

IRAN



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Labbaika ya Abbas
(a.s)!

We will never forget
your bravery and loyalty.

Protector of Zainab (a.s),
I feel you are always
there protecting me.

Always you are the one
I will go to first as the
guardian of and gateway
towards my Imam
Hussain (a.s).

Door of our needs, I
know you are always
listening to help me with
my troubles.
But what can we do for
you?

How can we ever do
enough to thank you for
your efforts in protecting
the Imam of your time,
the women and children?

We will continue to shout
our allegiance as loud
as we can and mourn
your martyrdom from
the depth of our hearts.



Profile

The Cultural Council of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Nairobi promotes mutual understanding and cultural co-operation among people of Kenya and Iran in line with the principles of the cultural agreement between Iran and Kenya.

The Cultural Council aims to create enduring partnership between our two friendly states' cultures by creating opportunities to connect with the latest skills, ideas and experience from Iran.

Activities

Library:

The Cultural Council has a very rich library consisting of myriad of books in the field of Persian language and literature. Besides, books on human sciences, history of Iran, Islamic studies, world history, religion, Islamic philosophy, a large number of books on social sciences, political science, culture and art are also available for readers and scholars.

Film and Art Division:

The film and art division consists of video and audio tapes of classical Persian music, art books, calligraphy models, attractive sceneries, handicrafts and various prominent Iranian films. In addition, film festivals and cultural exhibitions in various parts of Kenya are also organised by this Office.

Public Relations Department:

The department arranges meetings with prominent personalities from the domain of Kenya art and culture. Organises seminars, round table discussions and cultural programmes.

Information Centre:

The centre provides necessary information about Iranian art, culture and all other facets of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Distribution Unit:

This unit is responsible for providing Persian books, periodicals, magazines to the Persian loving people.

Persian Language Teaching Centre:

This unit is responsible for organising Beginners, Intermediate and advance level Persian courses for interested students. Besides, the unit has introduced Persian language teaching programme in Kenyan Universities.

Scholarship for Kenyan Students

We offer scholarships to study in the Islamic Republic of Iran to pursue either Bachelors, Masters or PhD. Please visit www.irankenya.org for more information.

Translation Unit:

The Cultural Council also does translation of books from Persian to English.

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EMBASSY OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

NAIROBI-KENYA



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Editorial

Dear Readers, the Iran Mirror team is so glad to share Iranian Stories with you in our digital platform. I hope you enjoy the articles in our October 2019 digital copy.

In this edition we give you a chance to peer into some exciting stories including Arbaeen, the Journey of the lifetime for not only Shia adherents but also Justice loving individuals from across the religious divide.

Arbaeen is the world's biggest peaceful gathering held annually around the holy shrine of Imam Hussain, in the city of Karbala, Iraq.

Not only does the congregation exceed the number of visitors to Mecca (by a factor of five, in fact). In short, Arbaeen dwarfs every other rally on the planet, reaching over twenty million last year. That is a staggering %60 of Iraq's entire population, and it is growing year after year.

Imam Hussein (A.H), is revered by Muslims as the "Prince of Martyrs". He was killed in Karbala on a day which became known as Ashura, the tenth day of the Islamic month of Muharram, having refused to pledge allegiance to the corrupt and tyrannical caliph, Yazid.

One of the most everlasting messages of Ashura to humanity either Muslims or non-Muslims that is very enlightening and useful is the very saying of Imam Hussein (AS): "If you do not have religion, at least be free in this world". Imam Hussein (AS) points out that humanity is a very valuable criterion and apart from any religion or ideology that men follow and regardless of whether they have belief and faith in God or not, there is an inner gem

inside them called as humanity and if man refers to it, he can find the right and true path and distinguish the right from the wrong with the aid of the very inner gem.

Also read an exciting Piece on the ancient art of making ships in southern Iran

If you are planning to travel to the southernmost parts of the country, we suggest visiting the Persian Gulf in trace of seeing the process of crafting and sailing traditional Lenj boats, which has passed down from father to son. The hand-built vessels are used for sea journeys, trading, fishing and pearl diving.

And among the scintillating stories in our October edition, we have a story on Lavash Flatbread, an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Iranians

As an intangible cultural heritage, the culture of making Lavash flatbread and sharing it in Iran has been common and ongoing in different parts of the country for many years.

It's around 800 years that making Lavash Flatbread has become popular among people. Iranians pronounce it "Lavash", "Levash" and "Lebash" in different dialects. Others call it "Tanury" bread. In Armenia, they call it "Laavaash" and in Georgia, "Armenian Lavash". Another type of Lavash known as "Saaji Lavash" has long been made inside people's houses in Qazvin, West of Tehran.

Hope you will enjoy your read.

Mahmoud Majlesain

Cultural Counsellor

Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Nairobi-Kenya

Lessons of Ashura



The day of Ashura for millions of Muslims around the globe is a day of mourning the calamity that befell Hussain, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and his family and companions in a land called Karbala. History calls it a battle but it shared more similarity to a massacre, as the army of Yazid (the Caliph of the time) descended on the camp of Hussain (who refused to pay allegiance to a corrupt leader), and the hundred-odd family and companions of Hussain heading out one by one to the battlefield to fight and ultimately be slaughtered by an army thousands strong.

The battle ended with Hussain requesting water for his six-month-old infant (the camp had been without water for three days beneath the blistering heat), only to see his child killed by an arrow, before burying him and heading out to the battle and ultimately his fate. After his death he was beheaded, and the camp that contained his sister, wives, daughters, and other female family members was ransacked, before they were taken out as captives.

There are an incredible amount of lessons that all Muslims

can take back from the day of Ashura.

If we think about the last words of Imam Hussein (AS) before his martyrdom, we will realize why he says: “O Lord! Surrender to your order and I know and worship no Lord but You. You help whoever seeks help.”

Ashura and Humanity

One of the most everlasting messages of Ashura to humanity either Muslims or non-Muslims that is very

enlightening and useful is the very saying of Imam Hussein (AS): “If you do not have religion, at least be free in this world “. Imam Hussein (AS) points out that humanity is a very valuable criterion and apart from any religion or ideology that men follow and regardless of whether they have belief and faith in God or not, there is an inner gem inside them called as humanity and if man refers to it, he can find the right and true path and distinguish the right from the wrong with the aid of the very inner gem.

Elsewhere, Imam Hussein (AS) says: “Religion should not be just a word on your tongue”. It means that you should not have a superficial attitude towards the religion, but, you should make efforts to manifest it in your life. The manifestation of the religion in the life of Imam Hussein (AS) is the greatness of his soul, the humane honor and dignity, not confining the human soul in the trap of desires and temptations, and not surrendering to whatever humiliates humanity and the human soul and for this reason, Imam Hussein (AS) says: “Death for the sake of honor is the eternal life”.

Ashura and Hope

Imam Hussein (AS) gathers his family before his martyrdom and says: “Be ready for difficulties and hardship and be sure that God will keep away enemies’ sedition from you.” Although, Imam Hussein (AS) knows what difficult conditions await his family, he makes them prepared to face such disasters and as the head of the family, he remembers to his family members the mercy of God and remind that everything depends on the God’s will. It has a family message to those who encounter problems in their life and lose their hope and control. In the most difficult situation, Imam Hussein (AS) encourages his family and when Hazret Zeinab (S) is impatient, Imam (AS) puts his hand on his sister’s chest and says: “Lest Satan takes your patience”. These are the lessons we can learn from Ashura and make use of them in our life.

Ashura and Servitude

One of the most important messages of Ashura is theism. All difficulties and the tragedy of Ashura occurred because Imam Hussein (AS) just surrendered to the God’s order to remove the existing ignorance. If we think about the last words of Imam Hussein (AS) before his martyrdom, we will realize why he says: “O Lord ! I surrender to your order and I am content with your decree and I know and worship no lord but You. You help whoever seeks help.”

Consider that in our daily prayers, we say: “You alone we worship and You alone we ask for help”. How many of us pay attention to this phrase! whereas the

message of Imam Hussein (AS) in the last moments of his life was the very holy verse. It is exactly what is named as the spiritual health. The spiritual health means that our life has the Divine color and we gain spiritual freedom and get apart from everything but Allah and achieve the intellectual and practical theism. Unfortunately, there are people who forget God first when they face a problem in their life and seek help from others to solve their problems. The message of Ashura is resistance, patience, and hope and believing that God has power over everything. The man who reaches this level and manifests this message in his life will never surrender to injustice and tyranny, since, he has faith in God and believes that the right and truth is victorious ultimately. So, in this way, the message of Imam Hussein (AS) and Ashura changes the people’s life and it is also a solution to tolerate the hardships of today’s world.

Ashura and Freedom

The other main issue as one of the great messages of Ashura is the freedom of choice and decision-making. The night before Ashura, Imam Hussein (AS) gathers all of his companions and says: “I have a duty and these enemies are against me and if you stay, you will be killed too. There is no responsibility for you.” He turns off the lights and says: “Anyone who wants can return”. Do you know such freedom of choice during history? When Imam Hussein (AS) says: “I take my allegiance from you”, it means that he gives up what he has right to it. Imam(AS) intended to keep just people who were aware of the importance of the event and the nature of his deed. So, he said: “The few people who are with me should be the most vigilant men”. They were the people who were completely aware that Imam (AS) has rose up for the sake of God’s satisfaction and fulfillment of the Divine decision not because of worldly greed and desire for power.



If you do not have religion, at least be free in this world

Imam Hussein (a.s)



السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ

INTRODUCTION:

Mahdi TV is a commercial free to air television station. It is the flagship of Al Hujjah Group Limited which is a registered company and incorporated under the companies act, 2015 in Kenya. The company is a private entity and fully owned by Kenyans.

MISSION:

1. Religion
2. Morality
3. Hope
4. Awareness
5. Patriotism

VISION:

1. Promotion and Deepening of the religious knowledge in the society.
2. To provide a balanced product to our viewership which will not compromise the value systems that are in place
3. To promote African heritage, education, entertainment, information, social harmony and spiritual uplifting.

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1. We believe in the true moderate Islam as taught by Holy Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) and his Ahlul Bait (p.b.u.t.).
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3. We Honor and encourage creativity and Innovation.
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11. We promote positive social values.



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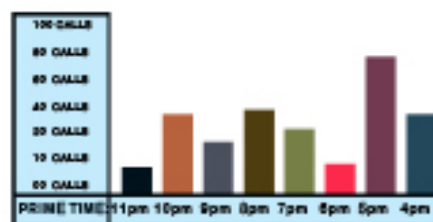
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Imam Hussain'S (as) reaction to the martyrdom of his African companion?



Imam Hussain (as)—the man who resisted, on his own, a world of opposition and a large population of wolf-likes and feared not a bit—was so moved in the face of emotional issues in a manner that would amaze us.

For instance, when John, the Ethiopian companion of Imam Hussain (as) was wounded during the battle and collapsed, Imam rushed to him. This brave African man was one of the sincerest adherents of the Ahlul Bayt, so he joined the companions of Imam Hussain (as). He might have been considered a very typical person in terms of his financial and social status, particularly among Arabs of that time, and not one of these well-known individuals.

Imam (as) rushed to him and sat by his side, in his time of need. John had no acquaintances, no children. No one was awaiting him, he had no one to weep and mourn over him. Hussain Ibn Ali (as) was so moved by John's martyrdom, in the same manner he was moved by the martyrdom of his son, Ali Akbar. He sat by him. Imam held John's head—

covered in blood—on his lap, but his heart wouldn't sooth. Then everyone saw Imam Hussain (as) holding John's face to his own face.

During the battle of Karbala many warriors were martyred. Great figures of Kufa like Habib Ibn Madhahir, Zuhair Ib Yaqin, others who were among the noble and well-known men of Kufa were martyred while supporting Imam Hussain (as). However, Imam Hussain (as) did not react to the martyrdom of these outstanding figures of Kufa, not even Habib Ibn Madhahir or Moslim Ibn Awsaja, the way he reacted to the martyrdom of his courageous African companion, John.

Ayatollah Khamenei
October 12, 1984



Imam Hussain (as) did not react to the martyrdom of these outstanding figures of Kufa, not even Habib Ibn Madhahir or Moslim Ibn Awsaja, the way he reacted to the martyrdom of his courageous African companion, John.

**Ayatollah
Khamenei**

Arbaeen: The Journey of a Lifetime



Imam Hussain left a timeless legacy of how one should face injustice: with defiance, courage, and honour



In a world where individualism reigns, the battle between justice and injustice is becoming increasingly difficult, and the ego of the rich increases while the happiness of the poor decreases, there stands a phenomena that challenges these traditions and offers an alternative reality: Arbaeen.

