



Akademik Tarih ve Düşünce Dergisi

Academic Journal of History and Idea

ISSN: 2148-2292

11(5) 2024

Derleme Makalesi / Review article

Geliş tarihi |Received:15.06.2024

Kabul tarihi |Accepted:29.09.2024

Yayın tarihi |Published:25.10.2024

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Atıf Künyesi | Citation Info

Hamzayeva, N. (2024). Steppe settlements of Azerbaijan: The role of the National Grassland Festival in keeping grassland traditions alive. *Akademik Tarih ve Düşünce Dergisi*, 11 (5), 3797-3811.

Steppe settlements of Azerbaijan: The role of the National Grassland Festival in keeping grassland traditions alive

Abstract

This article covers the historical, geographical and cultural significance of steppe settlements of Azerbaijan. In addition to being an integral part of the nomadic lifestyle, the steppe also plays a key role in the development of livestock and agriculture. In the article, the danger of forgetting the grassland traditions, the effects of modern life and the role of the National Grassland Festival in preserving these traditions are emphasized. The festival serves not only to keep the steppe culture alive, but also to transfer this heritage to the younger generations, develop ecotourism and have a positive impact on the local economy. At the same time, the cultural, economic and social aspects in the flowering of steppe culture are examined in detail. The article is an important call for the preservation and transmission of the rich cultural heritage of the Azerbaijani people to future generations.

Keywords: festival, agriculture, culture, nature, grassland

Azərbaycan'ın bozkır yerləşimleri: Ulusal Otlak Festivali'nin otlak geleneklerinin yaşatılmasındaki rolü

Öz

Bu makale, Azərbaycan'ın bozkır yerleşimlerinin tarihi, coğrafi ve kültürel önemini kapsamaktadır. Bozkır, göçebe yaşam tarzının ayrılmaz bir parçası olmasının yanı sıra, hayvancılık ve tarımın gelişmesinde de kilit bir rol oynamaktadır. Makalede, otlak geleneklerinin unutulma tehlikesi, modern yaşamın etkileri ve Ulusal Otlak Festivali'nin bu geleneklerin korunmasındaki rolü



<https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/atdd>

vurgulanmaktadır. Festival sadece bozkır kültürünün yaşatılmasına değil, aynı zamanda bu mirasın genç nesillere aktarılmasına, ekoturizmin geliştirilmesine ve yerel ekonomi üzerinde olumlu bir etki yaratılmasına da hizmet ediyor. Aynı zamanda, bozkır kültürünün çiçeklenmesindeki kültürel, ekonomik ve sosyal yönler ayrıntılı olarak incelenmektedir. Makale, Azerbaycan halkının zengin kültürel mirasının korunması ve gelecek nesillere aktarılması için önemli bir çağrı niteliğindedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: festival, tarım, kültür, doğa, otlak

Introduction

Azerbaijan's steppe culture is a rich heritage that has been formed over thousands of years, where people live in harmony with nature and reflect their daily lifestyle. This culture, with the cool climate of the highlands and the opportunities offered by the abundant pastures, creates ideal conditions for cattle grazing during the summer months. Yaylaq is not only a place, but also symbolizes a way of life intertwined with the history, traditions and cultural values of the people. Throughout history, steppe traditions of Azerbaijan have been an integral part of nomadic and semi-nomadic lifestyle. It is not just an economic activity for people, but it also means maintaining family ties, community relations and cultural heritage. However, in modern times, urbanization, urbanization and modern lifestyle create serious obstacles to the survival of these ancient traditions. Mass migration from rural areas to cities led to a decline in livestock and agricultural activities, which resulted in the weakening of the steppe culture.

In this context, the National Grassland Festival aims to revive the rich steppe culture of Azerbaijan, preserve it and pass it on to future generations. The festival is not only a revival of a culture, but also a platform to introduce the riches of Azerbaijan's historical and cultural heritage to the world. This event covers all aspects of steppe life, aims to teach these traditions to the younger generations, introduce the lifestyle of people living in the steppe and bring together different aspects of local culture (Hüseynov, 2024, p. 3). Yaylaq Festival is also a means to emphasize how important this ancient culture is in modern society. By holding the festival, people learn more about living this heritage, bringing together pastoral life, livestock, traditional food, crafts and folklore. Thus, the National Grassland Festival is an important event in terms of cultural preservation, economic development and strengthening of social relations.

