

Kurdistan Region - Iraq



Tourist Guide

Erbil - Dohuk - Sulaimaniya

General Establishment of Tourism

Erbil - Kurdistan

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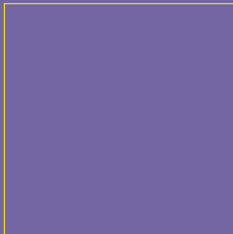
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## **Introduction**

Erbil, Sulaimanya and Dohuk Governorates that are located within Kurdistan Region are unique places in the world, where there are all components of tourism with its various shapes and categories. The Region has sustained fiercest acts of destruction, devastation and mass annihilation. Thanks to benevolent Kurdistan people who could prove for the world that they were able to convert those tragedies and ruin forms into security, stability, and serenity, with Allah's bestowing upon such land natural wealth and charming vistas-mountains, valleys, water springs, caves, and waterfalls. The people of Kurdistan Region have been striving earnestly for building their homeland.

We are hopeful that this humble guide would assist in providing basic information for the tourists who will be guests of Kurdistan hospitable people.

You Are Most Welcome



**Erbil Governorate**



## Erbil Governorate



## Erbil Governorate



The Erbil Governorate lies between 43,45/22' longitudinal parallels, eastwards and 35,37/15' latitudinal parallels, northwards. Thus, it is situated south of the Kurdistan Homelands, north of Federal Iraq and in the middle of Kurdistan Region. Geographically, the city of Erbil extends over a vast plain, with 1300 ft. above sea level. Erbil is a dividing line between Great Zab and Little Zab. The capital of Kurdistan, Erbil is 350 km off the Federal Iraqi metropolis, Baghdad. It is bounded by the city of Sulaimaniya in the east; Great Zab, cities of Mosul and Dohuk from the west; Kirkuk from the south and to the north there are Turkey-Iran borders. Since the ancient eras, Erbil has been an administrative, military and commercial centre, maintaining its value and fame. Hence it is an old

city, having names dating back to 4000 BC. In the Sumerian King's (Shulgi) writings it was known as (Urbillum); in the Babylonian and Assyrian inscriptions, referred to as (Arbaello)-i.e. the four gods. Under the Babylonians, Ishtar Temple was centred there. In cuneiform manuscripts it was known as (Ay Kshan Klama) which means (Region Lady's Home). It was the temple housing Assyrian gods; therefore one can see sculpted pictures of King (Banipal 627-688 BC); many Assyrian kings' pictures who had lived in the region; besides a bronze-made statue of Ishtar goddess. Owing to the city's significance, the Assyrian King (Sennacherib 681-750 BC) stored its underground water in 22 km marble-built tunnel extending from Murtk village to Erbil. On the water spring gate Sennacherib



wrote the following: (I am Sennacherib, the king of Assyria; I built three water tunnels from (Khani) Mountains to the Beauteous Lady's Home...) Erbil was the Assyrian Empire's Capital under Sargon of Akkad (705-721 BC). At that time Erbil had been at the peak of civilisational and constructional progress. Following the fall of Nineveh in 612 BC, it became a part of the Medes's State; however, after the World War I, it became part of Iraq's lands. Erbil witnessed many events and wars. The most well-known battle was (Arbella) in (331 BC) between Alexander of Macedonia and Dara III, the last Persian Emperor. Erbil is also designated as the city of Holako's Downfall, because all Holako's attempts to penetrate this city ended to a big failure and finally he pulled out his army (1235 A.D.)



#### Pre-Islamic Periods Witnessed by Erbil

1. Sumerian Period
2. Assyrian Period
3. Persian Period
4. Sasanid Period
5. Safavid Period
6. Parthian Period

#### Post-Islam Principalities Ruling in Erbil

1. Hazbanian Principality
2. Baktakmina Principality
3. Kurdish Mazinjan Principality

## **Arbila Battle (Kokmila):**

In 334 BC, Alexander had led his famous campaign against the East. Alexander met Darios III near Issus River (north of Syria) and defeated him. Consequently, he occupied Syria and Egypt. Later he headed for Iraq, crossed both rivers "Euphrates and Tigris" near Der Al-Zoor, and went towards Mosul, passing by Sinjar. He crossed the Tigris to Nineveh Plains, and encountered Darios in a battle called Kokmila, which was thought to have occurred at Khazar River.

