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NË FSHAT

Get to know

RAB- DISHT

#NËFSHAT



—the stone village



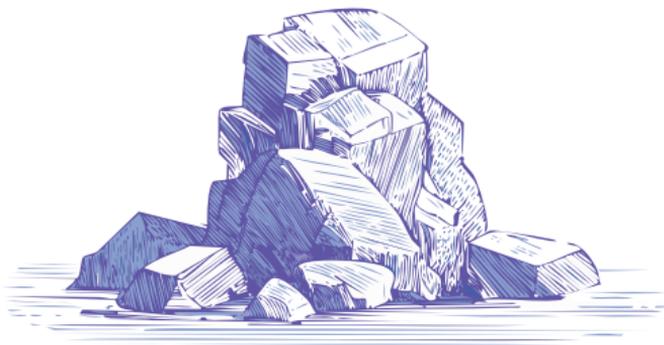
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Introduction

It is now well known that one of the unique features of Albania is the diversity of its nature. As a result, no city in Albania is like another, and no village is the same as another.

Every land has its own ecosystem, shaped by the dominance of mountains, seas, lakes, rivers, or rocks — or a harmonious blend of all. In turn, the people of each place have absorbed the essence of the nature around them, or that which they have chosen to call home.





The Stone Village

The road to Rabdisht

From the very beginning of your journey to Rabdisht, you can sense that it will be an extraordinary experience, as you find yourself surrounded by the mountains of Dibra right from the start.

And one thing is certain: you will never tire of the dizzying beauty of the peaks that stretch endlessly before you.

If you begin your journey from the city of Peshkopi, the road is one you may even choose to walk:

- The distance between Peshkopi and Rabdisht is just 7 km, a mere 10-minute drive.
- A 4-hour drive from Tirana, the capital of Albania, will lead you there.

The first sign of arrival in the village is two large pine trees that have grown on top of a rock. This is how you know you have reached a stone village.



Everyday life

Life in Rabisht mirrors the essence of slow living—a quiet, peaceful rhythm where time unfolds gently. The day begins with the first rays of sunlight spilling over the landscape. If the sunlight itself doesn't touch the villagers, it certainly never escapes the song of the roosters, who perch atop the delicate branches of trees in the yards of the homes.

The people here are simple, kind-hearted souls, living in harmony with one another, always considering the needs and concerns of those around them. “Lamja e Beqirit” was once the gathering place of the village's elder men, a spot for their quiet discussions. Today, their meetings have simply moved to the comfort of their own yards, where they remain close to home and nature.





Winding through the stone-paved alleys, you'll come across children heading to school, shepherds guiding their flocks to pasture, elderly women visiting one another, and an abundance of cherry trees that seem to grow in every corner. In Rabdisht, no visitor goes unnoticed or unwelcomed. It seems like it is no bother to intrude in the lives of these people, nor them in yours.

The villagers understand that nature is their truest companion, and they live in tune with it. The apples, cherries, and potatoes that grow here are renowned for their exceptional taste and quality. The women, in turn, craft compotes from figs, plums, and apples, drying them for the colder months. But it's their meticulous devotion to cleanliness and order that stands out the most—everything, even in its most rustic form, is kept spotless.



Imagine living in this slow-paced paradise, where there's ample time to learn the true meaning of gratitude. Here, you can lose yourself in a wealth of activities:



Hiking in nature



Alpinism



Mountain
biking



Cave
exploration



Therapeutic
Tourism



Horseback
Riding

When is the perfect time to visit?

If you come in June, you'll be greeted by long days, full of exploration and cherry-picking under the warm sun.

If you visit in winter, you'll be embraced by the rugged beauty of the pastures, experiencing a cold yet inviting season, where the warmth of a fire in the hearth awaits in every home.

And all year round, the healing waters are as open and welcoming as the doors of Rabdisht's homes, offering their soothing embrace in every season.





A bit of history

Rabdishti is also known as the "Village of Stone." The entire village is built from stone houses and roads, made from the rocks of the surrounding mountains, and its people have long been skilled artisans in stone crafting.