Arbaeen translates to “the fortieth” and marks the end of the annual mourning period for Hussain ibne Ali, the grandson of the Holy Prophet of Islam. Imam Hussain, the third Imam of Islam, was killed in the city of Karbala by the tyrant of the time, Yazid ibn Muawiya. Along with his family and 72 companions, he was mercilessly killed because he refused to legitimize Yazid’s corrupt rule by paying allegiance to him. Imam Hussain left a timeless legacy of how one should face

injustice: with defiance, courage, and honour. After his death, the women and children of his household were kept captive in Damascus. “The fortieth” also marks the day when these captives were finally released and able to walk back to the city of Karbala to mourn and pay their salutations to their loved ones.

To mark this historic event, every year, millions of people from around the world make their way to the city of Karbala in Iraq where Imam Hussain is buried. Most people make this journey by foot from the city of Najaf to Karbala, covering around 80 km in 3 to 4 days in order to reach the city of Karbala on the day of Arbaeen. This is both an act of servitude for Hussain and an imitation of how the family of Hussain walked to Karbala.

ARBAEEN OF IMAM HUSSEIN (A.S)

Humanitarian value

Over the years, this walk has developed into the largest annual peaceful gathering, with 20-25 million people walking towards the shrine of Imam Hussain. Along this journey one witnesses the grandest display of humanitarian values, such that it has left witnesses in absolute awe.

Along the road from Najaf to Karbala, the people of Iraq set up houses and tents called a “mawkab.” In these mawkabs they serve the visitors of Hussain. In their love for Hussain and his family they see this service as an honour and therefore refuse to accept any payment for the food, shelter, and help they provide. Along the entirety of the 80 km journey, you won't find a moment where you desire food, water, or shelter and it isn't given to you. You'll also find medical camps set up where doctors from around the world come to volunteer their services to all pilgrims. Where in the world would you find

people who are desperate to serve strangers in that manner? What other legacy has inspired people beyond the barriers of time to develop such humanistic values within them?

The Arbaeen walk is also a place where class, status, or race is irrelevant. Making this pilgrimage, there are elderly men/women walking with sticks, young children, wheelchair bound people pushing themselves, black people, Asians, white people, Middle Eastern people, Muslims, Christians, Jews, Sunnis, Shias, and even people of no faith — a truly universal event. The only characteristic given importance to is one's love for Hussain. You'll see former presidents, army generals, professors, and religious scholars sweeping the streets of Karbala. You'll see such people offering the pilgrims to massage their aching feet. Every person you meet will be displaying such high morals that it gives you the opportunity to reflect on your own morals and how much we are



The Arbaeen walk is also a place where class, status, or race is irrelevant... black people, Asians, white people, Middle Eastern people, Muslims, Christians, Jews, Sunnis, Shias, and even people of no faith — a truly universal event



Over the years, the visitors of Hussain have used the Arbaeen Walk to make a strong statement to the tyrants and oppressors of the time



lacking in sincerity and services to humanity.

These qualities that the pilgrims of Imam Hussain develop are actually a testament to the values that Hussain stood for and represented. This is because his pilgrims adopt these qualities within them with the knowledge that Hussain loved compassion towards one another, unity within society, offering assistance to those in need, etc. They therefore hope that by acting in the manner which Hussain wanted society to be, and refraining from the things he despised such as corruption, cheating, lying, etc., they can please their beloved Hussain.

Inner progression

Throughout this walk, travellers are given the opportunity to place the story of Karbala in perspective and use it to contemplate and reflect on their life. The crux of Karbala was a battle between good and evil, righteousness and falsehood. When one spends 3 days walking toward the man who succeeded in this battle, they naturally question where they stand in this battle today. Are their actions placing them on the side of Hussain or Yazid? Have they raised their voice against the oppressors of today like Hussain did then?

During this walk, one has to be prepared to give up many luxuries that we perceive as necessities; in actuality, these commodities are merely materialistic — small things like

a soft bed (you sleep on thin mattresses on the floor) or personal food choice (you have to eat what is being served). Despite this, during the entire walk, you will not hear one person complaining because once these other commodities are removed, one is able to directly communicate with their inner self. For the first time in many years, there is no superficial stimulus trying to make you happy; instead, the organic source of human happiness that come from love, compassion towards fellow human beings is allowing your internal self to feel a rare sense of contentment. Some may say you can gain inner peace through praying or meditating, but all of those acts encompass an interaction between yourself and a higher power whereas the Arbaeen walk allows you to reach your inner self while remaining attuned to your fellow humans and broader society. You are being internally touched but not in isolation, rather in sync with others. In mainstream society, with the rise of individualism, people claim to find contentment when they move away from people. If we were to continue to find inner peace through other people, even strangers (as is the case during the Arbaeen Walk), then society could function with greater peace.

Political Statement

Over the years, the visitors of Hussain

ARBAEEN OF IMAM HUSSEIN (A.S)

have used the Arbaeen Walk to make a strong statement to the tyrants and oppressors of the time. During Saddam's reign over Iraq, he had banned people from visiting Hussain or taking part in the walk. Although during this time people still risked their lives to visit Hussain, it was after his fall that the tradition of walking to Karbala truly re-emerged. But even today, the infestation of ISIS within the lands of Iraq had made visiting Hussain a risk. One of the years during ISIS's rule, they had threatened to bomb the visitors. That specific year, the Arbaeen Walk saw the greatest rise in pilgrims. People walked in millions towards Hussain and sent the message to ISIS and any bearers of injustice that the message of Hussain lives on. They showed them that lovers of Hussain don't falter in the face of oppression; rather, they look it in the eyes and destroy it with their courage and hope, just like Hussain ibne Ali did 14 centuries ago. This year, with the fall of ISIS in Iraq, the atmosphere was of victory and sheer happiness.

The use of the Arbaeen walk as a political statement was initiated by the revolutionary sister of Imam Hussain, Zainab binte Ali. When she was made to walk in shackles from Karbala to Kufa, then to Damascus, she didn't remain

silent; instead, she spoke to the onlookers and told them what had happened on the plains of Karbala. She let them know that her brother was beheaded because he stood for the common man. Then, when she was bought in to the palace of Yazid, she delivered such fiery speeches that her words were said to cause the collapse of Yazid's empire as she exposed him to the people. These visitors keep the legendary Zainab in their mind and with every step, they vow to continue her legacy today.

The story of Karbala and the remembrance of it through Arbaeen processions is something that has been cruelly hidden from the rest of the world. Tyrants of every era have recognised the power it possesses to ignite revolutionary spirits within humans and have therefore tried to restrict its magnitude and influence. But to their dismay, they have failed miserably. Every year more and more people are learning about Imam Hussain and the Arbaeen processions. Seeing millions upon millions of people from every corner of the world walking towards Hussain one thing was certain, the message of Hussain lives on and Hussain himself lives on in the hearts of those walking towards his shrine.



The Arbaeen walk is also a place where class, status, or race is irrelevant.

Making this pilgrimage, there are elderly men/ women walking with sticks, young children, wheelchair bound people pushing themselves, black people, Asians, white people, Middle Eastern people, Muslims, Christians, Jews, Sunnis, Shias, and even people of no faith — a truly universal event



7 facts by Ayatullah Khamenei: Can hijab save Western women?



Hijab gives women freedom and an identity. In spite of the dim-witted and superficial propaganda campaigns of materialistic people, hijab does not shackle women.

Ayatullah Khamenei



During the hundreds of years of oppression that the patriarchal Western civilization imposed on the female gender and particularly on Western women, some movements were launched by women to revive their rights. One of these movements is the “#Me Too” movement which was initially launched by famous Western women who had experienced humiliation and sexual harassment. But, will this movement find the cause of this human disaster and the real solution to it? The following is a collection of excerpts from Ayatollah Khamenei’s statements on “Islam’s outlook on women”-- the outlook that the patriarchal Western civilization has prevented from being heard by the world, by means of hassles and ample cants.

Does hijab prevent or accelerate women’s partaking in social-political activities?

There were some people who thought that as long as women wore hijab, they would not be able to enter different social and political arenas. In the case of the resistance that led to the Islamic Revolution, I know for a fact that in certain parts of the country our women entered the arena earlier than our men. They arranged street protests earlier than men. The same is true of different other events which took place after the victory of the Islamic Revolution and during the Sacred Defense Era.

Hijab gives women freedom and an identity. In spite of the dim-witted and superficial propaganda campaigns of materialistic people, hijab does not shackle women. By ignoring hijab and failing to cover what Allah the Exalted has asked them to cover, women undermine their own



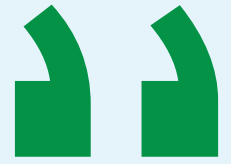
dignity and value. Hijab brings about dignity. It makes women more valuable. It increases women's dignity and respect. Therefore, it is necessary to appreciate hijab and to be thankful to Islam for emphasizing hijab. Hijab is among the blessings of God.

By baring women, Western civilization does not seek to give freedom to women

From the western viewpoint, the reason why women should not wear a chador and why they should not wear hijab is not that it wants them to be free. You say that you can have freedom with hijab as well. The West has a different opinion. It wants women to entertain men's eyes and it wants to use them in an illegitimate way. It wants women to have a special appearance in society. This is the greatest insult to women. Of course, they cover it up with certain beautiful words and they give it different names.

If West aims to give women freedom, why does it ban hijabi girls from universities?

Hijab is an honor for the person who observes it. A woman's hijab is an honor for her. In the past, in most countries - I say most countries because I do not know about all counties - even in Europe until two or three hundred years ago, aristocratic women used to wear hijab (veil) on their faces. Perhaps you have noticed this in some historical movies. They used to wear a kind of hijab on their faces so as to stop others from seeing them. This is an honor for women. In ancient Persia, the wives of aristocrats and senior officials used to wear hijab. But the wives of ordinary people did not all wear hijab, and there was no obligation to do so. Then Islam stepped in and abolished all these discriminations and said that women must wear hijab. It meant that the right to wear hijab was for all women. That was an Islamic view [that brought about this change].



Hijab is an honor for the person who observes it. A woman's hijab is an honor for her.

Ayatullah Khamenei





روزگار خیزد



Now they accuse us of violating women's rights. They are the ones who have to be condemned. They are the ones who must justify why they have used women as an object of promiscuity. Yesterday, I was given the figures of domestic violence - these figures were reported a week earlier - which said that two-thirds of the women throughout the world are beaten up by their husbands! I believe this is pitiful. It moves one to tears. This violence occurs mostly in developed Western countries, and result from sexual harassment and sexual demand that men have of women. This slandering is about the issue of women. They talk about women's rights and complain that we have imposed hijab on women. They themselves have turned the lack of hijab into a law and imposed it on women. They prevent female students from entering the university just because they are wearing a headscarf. Still, they condemn us for having made hijab obligatory. Our laws are all attempts that we have made to preserve women's honor, but their laws are there to disrespect women. And there are some other slanders similar to this that the West is levelling against us.

Western societies insistence on women's bareness is not out of advocating freedom, but out of being patriarchal

A symptom of patriarchy in the West is that they want women for men [to serve their lust]. Thus, they say that women should wear makeup so that man can seek pleasure! This is patriarchy, not freedom of women: it is actually freedom for men. They want men to be free to even fulfil their visual lusts; so they persuade women to uncover, wear makeup and exhibit themselves before men! Of course this type of selfishness was present in many men in societies that did not enjoy divine religions; it was existent in them from old times and they have it today, too: the Westerners were the utmost manifestation of it. Therefore, the issue of women pursuing knowledge, science, studying, awareness and acquiring knowledge and educations should be strictly followed up by ladies

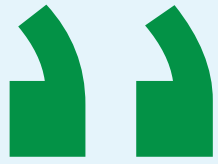
themselves and they should value it.

What does Islam pursue by promoting Hijab?

In order to prevent the mingling of the sexes and preserve ethical boundaries, Islam has obligated women to observe modest dressing (hijab). Hijab is a means of providing security: by observing hijab, Muslim women provide security both for themselves and for Muslim men. Wherever hijab is taken away from women, wherever they push women towards bareness and nudity, security is taken away primarily from women and secondarily from men and the youth. To preserve a healthy and secure environment wherein women can pursue their tasks and men can carry out their responsibilities, Islam has set hijab as an obligation: hijab is an outstanding obligation by Islam and its advantages are as I described.