Vector Plass, the archiologist says: The place where the famous Arbila Battle (330 BC) took place is located near Bartilla Plain. He believes that this place is correspondent with what the historians had mentioned. He also related that Bartilla is located in the same place of the ancient Kokmila. Having been defeated, Darios fled and crossed the bridge (at that time existent on Khazar River). Then Alexander crossed the Zab and reached Erbil. He camped at Girdmamik Village, where the remains of the old bridge are found. Batlemos named that place Kur Khora due to the existence of rocks and a huge building as well as many remnants near the Right Zab. To Assyrians, Erbil was a very famous city; it was mentioned in their ornaments written in cuneiform writing. There Darios had collected his treasures and ammunition. When Darios left the city, he left his treasures there.



Erbil Citadel

It lies in the middle of Erbil city. It has a round shape with its buildings and dwellings; 30 m high. It dates back to over 6000 years BC. Hundreds of families live on the Citadel; there are 506 houses distributed over three quarters (Sarai Q., Takyā Q. & Top khana Q.). They were built in artistic styles of architecture, particularly the houses of (Hashim Dabbagh Agha, Mulla Salim Chalabi, Ahmad Chalabi, Sheikh Jameel Ali Afandi, Haji Rasheed Agha). Additionally, there are the Great Mosque and Citadel Bath built in 1775 AD. The Citadel was famous for having most of the idols and was a centre for heroic deeds by the modern civilization figures; also, it was well-known as Defeated Holako's Castle. However, normal life is still ongoing in the Citadel. As discovered by archaeologists, the Citadel holds many significant remains of various historical races; 5000 year-old relics can be found within its inside parts, but have not yet been researched fully.