As descendants of the ancient Dibrans, the people of Rabdisht were renowned builders even during the Ottoman Empire, which gave rise to the saying:

"If Istanbul were to fall, Dibra would rebuild it,
But if Dibra were to fall, Istanbul could never
rebuild it."



In a way, this prophecy came true, as Rabdisht was completely rebuilt from scratch in 1920, maintaining the same style and infrastructure, after being destroyed by Serbian marauders in 1918, when the entire village was burned to the ground.

The village is thought to be over 2,000 years old, based on writings about ancient tombs in the area. However, this remains part of local legends.

But what does it matter whether the village is 2,000 or 400 years old, as long as it was rebuilt and still stands today, authentic with its stone houses, and its people—the warmest souls you could ever meet?



People of Rabdisht and their hospitality

The stone houses of Rabdisht tell the story of resilience—they've withstood storms and passed through the ages with unwavering strength. But the people of Rabdisht, though just as strong, bring a different kind of resilience. They are elite artisans, ancient hunters, devoted shepherds, exceptional cooks, and above all, the most generous hosts.

The quote that represents them is:

“The house belongs to the guest, then to the owner of the house.”

And history has shown that every foreigner or tourist who visits the village is considered a guest of the entire village, treated as such, and often leaves with tears in their eyes due to the unimaginable experience they've had there.

A photograph of a narrow, cobblestone street in a village during a rainstorm. The street is flanked by stone walls and buildings. In the background, a church with a tall, white spire is visible through the mist. Power lines run across the top of the frame. The overall atmosphere is quiet and atmospheric.

“

The house belongs to the guest,
then to the owner of the house.

There is no door they will knock on and not be opened.

There is no meal they will desire and not be served.

Because honouring the guest is the anthem of Rabdisht.

Just go to Sabri's house, and you will understand that everything you've learned about kindness and hospitality is nothing compared to what you will experience there.

In his home, you will sit in the living room by the fireplace, just like the old traditions of Albania. You will hear stories of the battles of the Albanians, the history of Rabdisht, drink raki, and touch pots, tools, and household items that belonged to his ancestors and beyond.

"The family's history is not for sale," says Sabri. And truly, there, you will discover beautiful values alongside the fantastic local dishes prepared by Sabri's wife, Festa.



The most beautiful part of all this is that "Festa" in Albanian means celebration, and this lady in the kitchen creates a feast of some of the most wonderful dishes.

With a smile and endless energy, she will cook lamb, beans with pastërma, byrek, fli, jufka, stuffed grape leaves, and sheqerpare.

Certainly, these sound like unusual names because they are dishes unique to this region, passed down rigorously from generation to generation, from woman to woman.

The first guesthouse of Rabdisht is Sabri's home, yet now, the doors of all its residents stand open, ready to welcome visitors to this charming village.

The most festive part on each guesthouse is the beautifully set table, with white cloths embroidered with handmade artisanal designs, where you'll raise a toast to your loved ones with raki made from grapes or plums.

The name Rabdisht comes from the old Slavic word "**Rabo**," which means hardworking people.

So, you can expect nothing less than to meet motivated, joyful people in harmony with what nature has gifted them, people who inspire without saying a word, simply by living.

It is one of the few villages that does not have emigration in its plans. On the contrary, it opens its arms to anyone who wants to join. You will discover children continuing to inherit the culture of folk music; you will hear young people playing the flute, *çiftelia*, and *dajre*, dancing and wearing traditional costumes at various events. Young women embroider and sing.

Their spirits are ever alive, their laughter fills the air, and their hands shape the land, creating an unbreakable connection between the human heart and nature's breath.



Architecture

Rabdishti, The Stone Village

Rabdisht has a distinct architectural atmosphere. Even architects are left speechless when they see the infrastructure built by the people of Rabdisht.

The entire village, surrounded by mountains, is characterized by stone walls, winding alleys, stone buildings with colorful doors, and climbing plants.

The houses have withstood concrete, plaster, lime, and duralumin—materials that dominate modern constructions. This, too, can be a pleasant surprise for visitors.

