

# AZERBAIJAN'S RESORTS

Hajibala BADALLI  
*Professor*



*New building of the Naftalan resort*

DESPITE ITS RELATIVELY SMALL SIZE, THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN IS RICH IN RESORT AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCES CONSISTING OF FAVORABLE CLIMATE, ABUNDANCE OF MINERAL WATER SPRINGS, DEPOSITS OF THERAPEUTIC MUD, THE UNIQUE NAFTALAN OIL AND A PICTURESQUE NATURAL SETTING, INCLUDING THE SAND BEACHES OF THE CASPIAN COAST.

**I**t is worth indicating that there are nine climatic zones in Azerbaijan, each of which has its own profile of SPA-treatment, and more than 200 groups of mineral water springs of different chemical compositions with a combined daily output of 20 million liters. **Many of these springs are on a**

**par if not better than leading foreign mineral water brands.**

Therapeutic mud holds a special place among natural resort factors. It is indispensable in the treatment of rheumatological, neurological and gynecological diseases, etc. Most of Azerbaijan's therapeutic mud deposits are rich in silts and

volcanic mud.

Resorts are usually classified on the basis of their therapeutic factors as mountain, seaside and balneological, i.e. those based on mineral waters and mud. They can also be of various profiles: those specializing in the treatment of cardiovascular, gastrointestinal, liver,



*Sanatorium in Shusha before occupation*

rheumatological, gynecological and other diseases. **There are regions in Azerbaijan possessing a wide range of therapeutic factors, including Absheron, Lankaran-Astara, Guba-Khachmaz, Shusha-Istisu and others. There are conditions in all of these regions for the establishment of multi-type resorts.**

Azerbaijan has favorable conditions also in terms of healthy nutrition of the population as a whole and the people undergoing treatment at resorts in particular. There are agricultural sectors in the country enabling it to produce a sufficient supply of products rich in vitamins and substances that are useful for human health. These include livestock and fish breeding, grain production, horticulture, tea-growing, etc. At the same time, it must be remembered that the prophylaxis of diseases may prevent many problems at the stage of treatment,

and an important precondition of prophylaxis is the protection of the natural environment.

The world today is paying ever-growing attention to the treatment of diseases using natural means and factors, while the application of medicines is treated with increasing caution. Besides, sustained use of certain medicines may develop dependence on them.

Therapy using natural factors in resort conditions is viewed as the most effective way of recovering one's health and work capacity, calming down the nervous system and strengthening immunity.

From the standpoint of the development of SPA and resorts sector, Azerbaijani territory may be divided in five regions:

1. Greater Caucasus, including resort areas of Ilisu, Chukhuryurd and Galaalti – mainly sulfurous and hydro-sulfuric mineral waters;

2. Lesser Caucasus, including resort areas of Yukhari and Ashagi Istisu, the Tutgunchay complex, the Shusha-Turshsu-Shirlan resort area and the Naftalan resort – mainly the acidulous waters rich in mineral substances;
3. The Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, including the resort areas of Sirab, Badamli, Batabat, Vaykhir, Daridag;
4. The Caspian coast;
5. The Kura-Aras lowland.

#### **Greater Caucasus**

This region, which includes Gakh, Gabala, Oguz, Ismayilli, Guba, Davachi and Shamakhi Districts, has dozens of hot, warm and cold low-salt sulfurous water springs. Of these, **the mineral springs of Ilisu in Gakh District, Chukhuryurd and Chagan in Shamakhi District and Diyalli in Ismayilli District should be used for therapeutic purposes.** Additionally, the picturesque

landscapes, clean air and refreshing water springs of this region have a soothing, wholesome and remedial effect. At present, there is a trade union resort Shafa in Gakh District. It would be a good idea to expand it and create new SPA in the district.