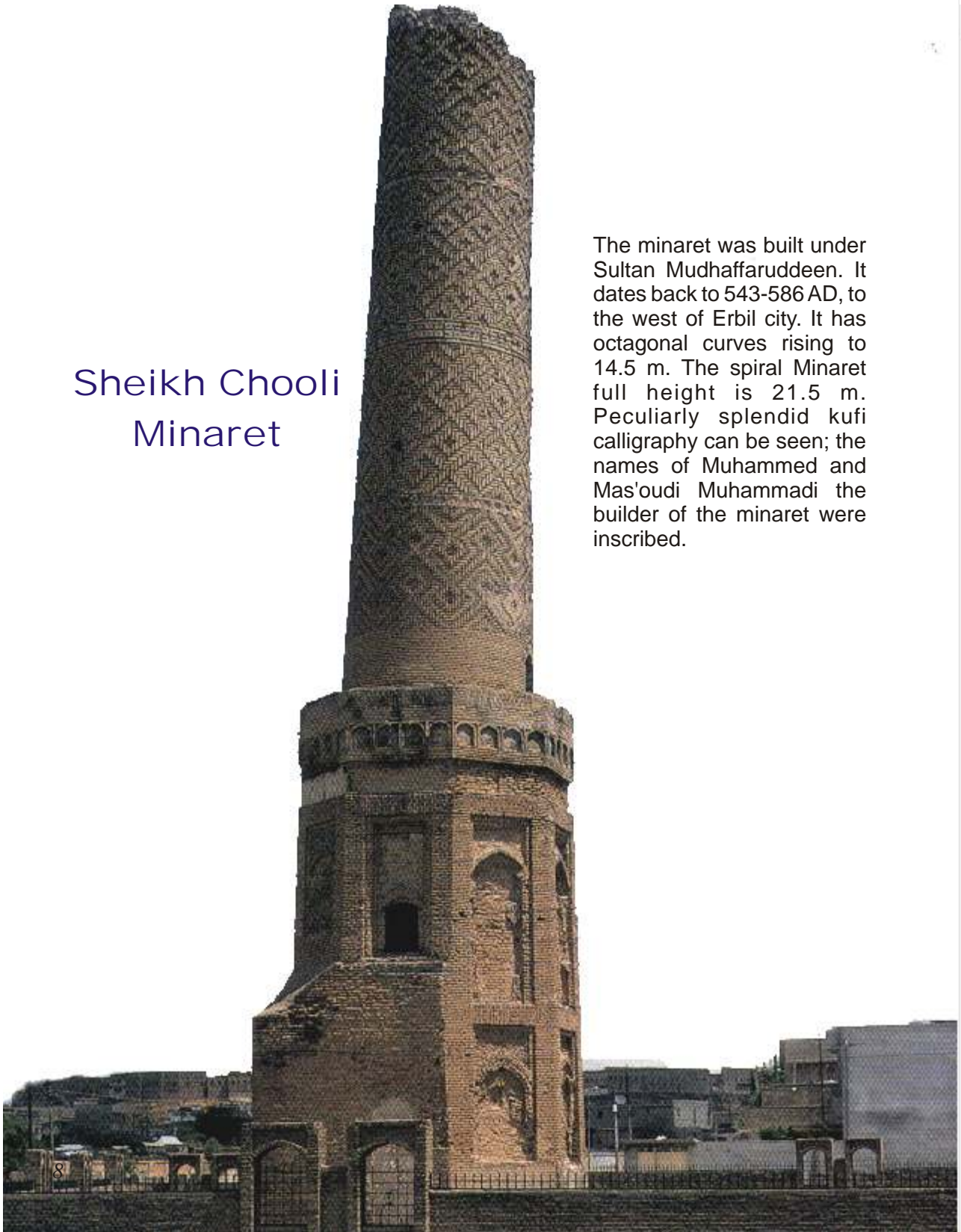


Some Views Of Citadel



## Sheikh Chooli Minaret

The minaret was built under Sultan Mudhaffaruddeen. It dates back to 543-586 AD, to the west of Erbil city. It has octagonal curves rising to 14.5 m. The spiral Minaret full height is 21.5 m. Peculiarly splendid kufi calligraphy can be seen; the names of Muhammed and Mas'oudi Muhammadi the builder of the minaret were inscribed.



## Erbil Civilization Museum

The museum is on Kirkuk Road between the 30m street and the 60m street, near Sheraton Hotel. It is rich in various antiquities, statues, remains of Erbil & surrounding areas ancient civilization. It holds a great archaeological library that is of benefit for historians and archaeologists.





## Bazaar Relevance to Tourists

Enriching tourists' memory during and after their touristic trips, bazaars have grown part of these journeys-benefiting from folkloric materials and artifacts made by the locals, as well as the market commodities needed by the tourists. Thus, the bazaar has a significant role in any tourist area, because souvenirs and other articles throughout the trip remain as vivid memories for the tourists. The bazaar in Kurdistan contains a broad range of handmade materials produced by the regional natives, showing the Kurdish folklore, in addition to typical Kurdish foods.



## The Great Bazaar

Generally, markets are interrelated in the city of Erbil. At the city centre, there is the old Great bazaar, known as (Qaysari) market. It includes many special shops and stores selling fabrics, folkloric manufactures, gold, women requirements; places for tailoring men's clothes and scores of shops exclusively selling breakfast meals, like yogurt, cheese and honey.





## Mudhaffariya Market

It is in Mudhaffariya Q., opposite to Governorate building. The majority of the shops are specialised in selling computers with their spare parts and accessories.



## Iskan Market

It is located between the 30m street and the 60m street , in Iskan Quarter. Shops in this market open until (1:00) AM. There are stores selling ready-made clothes for all age groups, as well as many shops famously serving Shawerma (Gyro).



## Erbil Restaurant

Located on Ainkawa Road / Tel: (2251533)

Constructed in Contemporary Design; Banquet Hall, Private Rooms, Car Parking Garage, Providing All Hospitality Services.



## Shahi Zhiyan Restaurant

Situated on Kirkuk Road / Tel: (2262035)

Constructed in Contemporary Design; Inaugurated in 2004, Banquet Hall, Garden, Car Parking Garage, Welcoming Visitors All Times.