The concept of grassland means summer pastures, which are an integral part of the ancient nomadic and semi-nomadic lifestyle of Azerbaijan. Grasslands are mountainous and high-altitude areas used for grazing livestock and domestic animals during the summer months. These regions, in addition to being the most fertile meadows offered by nature, played an important economic and social role in the life of the people. Yaylag is not only a place, but also a way of life of the people, an indicator of a culture living in harmony with nature. In

Azerbaijan, the concept of grassland has been formed for thousands of years and is a tradition related to the history of the Turkic peoples. Steppe culture, which is directly related to the nomadic lifestyle of the Turks, has been one of the main forms of life reflecting the lives of the people living in these areas. This culture is considered as a way of life related to the rhythm of nature and is a manifestation of people's adaptation to ecological conditions. In the steppe culture of Azerbaijan, the houses used during the steppe consist of various types of temporary dwellings. Among these houses are alakık, coma, deya, mukhuru, karakeche, dünnuğlu house, kolux, magarda, etc. there are structures called These houses, in accordance with the nomadic lifestyle, differ both in terms of providing comfort and usability. Alachiq is considered a symbol of the steppe culture of Azerbaijan. This form of house is usually made of light and easily transportable materials - logs, sticks and felt. 10-15 sticks and 2-3 felts are used to install the tent. These houses, in addition to their lightness, have the feature of staying cool in summer and warm in winter. It is possible to place things, including bedding, equipment for cooking in the hut. Daya (called "garakeche" in Shirvan) is widely used in the steppe period as a stronger and more stable structure. It usually consists of 4-6 felts (moulds) and 30-50 sticks. The size of the hut varies depending on the number of people in it and its supplies. The installation of the rod can take several hours, as it requires the rods to be correctly positioned and the felts to be firmly attached. The strong structure of the tree ensures its resistance to strong winds and rain that may occur in the summer (Hüseynov, 2024, p. 3). Houses called mukhuru are mostly used by small families or individual herders. They are usually made of lightweight materials such as wicker and felt, but are less durable than wicker and wicker. Mukhuru is an ideal choice for short-term uses. Karakeche and dünnuku house are the temporary dwellings chosen by those who lead a more nomadic lifestyle, especially those engaged in sheep farming. A blacksmith is usually a smaller version of a stick, but with a simpler setup. Dunuklu houses are mostly used as structures that facilitate living in difficult conditions in mountainous regions. Kolux and cave houses are designed to adapt to the requirements of local societies. Kolux is a more stable structure made of stones. The cave is used for safety and protection in harsher climates. In the production of these houses, the material called felt is of special importance. Felt is made by skilled craftsmen called "hallaj". The production process of felt consists of several stages: first, wool raw materials are washed, filtered, and then compressed and dried using a special method. This process ensures that the felt is more durable and waterproof. These different forms of grassland houses are adapted to the nomadic lifestyle in the mountainous and desert regions of Azerbaijan. They not only provide comfort and shelter, but also reflect a part of the local culture, traditions and lifestyle. In the preparation of these houses, the knowledge and traditional skills

of local craftsmen play an important role. Thus, steppe culture, combined with the deep-rooted history and cultural heritage of the Azerbaijani people, preserves its vitality even today.

Historically, the grassland tradition has been formed and existed since the ancient times of Azerbaijan. The nomadic peoples, mainly of Turkic origin, followed a nomadic lifestyle between the steppe and winter pastures, as they were engaged in animal husbandry. In the summer months, they moved to mountainous areas with cooler and abundant vegetation and grazed their animals there, and in winter they went down to the lowlands and winter quarters. This way of life was important both in terms of the health of livestock and the proper distribution of natural resources. Grasslands are widely distributed in different regions of Azerbaijan and were mainly located in the altitude zones of the Greater Caucasus, Lesser Caucasus and Talysh mountains. The geographical position and climate of these regions created suitable conditions for the steppe life. Mountains are favorable places for grazing, because the cool climate in summer provides comfortable conditions for animals, and in winter, these areas are covered with snow, which indicated the end of the grazing season (Hüseynov, 2024). Geographically, the steppe settlements of Azerbaijan are distinguished by their unique natural landscapes. These areas are uniquely formed by the combination of high mountain ranges, vast grasslands, diverse vegetation and abundant water sources. The steppes of Azerbaijan are home to different ecosystems due to their geographical location and climatic conditions. This creates a favorable environment for livestock and agricultural activities.