The power God has given exclusively to women

The greatness of women does not depend on their ability to attract the attention of immoral men. Such an ability is not an honor for women. It will not bring about respect for them. It will only bring about humiliation. The greatness of women depends on their ability to preserve their God-given modesty. Their greatness depends on combining this ability with pious dignity and a sense of responsibility. They should use their feminine delicacy and their pious inflexibility appropriately. The combination of delicacy and pious inflexibility is particular to women. That is the advantage that Allah the Exalted has bestowed on women. Therefore, the Holy Quran mentions the names of two women as examples of religious faith for both men and women. "And God sets forth, as an example to those who believe, the wife of Pharaoh" [The Holy Quran, 66: 11]. "And Mary the daughter of Imran" [The Holy Quran, 66: 12]. God mentions the wife of Pharaoh and Mary as two examples of faith. These are some signs that point to an underlying



Hijab is a means of providing security: by observing hijab, Muslim women provide security both for themselves and for Muslim men

Ayatullah Khamenei



If they say, “Why do you not give women the freedom to appear without hijab?” we should answer, “Why do you give them this harmful and threatening freedom in such a way?”

Ayatullah
Khamenei



Islamic ideology.

Does Islam suppress women’s freedom and dignity by promoting hijab?

In the Islamic school of thought, there is a sheltering and veiling space between men and women. This does not mean that women live in a separate world from that of men; no, men and women live together in the society, in their working environments—they interact with one another everywhere, they cooperate to resolve social problems, they work together to manage affairs in the battlefields and they work together to manage family affairs and raise children. However, outside the home and outside the family environment, this protective distance and this shielding space is certainly preserved. This is the main point in the Islamic model. If this is not observed, the society will be afflicted with the same depravity that the West is plagued with today. If this point is not observed, women will be left behind in heading towards the values—the case of which [women pioneering in moving towards values] has been witnessed in the Islamic Iran.

Statements made during a meeting with a group of nurses November 13, 1991

If they say, “Why do you not give women the freedom to appear without hijab?” we should answer, “Why do you give them this harmful and threatening freedom in such a way?” What is being pursued in the west regarding the issue of immodesty and lack of hijab makes one distressed. One wonders what they want to do and where they want to go.

You may have more information in this regard but I also have a lot of information about what is being done on this issue. These things are done at different levels which range from higher levels to occupational levels, living conditions and other such things. In the Islamic discourse, respect towards women and the characteristics, dignity and delicacy of women should be highlighted. By delicacy, I do not only mean physical delicacy. As well as physical delicacy, I mean the delicacy of women’s psychological and intellectual structure and also the delicacy of their responsibilities.

A unique experience in life: Traveling to Iran during Muharram



A unique time for visiting Iran is during the first ten days of the lunar month of Muharram, which falls from Sept. 1 to 10 this year. That's because Iranians, who are mostly Shia Muslims, hold special ceremonies during this time. For Shia Muslims, Muharram is a turning point in the history of Islam.

Over the past couple of years, Yazd, Meybod, Isfahan and Kashan were among the cities which hosted the highest numbers of foreign tourists on the ninth and the tenth days of Muharram (Tasua and Ashura) when the mourning ceremonies reach its climax.

Travelers are welcomed in all places where Muharram rituals are held. Last year, spiritual tourism in Yazd hosted people from France, Germany, Belgium, China, Turkey, Russia, the Netherlands, Brazil, Switzerland, Italy, New Zealand, Spain, the UK, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Romania, Australia and Thailand.

Holidaymakers can witness various ceremonies such

as Tazieh, a passion play inspired by historical and religious narrations, and Sineh-Zani [beating the chest]. They also converse with locals and religious figures while taking shots of mourners to document the events.

However, you, as a foreigner or a non-Muslim, may not be familiar with such concepts. Here we try to describe some important issues and enumerate some facts in this regard:

Muharram and the battle of Karbala

From a theological approach, religious rituals are perhaps a recreation of collective memories that help to shape what is known as collective identity, an essential foundation for sense of belonging. One such ritual is the mourning ceremony. Rich with symbolism, most of which have historical values, these ceremonies are a platform where communal beliefs and ideals about life and death are acknowledged and as people unite in grief and hope for consolation, they search for new meanings



...But the core meaning of Muharram is beyond such mere bereavement and commemoration of the past



of life and reevaluate and confirm the foundation of their beliefs.

The commemoration of the battle of Karbala on the day of Ashura (literally meaning 10th as the battle took place on the 10th day of Muharram) and the epic passion and courage of Imam Hussein (AS) and his 72 loyal companions who were all martyred (in 680 CE) is annually honored by Iranians. A grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Imam Hussein (AS) and his army of few followers battled with the large military detachment from the forces of Yazid I, the Umayyad caliph, whom Imam Hussein (AS) had refused to recognize as caliph. The Imam was beheaded by Shimr and all his supporters were killed, including his six-month-old infant son, and the women and children were taken as captives.

Muharram and the following month, Safar (which includes commemoration of the aftermath of Karbala) are a period lamentation for Muslims. War and fighting are prohibited during Muharram and festivities like weddings and birthdays are usually postponed to more appropriate days. People generally wear black out of respect or at least avoid wearing very bright colors.

But the core meaning of Muharram is beyond such mere bereavement and commemoration of the past. Karbala was

an actual and metaphorical venue where the Truth confronted the Lie, where justice spoke vibrant and audible in the face of prejudice and where courage, passion and devotion preceded attachment, worldliness and obstinacy.

The saga is narrated to tell us that compared to the Pyrrhic and momentary victory of injustice, integrity and honesty will always stand the test of time as today the life of Imam Hussein (AS) is honored by millions across the world while the account of his enemies is nearly lost in oblivion. The story also lives to tell us that the majority is not always right. Even if the army of Truth is small in number, it still is magnanimous in what it stands for.

Therefore, commemoration of Ashura is also a tribute to truth and justice and condemnation of tyranny anytime and anywhere. This is perhaps one of the many reasons why a day like Ashura can never be overlooked as these rituals encompass universal values that will never wear out. There will always be Shimrs of ignorance and Yazids of prejudice who are ready to sacrifice the Truth at the altar of the majority for their personal or communal interests but there will also be vigilant individuals who will notice the faintest flickers of hope for justice even in the darkest dungeons of their times and strive to magnify and relate

it to one and all alike.

Mourning in Muharram

The Persian word for mourning is 'Azadari', stemming from the word Azaa. The literal meaning of Azaa is twofold. Firstly, it indicates 'patience' and 'perseverance' and secondly, when used as a verb it implies consolation and solace that come as a gradual result of that patience. In many cultures, the act of consolation has a ritualistic face and it is therefore systematic and easy to follow as it provides its very own logic, symbolisms and paradigms.

The ritualistic bereavements of Muharram are a platform where various artistic genres like literature, painting, music, fiction and drama are reconciled.

During Muharram, a part from mosques, each neighborhood sets up its own establishment for the ceremonial processions of the month known as 'Tekkiyeh', which are venues for gathering of mourners known as 'heyat' (literally meaning group or delegation) who honor the life of Imam Hussein (AS). Tekkiyeh (stemming from the word eteka, meaning backup or reliable) was historically a staying place for visiting pilgrims and dervishes who relied on the goodness of the benefactors for daily sustenance. Today Tekkiyehs, however,

are specific locations for mourners who meet and participate in religious gathering after which they head out on the streets in groups known as dasteh (literally meaning cluster) to parade a dramatic mourning. The dasteh in each neighborhood has a specific route through which it will proceed and people follow and move with the cluster of mourners as they chant mourning songs on the night and the day of Ashura. Resilient beat of drums and a few other instruments are heard as people weep to the hymns and men in black rhythmically flagellate their backs with two pairs of chains and beat their chests with open palms. This ritual is known as Sineh-Zani (beating the chest). Women may watch the processions and follow the parade; however, they do not practice flagellation.

Traditionally an elderly person known as rish sefid (literally meaning, white-bearded) who is also a benefactor of the processions will raise and wave the green and black flags (traditional colors of Islam and mourning) ahead of the parade. Later people take turns to hold the flag as the mourners move through the streets. A tall (sometimes as long as 12 meters) richly decorated with fabrics and feathers structure known as nakhl (palm tree) is carried around. The nakhl is a symbol of Imam Hussein's coffin as history



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Tazieh, which recounts religious events, historical and mythical stories and folk tales, was registered on UNESCO's List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in November 2010.



narrates his beheaded corpse was carried on a stretcher made of palm leaves. For many people carrying the nakhl throughout the ceremony is a form of bereavement and an instance of humbleness.

Some nakhls are so heavily decorated that more than a 100 people are needed in order to carry them. Alam (literally meaning standard) a symbol of standards carried in Karbala are also shouldered by some. While the band plays martial and doleful music, some people clad in costumes

representing the army of Imam Hussein (AS) sit on horses and their suffering under the oppression of their enemy, Yazid is enacted by individuals who wear dark intense colors and have aggressive faces and large moustaches.

Also, Imam Hussein's loyal white horse known as Zuljanah (literally meaning, winged horse) saddled and decorated with green fabric and tainted with red paint (representing blood) is symbolically paraded.

MUHARRAN IN IRAN

Zuljanah who was also shot with arrows during the battle, ran to the women's tent upon seeing Imam Hussein's corpse on the ground. Seeing the blood stains on the horse, Imam's family came to know of his death. It is said that Zuljanah died three days later as he stopped eating and drinking after the Imam's death. Accounts of the horse are also mentioned in songs and sermons. This parade usually last a few hours after which people gather for a dinner or lunch feast known as Nazri.

Other communal forms of mourning include Tazieh which is actually a passion play usually performed during the first ten days of Muharram culminating in a passionate and emotional peak on the tenth (Ashura). Stories and characters involved in the Karbala battle are enacted by men and young children. Needless to say, these rituals are region specific and quite diverse. Major theatre house in Iran also stage plays relevant to this month.

Tazieh, which recounts religious events, historical and mythical stories and folk tales, was registered on UNESCO's List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of

Humanity in November 2010.

Nazri: Food ritual and alms for the poor

Religious ceremonies in Iran more than often include food offerings, whether they are held at public venues like mosques or at private residences. These communal gatherings are also a kind of forum where friends, acquaintances and neighbors meet over food that is served after the ceremonies.

During Muharram, every village, township, city or metropolis is abuzz with preparation for food offerings known as Nazri, the processions of which are usually sponsored by wealthy benefactors.

Sheep, cows and other halal animals are specifically and ritually sacrificed for this purpose. Large pots and equally large ladles and spatulas are taken out of the cellars, big fires are lit and food is prepared in large quantities and distributed among the people, particularly the poor.

The most common dish is Gheymeh (known as Gheymeh-e Imam Hussein) which includes a thick stew of split peas and chopped lamb cooked with dry



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lemons and tomato puree and served on a bed of hot saffron rice. Other dishes of Persian cuisine, like Aash (thick soup-stew), Halim (thick dish of wheat, lentil and meat), Shole Zard (a sweet dish made of rice), palm dates and sherbets are also served during these days.

Nazri (stemming from the Arabic word, Nazr) which literally means 'offering' is actually a form of a religious commitment that the benefactor has vowed to fulfill when his prayers are heard. People pledge (make a spiritual vow) to do acts of goodness, like feed the poor, visit holy shrines and give alms if their prayers and wishes come true. Also sometimes food offerings are distributed as Kheyrat (literally meaning charity) in the memory of the deceased. It is believed that the prayers of the poor and needy who are fed by these offerings will benefit the souls of the departed.

During Muharram, particularly on Tasua and Ashura days, each neighborhood in the city will set its food stalls and offer food to the mourners. Also private homes offer food to their neighbors by distributing parcels to houses or hosting the mourning ceremonies inside their homes and asking people to join by invitation.

Facts

1- Muharram is the first month of the

Islamic calendar and therefore the 1st day of the month marks the Islamic New year. Since the Islamic calendar is a lunar calendar, Muharram moves from year to year. This is while the Persian New Year falls on the 21st of March according to the solar calendar.

2- Muharram (derived from the word Haram, meaning forbidden) is one of the four sacred months of the year in which war is prohibited.

3- In Islamic and Persian culture, the 3rd, 7th and 40th day of birth and particularly death are significant dates. Arbaeen (literally meaning forty in the Arabic Language) which marks 40 days after the death of Imam Hussein (AS) is also a typical period of mourning for Muslims.

4- During Muharram, particularly on Tasua and Ashura, people refrain from doing or saying things that may violate the honorable spirit of the month. Television and radio channels alter their timings and programs to accommodate more of religious sermons, mourning songs, live ceremonies and films pertaining to the spirit of the month.