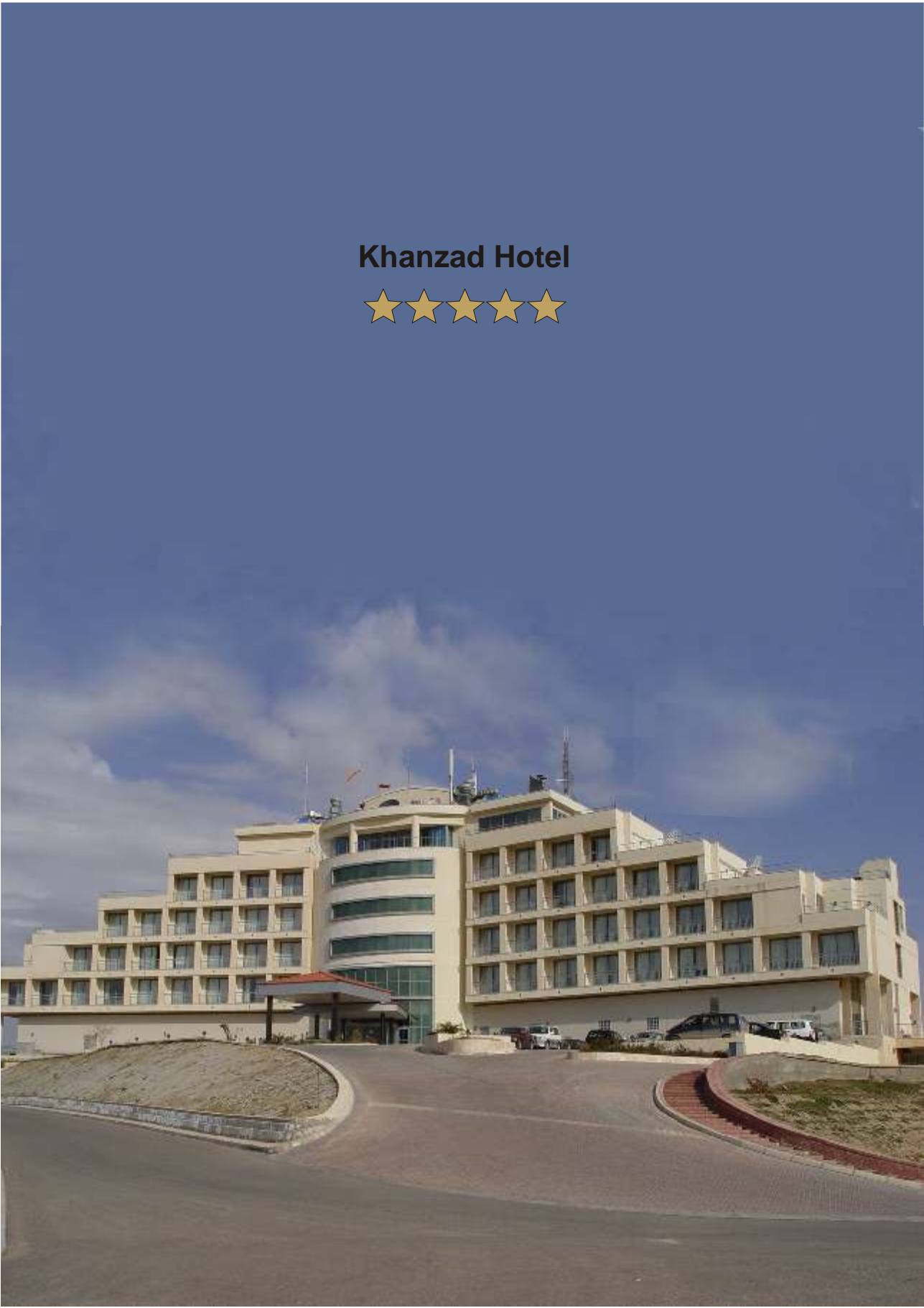
## Washington Restaurant

Located on 60-m St, Opposite to Regional Bank / Tel: (2233222)

Inaugurated in 2003; 2-Storey; Providing All Hospitality Services; Ready to Serve Variety of Kurdish & Erbilian Foods.



