhtyan – Goris
Tel. 0284 22690
E-mail: touristoffice_goris@yahoo.com



Bgheno-Noravank is a monastery located in the forest about 16 km south of Goris, and 3.5 km from the M2 highway leading to Kapan, just off the village road to Bardzavan. Founded in the 10th century, Bgheno Noravank became one of Syunik's most important religious and cultural sites. It was a summer residence for Syunik's bishops and an important university in medieval Armenia. Thousand of precious miniatures were produced in its scriptorium (writing room for scribes), but most of them were destroyed during raids by the Seljuks and Mongols. One of the manuscripts that survived is the famous Echmiadzin Gospel that was completed in Bgheno Noravank in 989 and is now exhibited at the Matenadaran Institute of Manuscripts in Yerevan. The monastery was abandoned in the 14th century, and rediscovered in the 1920s by writer Axel Bakunts. What can be seen today is a small basalt church of 1062 that was reconstructed and shows elaborate biblical reliefs and other geometric carving. Some khatchkars (cross stones), two of which display extraordinary human figures, as well as foundations and ruins of other buildings can be seen next to the church. Outside the monastery are a picnic table and a fresh water spring that makes this a nice camping place.

Yeritsavank is a 6th-century monastery located about 3 km NE of Artsavanik village (Artsin meaning eagle), off the M2 Highway Goris-Kapan. The complex consists of remains of the outer wall, the 6th-century S. Stepanos Nakhav'ka church, and foundations of monk cells and service buildings. The monastery is named after Yeritsak, a hermit who was later appointed bishop of Syunik in the mid 6th-century. He built the monastery as a hermitage and place of prayer, but it soon became a popular religious center in the early Syunik kingdom. Today the single-nave church with a vaulted ceiling can still be seen although it is poorly preserved. The plain overlooking Mount Khustup offers astonishing views of the valley. Within walking distance from the church, in the forest, there is a quaint picnic area with a roofed hall, tables and benches that also serves well for camping. The road to Arsavanik village is not marked (you need to take a turn right from the main road from Kapan but no signs), bumpy and in bad condition. From the village to Yeritsavank is a dirt road crossing meadows takes to the ruins. About 1 km west from the church are other ruins, but they are also unmarked. Ask locals to point them out to you.



them did not leave until the 1980s, when they finally moved to a new village in the higher plain. Some of the caves were elaborately carved from the limestone to create decorations including suites of rooms including front rooms, windows, porches and gardens. The houses formed an ingenious defense system with interconnected tunnels and trap doors that allowed villagers to escape to lower caves and the valley floor in case of enemy attack. The area comprises about 1,800 cave dwellings, some of which are still used as barns. Among the spots that should not be missed are the 4th-century St. Tadevos cave church, St. Hripsimeh church, located on the valley floor close to a spring, and the roofless Anapat (Hermitage) church. The Spring Cave is a sacred place where spring water is collected in basins.



