

# APARAN, LAVASH, AND OUTER SPACE

*Posted on March 24, 2015 by Keghart*



Category: [Opinions](#)



**Joseph Dagdigian**, MA, 24 March 2015

The city of Aparan lies on one of Armenia's main north-south highways, about 45 miles north of Yerevan. The road is heavily travelled with much of the traffic stopping at the popular bakery on the highway there. Within the bakery are a number of tonirs used to bake bread.

**Removing baked bread from a tonir, Aparan bakery**

Tonirs are large beer-keg shaped clay barrels traditionally fired by wood at the bottom of the barrel. As a concession to modernity, however, these tonirs are fired by gas. Flattened dough is slapped onto the inside wall of the tonir, and a few minutes later the baked bread is peeled off. Available at the bakery is a large assortment of breads as well as sweet and savory pastries. Aparan is noted as well for its pure, refreshing water – available at fountains along the street.

**Joseph Dagdigian**, MA, 24 March 2015

The city of Aparan lies on one of Armenia's main north-south highways, about 45 miles north of Yerevan. The road is heavily travelled with much of the traffic stopping at the popular bakery on the highway there. Within the bakery are a number of tonirs used to bake bread.

**Removing baked bread from a tonir, Aparan bakery**

Tonirs are large beer-keg shaped clay barrels traditionally fired by wood at the bottom of the barrel. As a concession to modernity, however, these tonirs are fired by gas. Flattened dough is slapped onto the inside wall of the tonir, and a few minutes later the baked bread is peeled off. Available at the bakery is a large assortment of breads as well as sweet and savory pastries. Aparan is noted as well for its pure, refreshing water – available at fountains along the street.

Other claims to fame are Aparan's ancient tombs on a hill to the west of town, though I think these are seldom visited, as well as Aparan's <sup>4th century</sup> basilica.

Aparan's major attraction, however, is its memorial commemorating the Battle of Bash Aparan. This was the site of one of three heroic battles in May 1918 against Turkish armies which had invaded Caucasian Armenia. The Turkish intent was to finish off the remnants of the Armenian nation in the aftermath of 1915. The two other battles were at Sardarapat and Karakillisa (now Vanatsor). Three Armenian victories saved the Caucasian Armenians from annihilation and led to Armenia's declaration of independence on May 28, 1918--the first independent Armenian state in over 600 years. Overlooking the Bash Aparan memorial is the tomb of General Dro Kanayan--an Armenian freedom fighter and the commander who led the fateful battle there.



### **Aparan bakery**

Passing through Aparan on the way home I stopped to get some lavash bread (large thin sheets of bread) at the bakery. I ordered three sheets of lavash, figuring that would last a week or so. Much to my surprise the sheets of lavash were the size of tablecloths. As a result the lavash lasted well over a month, but remained edible. I mentioned this to my friend VT:

**JD: *"I just finished some lavash I bought over a month ago. I'm surprised that it was still edible!"***

**VT:** "Of course, lavash lasts forever. When it dries out just moisten it a bit. By the way, have you seen photos of those astronauts and cosmonauts in space?"

**JD: *"Yes, on TV. Why?"***

**VT:** "They're fools, do you hear me, fools! They squeeze their dinners out of toothpaste tubes! When we Armenians go into space we're going to take lavash. It lasts forever."

**JD: *"And I suppose when we land on the moon – we'll build a tonir?"***