5- Black as the color of mourning during this month is visible in people's attire, banners hanging from buildings, billboards, decoration of city walls and in the writings on the rearview windows of

MUHARRAN IN IRAN



cars.

6- Tasua and Ashura are holidays in Iran. Iraq, India, Indonesia, Turkey, Pakistan, Bahrain, Trinidad and Tanzania are among the countries that honor Muharram. All tourist sites and museums are closed during these two days but most of shops and restaurants are open

for travelers.

7 - The night of Ashura in Iran is called Shaam-e Ghariban, meaning "the night of strangers" and those who are far from home and help. People light candles in holy places and gatherings in every corner of the country.





Iran, Russia Start Joint Production of Robot Surgeons

By IFP Editorial Staff

Iran and Russia have officially started the joint production of the surgical robot named Sina based on an agreement signed in Moscow.

The deal was signed in a ceremony attended by the head of the Centre for Knowledge-based Enterprises and Companies at the Iranian Vice Presidency of Science and Technology, and the head of the Russian Centre for Research and Development.

Based on the agreement between Iranian knowledge-based companies and their counterparts in Russia, the robot will be constructed as SKD (semi-complete parts) in the Russian Federation.

The mass production of this robot is being carried out in collaboration with the Institute for Advanced Medical Technology, No Avaran Robotic Knowledge-based Company, the Sina Institute of Robotics and Medicine, and the Russian Research and Development Centre.

Sina robot was unveiled for the first time in the INOTEX 2015, and its commercialisation got underway at the fourth exhibition of laboratory equipment and materials.

For a brief review of Iran's achievements in various fields of science and technology, check the book "Science and Technology in Iran: A Brief Review – 2019"

The robot is designed and developed for remote

surgery and is consisted of two parts. The first part is at the disposal of the surgeon, which can be installed in another building or city, and the second part, which is installed near the patient's bed, is controlled by the remote surgeon.

Each move that the surgeon orders to the first robot is transferred to the second one and then it copies the same moves on the patient.

In addition to remote surgery, this device also offers other advantages to the surgery. It can eliminate surgeon's hand tremours and minimise the surgeon's movements.

Iran, Russia Determined to Expand Technology Ties

For example, a doctor in a surgical ward has a big stitch on patient's body, but a robot copies one-fifth or one-tenth of it, so using this robot can make some movements possible that can never be done by human hands.

The joint meeting of Iranian and Russian knowledge-based companies was held on Friday in the presence of Iran's Vice President for Science and Technology Sorena Sattari, and Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Russian Federation Mahdi Sanaie at the Azimut Olympic Hotel in Moscow. Representatives from more than 70 Iranian knowledge-based companies accompanied Sattari in this trip.

Iranian Researcher Declares War against Cancer

By IFP Editorial Staff



An Iranian researcher with no relevant educational background has raised the hopes of those suffering from cancer by developing three new medicines to cure various types of the deadly disease.

Mohammad Kazem Rashidi, 75, says the newly produced medicines are completely natural from A to Z and there is no preservative among their ingredients.

The first anti-cancer medicine is produced only for women suffering from cancer. The second drug is mainly used for preventing Alzheimer's disease among the elderly. It also treats patients suffering from frequent urination.

Rashidi is neither a doctor nor a university graduate but he has managed to take full command on the materials in the Canon of Medicine by Avicenna and The Comprehensive Book on Medicine by Rhazes, two major Persian polymaths.

He has managed to merge prescriptions by Avicenna and Rhazes together to develop a new medicine – the last of the three new drugs – which can prevent bleeding. Medical tests in the central city of Isfahan

have approved the efficiency of the medicine.

Before the new medicines, Rashidi had produced a special medicine for treating patients suffering from Diabetic wounds for the first time in Iran.

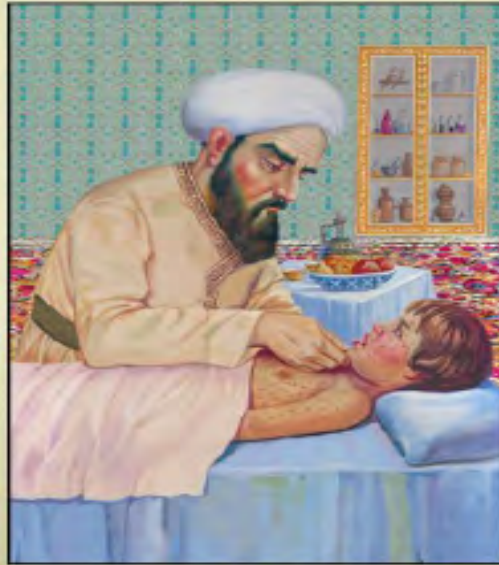
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He has already established a large farm and beekeeping field in his hometown in Hamedan province providing all the ingredients of his medicines himself.

"By establishing the farm and the beekeeping field as well as a knowledge-based firm, I've managed to provide jobs directly or indirectly for tens of people," he said.

Rashidi wishes to treat people suffering from Epidermolysis bullosa (EB) which remains an incurable disease even for modern medical science. The Iranian researcher says he also hopes to cure a number of teenage girls in a Shinabad village in West Azarbaijan province who were badly hurt after their school caught fire.

One of the Greatest Physicians of all times



Kitab_fi'l-Judari

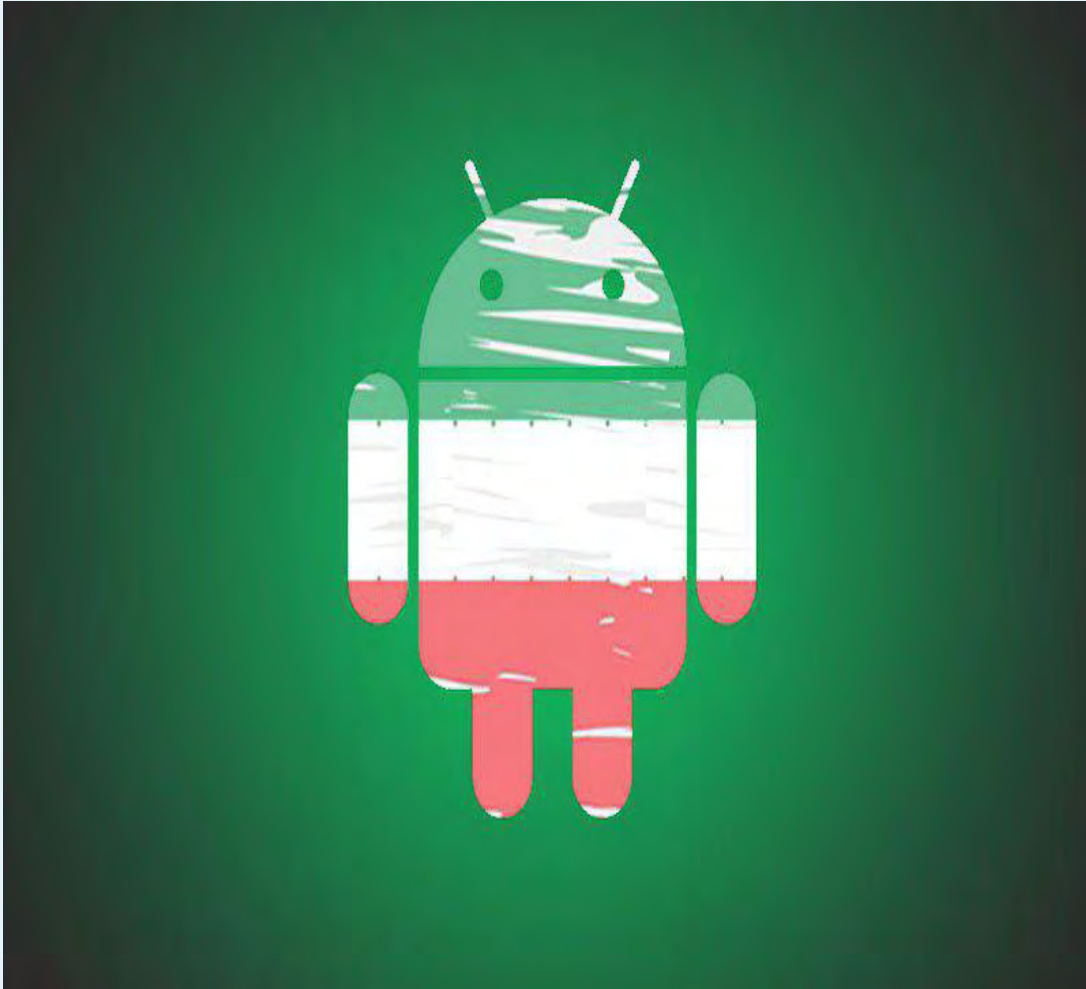
“The main problem of people suffering from the EB is that their skin doesn’t produce Collagen anymore. I’ve produced a new ointment which helps them to produce the material. The cost of chemical treatment for this type disease is too high and most of them usually end up in failure because it is an incurable disease. I’ve said I’m ready to treat these people. I provide them with the ointment free of charge and they have

admitted its effect on themselves,” he said.

He went on to say that his main goal in life is offering services to people suffering from incurable diseases. “I’m 75 years old and have achieved whatever I wished in my life financially. So, I’ve decided to dedicate the rest of my life to efforts to offer services to such patients.”



Android market in Iran, a promising future



... by the Information and Communication Technology Ministry, the active mobile phone penetration rate has reached 110.53% until March 2018 in Iran.

According to a report released by the Information and Communication Technology Ministry, the active mobile phone penetration rate has reached 110.53% until March 2018 in Iran.

The figure promises a great market for cell phone-related businesses in the country, which is somehow untapped in some sections.

Café Bazaar, an Iranian Android marketplace, is one of the few Iranian companies that release comprehensive reports on Iran's android application market. The reports provide a deep view of the Iranian market, which can be used by developers and business persons.

This article presents an analysis released by TechRasa, an Iranian startup, and tech media, based on the latest

report of Café Bazaar in late June 2019.

Considering the figures and statistics mentioned below, Café Bazaar can develop its market not only in the country but also in other Persian-language and neighboring Arab countries.

There are 110 million Persian-language population worldwide, which provides a great market in Iran and friendly and neighboring countries can create Halal content for their android market

There are 110 million Persian-language population worldwide, which provides a great market in Iran. Moreover, friendly and neighboring countries like Afghanistan (with 6.5 million internet users) and Arab countries like Qatar, Oman, Lebanon, Iraq and Syria (with a total 38.5 million users) can create Halal content for their android market.



According to the statistics, there are 65 million smart-phones in Iran, seven million of which are iPhone and 64 million users are connected to 3G and 4G networks.

Café Bazaar has over 40 million active installs, 31 million monthly active users and 163,000 applications (31,000 games and 132,000 applications) in comparison with the Google Play, which has over 2.5 trillion monthly active users and 2.6 million applications.

However one can compare the ratio of the number of applications and the users. In Google Play, there are 962 active users for each application but there are 190 active users for each application on Café Bazaar. However the issue can be considered from two points of view; first, the global market of the Google Play cannot be undermined.

The second approach assesses the number of applications for each user, which is higher (about 5 times) in Café Bazaar.

Although there is not any precise statistics about the quality and proficiency of the applications, the Iranian applications are not developed as of the Google Play which can be considered as an opportunity for android market of Iran.

Double productivity for Iranian android developers

During the Iranian calendar year 1396 (March 2017-March 2018), the number of applications available on Café Bazaar

was 151,000 which increased to 163,000 in the Iranian calendar year 1397 (March 2018-March 2019).

The Google Play has 724,000 developer teams, which has released at least one applications. According to the statistics in 2017, each team at the Google Play develop 3.6 applications, while the figure for Café Bazaar is 7.4 applications for each developer. The issue shows the double productivity of Iranian developers, which may affect their quality and services.

Market development in Iran

According to the statistics, there are 65 million smartphones in Iran, seven million of which are iPhone and 64 million users are connected to 3G and 4G networks.

Hence, Café Bazaar can develop more in Iran. About four million users are annually added to Café Bazaar each year, which is not very high growth. However as mentioned above, Café Bazaar can expand its market in other countries.

Fewer applications on smartphones in Iran

Globally, the number of applications installed on the smartphones by the users are 80 ones while in Iran the number is 62. In addition, the users use 40 application





per month and the figure is not announced by Café Bazaar.