Grasslands are located in the altitude zones of the Caucasus Mountains. The height of the mountains directly affects the climatic conditions of the grasslands. For example, high mountains have a colder and wetter climate, which makes the vegetation of the plains richer. A variety of vegetation types are found in these areas, including alpine meadows, grasslands, and subalpine zones. Grasslands are especially ideal for cattle grazing because the plants that grow here have high nutritional value. Water resources in grasslands play an important role in the development of livestock and agriculture. Mountain rivers, springs, and lake shores are natural water resources that ensure the sustainability of grassland life. Water is essential for livestock drinking and crop irrigation. The abundance of these sources also stimulates the economic development of grassland areas. Prairie families cultivate land near water sources, which increases their food production. The start and duration of the grazing season varies by geographic location. For example, in the southern regions of Azerbaijan, the grassland season starts in May and lasts until the end of September. During this period, the animals graze in the cool mountainous areas and gather food reserves for the winter months. At the same time, in

some regions, the grassland season lasts for a shorter time. This is due to the height of the mountains, climatic conditions and density of vegetation. High mountains are covered with snow more quickly in the summer months, which leads to a reduction in the duration of the grassland season. Grasslands are the economic basis of agricultural and animal husbandry activities in which the local people of Azerbaijan live. The development of cattle breeding in these areas forms the source of people's livelihood. The meadows located in the mountainous areas have high-quality pastures. Animals that graze here produce healthier and better quality meat, milk and other products. This has a positive effect on the local economy and enables agricultural products to be placed on the market. The steppe tradition is not only of geographical and economic importance, but also an important part of the cultural identity of the Azerbaijani people. The prairie season is symbolic of a lifestyle where families live and work together. Here, not only livestock grazing and agricultural work took place, but at the same time, the preservation of the cultural heritage of the people and its transmission between generations took place. The steppe life was also socially important, because at that time people came together and carried out various social and cultural activities of the society. For example, the grassland season was considered the time when weddings, holidays and other cultural events were held. In the life of the steppe, family and community associations were strengthened, and social relations were strengthened. In addition, the steppe culture occupied a large place in the literature, music and art of the Azerbaijani people. Epics, folk songs and narratives reflected the beauty and hardships of country life. Thus, the meadow was not only an area of economic activity, but also an important cultural and social event in the life of the people (Hüseynov, 2024).

1.Importance of Steppe Settlements of Azerbaijan: Economic, Ecological and Social Aspects

The steppe settlements of Azerbaijan have multifaceted importance. From an economic point of view, grassland regions have great potential for agriculture and especially livestock. These areas created ideal conditions for the development of cattle breeding, as it was possible for cattle to graze freely during the pasture season. Animal husbandry has been one of the main economic sectors in Azerbaijan since ancient times. Grazing animals in the grasslands was the source of livelihood for families, and products such as meat, milk, and wool were sold both in the domestic market and through trade routes to other regions. The grassland season increased economic activity in rural areas and ensured the abundance of traditional products in the markets. From the ecological point of view, Azerbaijan's grassland culture is noteworthy as an ideal example of sustainable agriculture. This system is based on the ecologically correct use

of natural resources by humans, thus ensuring the independent development of both humans and nature. One of the main principles of steppe culture is the free grazing of cattle on the steppe. This process not only aims to meet the nutritional needs of animals, but also stimulates the restoration of natural meadows and pastures. Grazing of animals on grasslands increases the biomass production of pastures, and creates conditions for the reproduction and regeneration of plants. Thus, the grassland system not only prevents soil depletion, but also protects the health of the ecosystem. In traditional animal husbandry practices, cyclic use of pastures is practiced, which facilitates re-vegetation. This process maintains the natural circulation of pastures, improves the quality of the soil and ensures the sustainability of local ecosystems. Families engaged in livestock farming during the grassland season use less arable land and have a balanced impact on nature. This preserves the natural fertility of the soil by using cropland residues and pastures in winter, along with free grazing of animals during the pasture period. The rest of the cultivated fields in winter makes it possible to restore the soil and increase its productivity in the future. This system creates conditions for agricultural activities to be more sustainable and ecologically compatible. Grassland culture also ensures sustainable use of water sources. Mountain rivers, springs and lake shores are the main sources of water for steppe life. These water sources are vital for drinking by animals, irrigating plants, and protecting grassland ecosystems. Appropriate management of water resources is based on traditional knowledge practiced by local people. In order to prevent depletion of water sources, families in the grasslands pay special attention to water conservation. Thus, sustainable protection of mountain rivers and springs increases the ecologically positive impact of this culture. Grassland culture is a system that increases the resilience of local ecosystems. According to the principles of biology, Livestock activity has a positive effect on the ecosystem and increases the diversity of local plant and animal species. This helps to maintain the natural balance and create an environment that is more resilient to climate change. At the same time, the biological diversity provided by the grassland system increases the health of the ecosystem, supports the efficient use of local resources and sustainable development (Güleç, 2015).