Southern Syunik – Kapan and Meghri

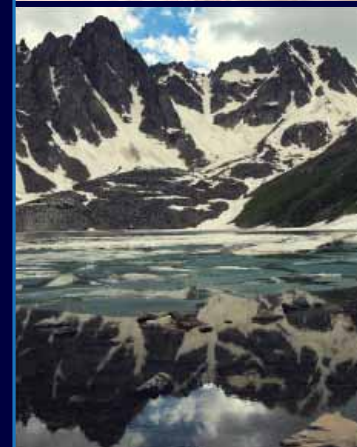
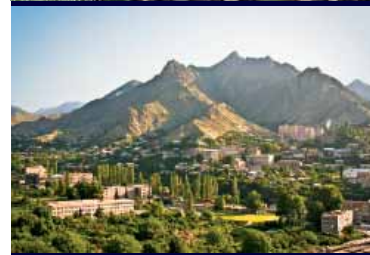
Kapan is the Syunik regional center and a lively town on the Voghji River. The mining industry is bustling there, and the city offers a good range of accommodations, restaurants and shopping opportunities. Thanks to its location in the center of Southern Syunik, Kapan is the ideal starting point for daily excursions to Mount Khustup, Shikahogh State Reserve, Zangezur Sanctuary, Arevik National Park and Meghri. A walk along the riverbank is a good way to observe its rapid waters and plunge into city life. From the tree-lined central park visitors can enjoy an astonishing view of Vachagan River flowing down from Mount Khustup (3201 m) that overlooks Kapan before merging with the Voghji River. National hero Davit Bek's statue representing a horseman with a sword and rising high next to the crossroads in the center of town is one of the local landmarks, and proclaims Kapan's leading role in the liberation movement. **Baghaburj Memorial Complex**, located 200m south of Kapan and built in 1970-1990, is composed of four monuments dedicated to the Great Genocide, the victims of the Karabakh war, an unknown soldier and the victims and soldiers of WWII. The **Garegin Nzhdeh Memorial Complex** is located in the northwestern part of Kapan and is the tombstone of the general who freed Kapan, Goris and Sisian from the Russian Army in 1920, ensuring that Syunik remained part of Armenia.

A few small but interesting museums in Kapan are worth visiting to learn about local history and traditions. Kapan Archaeological museum features local history and traditions of Kapan district and Syunik Marz from the 9th century to the 20th century. The collection includes

about 14,000 items such as documents, photographs, pictures, letters, old books, memoirs, musical instruments and ancient radio equipment relating to Kapan's people and places. The museum complex includes a building across the inner garden that will become an ethnographic museum to re-create a household and the way of life of locals in the 19th century. The open-air collection includes stone works, such as khachkars (cross stones), graves, burial stones, and large vases exhibited in the museum inner courtyard. Next to the city hall the local branch of **Yerevan Contemporary Arts Museum** periodically organizes exhibitions and has a permanent exposition of canvases and sculptures of contemporary artists.

Photos on most important events, monuments, weapons used during the Second World War, as well as crude stones, antiquities and murals covering more than 200 years of the history of Kapan are exhibited at the **Shumavon Movsisyan History Museum**.

The Halidzor Berd (Fortress) is a fortified complex located on top of a hill by the Voghji River overlooking Kapan. It was built in the 17th century in the place of a medieval convent. The fortress became known as the headquarters of Davit Bek, the famous Armenian freedom fighter who led legendary battles against the Ottomans in the 1720s. Davit Bek eventually died of an illness at this fortress in 1728, but no one knows where his body was buried. The Halidzor Berd complex includes service buildings, a church and fortified walls. It was restored recently, and can be accessed on foot (500 m) or by car along a bumpy steep dirt road.



ACCOMMODATION & FOOD

LERNAGORTS HOTEL & REST.

2 Demiryan Str. – Kapan
Tel. 0285 28039, 077 387867
E-mail: mimaxhotel@rambler.ru

DARIST HOTEL & REST.

A Manukyan Str. 1/1 – Kapan
Tel. 0285 28232

DIAN HOTEL

Gortsaranain 3 – Kapan
Tel. 0285 20120, 098 886040
E-mail: dianhotel@gmail.com

MI & MAX HOTEL

8-9 floors, 2 Demiryan Str. – Kapan
Tel. 0285 20300, 091 192484
E-mail: mimaxhotel@rambler.ru

HOVIK NURIJANYAN B&B

Vachagan Village – Kapan
Tel. 0285 24809, 093 887146

ALEK B&B

2 Vahanavank district – Kapan
Tel. 094 602802

ROBERT B&B

A. Manukyan Str. 5/22 – Kapan
Tel. 093 831970
E-mail: armrobert2006@yahoo.com

ԿԱՊԱՆ KAPAN

Մարզիկական տարածք 27 կմ² - city territory 27km²
Կապանի բնակչությունը 46 հազ. - city population 46 th.