**The Galaalti resort** is located in a woody area on the Caspian coast. It is situated 100 km from Baku on the territory of Davachi District at an absolute altitude of 600-700 meters. There is a source of low-salt hydrocarbonate-calcium, sodium and magnesium waters Naftusya here that contain naphthenic acids. The mountains, the forest and the sea combined with mineral waters have a comprehensive wholesome effect on the organism. The results of scientific researches and clinical observations demonstrate that the Galaalti waters can be successfully

applied to the treatment of a number of kidney diseases, small stones, salts and hypostasis of urinary tracts, pyelocystitis, chronic hepatocholecystitis, gastritis, etc. Attending physicians recommend and prescribe this water both for drinking and as baths. The author of this article has personally witnessed the falling out of stones of different forms and sizes after the use of the Galaalti water for several days. In fact, some stones were so sharp that they could easily cut a hand.

Taking this into account, it might be worth setting up a museum of kidney stones in Galaalti that would probably be unique in the world.

#### **Lesser Caucasus**

**The Yukhari Istisu, Ashagi Istisu and Tutgunchay** resorts are located in a picturesque mountainous terrain at an altitude of 1,800-2,200

meters above sea level. The clean mountain air and the ultraviolet solar radiation combine well with the numerous therapeutic mineral springs. **Istisu is known for its healing properties well beyond Azerbaijan. People from Asia Minor, Iran, Afghanistan, the Arabian Peninsula, Egypt have been coming here for centuries.** First scientific researches of the impact of natural factors of the Istisu resort on people's health were carried out in 1928. The mineral water from local resorts has a very high output rate and is prescribed both for drinking and as baths. It has been proven that the Istisu resorts provide effective treatment of liver, gastrointestinal, metabolic system and kidney diseases.

**The Shusha-Turshsu-Shirvan resorts.** The city of Shusha is lo-



*Istisu sanatorium in Kalbajar before occupation*



cated in the basin of the Gargar river at an altitude of 1,300-1,500 meters above sea level. It is surrounded by a picturesque area with uniquely healthy air. **People suffering from general weakness, anemia, chronic bronchitis, cardiac insufficiency, closed tuberculosis have been coming here for centuries and, after spending a couple of months in Shusha, returning home fully recovered.**

The Shusha resort should be studied and developed in conjunction with the resort areas of Isa Bulagi, Turshsu and Shirilan. Until 1967, Shusha was only considered a climatic resort, while after the construction of a pipeline for the acidulous, hydrocarbonate, magnesium, calcium and iron mineral water from the Shirilan spring, it received the status of a climatic and balneologic resort. This water is consumed on

doctoral prescriptions with the aim of rinsing the gastrointestinal tract.

**The Naftalan resort** is located in the vicinity of Ganja. The Naftalan oil is delivered to the town of Naftalan from surrounding deposits and is used for therapeutic purposes. The oil from Naftalan looks like ordinary oil and is slightly thicker and heavier than fuel oil. **It is rich in healthy substances, including sulfur-nitrogenous compounds, naphthenic and aromatic hydrocarbons, a number of organic and non-organic compounds, and naphthenic acids. The Naftalan oil has been used medicinally since ancient times,** while doctoral supervision was introduced in 1896.

Naftalan is widely used in the form of local and general baths, applied to a sore place, and used as a paste, sunlamp, phonophoresis, etc. Naftalan is successfully applied to

the treatment of rheumatological, gynecological and urological diseases, post-traumatic complications and skin diseases.

### **Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic**

Of the resorts of this region located at an absolute altitude of 1,000-1,400 meters, the Batabat, Badamli, Sirab, Vaykhir and Daridag resorts deserve special mention. These places are very picturesque, have prolific orchards, clean air and mineral water springs of different nature. **Nakhchivan is perhaps a world leader for the number of therapeutic mineral water springs on such a small territory.**

Waters from the Badamli and Sirab springs are successfully applied to the treatment of liver, gastrointestinal and urinal tract diseases. Under strict doctoral control, the unique



arsenical water of the Daridag mineral water spring is used in the treatment of many diseases of joints, muscles and the nervous system. This water should be consumed three times a day in the proportion of one tablespoon per glass of ordinary clean water for 15-20 days. A single dose is 20 grams. The water is effectively used in the treatment of gastritis, intestinal diseases, cardiac insufficiency, anemia, general malaise, etc. The Sirab area has mineral water springs such as Borjomi, Narzan, Yessentuki, etc., which are also prescribed for the treatment of various diseases.