In the social aspect, steppe culture played a major role in the development of the social structures of the Azerbaijani people and strengthening of community unity. In the steppe, families lived and worked together, which strengthened both intra-family and intra-community relationships. During the grassland season, people gathered together and performed various social and cultural activities. Weddings, holidays and various traditions were performed here, which further strengthened the community's unity and cultural identity. In particular,

knowledge and experience were transferred between generations and traditions were kept alive through the steppe lifestyle. Thus, the steppe settlements of Azerbaijan are of great importance not only from the economic and ecological point of view, but also from the social and cultural point of view. These places were areas where people lived in harmony with nature, and played an important role in the social and cultural development of society. The steppe culture of Azerbaijan has its roots in the ancient nomadic and semi-nomadic way of life. The mountainous regions of the Caucasus were one of the main settlements of nomads in the past, and the steppes were an important part of this nomadic lifestyle. The features of Azerbaijan's geography — high mountains, wide pastures and favorable climatic conditions — created fertile conditions for the development of steppe life. The natural conditions of the mountainous regions provided the nomads with cool air and abundant pastures in the summer months, which played an important role in the development of cattle breeding. Since ancient times, the Turks from Central Asia have been engaged in animal husbandry and nomadic lifestyle, and have continued the steppe and winter culture. Although the steppes were their temporary settlements, these places became the center of agriculture, trade and cultural relations. For the nomads, the steppe was not just a place, but also a system of living together with natural resources, keeping animals and performing economic activities. The mountainous regions of Azerbaijan, especially the Greater Caucasus and Lesser Caucasus mountain ranges, are one of the main areas where the steppe culture spread. These mountain ranges are known for their high altitudes, magnificent natural landscapes and diverse ecosystems. The height of the mountains varies between 2000-4000 meters, which plays an important role in the formation of steppe life. The Great Caucasus Range forms the northern border of Azerbaijan, where there are high peaks, valleys and river valleys. The climate in this region varies depending on the altitude. Although mild climate prevails at low altitude, cold and humid climatic conditions are observed in high mountains. This creates ideal conditions for cattle grazing in the grassland season. The Lesser Caucasus is located south of the Greater Caucasus, where the mountains rise to a height of 1000-2500 meters. The mild climate of this region ensures abundant rain in the summer months and the development of high pastures. Such conditions are favorable for the development of livestock and vegetation (Güleç, 2015). The Karabakh steppes and mountainous areas of the Nakhchivan region are the place where the steppe culture of Azerbaijan is preserved and developed alive. These grasslands are rich in different biotopes, including alpine meadows, subalpine forests and stony meadows. This vegetation provides high-quality pastures for cattle feeding. In addition, the presence of mineral wealth in the mountainous areas of Nakhchivan allows further development of cattle breeding activities in this region. The abundance of underground water

sources supports the irrigation of pastures and the development of plants. The way of life in the steppe is built on the foundation of livestock culture. Families migrating to the mountains in the summer brought their cattle with them and engaged in animal husbandry in the grasslands. Animal husbandry was the main economic activity in the steppe culture of Azerbaijan. This was not limited to meat and dairy products; wool, leather and other livestock products were also produced in the steppe. In the steppe life, animal husbandry was not only the main source of livelihood for families, but also became an integral part of social and cultural life. Food production in the steppe is also one of the main elements of this lifestyle. During the steppe season, fresh dairy products obtained from animals - cheese, yogurt, buttermilk and butter - occupied an important place in the daily diet of the families living in the steppe. Livestock products were produced both for domestic use and for trade. Cattle-raising families kept the products obtained in the pastures as a reserve during the winter months, and sometimes sold them to the surrounding regions through trade. This food production played an important role in establishing not only economic, but also cultural and social relations. The organization of family life in the steppe required a special discipline. In the grasslands, nomads built large tents, which were the main living space of the family. Tents were built and installed according to the daily needs of the families living in the steppe. These tents were considered a central place for both social events and daily activities. During the grazing season, families worked together, tending livestock and producing food. The division of labor among family members ensured the continuity of the pastoral life. Men were engaged in animal husbandry, while women were engaged in food preparation and household work. The children learn the skills related to cattle breeding and prepare to continue these traditions in the future. The way of life organized in the steppe was not only an economic activity, but also a valuable tradition that shaped the culture of the Azerbaijani people and was passed on from generation to generation. This tradition strengthened the relationship of nomads living in harmony with nature with the ecosystem and allowed them to create their own culture.