The same can be said for the method of opening a door, which at first glance appears closed... but in fact, there's a secret in how it opens. To discover this secret, you have to see it for yourself.

(This technique also relates to the old tradition of hospitality, where there is no need to knock on a door to have it opened—simply find the hidden key...)



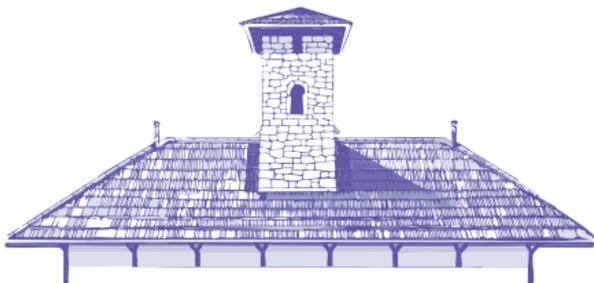
The houses are all large, with many windows, and each room once had its own fireplace and hamam.

The people of this region have been skilled builders since the time of the Ottoman Empire. Rabdisht reached its peak in development during the 17th and 18th centuries, when the “School of Stone Masters” was established.

In 1897, an Austrian diplomat wrote that the stone masters of Dibra were skilled enough to work on the projects of the best engineers in Europe at that time.

They were that talented and dedicated. When the village had 1,700 inhabitants, 400 of them were masons. Today, only 400 people remain, and of those, 4 are still stone artisans.

One of them tells us that building a simple chimney takes four full days. Each stone is carved individually, and it takes about 2 to 3 hours to carve each one.



Today, there are 80 stone houses, and their restoration follows the same traditional methods.

The stones are gathered from the surrounding mountains and transported by horses.

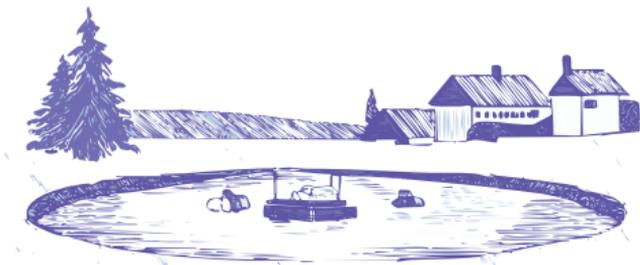
All of this can often give the impression of an ancient town, but Rabdisht prefers to be considered a model village.



Rabdishti, The Village Among the Peaks

Nestled between the towering peaks, Rabdisht is a village whose very essence is intertwined with the rugged landscape that surrounds it. From the moment you step foot in this enchanting place, the mountains seem to embrace it in a timeless bond, one that is closer and more intimate than any other region in the area. The village, with its striking location, feels almost as though it is a natural extension of the land itself.

Rabdisht's proximity to the curative marshes of Peshkopia, with their healing waters sourced from the majestic **Deshat Mountain**, adds another layer of beauty to this unique setting. The terrain here is a patchwork of rugged reliefs and gentle slopes, creating a striking contrast that captures the raw power and serene calm of nature in the same breath.



The village is blessed with an abundance of natural features—its winding creek that courses through the heart of the settlement, the verdant meadows that stretch beneath the towering peaks, and the mix of pine and wild oak trees that dominate the landscape. A refreshing breeze fills the air, carrying the scents of pine, herbs, and the crispness of the mountains, a fragrance that shifts with every season. Whether in the freezing grip of winter or the heat of summer, the air here is always pure, a constant reminder of Rabdisht’s connection to the untouched beauty of the land.



Rabdisht lies within the boundaries of the **Korab National Park**, a protected sanctuary that spans 555 square kilometres, with Korab's towering summit reaching a height of 2700 meters. The water of Korab flows throughout the valley, feeding the land with life, while the village offers stunning views of the surrounding areas. From here, one can gaze across the Peshkopia region, the **Black Drin valley**, and the **National Park of Lura**, all of which contribute to the village's remarkable panoramic vista.

On either side of Rabdisht, gentle hills rise, offering peaceful landscapes of lush green meadows and patches of forest. **The Arusha Valley**, also known as the Bear's Valley, is one of the most picturesque features of the area. Surrounded by white gypsum cliffs and the vibrant green of pine forests, this gorge is a sanctuary for local wildlife. Legends say that bears descend from the mountains to drink from the streams here, lending the valley its unique name.