ԿԱՊԱՆ՝ շրջակայք

KAPAN Surrounding

ԿԱՊԱՆ - 27 կմ - ԿԱՅԱՐԱՆ

ԿԱՊԱՆ - 0.5 կմ - ՏԱՐԱԽԱՐՏԻ ԲԼՈԿ

ԲԱԳԽԱՅՐԻ ԲԼՈԿ - 2 կմ - ԲԱԳԽԱՅՐԻ ԲԼՈԿ

ԲԱԳԽԱՅՐԻ ԲԼՈԿ - 2 կմ - ԲԱԳԽԱՅՐԻ ԲԼՈԿ

ՄԵԳՐԻ - 92 կմ - ՄԵԳՐԻ

ԿԱՊԱՆ - 66 կմ - ԳՈՐԻՍԻ ԵՐԵՎԱՆ - 302 կմ - ԵՐԵՎԱՆ

ACCOMMODATION & FOOD

ELEGANT CAFE & REST.

Shahumyan Str. 32/1 – Kapan
Tel. 0285 21505

PRINCE RESTAURANT

Shahumyan Str., Kapan
Tel. 094 095707

HAYRAPETYAN EGHBAYRNER CAFE & REST.

Lernagortsneri Str. 3/5 – Kapan
Tel. 0285 23999

SHIKAHOGH STATE RESERVE VISITORS CENTER

Shikahogh village
Tel. 0285 60655
E-mail: office@shikahogh.am
www.shikahogh.am

QARAVAN RESTAURANT

Kapan-Qajaran Highway, Kapan
Tel. 077 114141

ՊԱՅՄԱՆԱՆԱՆՆԵՐ LEGEND

- | | | | |
|--|-------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| | Ի Ե. ՌԱՍԻԱՆԻ | | Մոնաստիրներ, քաղաքներ |
| | ԲՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԿԵՆՏՐՈՆԵՐ | | Պատմության թանգարաններ |
| | ԲՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԿԵՆՏՐՈՆԵՐ | | Գեղարվեստական թանգարաններ |
| | Փոստային օբյեկտներ | | Պատմության հուշարձաններ |
| | Բուսային կայաններ | | Պատեր / Գծեր |
| | Հյուրանոցներ | | Պարկեր, այգիներ, գերեզմանատեղեր |
| | Բնակարանային հիմնարկներ | | |

ՆԵՐԿԻՆ ՎԱԾԻՐԱՆ

ՇԱՀՈՒՄՅԱՆ

ՀՂՈՐԱ

ՊԱՐԱՎԱՏՈՒՄ



The Baghaberd Fortress is located near the Andokavan village. The building is connected to Baghak, grandchild of Sisak, a prince of 1700 BC who according to legend is an ancestor of the Syunik progeny. The impressive castle had double walls, of which some 8m-high towers and other ruins remain. In 1103, after the destruction of Kapan city, Baghaberd became the capital of the Syunik kingdom, and thousands of manuscripts were brought to the Fortress from different monasteries, including Tatev, to protect them from invaders. However, during the invasion by the Seljuk Turks in 1170, 10,000 books were either stolen from Baghaberd or destroyed by the Seljuks.

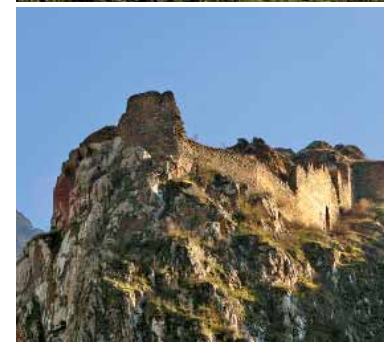
The Vahanavank Monastery is located 6 km west of Kapan. It was the religious center for the kings of Syunik. The monastery was founded in 911 by Vahan, son of Prince Gagik of Kapan who built the church and dedicated it to S. Grigor Lusavorich, whose gavit (entrance hall) on the western wall was added in 1046. His nephew Vahan II became Bishop of Syunik, and then of Catholicos. Queen Shahandukht commissioned the S. Astvatsatsin church, where she and her family are buried. The monastery included several service buildings but suffered several raids until it was totally ruined and abandoned in the mid 14th century. The area around Vahanavank was the setting of Syunik's liberation and independence movements from the 18th century, but the ruins were not excavated until the mid 20th century.