In recent decades, the rapidly developing urbanization and modern lifestyle have had a serious impact on the survival of Azerbaijani steppe traditions. Economic and social changes, especially mass migration from rural areas to cities, have led to the weakening of the steppe culture. The orientation of the population to urban life has pushed traditional agricultural and animal husbandry activities to the background. As a result of this, it became difficult to live the steppe culture, and among the new generations, the knowledge and traditions related to the steppe began to be gradually forgotten. Along with urbanization and modern lifestyle,

fundamental changes in people's work and lifestyle also took place. Since it was difficult, if not impossible, to engage in animal husbandry and nomadism in the urban environment, people began to move away from these ancient occupations. Instead of families migrating to the highlands during the grassland season, people have started to live a different life in a stable urban environment with employment and the help of modern technologies. At the same time, traditional animal husbandry activities have decreased in rural areas, and technological and industrial developments have reduced interest in these areas (Güleç, 2015). In modern times, the interest in country life has decreased sharply, as the younger generations are mainly focused on urban life and are more familiar with urbanization. This causes the steppe traditions to be limited to the older generation and face the danger of being forgotten in the future. Because the social norms and lifestyle associated with urban life are different from the skills and philosophy of life required on the prairie, the transmission of this culture between generations has weakened. The decline of traditional grassland areas is one of the other main reasons for the decline of grassland culture. Although there are vast grasslands in the mountainous regions of Azerbaijan, modern economic development projects and urbanization have led to the loss of some of these areas. Traditional pastoral settlements are sometimes sacrificed for infrastructural development and agricultural expansion. Roads, industrial facilities and other development projects, sometimes built in mountainous areas, have led to a gradual reduction of grassland areas. At the same time, this decline coincides with a weakening of interest in grassland culture. Among the younger generations, the difficult conditions of steppe life and its location in remote regions are one of the main reasons for reducing interest in this culture. As sources of income and living conditions are more attractive in cities, people are reluctant to settle in the grasslands, and as a result, interest in the grassland culture is waning. This can lead to the gradual forgetting of steppe traditions and the fact that this historical culture remains only in memories. The decline of grassland traditions can lead not only to the loss of cultural heritage, but also to environmental and economic impacts. Natural vegetation and ecosystems are also changing as a result of the reduction of livestock in the grasslands. As traditional grassland habitats are displaced by nomads, the natural balance of the highlands is disrupted, which can lead to long-term environmental problems. At the same time, the decline of cattle-breeding and agricultural activities in the steppe has an impact on some areas of the economy.

As a result, the forgetting of steppe traditions poses a serious threat to our cultural heritage, as well as economically and ecologically. In order to prevent this, measures should be taken to protect and preserve ancient steppe traditions and projects should be implemented to transfer this culture to younger generations. This festival, which has been held in the country