Transactions, which include buying applications, subscription right, and in-app purchasing, grew during the Iranian calendar year 1397 at a lower rate. The annual growth of transactions was 3.5 million during 1395 (March 2016-March 2017), two million during 1396 (March 2017-March 2018) and 500,000 during 1397 (March 2018-March 2019).

However one cannot neglect the hard economic situation of the country during the past year.

Tehran, the hub of android developers

From 22,000 developer teams, 28 percent of them live in Tehran, holding 71.6 percent share of Café Bazaar income, which equals 1,850 billion rials (about 44 million dollars). While Tehrani developers hold 26.8 percent share of 163,000 applications of Café Bazaar.

During the Iranian calendar year 1397, there were over 1600 application developers and 370 game developers that their products have more than 10,000 active installs.

“Long ago, the plan to design and develop and Iranian Android was put on the agenda of the Ministry of Communications [and Information Technology], and this issue became more serious after Google imposed

sanctions on Iranian users,” the Minister of Communication and Information Technology Mohammad-Javad Azari Jahromi said.

“Now, this operating system has been developed by a group of students at Sharif University of Technology,” the minister underlined.

He further said Google is not able to remove the Iranian Android or Iranian apps working with the new OS.

“In order to give users more assurances, the [Iranian] GLX company has produced a mobile phone that supports this operating system and gives Iranian users the assurance that they can use their applications in a safe environment without being concerned about US sanctions,” the minister noted.

The newly-developed operating system both works with original Android apps and the Iranian apps that are banned from Google’s official Play Store.

A promising trans-border market

Café Bazaar announced that it has 520,000 internet users in foreign countries and has a great capacity for attracting more, which can bring forex to Iran by selling applications and games.

The empowering of the digital economy and supporting digital marketing can bring great revenues for Iran, a fact that should not be disregarded.



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Mohammad-Javad Azari Jahromi, Minister of Communication and Information Technology



Cryptocurrency: The New Oil and Spice in the Middle East

By IFP Media Wire

For centuries the Middle East has become renowned for something mysterious and even romantic. Tales of riches or princes, queens and thieves have filled the dreams of children all over the world. But the Middle East may not have had any of these stories if it were not for the trading of spice and oil that have made the nations in the region richer than many on earth.

Trade, and especially the understanding of trade in the Middle East have been the reasons why mineral wealth and spices have become such valuable commodities and perhaps next on the list could be cryptocurrencies.

Oil Controls the World

The prices of oil are monitored closely as are the exchange rates that buy and sell this precious liquid. Monitoring and controlling the price of oil is something that has had to be mastered and is fundamental to the survival of many Middle Eastern states. Oil priced in dollars relies on the strength or weakness of the dollar to maintain its price and be sold and purchased. The region dominates the oil market globally, even impacting the value of the dollars that buy it, but as cyber currency emerges as a tool of trade the Middle East could begin impacting the value of these currencies too.

Cryptocurrency Trading

There has been a rise in people all over the world now trading in, or at least dabbling in cryptocurrency. Growing numbers of people are looking to get in on the rewarding truth about cryptocurrency trading as stats from people searching

for the best crypto bots on <https://top10cryptobots.com/> will prove. This trend has made cryptocurrency become more prevalent as a strong trading currency that could outstrip the value and even dominance of the Green Back in time to come. Cryptocurrency trading on a grand scale could become big business for oil-producing states as purchases of the black gold begin to be made in currencies other than conventional foreign money.

The Value of Cryptocurrency

When things like Bitcoin first emerged, they were laughed at and many were skeptical. It is understandable because people and business around the world were and are so used to conventional Dollars, Pounds, Euros, and Yen. However, small cryptocurrencies soon disrupted the way the world started to see money, value, and worth. Yes, cryptocurrencies could take over the world if you believe what some experts are saying. With this in mind and with the dominance of the oil production industry in the Middle East trading in oil is cyber currencies could easily spark the beginning of cyber currency trading domination. The first-ever purchase with a cyber-currency was a pizza and this proved that the strings of ones and zeros had value in the real world. Because of this cryptocurrency can theoretically be used to purchase anything, including oil and spice. If these currencies became the preferred trade mechanism and with the global oil dominance the Middle East could soon find itself the dominant player in the cyber currency world. This could be a very real possibility.

Cryptocurrency trading on a grand scale could become big business for oil-producing states as purchases of the black gold begin to be made in currencies other than conventional foreign money



DAM Construction in Iran

Karun Dam



As reported by the portal of Iran's Energy Ministry (known as Paven), currently 17 hydroelectric power plants with a total capacity of 3,800 MW are under construction across the country, which, once completed, will generate an average of 7,700 gigawatt hour (GWh) electricity on an annual basis.

There are currently 178 major dams operating across the country behind which nearly 41 billion cubic meters of water is stored.

Iran's current power generation capacity stands at about 85 GW of which the share of hydroelectric power plants stands at nearly 20 percent.

Currently, 54 hydroelectric power plants with a total capacity of over 12000 megawatts are operating in Iran, with an average annual output of about 6,000 GWh.

The increase in the country's hydroelectric output comes as heavy rainfalls in spring almost filled all the dams across the country.

Iran has some several tall dams, with eleven of them ranked amongst the tallest in the world. It has 40 completed dams, with 11 more currently under construction.

Karun Dams

Five of the tallest dams in Iran, Karun-4 dam, Karun-3 dam, Shahid Abbaspour dam, upper Gotvand dam and Masjed Soleyman dam, are located along Karun River. This is owing to the fact that Karun River experiences the most seasonal flooding incidences and the highest discharge slits in the country.

The tallest dam in Iran is Karun-4 dam found in the province of Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari. The 230-meter high structure was constructed primarily to provide hydroelectricity. Its construction was completed in 2010 and it currently has an installed capacity of 1,020 megawatts.

Karun-3 dam in Khuzestan province is the second tallest dam in Iran at 205 meters. It has the same arch shape as Karun-4 dam to strengthen its foundation against the force of the reservoir waters.

It was completed in 2005 and also serves majorly to generate electricity and control floods. Its installed capacity is 2,280 megawatts.

Shahid Abbaspour dam, also known as Karun-1 dam is the fourth largest in Iran at 200 meters. It is also found in Khuzestan province. It was completed in 1976 and has an installed capacity of 2,000 megawatts.

Upper Gotvand dam in Khuzestan province, ties with the Amir Kabir dam as the fifth highest dam in Iran at 180 meters high. It was completed in 2012 and has an installed capacity of 1000 megawatts.

Masjed Soleyman dam is the ninth tallest dam in Iran at 164 meters. It is also called Karun-2 dam and is found in Khuzestan province. It was opened in 2002 and has an installed capacity of 2,000 megawatts.

Other Tall Dams

Dez dam located on Dez River in Khuzestan province is the third tallest in Iran at 203 meters. It was primarily constructed for hydroelectricity. It was completed in 1963 and has an installed capacity of 520 megawatts.

Amir Kabir dam is Iran's fifth largest with a height of 180 meters. It is found on Karaj River in Alborz province. The dam was completed in 1961 mainly to support agricultural activities.

Marun dam is the seventh highest at a height of 175 meters. It is also in Khuzestan province but located on Marun River. It was completed in 1998 and has an installed capacity of 150 megawatts.

Marun is an embankment dam on Marun river, 15 kilometres to the north of Behbahan in Khuzestan province, south-west of Iran.

The dam provides water for agriculture and hydroelectric power.

Daryan dam is the eighth tallest dam in Iran with a height of 169 meters. It is found on Sirvan River in Kermanshah province, was completed in 2018 and mainly supplies water for irrigation

Masjed Soleyman dam is the ninth tallest dam in Iran at 164 meters. It is also

“ “
Currently, 54 hydro electric power plants with a total capacity of over 12000 MW are operating in Iran, with an average annual output of about 6,000 GWh.





Rajai Dam (SoleymanTangeh)



Silveh Dam and irrigation-drainage canals, Karam-Abad Dam Sardasht Dam and Power plant were some of the water projects that President Rouhani launched

called Karun-2 dam and is found in Khuzestan province. It was opened in 2002 and has an installed capacity of 2,000 megawatts.

Rudbar Lorestan dam is the tenth tallest dam in Iran at 158 meters. It is found on Rudbar River in Lorestan province. It was opened in 2016 and has an installed capacity of 450 megawatts.

Shahid Rajaei dam seals the list of Iran dams ranked amongst the tallest in the world with a height of 138 meters. It is found on Tajan River in Mazandaran province. It was opened in 1997.

The Kouhrang 1 Dam is a masonry gravity dam on the Kouhrang River about 4 km (2.5 mi) southwest of Chelgard in Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province, Iran. The primary purpose of the dam is to divert up to 320,000,000 m³ (260,000 acre/ft) of water annually via the 2.8 km (1.7 mi) long Kouhrang 1 Tunnel to the Zayandeh River to the east where it would help supply cities like Isfahan with water.

Jiroft Dam is a hydroelectric dam in Iran with an installed electricity generating capability of 85 MWh situated in Kerman Province. The fifth concrete dam built in the country, it was begun in 1975 and completed in 1992. It is located on Halil River (Halilrood) 40 km upstream of Jiroft (North-East of the city) in the narrow valley of Narab. Its reservoir capacity is around 410 million cubic metres up to the normal level (1185 metres above sea level). The maximum height of the dam is 134 m and the crest length is 277 m. The dam

in its first water year of operation (1992) survived an extraordinary flood (1 February 1993) with the peak discharge of 5035 cubic metres per second. The flood had a return period of 800 to 1000 years

Role of Dams

Iran completed almost half of its tallest dams in the 21st century. Its dams serve a variety of purposes from supplying electricity, controlling floods, irrigation as well as cultural purposes. Ongoing construction will see the unveiling of an even taller dam called Bakhtiari dam which shall boast to be the tallest in Iran, given its current height of 325 meters, already higher than the world's tallest dam which is 30 meters high.

The Bakhtiari Dam is an arch dam currently under construction on the Bakhtiari River within the Zagros Mountains on the border of Lorestan and Khuzestan Provinces, Iran. At a planned height of 325 metres (1,066 ft), it will be the world's tallest dam once completed and withhold the second largest reservoir in Iran after the Karkheh reservoir. The main purpose of the dam is hydroelectric power production and it will support a 1,500 MW power station. By trapping sediment, the dam is also expected to extend the life of the Dez Dam 50 km (31 mi) downstream.

Source: *Wanza, Serah. "The Tallest Dams in Iran." WorldAtlas, Jun. 20, 2019, worldatlas.com/articles/the-tallest-dams-in-iran.html.*

The ancient art of making ships in southern Iran





Maritime trade, shipping and shipbuilding have long been practiced in Iran. There have been many small or big shipyards across the northern coasts of the Persian Gulf.

If you are planning to travel to the southernmost parts of the country, we suggest visiting the Persian Gulf in trace of seeing the process of crafting and sailing traditional Lenj boats, which has passed down from father to son. The hand-built vessels are used for sea journeys, trading, fishing and pearl diving.

Entering a shipyard is like stepping back into the ancient times, with some local artisans working on gigantic timbers to shape a reliable vessel.

Such expertise of the Iranian shipbuilders was registered on UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list in 2011 under the tile “Traditional skills of building and sailing Iranian Lenj boats in the Persian Gulf.”

Lenjes were initially used for long routes, for instance to China and Africa, but now, locals usually embark on shorter journeys in the Persian Gulf. Nowadays, many goods such as electronics and home appliances, textiles and foodstuff are transported between Iranian ports, Dubai and Oman.

It is said that a Lenj takes some two years to build, depending on its size that reveals portions of its hardship, care and detail of the craftsmanship. Moreover, different kinds of wood are needed for the various components that are mainly imported from India and Africa as there are no forests in southern Iran.

Iran’s history of seagoing is deep rooted in time. As of nearly the sixth century BC, the northern sides of the Persian Gulf became dominated by a succession of Persian empires including the Median, Achaemenid, Parthian and Sassanid empires. Under the leadership of the Achaemenid king Darius the Great (Darius I), who reigned from 522 to 486 BC, Persian ships found their way to the Persian Gulf, laying a strong foundation for maritime petrol and navigation in the region.

For avid travelers, it is also recommended to go on a tour to the Qeshm Island, where traditional boat-makers are making a living. Situated at the narrowest part of the Straits of Hormuz, a waterway separating Iran and Oman, the sun-scorched island is fringed with biologically diverse mangrove forests, attractive beaches and some 60 Bandari villages.

Qeshm features geologically eye-catching canyons, hills, caves and valleys, most of which are protected as part of the UNESCO-tagged Qeshm Island Geopark, itself a heaven for nature-lovers.

