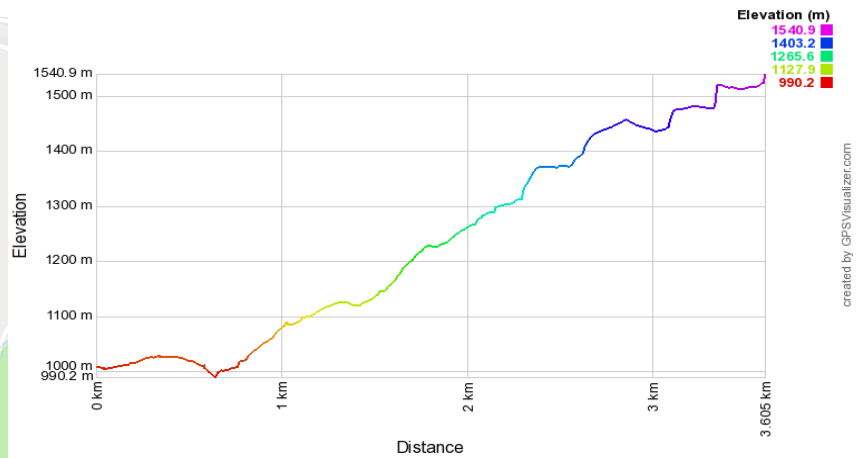
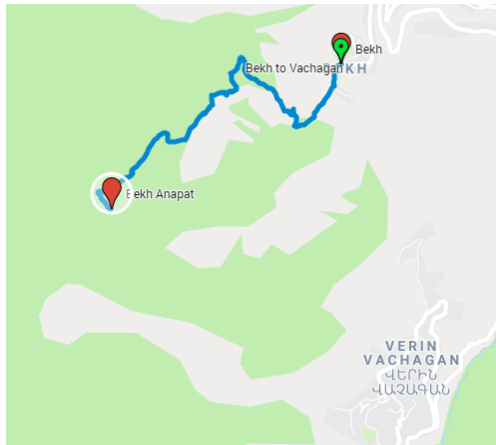


Section Seven Bekh Villiage - Bekh Anapat Monastery

Distance 3.6 km **Time** 2 hours **Difficulty** Medium



General Description This section of the trail takes you on a pilgrimage to the legendary, yet still relatively unknown, Bekh Napat (hermitage). This 10th century monastery is located in the depths of the forest above Bekh village, located west from the center of Kapan. This hidden monastery, only accessible on foot or horseback, allows you to escape from everyday distractions and retreat to ease your mind in this breathtaking valley. Take your time and meditate or just stop by to see this historical masterpiece. It has been marked as medium difficulty because of the long ascent up the hill to the monastery, lasting at least 2.5 hours. Fortunately, the trail is almost entirely in the forest so you are shaded from the heat of the sun during the summer months.



The trail embarks from the village of Bekh, near the central square where the church is located. Look out for signposts on walls and electricity pilons which show you the way out of the village.



Approximately 5/10 minutes after departing the village you will see a stature on your left of a kamancha, a famous Armenian stringed instrument. Its body has a ball shape (is spherical). In Persian, the word means 'a little bow'. Musicians play the instrument on their knees (vertically). Then the player turns Kamancha to meet the bow rather than guiding the bow itself across the strings.



About 15 minutes into the walk (after the brook – you will rejoin this later just before the hermitage), but before you start the ascent, you will come to a rocky outcrop, on which is placed a khachkar with stone steps leading up to it. The path goes to the right as you look up the hill.



As the path goes left up the hill – winds up the hill through the forest (parallel to the brook – not in sight but same direction), follow the signs affixed to trees that are placed at regular intervals.



About 1.5 hours into the hike, and 100m before the monastery, there is a small pipe for fresh water. Again the flow is quite weak during summer to you may need to be patient to fill your bottles.



Congratulations, you have arrived at the Bekh Napat monastery, which dates back over 1000 years, however there are stones that date back to the first century and even ones that pre-date the Christian era. The Organization Terre et Culture (<http://www.terreetculture.org>) is working for four weeks each summer on this site to restore and preserve the cultural heritage of the site.

Have a look around the impressive archeological site, have a break or even lunch. Be careful while exploring the ruins as stones can still fall down.



It is worth also going into the second door on the right. This leads you to the dining room, where the monks stored food. Further down the hill is a stone hermitage that accommodated the monks, who lived a very ascetic lifestyle.

It is possible to set up camp at the old monastery and there is an established fireplace for cooking. Near this monastery there is forest that is natural and untouched by human activities.

Acknowledgements

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