since 2016, is organized to preserve and present to society the traditional elements of pastoral life, ancient professions related to cattle breeding, as well as national traditions. The main organizer of the festival is the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan and other cultural centers. The purpose of the festival is not only to keep the past alive, but also to ensure the vitality of this culture by promoting the steppe life. Various national sports (wrestling, archery, and horse racing), craft exhibitions, music and dance performances, as well as traditional pastoral activities such as herdsmanship are on display here. The festival promotes not only the historical-cultural aspects but also the philosophy of living close to nature, ecological sustainability and knowledge of agriculture. Animal husbandry, weaving, carpet weaving and other prairie-related arts are brought back to the fore during the festival. The works of traditional artisans and handmade products are exhibited and sold at the festival, which creates an important platform for the economic support and development of those traditions. Increasing interest in these arts is not only limited to the protection of cultural value, but at the same time, it creates conditions for the adoption of these professions by the younger generations (<https://www.myf.az>). The National Grassland Festival plays an important role in the preservation and restoration of deep-rooted steppe traditions of Azerbaijan. Although the steppe culture, which has been important for the people of Azerbaijan throughout history, declined due to the influence of various historical and economic factors, thanks to the festival, it was possible to revive this heritage. Within the framework of the festival, ancient professions, craft skills and elements of rural life are revived and presented to a wide audience. This helps to ensure that the traditions in the people's memory are not forgotten and passed on between generations. One of the most important functions of the National Grassland Festival is to revive the grassroots culture and increase interest in this culture in the society. The festival allows especially young people to get acquainted with the steppe lifestyle, to learn and value these ancient traditions. For young people growing up in the urban environment, the steppe lifestyle can sometimes seem distant and unknown, but through the festival, they get a chance to get to know the activities carried out in the steppe, animal husbandry traditions, cultural and social relations more closely. Various competitions, games, seminars and exhibitions organized by the festival increases the interest in the steppe culture among young people. Horse racing, national games and other traditional events are not only for entertainment purposes, but also a means to emphasize the physical and spiritual value of these traditions. Along with this, the traditional technologies and knowledge used in the steppe are also transferred to new generations through the trainings and master classes held at the festival (<https://www.myf.az>).

The festival also aims to increase the interest in steppe culture among broad sections of the society and to show that this culture is still relevant in modern times. The nomadic lifestyle should not be perceived only as a part of the past; on the contrary, the values of this culture, such as ecological sustainability, healthy lifestyle and living in harmony with nature, are also important for modern times. The National Grassland Festival emphasizes how important this culture is for modern society and creates an opportunity for the revival of grassland traditions as a part of the cultural heritage of the society. The festival offers a unique experience for local and foreign tourists with an interest in grassland culture. The revitalization of historical steppe settlements together with the natural beauty of mountainous regions creates both cultural and ecotourism opportunities for tourists. The originality and natural lifestyle offered by the steppe culture is attractive to modern travelers. Within the framework of the festival, tourists can visit the nomads' tents built on the plains, watch the traditional livestock and agricultural processes, participate in national games and musical performances, and gain an unforgettable experience. These events also make the festival attractive for those who want to see the historical richness of the ancient nomadic culture of Azerbaijan. Thanks to the National Steppe Festival, the villages and towns located in the mountainous areas of Azerbaijan develop in terms of tourism, which has a positive effect on the local economy. Especially hotels, restaurants, souvenir shops and other tourist facilities located in the regions benefit from the influx of tourists. In addition, various exhibitions and events held during the festival create an additional source of income for the local people by presenting their knowledge and skills on the steppe life to a wide audience. Grassland tourism opens wide opportunities in terms of developing tourism, as well as stimulating agriculture and socio-economic development of regions (<https://culture.gov.az/az/umumi>). Presentation of various traditional products during the National Grassland Festival provides an opportunity to promote local cultural heritage and expand economic activities. One of the highlights of the festival is the introduction of national dishes, especially food products that have a special place in the life of the steppe. Dairy products such as yogurt, cheese, ayran, as well as other food products produced by natural methods, are widely exhibited here. This allows tourists to get acquainted with the rich cuisine of Azerbaijan. In addition, handicrafts and hand-made products take place in the festival. Examples of carpet weaving, pottery, woodcarving and other traditional arts are highly sought after by both local and foreign visitors. In addition to selling their products, artisans demonstrate the process of making them, thus supporting the survival and transmission of these arts to future generations. Also, the sale of these products improves the economic situation of local artisans and gives them an incentive to continue their work. Along with the presentation of traditional products,