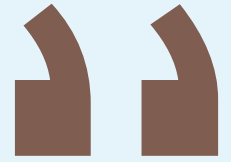
According to UNESCO, the traditional knowledge surrounding Lenjes includes oral literature, performing arts and festivals, in addition to the sailing and navigation techniques and terminology and weather forecasting that are closely associated with sailing, and the skills of wooden boat-building itself.

Iranian navigators could locate the ship according to the positions of the sun, moon and stars; they used special formulae to calculate latitudes and longitudes, as well as water depth. Each wind was given a name, which along with the color of water or the height of waves was used to help forecast the weather. Specific music and rhythms also constituted inseparable parts of sailing in the Persian Gulf, with sailors singing particular songs while working.

The UN cultural body has mentioned that heritage is “in need of urgent safeguarding”, meaning continuing this tradition of shipbuilding is not easy, and the craftsmanship is still somewhere between tradition and modernity.

Over the past couple of years, U.S.-led sanctions and its related economic boycott of Iran has sharply increased the cost of wood and engines. One more challenge has been the sharp decline in the number of locals with the knowledge of building and maintenance a Lenj.

Nowadays, the community of such practitioners is getting smaller and smaller; mainly comprising elderly



Such expertise of the Iranian shipbuilders was registered on UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list in 2011 under the tile “Traditional skills of building and sailing Iranian Lenj boats in the Persian Gulf



people. Wooden Lenjes are being replaced by cheaper industrial vessels, yet Lenj construction shipyards are being transformed into repair yards for older Lenjes.

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Lenjes have been absolutely central to Iran's

history of exploration. Iran was one of the oldest empires to use this type of ship, beginning with Cyrus the Great," says Ali Pouzan of the Historical Village of Guran Cooperative Company. Established to preserve lenjes and other village traditions, the 39-member cooperative is determined to save the culture of the ships through tourism. "We plan to build a lenj museum in Guran in the next few years, which will educate the public on the ancient tradition and preserve the culture of sailing that's been so important to life in this part of Iran," Pouzan says. "However, if we don't receive enough support through tourism, then unfortunately lenj culture will disappear forever."

In 2011, UNESCO added the lenj to its List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, recognizing its historical and cultural importance.

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The Culture of Making *‘Lavash’* Flatbread in Iran



As an intangible cultural heritage, the culture of making Lavash flatbread and sharing it in Iran has been common and ongoing in different parts of the country for many years. Often times, they bake this flatbread inside an oven called “Tanur”, but nomads bake Lavash on “Saaj”, a metal or stone flat surface. Old Tanurs were generally made of stone or pottery and installed in the ground.

Nowadays, however, Lavash bread is baked inside ovens built into the walls. In its 11th gathering, UNESCO organization inscribed the culture of making Lavash flatbread and sharing it as an intangible cultural heritage of Iranians. Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkey also share the same tradition with us. Iranians invite everyone from across the world to Iran to get acquainted with this cultural element and to experience the aroma of life in this bread.

Culturally speaking, Lavash has been made for regular meals. In addition, this flatbread has been shared at wedding ceremonies, birth times, funeral ceremonies as well as various holidays and sometimes during prayers.

The Word “Lavash” & Its History

It has roots in Middle Persian Language, Pahlavi. Of course, some researchers believe it had been derived from the Middle East in general and some are of the opinion that it belongs to Sumerians. In fact, the word Lavash and the flatbread Lavash belong to Iran. In addition, the tradition of baking it has been transferred as a skill and culture to our neighboring countries.

From the nutrition point of view, bread has had a significant place in the history of the humans. One may say the history of making bread goes

back to the Stone Age. During that period, people learned to mix water with milled grains and make the paste. Then, they exposed the paste to fire in order to make bread.

According to historical pieces of evidence, during the 1st millennium, bread had been the main food of the humans and it was used during religious rituals. In ancient Greece, one of the major parts of daily cooking was making bread.

Nevertheless, thin flatbread became popular after 1912 in this part of the world. In the beginning, it wasn't the favorite bread of many people. They thought it couldn't last long and would lose aroma and taste. However, it attracted more fans later. Of course, the method of preparing and baking bread and the ingredients have been somewhat varied among various nations.

Lavash Flatbread, an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Iranians

It's around 800 years that making Lavash Flatbread has become popular among people. Iranians pronounce it “Lavash”, “Levash” and “Lebash” in different dialects. Others call it “Tanury” bread. In Armenia, they call it “Laavaash” and in Georgia, “Armenian Lavash”. Another type of Lavash known as “Saaji Lavash” has long been made inside people's houses in Qazvin, West of Tehran.

During the session, UNESCO reviewed the document “Flatbread making and sharing culture: Lavash, Katryma, Jupka, Yufka” jointly submitted by Iran, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, and finally voted to inscribe the bread as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The culture of making and sharing flatbread in communities of Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey carries social functions that



In its 11th gathering, UNESCO organization inscribed the culture of making Lavash flatbread and sharing it as an intangible cultural heritage of Iranians



MEHR NEWSAGENCY





have enabled it to continue as a widely-practised tradition.

Making the bread (lavash, katyrma, jupka or yufka) involves at least three people, often family members, with each having a role in its preparation and baking. In rural areas, neighbours participate in the process together.

Features of Lavash Flatbread

There are certain features that distinguish Lavash from other types of bread in Iran:

- It's thin and crispy, maximum 3 millimeters thick and one of the traditional types of bread in Iran.
- It's made of slightly fermented dough in particular ovens or on Saaj.
- Usually, white flour from wheat (bran-free) is also used in making Lavash.
- Recently black wheat, bran flour, barley flour, oatmeal, and corn are also used separately or in combination with wheat flour to make this flatbread.

Bakers' Yeast in Lavash

As a matter of fact, yeast ferments flour. As a result of fermentation, bread becomes crispy, more aromatic and tasty. Also, it makes it more digestible and durable.

In some areas, bakers expose Lavash to the air right after they take them out of the oven. This is to make them dry so that they can keep them in the same condition for a long time, and to eat them with different local and traditional dishes. Then, when you want to eat them after several days, you may spray some cold water on them to make them softer.

How to Bake Lavash Flatbread and Its Ingredients

In order to make this traditional bread, you need:

- Bran-free wheat flour,
- Water,
- A little salt, and
- Bakers' yeast.

First, yeast is mixed with flour and water and kneaded completely. This dough is set aside in a warm environment for some time to get ready. After approximately one hour, the dough inflates and increases in volume.

Then, a baker divides it into smaller pieces and flattens each piece using a rolling pin on a flat surface. Finally, the flattened dough (app 3 millimeters thick), is pressed hard to the oven's inner walls already heated. When flatbread is completely made, it easily comes off the walls with little effort.

Different Types of Iranian Bread

Some Iranian bread types belong to particular regions of the country locally baked in rural areas or towns. However, others are extensively baked on a daily basis everywhere in the country's bakeries. Lavash is one such type of bread, which is now a globally recognized intangible cultural heritage of Iranians.

In addition to this flatbread, there are some other types of Iranians' favorite breads like: "Sangak", "Barbary", "Taftoon", Naan Roghany", "Nan Khoshk", "Naan Shirmal", and "Fatir". As a traveler, you can taste all these types of bread when you visit Iran. Just remember not to forget this tasty experience as it remains with you for years.



Making the bread (lavash, katyrma, jupka or yufka) involves at least three people, often family members, with each having a role in its preparation and baking

الفلسفة بجنتنا

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The 6th Arbaeen International Awards 2020

With regard to the unique and valuable spiritual capacity of Arbaeen (forty days after martyrdom) of Lord of the World's martyrs, Imam Hussein (AS), which is accompanied with the rally of millions of his lovers from all over the world, Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO) in 2014 decided to hold an infra-national event, with the aim of reflecting manifestations of this international religious event in a proper way to the world.

Therefore, the first Arbaeen International Award, focusing on photos, was held in 2014 for the first time in Iran and the world.

In response to the big welcome of Imam Hussein's pilgrims from this award, the next courses of this international award were held in greater dimension including both photos and videos works. Relying on the Almighty God's help, the 6th course of Arbaeen International Award will be held in 2020 with three parts: videos, photos and travelogues.

<http://intlarbeen.com/en-us/Announcements>

*Iranian
Dates: Real
Taste of
Nature*



In recent years Iran is one of the leading Countries in Date production in the world, with annual production of about 900000 metric tons.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture, there are more than 400 species of date all over Iran but just a few of them have commercial value. Generally dates according to their level of moisture categorized into three big groups which are: Dry, Semi Dry, Wet.

Each part of Iran has a suitable climate for producing special sort of dates. Kerman province is the center for three sorts of dates which are Mazafati, Klute and Farehkon. Other provinces like Hormozgan, Khuzestan and Bushehr are suitable for other sorts like Piarom, Sayer, Kabkab and Zahedi. The main areas that produce dates in Iran are Hormozgan 21.6%, Kerman 21.1%, Khusistan 17.6%, Bushehr 13.4%, Beluchestan 12.2%, and Fars 12.3%.

Date nutritional value:

Dates are very nutritious, assimilative and energy producing. With the present uncertainty in the world food supply and the expected increase in demand, the date palm could be a good source of food of high nutritional value. In fact, date fruit is rich in nutrients, and due to its dietetic values it has always been held in high esteem by people. Compared to other fruits and foods (apricot: 520 calories/kg; banana: 970 calories/kg; orange: 480 calories/kg; cooked rice: 1,800 calories/kg; wheat bread: 2,295 calories/kg; meat (without fat): 2,245 calories/kg, dates give more than 3,000 calories per kilogram.

Furthermore, the date palm is one of the greatest producers of food per hectare, and world date production is well over 3 million tons.

The date fruit consists of 70 % carbohydrates (mostly sugars), making it one of the most nourishing natural foods available to man. The water content is between 15 to 30 % depending on the variety and on the maturity stage of the fruit.

In most varieties, the sugar content

of a date fruit is almost entirely of the inverted form (namely glucose and fructose), important for persons who cannot tolerate sucrose. The invert sugar in dates is immediately absorbed by the human body without being subjected to the digestion that ordinary sugar undergoes. The flesh of dates contains 60 to 65 % sugar, about 2.5 % fiber, 2 % protein and less than 2 % each of fat, minerals, and pectin substances. Date fruits are also a good source of iron, potassium and calcium, with a very low sodium and fat content. In addition, moderate quantities of chlorine, phosphorous, copper, magnesium, silicon and sulfur are also found in the date fruit.

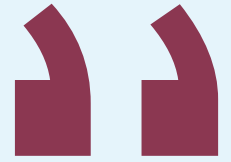
Date fruit is called a mine in itself because it is very rich in minerals. Its phosphorous content is similar to that found in the same quantity of apricots, pears and grapes put together.

Its high content of magnesium (± 600 mg/1kg of dates) could also be very beneficial. Date consumers in Saharan areas are known to have the lowest rate of cancer diseases, a fact attributed to the magnesium found in dates.

With only 1 mg of sodium per 100 g, dates are good food for those on a low sodium diet. The iron content of 3 mg per 100g is almost a third of the Recommended Dietary Allowance for an adult male. Note that fiber, even though it is not a nutrient for humans, is of much value in a diet as an aid to digestion and evacuation. There is ample evidence that for most persons a diet fairly high in fibre is healthier than one low in fiber.

Furthermore, dates are a good source of vitamins A, B1 (thiamine), B2 (riboflavin), and B7 (nicotinic acid also called niacin). The following contents per kilogram are an average for all date varieties: vitamin A, 484 international units; B1, 0.77 milligram (mg); B2, 0.84 mg; and B7, 18.9 mg.

Protein is also of particular interest; it is variety dependent and also varies according to the stage of maturity. An average of 1.7 % of protein of the wet



... there are more than 400 species of date all over Iran but just a few of them have commercial value







Astamaran or Sayer is very popular in many countries such as Russia, Canada, Australia, UK and New Zealand because of its unique features such as high sugar content and low cellulose content.



weight of the flesh is roughly obtained.

Different Kind of Persian Dates

There are hundreds of kinds of dates in Iran! Persian dates have different attributes and degree of color which each of them are used differently. Some of the Persian dates are:

Astamaran or Sayer (semi-dried date), Shahani (also called Khork Shani, is a dried date), Zahedi, Kabkab, Rabbi, Gantar, Sayer, Khazravi, Dayri, Hallavi, Barhi, Ferssi, Allmehtari, Khassui, Liloiei, Mordar Sang, Mazafati, Piarom, Ashkar, Berim, Beliani, Sovidani, Hadak, Bent Alsabae, Dagalzard, Bobki, Chabchab, Mashtom, Jahromi, Amobahri, Dagalsorkh, Hadal Khasab, Hamravi, Hasavi, Ashagh, Jozi and ... is just to name a few.