Kajaran, located on the M2 highway from Kapan to Meghri, is known as the site of a large molybdenum mine. From here a dirt road leads to Zangezur State Sanctuary and Boghakar Reserve, where excursions and treks can be organized by contacting Shikahogh State Reserve that manages the Sanctuary as well.

Meghri is an ancient settlement located about 6 km from the Armenian-Iranian border. Meghri can be reached by the M2 highway passing through Kajaran and the highest mountain pass in Armenia, the Kajaran Pass (2535 m). A new highway, opened in 2007, connects Kapan to Meghri through the villages of Shikahogh, Tsav and Shvanidzor and it is often the only road option in winter, when the Kajaran Pass is snowbound. Meghri is a pleasant and characteristic town of the region that preserves ancient traditions and folklore. There are more than 65 historic-cultural monuments in Meghri, 17 of which are in Meghri town including churches, fortresses, bridges and memorials. Houses in Meghri include historic quarters, such as Pokr Tagh (Old city), and many still preserve the local traditional architectural style with arched gates, wooden balconies and inner walled gardens. **Meghri Fortress** overlooks the town center and the entire valley with four circular and rectangular towers and fortified walls dating back to the 12th Century. It was one of the most effective defensive structures in Armenia, and served as liberation fighter David Bek's stronghold in the fight against the Turkish army in the 1720s. In the town center, the **Astvatsatsin Church** is a 17th-century building with interesting 19th-century frescoes showing scenes from the Bible, apostles and saints. The area around Meghri and Agarak, the closest village to the Iranian border, is known for the tropical climate with very hot summers and mild winters. The tasty and sweet fruits growing in local orchards and courtyards of stone brick houses are famous all over Armenia.

Karchevan, located just a few km west of Meghri and north of Agarak, is considered the oldest village in the Meghri region. Here the first school of the region was opened in 1873,

and the church dedicated to the Holy Mother of God was built in 1230. **Shvanidzor** village, located east of Meghri on the M17 road to Kapan, stands out for its picturesque location, valuable buildings and an aqueduct dating back to the 17th-century that still operates. Houses in the village have elaborate columned balconies overlooking the slope, and the village is known for its delicious wine. Another interesting village is **Malev** that was abandoned some years ago by all inhabitants except for an elderly couple who still live in this strange and silent place.