Nakhchivan's famous salt mines have a special micro-climate. They are located deep under the ground

and patients go into them to receive treatment for chronic bronchitis and bronchial asthma.

#### **Caspian coast**

This region includes Khachmaz, Davachi, Absheron, Salyan, Neftchala, Masalli, Lankaran and Astara Districts. It is located in the country's east, stretching along the Caspian coast from north to south. This is where the country's two biggest industrial centers, Baku and Sumgayit, are located. For its climate, natural conditions and predominant healing factors, the region can be divided in three parts:

- a) resort areas of Khudat and Nabran-Yalama;
- b) the Absheron Peninsula;

- c) subtropical resort areas of Lankaran, Masalli, Astara and Meshasu.

**The coastal zone of Khudat-Yalama-Nabran** stretches all along the Caspian coast for over 20 km and is entirely covered with forests. The combination of sea and forest climate has a soothing effect on the nervous system, regulates the cardiovascular and respiratory systems.

Proceeding from this, it would be appropriate to establish a modern sanatorium and resort network specializing in the treatment of the said diseases on this territory. There are quite a few recreational and health facilities around the Nabran settlement on the seaside. In addition, there are several mineral water springs in this zone.

**The Absheron Peninsula** is characterized by oceanic climate and, at the same time, has hydrogen-sulfide (Surakhani) and thermal-sulfur (Shikhov) water springs, significant reserves of underground iodine-bromide waters, as well as high-quality healing mud (Masazir) and valuable volcanic mud (Gobustan-Alat). It is also worth adding to this the sand beaches stretching for many kilometers. They are universally seen as an indispensable therapeutic remedy.

Therefore, the establishment of modern SPA resorts in coastal Absheron settlements should be viewed as a task of national importance. The SPA currently operating on the Absheron Peninsula are 25-40 km from Baku, which considerably alleviates the problem of adaptation and acclimatization for patients. The range of natural factors existing on the Absheron Peninsula facilitates successful treatment of a number of diseases of the nervous,

rheumatic, cardiovascular and gastrointestinal systems.

**The Lankaran-Masalli-Astara** mountain and subtropical zone stretches for almost 50 km along the Caspian coast and is noted for favorable natural conditions. The entire territory is covered with mountain forests that have a multitude of highly valuable and rare trees, including the ironwood. This area is also known for its tea plantations, citric groves, superb sand beaches, thermal, warm and cold mineral water springs, including 10 hot ones. From the standpoint of conditions for establishing SPA, the mineral water springs Meshasu in Lankaran and Istisu in Masalli Districts are particularly valuable.

Scientific research and lengthy climate observations have estab-

lished that it would be appropriate and necessary to establish a modern SPA infrastructure in this zone to enable treatment of the nervous, rheumatic, cardiovascular and gastrointestinal diseases.

#### **The Kura-Aras lowland**

This region is favorable mainly for the establishment of climatic resorts specializing in the treatment of kidney and urinal tract diseases, similarly to the Bayram-Ali resort in Turkmenistan. This is explained by the fact that in hot summer conditions a significant proportion of moisture is discharged from the body not in the form of urine, but through perspiration, which takes much of the burden off the kidneys. Besides, the consumption of fruit, especially water-melons and white mulberries this region is rich in, facilitates effec-

tive rinsing of the kidneys and elimination of deposits and salts.

#### **References:**

1. M. Efendiyev. The Ilisu resort. Baku, Azgosizdat, 1965, p. 160.
2. S. Salikhov. Impact of Turshsu resort factors on different functions of the organism. Baku, Azgosizdat, 1972, p. 376.
3. A. Kuliyev. Naftalan and its therapeutic methodology. Baku, Azgosizdat, 1973, p. 360.
4. Resorts. Encyclopedia. Moscow, Soviet Encyclopedia, 1983, p. 591.
5. G. Badalov. Cardiac diseases and the Galaalti resort. Baku, Knowledge Society, 1978, p. 82.
6. H. Badalov. Treatment of cardiovascular diseases at various altitude resorts of Azerbaijan. Baku, Shirvannashr, 1995, p. 150.