The Borovik Hill, one of Dibra's 41 natural monuments, is another highlight of the area. This dense pine forest, nestled among the gypsum and rock formations, serves as an ideal habitat for a variety of wildlife, including brown bears, foxes, jackals, wild boars, and deer, creating a truly remarkable ecosystem.

The Fran Forest in Rabdisht, filled with pine and oak trees, is home to numerous medicinal plants like wild tea, blueberries, bilberries, sage, and blackberries. These natural wonders not only contribute to the biodiversity of the region but also have been used for generations to promote healing and wellness.

Rabdisht's beauty is not only in its picturesque landscapes but in the balance between human history and nature. It stands as a testament to the resilience of both the land and its people, a village in harmony with the mountains, forests, and waters that surround it. For visitors, it offers not only a glimpse into the unspoiled wilderness but an invitation to experience the spirit of a place where nature and tradition live side by side.



Through discovery after discovery, you will see how the relationship between humans and nature in Rabdisht holds surprises that will surely make you want to visit as soon as you read these lines.

- Near the village, there is an easy-to-reach attraction called the **“Village Balcony.”** You can climb up using safety ropes, and while enjoying breathtaking views of the village from above, you will discover that the layout of the village buildings forms the shape of the map of Albania.

Is this a designed detail or just a coincidence? Whatever the answer, you will be left speechless at that Balcony.

- Secondly, it’s worth noting that the village of Rabdisht is either a starting point or a stopover of the long-distance, cross-border trail known as High Scardus Trail, which connects Kosovo with North Macedonia.





And when you climb the hills around the village, on the hiking paths connected to the High Scardus Trail, you will realize how special this place is to rest — the mountain streams, transformed into fountains by the hands of the villagers which allows the flowing water to be controlled by the people themselves. Isn't that beautiful?

You can feel the presence of the locals in nature, even when you embark on hikes far from the village.





Culinary Delight

In Rabdisht, when it comes to cuisine, you'll find yourself in the golden zone of the finest, most unique flavors. Their main specialty is **"Fli"**, a dish known and cherished all across Albania..

The preparation of "Fli" is like a reflection of life itself—requiring patience, sometimes difficult, but always beautiful and delicious in the end. The dough is made from fresh village eggs, butter, milk, and flour.

The women of Rabdisht, after preparing the dough, layer nearly 100 sheets, one after another, to bake them over an open fire. It's truly an art form. It takes four hours to prepare, but only two minutes to enjoy.

What else will the ladies of Rabdisht serve? **"Jufka"**(handmade pasta), baked potatoes, beans cooked in a clay pot, dishes with cornmeal, homemade village cheese, fresh fruits, and of course, **"Raki"**.





Instead of an ending

Instead of an ending here are some lines from a Dibra song:

“Heej Hajredin Pasha, oh Radika is drawing near,

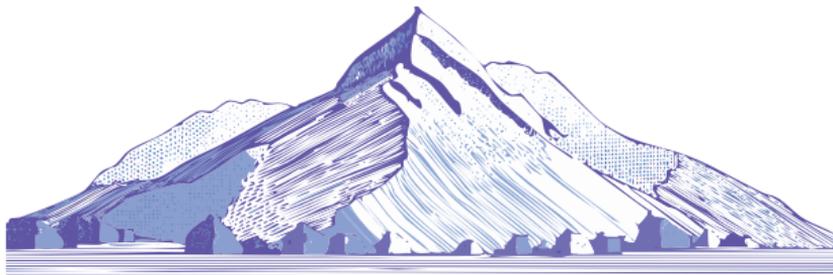
Where are those mountains of Dibra, my dear?

Where are those mountains of Dibra so wide?

... For troubles has caught the Pasha in stride,

The mountains of Dibra, they've sworn their vow,

The mountains of Dibra, they stand firm now.”



Grab this postcard, travel to Rabdisht,
And invite your friend to join you there!

This space is for writing

This side is for address





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