Astamaran

Astamaran or Samarran is a semi dry, thick and rough date. It makes up about 70% of Iranian date and 40% of Persian

date export. Astamaran or Sayer is very popular in many countries such as Russia, Canada, Australia, UK and New Zealand because of its unique features such as high sugar content and low cellulose content.

Shahani

Shahani dates are long with a narrow tip and the color is golden-yellow to light-brown. Its khalal is sweet, so some amount of its palm fruit is being consumed in khalal stage. These dates are late-ripening type.

Zahedi

Zahedi dates are a rarer type of date that has a pale brown skin and thick, golden inner flesh. It has considerably lower sugar content than other type of dates. Zahedi dates are chewy and semi dry and have peanut-buttery flavor and taste.

Kabkab



Persian Kabkab dates are semi dry dates and are considered wet dates. These dates long and the color is dark brown. Kabkab dates, like Astamara, Shahani and Mazafati have the most economic value in Iran.

Rabbi

Rabbi dates are one of the most popular date types. Their production is exclusive to Iran. Rabbi Date grows in Iranshahr, Zabol, Chahbahar and Saravan cities of the Sistan and Baluchestan province of Iran. Rabbi dates are soft, dark brown in color and long in size and can be kept in normal temperature of room. They have thin, meaty skin and soft texture.

Gantar

Gantar dates are also known as Qantar or Ghandi in different areas. They are one of the most popular types for export from Khuzestan.

Khazravi

Also known as Khadrawi dates have an oval core with light brown color and the core sticks to the fruit. Khazravi dates are considered to be some of the best dates in both texture and flavor.

Piarom

Piarom dates are one the most expensive type of Persian dates. Piarom dates are cultivated in Hormozgan province in south of Iran. They have dark brown color and thin skin. Piarom dates are considered semi dry and meaty. Because of its low sugar, Piarom dates can be consumed by diabetic people.

Dayri

Dayri dates are large with thick skin surrounding the seed. The color of Dayri dates are dark brown to black. They are very tender and lack the fibrous meat that some other types of dates have. Dayri dates have a strong flavor with a hint of vanilla.

Halawi or Hallavi

Halawi dates have a sweet honey flavor. They are long and thin and have buttery blonde colored skin. Since Halawi dates have lower than average sugar content, they are a great choice for people who have sugar sensitivity.

Barhi

Barhi dates have a rich and syrupy flavor. They are one of the smallest and most fragile types of Persian dates. Barhi dates are harvested in August and early September. They have varying degree of sweetness which depends on its ripeness level, ranging from fresh sugar cane to coconut and butterscotch flavor. Barhi dates are unique in their edibility during all three stages of ripeness: yellow and semi-ripe (Khalal), amber brown and fully ripe (rutab) or dark brown dried and wrinkled (tamr).

Khassui

Khassui is one of the best dates in Iran. Khassui dates are harvested in the northeastern province of Bushehr. They are considered as one of the smallest varieties of Persian dates and have a long hold time. According to the species and its growth area, they are typically found in different color from golden yellow to bright brown, from pure red to dark brown and from dark red to blackish dark purple.

Revitalizing traditional Iranian art of

making Garih artworks



The geometric patterns (Persian Gereh) are among the best visual effects of Islamic art and architecture. In the past, Muslim artists enjoyed a lot of scientific knowledge in the field of geometry; they knew well how to divide a single line or a circle into odd or even parts.

They were great experts on the field of proportions and used it in Islamic Art & Architecture. The instruments they used to create these geometric patterns, Muqarnas and etc. was just a pencil, compass and a ruler.

Who would believe that the design of massive collections, such as Isfahan's Naqsh-e Jahan Square or the Taj Mahal in Agra, which was made by Muslim artists, was all drawn only by a ruler, pencil and a compass.

In this course, which is taught by a traditional architect, you will become familiar with the world of geometry. You will visit several places with beautiful and great patterns such as Masumeh holy shrine, different traditional made mosques in Isfahan to feel the beauty and aesthetics of these patterns and learn how to draw some of them in the traditional way that was drawn a few centuries past.

Girih is a decorative geometric art form which used to be a major part of architecture and handicrafts in post-Islam Middle East.

The art was prevalent in Iran in the 12th century, but considerably faded in the contemporary era. However, the art has been revived in the country again over the past decade.

Girih is one of the subdivisions of wood arts in the architecture domain. Works produce in Girih art are used both in decorations and architecture.

Girih is one of the ancient forms of wood art where small pieces of wood are put next together to produce traditional and geometric shapes. Girih is among the delicate art forms which were all the rage from the early years of the Islamic era onwards.

Some researchers believe the Girih art emerged during the Abbasid Caliphate

and became popular during the 12th to 14th centuries in Egypt and Syria from where the art found its way to Iran.

Evidence shows that the Girih art in Iran dates back to the Seljuk and Safavid eras and that Isfahan is the birthplace of this art. The Girih art is usually used in building holy shrines, tombs, minarets and lattice work used in the windows of houses, palaces and fences.

Sash windows are still a popular part of the Iranian-Islamic architecture produced in a workshop in Tabriz in Azerbaijan Province, northwestern Iran.

The word "orsi" for sash windows has entered the Persian language from Russian – "or" meaning slide up and "si" meaning light and fountains which is also used in the dialects of southern Iran.

"Orsi" sash windows slide vertically and usually open onto the courtyard.

Girih [knot in Persian] wood designs are created with pieces of cut wood and stained glass in various geometric shapes, aligned repeatedly alongside one another. The geometric patterns are in fact an inseparable part of this art.

A prime example of this art in Iran is the Chel Sotoun edifice, Hasht Behesht, and the Alam, Sheikh-ol-Islam, and Sukias historic houses in Isfahan. A number of historic houses in kashan, and also the Tabatabaei, Abbasian, and Boroujerdi-ha houses among others in Yazd and other ancient parts of Iran display the art in all its glory.

The orsi sash windows are usually rectangular. The upper parts of the windows extend up to the ceiling, rectangular or crescent-shaped and arched, with stained glass panes. Such doors and windows were widely used in the hot, arid climate of central Iran to adjust and soften the penetrating light.

No nails and glues are used in making orsi windows and all the geometric shapes are put together with delicate wooden fittings (tongues and grooves).

The art of Girih and orsi making is an original art which is also rather costly due to the painstaking work involved. This wood art can be seen in religious venues, such as Imam Reza's Mausoleum

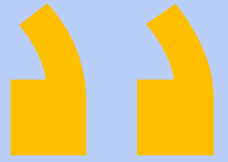


The instruments they used to create these geometric patterns, Muqarnas and etc. was just a pencil, compass and a ruler.



MEHR NEWSAGENCY
Photo: Behnam Yousefi





Girih” is Persian for “knot,” and refers to the straight lines that run through these tiles, forming what’s called “strapwork



MEHR NEWSAGENCY
Photo: Behnam Yousefi

in Mashhad, northeastern Iran, or the Shah Abdol-Azim Mausoleum in Ray, southern Tehran. Nevertheless, a workshop in Tabriz continues to produce fine quality orsi sash windows for the lovers of original Iranian interior decorations.

“Girih” is Persian for “knot,” and refers to the straight lines that run through these tiles, forming what’s called “strapwork.” The strapwork is usually what you see on these buildings; the actual borders of the tiles don’t appear. For an example of this, look at the stone piece to the right. On the left side you can see strapwork, and on the right side you can make out an overlay of the tiles that contain the strapwork.

Wooden girih chini is a combination of geometrical shapes that are placed in a harmonious manner. Creation of a geometrical plane by wooden sections called “alat” is called girih chini. Alats (wood pieces) are interconnecting by tongue and groove joints (Reyntiens, 1990). According to the pattern, these sections (alat) create special motifs and symbols in the composition called “shamseh” (star) and mostly 8pointed star

is used in Safavid era. Laleh Bakhtiari has claimed number eight is an emphasis on eighth stage of suluk and Miss Mir Ahmadi suggests that in Safavid period eighth stage of suluk was more considered, maybe the artist invites all residents to holiness. Perhaps the reason why constructors of sash windows, have chosen girih chini for theosophical conceptions is that geometrical patterns are the most abstract shapes and are beyond the nature. On the other hand they are stable because of angles and straight lines. We surely know geometrical shapes begin by a point and continue to countless sides. So they could be drawn and constructed unlimitedly. It must be claimed that lots of castes in Islamic period and specially in Safavid era were formed influenced by Sufi Chivalry way which have Islamic rules. Since apprentices must have learnt these rules and accept one of those castes to be able to learn any profession, we can easily observe the penetration of religion and beliefs in the art works specially sash windows

A woman is seated in front of a rustic wooden door. She is wearing a vibrant yellow headscarf (ruband) with a decorative headband (khatam) and a matching yellow shawl (chador) over a long, flowing teal-green dress. The dress is intricately embroidered with gold and red floral patterns. She is also wearing a large, ornate necklace and a bracelet. The background is a weathered wooden wall with a door handle.

An Introduction to Iran's Traditional Dress

Iran as a multi-ethnic and multicultural society has a varied population dispersed in different parts of Iran, from north to south and west to east.

Even though the majority of Iranian are Persian, various ethnic groups exist in the country with their own language, tradition, costumes and clothes.

Due to diversity of Iranian ethnicity, Iranian people both men and women wear embroidered designs and colorful patterns.

Traveling to Iran presents you a wide range of clothes belonging to different cities or cultures in order to show the glorious Persian heritage, a prodigious beauty that penetrates your soul. Clothing is a vital issue from ancient era until now in the contemporary lifestyle. It is necessary to mention that religious believes have very important effects on choosing type of clothes especially in villages of Iran.

Traditional dress is a good reflection of history and costume which is still worn among different ethics. Although after the revolution of Iran, women are forced to wear loose-fitting dresses along with a head covering, still a variety of clothes is seen especially in villages and a great number of Iranian women are eager to follow fashion mainly in big cities like Tehran. Sophisticated and fabulous clothes are integral part of dressing among Iranian women as if they dream of being seen beautiful and charming in order to fulfill their desires.

Let's have a review on Iranian clothes in order to immerse in the amazing beauty of dressing in Iran:

Bakhtiari

The clothes of the Bakhtiari nomadic tribe are rather versatile, accounting for the extreme weather conditions they may encounter during migration. Men wear tunics, wide trousers fastened at the ankle, and wool skullcaps. Colorful, layered skirts paired with matching vests are common for women. Their long scarves are embellished with hand-stitched designs or ornaments.

Qashqai

Of Turkic origin, the Qashqai are another nomadic tribe. Women are distinguished by their voluminous, multi-layered, colorful skirts and long headscarves pinned under the chin, which allow loose pieces of hair to frame their face. Men's round hats are made of sheep hair, which is unique to this tribe.

Baluchi

The southeastern Sistan and Baluchestan province borders Pakistan and Afghanistan, and the traditional clothes of this region therefore resemble the typical shalwar kameez of these neighboring countries. Along with pants and colorful embroidered knee-length dresses, women adorn themselves with gold bracelets, necklaces, and brooches, and a second, longer shawl often covers their head and shoulders. Long pants, loose-fitting shirts, and a turban are customary for men.

Turkmen

Earthy tones dominate the traditional dress of Turkmen men and women. Wearing long dresses with open robes, women often conceal part of their face with a cloth hanging just below the nose. Wool hats, worn to protect against cold weather, are the prominent feature of men's garments.

Kurds

Kurds have varying styles, as reflected by their residence in different regions. Both men and women tend to wear baggy clothes shaped at the waist by a wide belt. Men wear matching jackets, and women decorate their headscarves with dangling coins and jewels.

The most important feature about clothes in Kurdistan, the western province in Iran, is the colorful clothes from top to bottom. The dress consists of colorful designs usually a long dress or gown, over which a vest or jacket is worn with colorful pants and belts or colorful shoes embroidered with stones or beads.



The instruments they used to create these geometric patterns, Muqarnas and etc. was just a pencil, compass and a ruler.



Jewelry is very common and all women are eager to put on accessories regardless to age.

Jewelry is very common and all women are eager to put on accessories regardless to age.

Dowry is an old culture in Iran that is still popular among Iranian people then wearing expensive jewelry among older women given them by their husband's family as a large dowry, presents the glory and the pride of an old woman.