# **Khanzad Hotel**



Khanzad Hotel Situated on Erbil-Salahuddin Highway  
6 Stories, 96 Rooms, Modern  
Luxury Hotel; Constructed Parallel  
to Khanzad Mountain; Wide  
Attached Areas Surrounded by  
Forests; Offering Various Services to  
Tourists. Watching over Rural Areas,  
Valleys & Mountains; About 15 km  
off Erbil City Centre.





## Erbil International Hotel

Erbil / Salahuddin Road/ Tel:  
(77/76/75/74/73/72/2234471/2234470).  
Splendid Luxury Hotel in Erbil. 10 Stories, 139 Rooms,  
Reception Lounges, Conference Hall, Resting &  
Entertaining Hall, Sports Club, Store, Summer Casino,  
Garden, Swimming Pool, Car Parking Garage;  
Constructed as per Modern Urban Standards.  
Inaugurated in 2004; Servicing All Hospitality  
Accommodations.



## Martyr Sami Abdur-Rahman Park

The park is situated on 60-m St, opposite to Kurdistan Parliament Building. It is beautiful, integrated and of tourist peculiarity. It is constructed by the Regional Government as per modern urban styles. It includes a swimming pool, statues, casinos and car parking garage.



## Jalil Khayat Mosque



## Al- Sawwaf Mosque

It is located on the ( Thirty meter)Street , next to the Kurdistan Region Bank, Constructed in the year 2003 according to Islamic architecture. It combines between modernism an heritage.



## St. Joseph Church

The church is located on Erbi-Ainkawa main road. It is one of the eminent churches in Ainkawa sub-district. Its total area is 10000 M2 of which the premises take up 950 M2. In 1978, it was built according to the ancient Babylonian design.



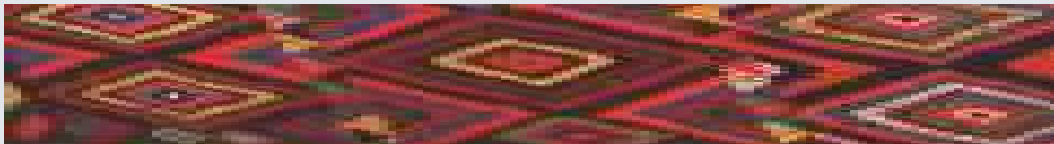


## ARTS

From now and then Artistry and cultural activities take place in the Halls and Galleries of Erbil city center such as Media Hall, Culture Hall and the Palace of Arts.



## Theatrical Scenes



## Khazad Castle



Khazad Castle lies on Erbil-Shaqlawa road and is one of the archaeological sites in the city of Erbil. It dates back to Soran Principality period when Princes ruled (Sulaiman Beg and Princess Khazad) in Soran district whose capital was Rawandooz then.

## Deween Castle



In the medial rule of Abbasids, there had been a small emirate in the mountainous area, to the east of Erbil City. It was established by the princes of Zarzariya Tribe. Its castle "Deween Castle" was considered to be the greatest and most famous in the region. The emirate was the main center for political entities in the area. The castle is located on the top of a mountain, looking down upon a great river. The princes of this emirate are believed to be the affiliates of "Shadi Bin Marwan", who was the chief of Rawand Tribe, who were residing the village close to Deween Castle. He was one of the grandfathers of Salahaddin Al-Ayyoubi.



## Shaqlawa Resort



51 km off Erbil city centre, at the bottom of Safeen Mountain, to the north of Erbil. Shaqlawa is situated between Safeen Mountain, 966 m above sea level, and Sourka Mountain. The maximum temperature is 30-35 degrees Celsius in summer and 10 degrees below freezing in winter. The resort has plenty of forests of fruit trees (peaches, walnuts, grapes, figs, pomegranate...), with sweet water. It has a big market selling many types of non-seasonal foods. Moreover, there are special and folk restaurants and a hotel. For sure, Shaqlawa is admired by any tourist, thus it is visited yearly by thousands of tourists.





