



Discovering Azerbaijan

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Photos and text

LAZA – BEAUTIFUL ALL YEAR ROUND







There are places that attract visitors with their splendor, but if we visit them once, you don't feel like going back. Because this beauty no longer touches the soul, it does not warm it any longer. The village of Laza in the north of Azerbaijan is a completely different matter. It became known to tourists relatively recently, when the Shahdag ski resort opened a couple of kilometers away. The small village nestled in the ring of mountains quickly became a favorite haven for those who want to save money on housing.

But the main reason for the popularity of Laza is the incredibly beautiful nature and the feeling of serenity that reigns in these places. There is no bus service here, and visitors can get to the village only by car. The drive is a little over three hours and two hundred kilometers from Baku, and a spectacular panorama of mountains shrouded in fog opens up. It is cool in these places even in summer, and frosts are quite commonplace in winter. Before going to Laza in winter, one should definitely review the weather forecast because the journey might be difficult due to snow and fog. There are many panoramic sites along the road, commanding views of waterfalls surrounding the village. In winter, they become a center of attraction for sports fans

as they host international ice climbing competitions, which are always full of surprises because the shape of ice waterfalls is always different.

At the entrance to Laza, there are always many kids selling local souvenirs. In the summer, they sell dried thyme, a favorite attribute of Azerbaijani tea drinking, and it is collected here in the mountains. In winter, young merchants offer to buy jorabs, the traditional warm socks knitted by their mothers. In general, the children in Laza are very hardworking and help adults in their free time. Most of the local youth work in the Shahdag ski center and nearby recreation areas, which never experience a shortage of visitors. Already from the road you can see houses for rent let. There are only 26 yards in Laza, but all the houses are well equipped.

Attracting attention at the first glance at the village is a rock of unusual shape, with one side wedged into one of the gardens. This rock is hollow – a saint named Haji Seyid Baba was buried there last century. Then his remains were reburied near the rural cemetery, but the rock continues to serve as a sanctuary, as people come here to make a wish, then go around the rock and drink water from the spring. There is also a mosque in the village, which is more than three hundred years old. It is







not functioning now, but blends seamlessly into the village landscape.

The soil in and around Laza is very humid, which is the result of its proximity to five waterfalls, a mountain river and groundwater. That is why there is so much greenery and flowers here, and their aroma is always in the air. There are huge cabbages, potatoes and cucumbers growing in the gardens. In addition, despite the cool climate, there are also fruit trees in Laza, not to mention berries. Almost every yard has its own apiary and the local honey is respected by adherents of a healthy diet. As is the case with all mountain villages, Laza lives on cattle breeding. Everything here evokes peace – the lovingly decorated houses, the calves blinking their long eyelashes, and the always bewildered chickens scurrying underfoot. The silence and peace are occasionally disturbed by local horsemen returning from pastures. People here they have not forgotten how to smile to passers-by and are very hospitable, albeit a little shy.

The inhabitants of Laza are Lezgins, many of them speak Azerbaijani and Russian (the border with Russia is only a few kilometers away), the language they speak to visitors in. But even those who do not speak languages will certainly invite visitors to tea or offer refreshing spring water. There are no restaurants or cafés in the village. There is a small shop selling alcohol for visitors. Local people provide themselves with basic products from their backyard, and the rest is bought in regional centers.

Most of those who come to Laza for a day stop over the Gosha coupled waterfalls, where there are cafés and picnic areas. On weekends, the place is fairly crowded and noisy, but once you climb the mountain a little, you can enjoy the mesmerizing landscape in silence. This region gives you coolness in the summer and invigorating freshness in the winter. Laza is a small location point on the map, but the impressions from it are immense – so do come and see it! 🌸