the commercial aspect of the festival is also of great importance. Visitors have the opportunity to purchase both local agricultural products and handicrafts during the festival. This creates an additional source of income for small and medium-sized businesses operating in the field of agriculture and crafts. Markets organized within the framework of the festival not only increase the sale of local products, but also revive the cultural and economic life of those regions (<https://azertag.az/xeber>). The National Grassland Festival is an original project conceived and developed in the format of a large-scale hand festival in order to keep alive the steppe culture and elat traditions, which are among the lifestyle and unique cultural examples of the Azerbaijani people formed over centuries. The National Grassland Festival will popularize ancient handicrafts, ancient folk games, national sports, equestrian national games and horse-riding in the country, expand the cultural relations of the Turkish noble countries and peoples, and achieve the strengthening of bonds and solidarity between peoples; aims to host large traditional international projects by continuously organizing the festival (<https://culture.gov.az>). The author of the idea and the project leader of the National Grassland Festival is Muzadil Hasanov, the vice-president of the Javad Khan History and Culture Foundation. The 1st National Grassland Festival will be held on July 26-28, 2019 in the Duzyurd-Miskinli grassland area of Gadabay (postponed due to the pandemic in 2020-2021), the II National Grassland Festival will be held on July 29-31, 2022 in the Khan Khan area of Goygol district. The III National Grassland Festival was held on July 5-7, 2024 in the area of the mysterious Khan Grassland of Goygol district. The Khan Plateau is located 23 km from the city of Ganja, near Hajikand settlement, in the historic Sariyal district, on the road to the famous Javad Khan peak. In general, hundreds of foreign specialists and participants representing 24 countries, musicians, athletes, official and honorary guests, more than 350 thousand guests from many regions of the country and abroad participated in the festival. The National Grassland Festival consists of several components and sections that are closely related to each other:

-Cultural part; national dances, exchange of lovers, folk songs, cultural programs and exemplary performances of representatives of various ethnic groups living in Azerbaijan (Avars, Molokans, Talish, Jews, Lezgis, Sakhurs, etc.) as a visual demonstration of tolerance and multiculturalism, etc.

-Ethnographic part; impaling, locksmith, azdalimez, spraying, falling in love, etc. such as old folk games, examples of country cooking, demonstration of carpet making, rug making and felt making, etc.

- National Meadow Games; competitions in traditional national sports based on ancient roots, blanket horse races, equestrian games, etc. (<https://multicultural.az>).

-Eco-agro-ethno tourism; for tourists, the opportunity to stay in old traditional-style yurts and huts, to lead the same lifestyle as grazing (cows or sheep/goats), milking them, mowing grass (making fodder), taking care of horses, playing the river, doing applied arts to be etc.

- Agriculture; "Pasture bed" Traditional keeping of various types of local breeds of animals for the pasture and in natural conditions, exhibition-competition of rams, gurdbasars (shepherd dogs) and local draft horses, pasture life, etc.

- "Turksoy" International part; Speeches of Turkic peoples and representatives of the country on cultural and sports programs. Demonstration of unique cultural-ethnographic features, national cuisine, exhibition of applied art samples, etc.

- Scientific-practical part; Organization of conferences and seminars on "Yaylaq and Elat tradition", presentation of various research, scientific and artistic works in this field

- Military-patriotic section; Yaylag Camp aimed at providing special military-patriotic training of young people (<https://culture.gov.az/ru>).

Conclusion

The steppe culture of Azerbaijan is a rich heritage with historical, geographical and cultural aspects. As part of the nomadic and semi-nomadic way of life, the concept of grassland played an important role in the formation of the cultural identity of the people and the development of economic activities. These places are important not only for livestock and agricultural activities, but also in terms of strengthening social and cultural ties, keeping traditions alive and strengthening community unity. However, due to factors such as urbanization, urbanization and climate change in modern times, steppe traditions are facing serious threats. The orientation of the younger generations to urban life and the forgetting of the steppe culture are serious challenges for the preservation of this heritage. Therefore, events such as the National Grassland Festival are important in terms of keeping the steppe culture alive, passing it on to younger generations, and restoring this heritage. The festival is not only the revival of old traditions, but also attracts the attention of local and foreign tourists and shows how important the steppe culture is in modern society. shows that It creates a unique platform for increasing tourism potential, revitalizing the local economy and introducing rural life to young people. Appropriate measures should be taken to ensure the sustainability of steppe culture, and strategies should be developed to preserve, restore and pass on steppe traditions to younger generations. In this way, the steppe culture, which is a part of the cultural heritage of the Azerbaijani people, will be lived and passed on to future generations.

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https://azertag.az/xeber/goygol_rayonunda_novbeti_milli_yaylaq_festivali_teskil_olu

<https://culture.gov.az/az/shusha-ili/14574>

<https://multicultural.az/az/medeni-mukhteliflik/1162/ii-milli-yaylaq-festivali->

<https://culture.gov.az/ru>

Tika, <https://tika.gov.tr/detail>

Ekler*

1. *Azerbaycan'da Milli Yayla Festivali*



2. *Azerbaycan'da Milli Yayla Festivali*



3. *Azerbaycan'da Milli Yayla Festivali*



* Bu görseller Tika, <https://tika.gov.tr/detail> sitesinden alınmıştır.