**Shaqlawa Palace Hotel**  
Tel.: 2521333  
Mob.: 4454569



**Media Palace Hotel**  
Tel.: 2520799  
Mob.: 4537015



**Jihan Resturant**  
Mob.: 4457581



**Safin Hotel**  
Tel.: 2520635 - 2521118

## Gully Ali Beg Resort



Photo: Roshan Jahan



## Galy Ali Beg R e s o r t

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130 km off Erbil governorate centre. It is one of the attractive and beautiful resorts in Kurdistan Region. It extends for 12 km between Korak and Bradost Mountains, forming a magnificent landscape. The Gully is round 800 m above sea level, with maximum temperature 35 degrees Celsius in summer and 10 degrees below freezing in winter. In the gully two rivers meet-one springs from Alana Valley, Khalifan sub-district; the other from Rawandooz district and Bekhal Resort. At the gully entrance, both meet Seedakan River to form the Great Zab. In addition to the major waterfall, there are several cascades. The resort is featured by its mountainous terrain and various trees. It is a gorgeous place for recreational picnics; it has a number of restaurants and other entertaining spots. In spring and summer, tourists head for the resort where there are private places for families.



## Bekhal Resort

140 km away from Erbil governorate centre, east of Gully Ali Beg, 10 km off Rawandooz district. The maximum temperature is 32 degrees Celsius in summer.




resort is accessible via Gally Ali Beg road or Rawandooz district. It has a huge cataract with pure water falling down the mountain. There are several folk restaurants and other entertaining places. From early spring to late autumn, tourists head for the resort.

## Jundyan Resort

147 km off Erbil city centre, 5 km from Soran district. It lies at the bottom of Hndreen Mountain; with maximum temperature 32 degrees Celsius in summer. Jundyan resort is famed for its magic sweet water spring flowing out of Hndreen Mountain bottom. It is surrounded by varied trees. The Regional Government took care of this resort, including a restaurant, and other recreational and private places for tourist families.





## Haji Omaran R e s o r t

180 km to the north of Erbil city; with maximum temperature 30 degrees Celsius in summer. The resort is famous for the greenness of its highlands in summer. It is an area rich in trees and water springs - like Shekhi Ballakyan spa used by the population and tourists, for kidney problems; alongside another spa for skin diseases. Therefore, the resort has become well-known as a medicinal tourist area.





## Rabban (Monk) B e r y a M o n a s t e r y

Located over a valley with the same name, the monastery, an hour climb from the public road, overlooks Shaqlawa sub-district. This is not like other shrines, being very much organised. It was used to be a refuge for a group of monks. The track leading to it is rough and strenuous; however, it is visited by people round the year. Down the entrance, there are two large engraved rooms, leading up to a wide gate as the front part of the wall has collapsed. Above this wall, there is a small niche a around which a fable revolves - anyone who succeeds in throwing seven small stones, and having them pass through all, they would attain what is desired. It dates back to the fourth century AD.



## Neanderthal & Shanider Cave

Shanider Cave is located in Bradost Mountain, about 2 km from Shanider Village on the latitude 36.5 northwards; and longitude 44.20 eastwards; height: 2500 ft. above the sea level. The cave has an arched aperture which is looking down upon the Upper Zab. Its floor is even; its area is about 11.700 ft.

Neanderthal man lived the cave about 50.000 to 70.000 years Before Christ (B.C.). Inside the cave there are remains of the bones of various animals, which prove that it was dwelt by wild animals.

The first visit to the cave was done by Soliky in 1951. In his expeditions, Soliky discovered that there were (4) categories in the cave: (A, B, C, & D) which represent 4 different cultures. The Category D produced an ancient guide for nine skeletons, (two of them were children; the rest were adults. The explorer called them Shanidar.

However the expeditions of Madam Arlet Lerwa that the man of Shanidar was very fond of flowers. He mixed flowers with pine weeds and made a laurel (for the first time prehistorically). He set it on the grave of Shanidar No. IV. This is an example of the first laurel which goes back o 60.000 (sixty thousand years



This cave is located about 39 km to the south west of Soran Area. One can reach the cave by passing through a branch road, which is going towards the south near Hawdiyan village. Then the road is heading upwards to Bradost Mt., where two caves are found. The first is called Diyan, the second is Bestoon. In 1951 expedition missions have found stone tools from the Modern Stone Age. Inside each cave there is a deep cleft in which water is flowing. Inside both caves the natural phenomena of Stalktite & Stlakmite can easily be seen.

### **Bestoon Cave:**