Էկո երթուղիներ

Շիկահող - գեղձու պուրակ

Սրաշեն - Ներքին Հանդ - սոճու պուրակ

Ծավ - ջրվեժ - Կեմանց գյուղատեղի

Ծավ - Կաջուր վայր - Մասրիկ գյուղատեղի

Ծավ - Սանալու գյուղատեղի - Մթնաձորի անտառ

1

Shikahogh Village - Yew Grove

2

Srashen Village - Nerkin Hand Village - Plane Grove Sanctuary

3

Tzav Village - Waterfall - Ruins of Kemants Settlement

4

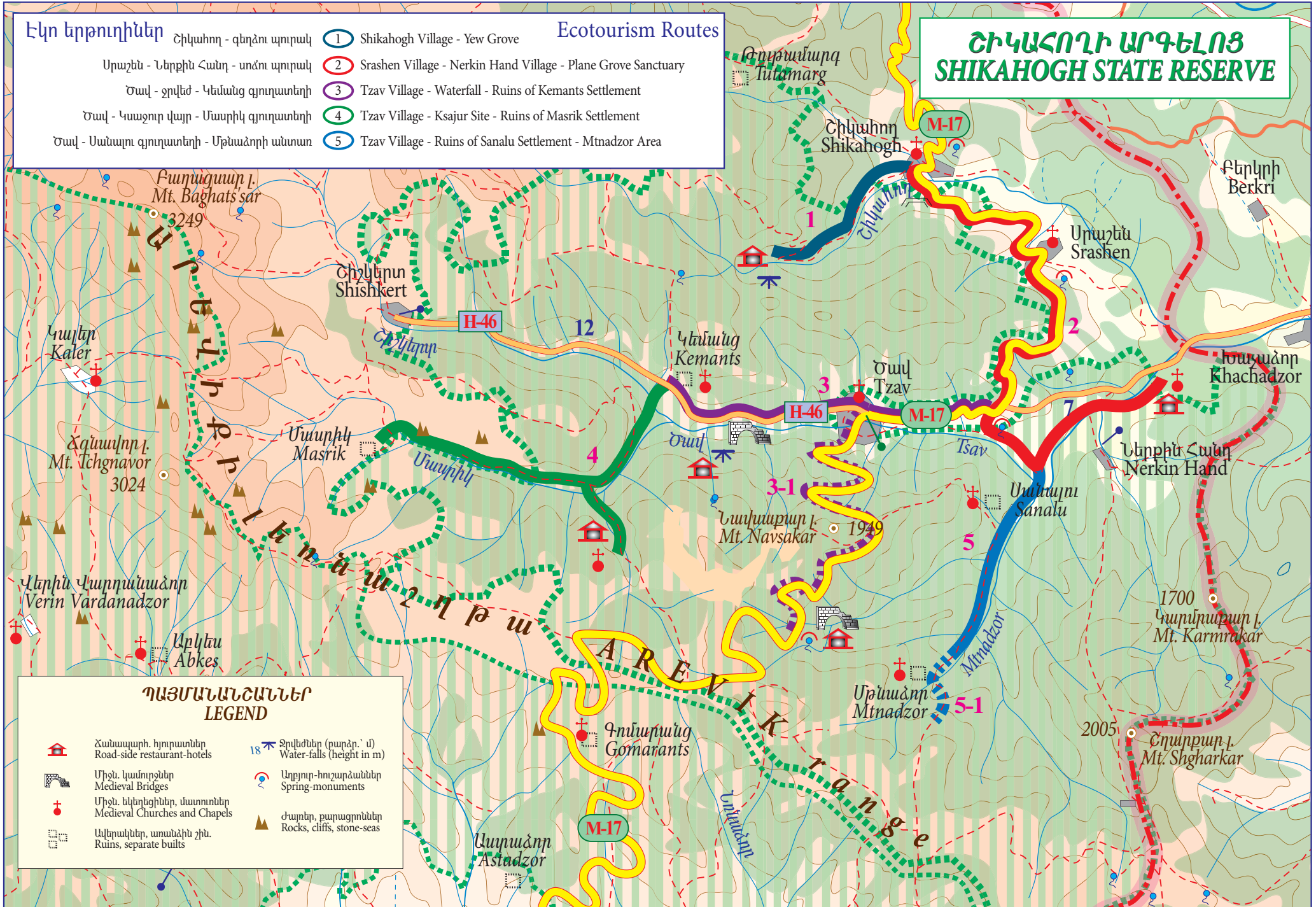
Tzav Village - Ksajur Site - Ruins of Masrik Settlement

5

Tzav Village - Ruins of Sanalu Settlement - Mtnadzor Area

Ecotourism Routes

ՇԻԿԱՏՈՂԻ ԱՐԳԵԼՈՅ SHIKAHOGH STATE RESERVE



ՊԱՅՄԱՆԱՆՇԱՆՆԵՐ LEGEND



Հանապարհ. հյուրատներ
Road-side restaurant-hotels



Միջն. կամուրջներ
Medieval Bridges



Միջն. եկեղեցիներ, մատուռներ
Medieval Churches and Chapels



Ավերակներ, առանձին շին.
Ruins, separate built



Ջրվեժներ (բարձր.՝ մ)
Water-falls (height in m)



Աղբյուր-հուշարձաններ
Spring-monuments



Ժայռեր, քարացրոններ
Rocks, cliffs, stone-seas

