

**Karabokh**  
*a hidden treasure*



# Nikol Duman

House Museum & Ethnographic District



**MOUNTAINOUS  
KARABAKH**



# Nikol Duman

House Museum & Ethnographic District





The **Nikol Duman House Museum and Ethnographic District** are located in the picturesque village of Tsaghkashat (Ghshlagh) along the main road between Stepanakert and Gandzasar, roughly 22 kilometers past Stepanakert, which has been largely restored to recreate 19th century village life in the Askeran Region. Tsaghkashat is a quaint village of roughly 200 indigenous inhabitants who are mainly occupied with cattle breeding and wheat farming. The age-old tradition of wine-making is also being revived in the village.

Tsaghkashat is surrounded by many historical monuments, including the ruins of Vaka Monastery. The village cemetery is home to a number of wonderfully ornamented *khachkars* (cross-stones) carved by the old masters.

Nikol Duman (Nikoghayos Ter-Hovhannisyan) was born on January 12, 1867 in the village of Tsaghkashat. He was an agent of the Armenian national liberation movement and a member of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation. He graduated from the Regional School of Shushi in 1887 and went on to become a teacher at several Armenian schools in the Southern Caucasus.

Between 1894 and 1896, while teaching at the Armenian schools of Tabriz and Salmast (Iran), he participated in important battles that were fought in the region, which earned him the nickname Duman (storm). During the Armenian-Tatar clashes of 1905-06, he led the Armenian defense forces of Baku, the entire Yerevan State and the Ararat Valley.

Duman was not able to participate in the Armenian resistance movement that began in 1914 due to a severe illness, and a true freedom fighter at heart, he was not able to cope with the feeling of idleness. He took his own life on September 27, 1914.

The museum is set in the house where Nikol Duman, the revered Armenian freedom fighter, was born. This beautiful two-story 19th century home, adorned with an intricately carved wooden balcony, has been fully restored in keeping with its original architectural design.

The main room is dedicated to the life and work of Nikol Duman. Maps, diagrams, guns and other military equipment are on display, shedding light onto the clashes between Armenians and Tatar-Turks in the 19th and early 20 centuries in Baku, Yerevan, Nakhichevan and other major Armenian centers.



ABOVE

It is said that during the battle to defend Derik Monastery, one of 3 Armenian monasteries in Northern Iran, Duman and his battalion were facing sure defeat. Then, in a storm-like fashion, as if rising from the dead, Duman charged the enemy and won the battle. This is how he earned the nickname Duman, which means “storm”.





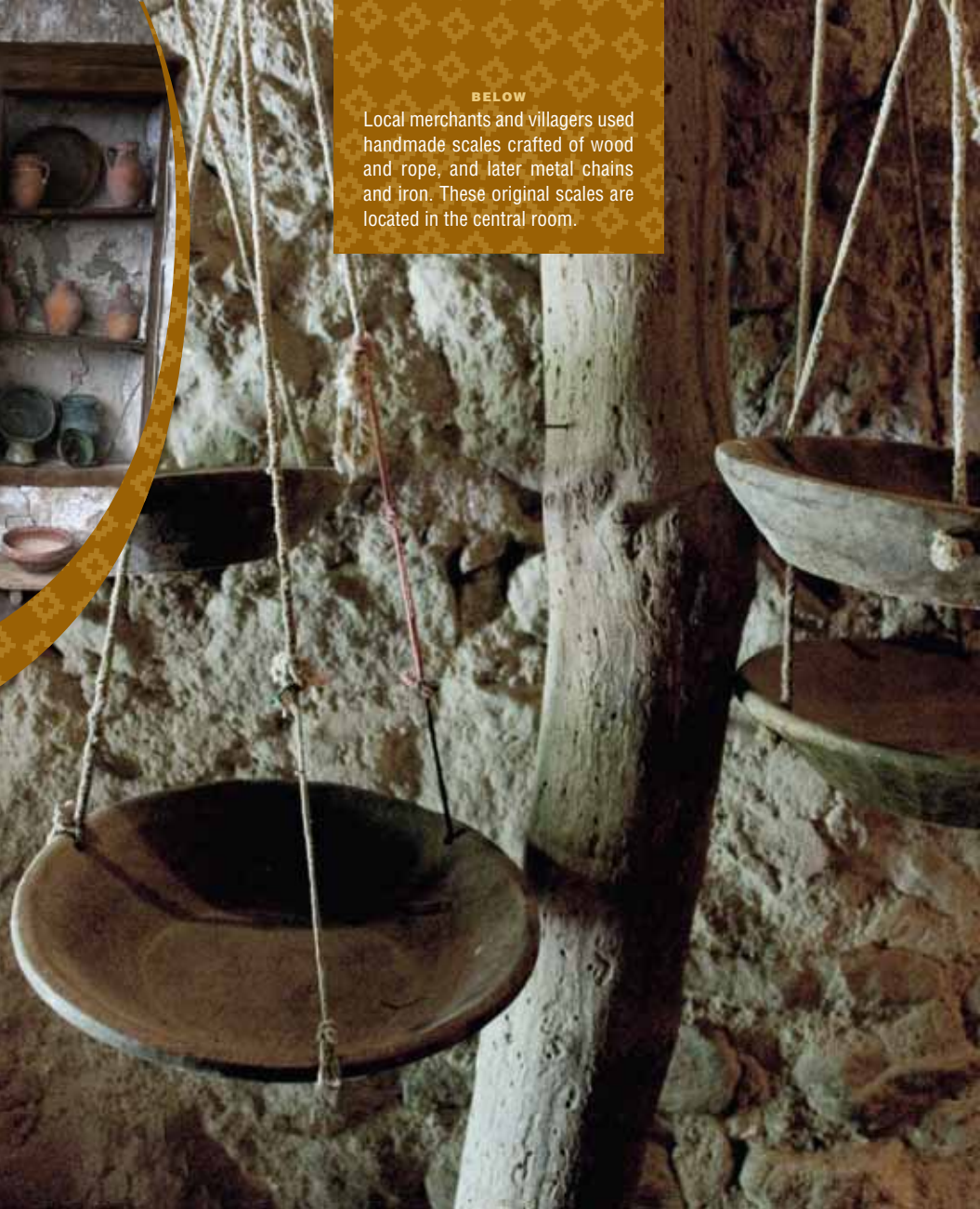
RIGHT

The Ethnographic District houses hundreds of original 19th century artifacts, such as bowls, barrels, clay and wooden jugs, and ornamented mugs, cutlery and vases made of bronze and silver.



BELOW

Local merchants and villagers used handmade scales crafted of wood and rope, and later metal chains and iron. These original scales are located in the central room.







ABOVE

Typical Eastern Armenian men's coat worn mostly by city folk in the late 19th to early 20th century. The decorative belt determines the status of the person.



ABOVE

Inside one of three B&Bs of the District where visitors are welcome to spend a night or two.

The Ethnographic District includes several restored buildings in the vicinity of the museum, giving visitors a feel for life in Karabakh in the 19th century. The house of Khanasori Vardan, Duman's fellow Armenian freedom fighter, is found nearby and has also recently been restored.

Be sure to stop by the **tonratoon** (traditional Armenian wood-burning oven) and try the fresh **tonrahats** (flatbread baked) before your eyes, a sight and taste you will surely savor.



## CARPET STUDIO ■

Karabakh is famous for its quality carpets and rugs. Different regions have developed their own style, patterns and color-specific designs. Although you can find a variety of carpets throughout the Ethnographic District, it is only at the nearby **carpet-weaving studio** that you can watch contemporary masters weave Karabakh carpets using age-old methods. Carpets and other local handicrafts are available for sale at the **souvenir boutique** around the corner.

The ethnographic village of Tsaghkashat often hosts concerts, carnivals and traditional shows. A few of the recently restored 19th century structures now serve as comfortable guesthouses.



BELOW

Another major site of interest in the area is Zizi Kar, a set of boulders that was once an important pagan place of worship. Celebrated 19th Armenian writer and native of Karabakh, Ghazaros Aghayan, was so captivated by the power of Zizi Kar that he was inspired to write a poem called “Aregak” (Sun). The poem has become part of the canon of Armenian poetry, immortalizing Zizi Kar and its pagan past.

At **Maran**, a traditional tavern, you can sample local cuisine like homemade bread, cheese, pickles, and of course, Karabakh’s specialty, *jinkyalov hatz* (a thin, doughy bread pocket filled with fresh greens, some of which are only found in Karabakh). To compliment your meal, try one of the local wines, or if you’re feeling adventurous, try the ever-potent local favorite, *tii oghi* (mulberry vodka). To fully immerse yourself in the late 19th century environment, you may choose to enjoy your meal in the garden, under the shade of the mulberry trees.

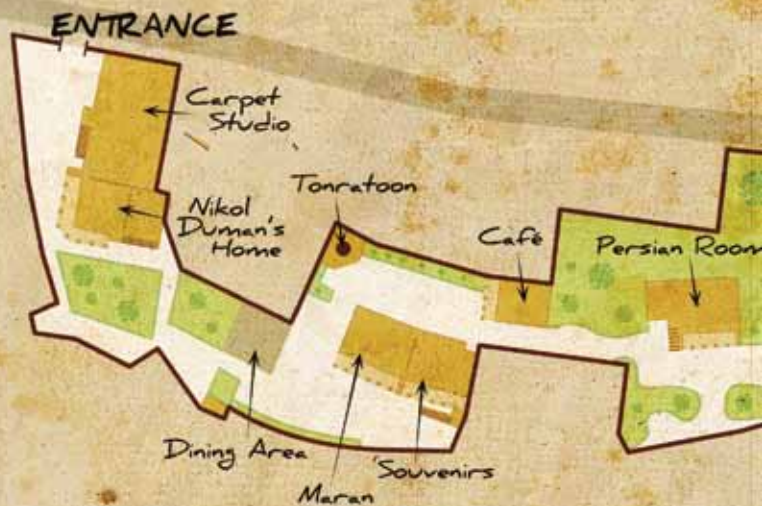
The “**Persian Room**” is located in the cellar of the 7th building. In this charming room with a medieval eastern flair, you can relax, smoke *nargile* (water pipe) and savor eastern sweets.

MARAN





## Nikol Duman House Museum



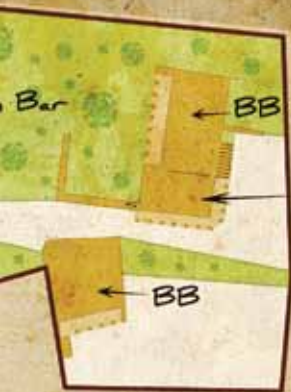
ABOVE

In typical Artsakh (Armenian name of the region) style, this elderly woman wears a colorful outfit with a headdress that usually covers the mouth, but in time that custom vanished.



The Nikol Duman House Museum is open every day from 10:00 am to 7:00 pm. Admission is free, but donations are accepted.

Telephone: +374 47 944758  
[www.ndumanmuseum.nk.am](http://www.ndumanmuseum.nk.am)



Khanasori  
Vardan's  
Home



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## **MOUNTAINOUS KARABAKH**

Government Tourism Department

Stepanakert, Hov. Toumanyane ave, 63  
+ 374 47 949172  
info@tourismdept.nkr.am

[www.visitkarabakh.net](http://www.visitkarabakh.net)