In Kurdish tribes, even though old women prefer to put on dark clothes in comparison to younger ones, wearing bright colored traditional gowns and dresses is very popular among younger women in Kurdish tribes.

Lur

In contrast to Lur men, who favor neutral colors in their baggy clothes, women lean towards bright, feminine colors, with the trademark stripes hemmed on the pant cuffs. A vest reveals the sleeves of the long dress worn over the pants. After wrapping the headscarf around the head, neck, and shoulders, a long piece is left hanging down the back.

Gilaki

Worn with long shirts and matching vests, floor-sweeping skirts with colorful horizontal stripes at the bottom are the discerning feature of the traditional Gilak wardrobe in the northern Gilan province. Men are distinguished by the wide cotton belt around the waist.

Mazandarani

With pants worn underneath, the traditional skirts of the northern Mazandaran region are known to be much shorter and puffier than in other regions. Cotton shirts and hunting trousers with the socks and/or boots worn just below the knee are typical for men.

Abyaneh

In the village of Abyaneh, the aging population has maintained their traditional clothes. Women continue to don airy, below-the-knee skirts and their signature long, white floral scarves that cover the shoulders. Traditional men dress in wide-legged black pants, colorful vests, and wool skullcaps.

Bandar Abbas and Qeshm

The women in the southern port town of Bandar Abbas and the island of Qeshm are notable for their brightly colored, floral chadors and niqâb, which come in two types. The first gives the impression of thick eyebrows and a mustache from afar, a ruse used in the past to fool potential invaders into mistaking women for men. The other is a rectangular embroidered covering revealing only the eyes. Many women choose not to wear the niqâb today, but it is part of a centuries-old tradition that helped protect the face from the wind, sand, and scorching sun in these areas.

North of Iran

Now it is time of catching a glimpse at the culture of north of Iran as one of the most attractive tourist attractions in Iran, a region that is really beautiful in four seasons. In the spring you absorb the aroma of blossoms in different colors, mild breeze touches your skin as you dream of staying for a long time at the bench of Caspian sea. In autumn just immerse in amazing beauty of colorful trees and pleasant mind breeze.

As you are enjoying the nature of north of Iran, women and men pass the hectic day in paddy fields with traditional clothes suitable for the job.

Gilan is a famous province in north of Iran maybe named as green province.

Women do not like to wear black clothes just because of scenic beauty of nature.

It is interesting to mention that even in a funeral ceremony in north of Iran, women are not willing to wear black clothes and in order to show their sorrow they prefer to put on ragged customs.

The main clothes of Gilak women are Chadorkamar, Shaliteh, skirt, trouser, coat, robe (Kutah-Tuman), scarf, Lachak and short skin (Gerd-e Tuman). (The last one is used with traditional wide trousers narrowing of the ankle).

"Lachak" is another famous clothes that is a headdress like a hat, worn by old women.





Parau Cave in Kermanshah Iran; 3000 meters height from sea level



Parau cave is the greatest vertical cave in the world at the time of its discovery, more than 40 years ago (1971)

Parau or Paru (meaning full of water) is the name of a cave at 3050 meters height in Parau Mountain which is located twelve meters from the north east of Kermanshah City among Taq-e Bostan Mountain and Bistun Mountain and in the south of an area called Parau Square. This cave is located 300 meters down Sheikh Ali Khan Summit or Parau Summit. It was the greatest vertical cave in the world at the time of its discovery, more than 40 years ago (1971). That was why it is called Everest of all the caves in the world. This cave is registered as the second natural and national monument in Kermanshah in 1388 by Environmental Protection Agency in Iran. Today, many deep caves are discovered throughout the world which are even deeper than Parau Cave and have sent this cave down to rank 221 in the list of deepest world caves. One of the exquisite features of Parau Cave is its three thousand meters height from sea level which is the highest level from sea among all the caves in the world. This cave was recorded as the natural national monument by the Environmental Protection Agency in 1388. Moreover, it was registered by the Cultural Heritage Organization with registration number 98 in the list of Iran's natural monuments on 20th of Bahman 1389.

Parau Cave is a limestone cave in the Zagros Mountains, north of Kermanshah in Western Iran. At 751 m deep, it is the deepest cave in Iran. However, it has been reported as the second deepest, at 568 m deep. The cave is the most dangerous cave in the country, claiming the lives of five people.

Interestingly, Parau Cave is registered as the second natural and national monument in Kermanshah. However, one of the exquisite features of Parau Cave is its 300 meters height from sea level which is the highest level from sea among all the caves in the world. and that was why it is called Everest of all the caves in the world.

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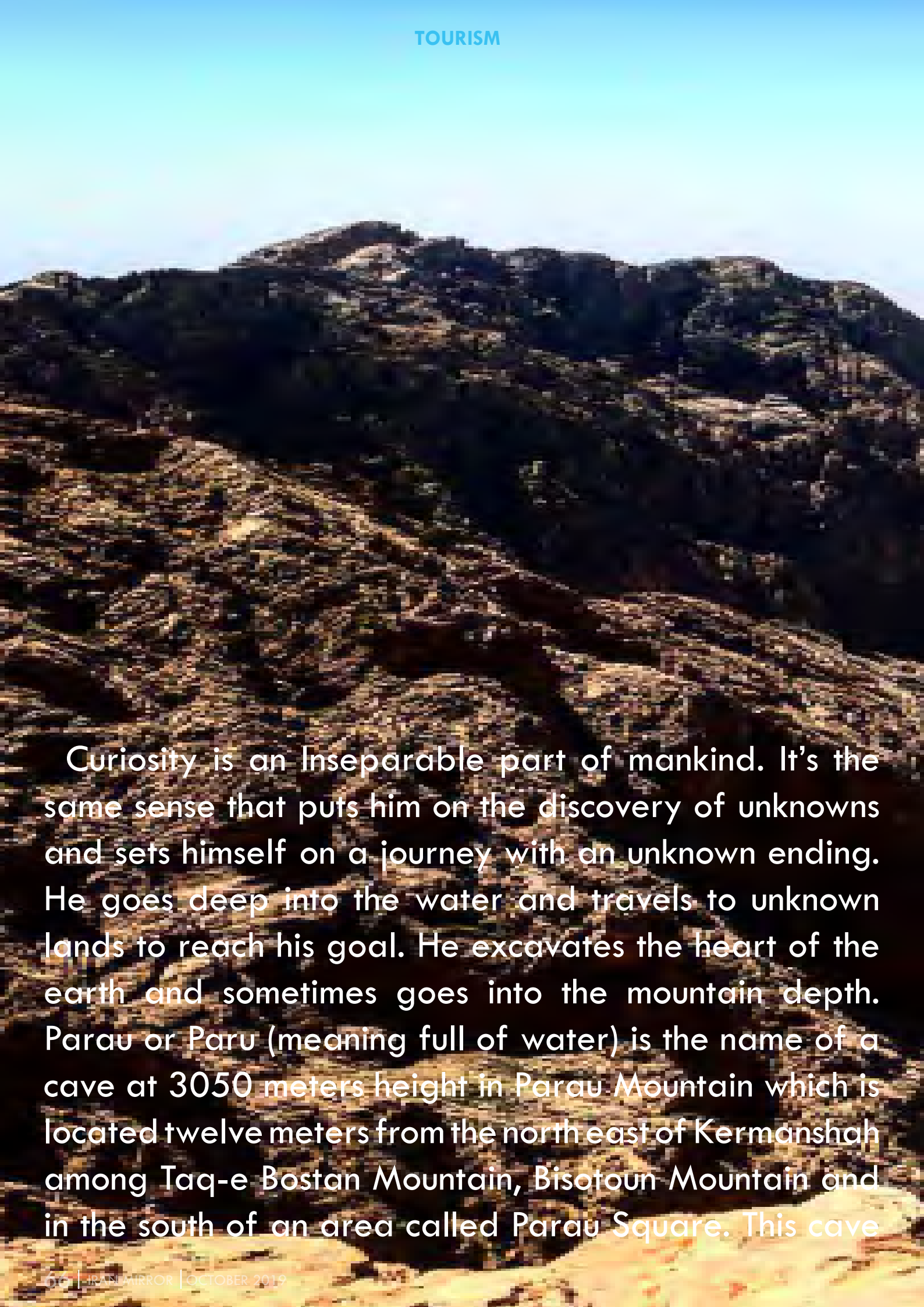
One of the precious features of Parau Cave in Kermanshah is its three thousand meters height from sea level which is the highest level from sea among all the caves in the world. The cave with its ruggedness is considered to be one of the most difficult caves in the world. So far, five cave-men and cave-women have died while caving.

The history of Ghar Parau begins in September of 1971. A British expedition of 11 members came to Iran to explore the mountain terrain around the town of Kermanshah, and, especially, the Kuh-e-Parau massif. The organizer and leader of the expedition – John Middleton – presumed, that the Zagros Mountain range was rich with karst and caves of different size. He based on maps of Survey of India (1:250,000) that were made after the World War II by the British and enlarged to 1:25,000 scale and on geological maps of British Petroleum company (1:500,000), an annex to which clearly stated, that this region has massive limestone massifs and resurgence through karst snake-holes.


The entrance to Ghar Parau (“Ghar” means “a cave” in Farsi) was found very quickly and a group of cavers explored it as far as “The Eroica” 40-meters pit. When the rest of the team came up, the base camp was erected near the entrance to the new cave and in the mid-September the exploration begun. It took only a few days to go as deep as -700 meters with a minimum of rigging. The British used the ladder and securing rope technique, and only rope for abseil in the lower part of the cave, when the team ran out of ropes. Only three strongest members reached the -700 meters mark (pitch 25), on their way back they conducted the mapping. This was the end of all work that year, the team ran out of time and headed back to Britain. At that time the world deepest cave was Reseau de la Pierre St-Martin (-1174 m.) in the French Pyrenees. The existence of a new 700 meter deep cave drew the interest of the world's caving community and, especially, British cavers, since in this country the caving clubs are traditionally strong and developed.

Curiosity is an Inseparable part of





Curiosity is an inseparable part of mankind. It's the same sense that puts him on the discovery of unknowns and sets himself on a journey with an unknown ending. He goes deep into the water and travels to unknown lands to reach his goal. He excavates the heart of the earth and sometimes goes into the mountain depth. Parau or Paru (meaning full of water) is the name of a cave at 3050 meters height in Parau Mountain which is located twelve meters from the north east of Kermanshah among Taq-e Bostan Mountain, Bisotoun Mountain and in the south of an area called Parau Square. This cave

A scenic view of a mountain valley with a winding road and a large cave entrance. The landscape is rugged and mountainous, with a clear blue sky and some clouds. The foreground shows a dirt road leading towards a large, dark cave entrance. The background features more mountains and a valley with some vegetation.

is located 300 meters down Sheikh Ali Khan Peak or Parau Peak. It was the biggest vertical cave in the world at the time of its discovery, more than 40 years ago (1971). That was why it is called Everest of all the caves in the world. One of the precious features of Parau Cave in Kermanshah is its three thousand meters height from sea level which is the highest level from sea among all the caves in the world. Our suggestion is to use Alaedin Travel Iran tours to take full advantage of all the facilities. The tour guides are extremely friendly and welcoming that you will enjoy a nice ambience.



TOURISM

While you are going down in Parau you should keep in mind that you have to spare enough energy to get out of there. 26 pitches should be ascended by rappelling techniques while in some of them cold water pours on you. Water makes working with the rope harder and also makes you cold. You need to rest sometimes while you should be careful not to spend much time resting because you may not be able to get warm again!

Places and pits have all been named and some names really make sense. First pitch is called the Golden Waterfall. The third is called eroica(37m)(Beethoven's third symphony meaning hero) because of the music of water in there. Jaws of the Hell, Vicoria's Shaft, Ferdowsi st. and many other names either say something about the place or the feeling of cavers about it.

Going there you should be really prepared, mentally and physically. Just in pitches 5, 15 and 18 there are places for resting(sleeping or taking a nap). So you should be able to ascend 752 meters with Jumar and Etrier beside the classic cave paths you should pass while not sleeping for hours and hours. That's challenging!

Parau needs more skills than rappelling, climbing and caving. There you will need not only fitness but also much of strength.

After years of speleological work, Iranian cavers have discovered the country's second-deepest cave in the mountains of Kermanshah province in western Iran.

This firmly establishes Joujar Cave as the second-deepest cave in Iran with a depth of 568 meters, following Ghar Parau Cave, which has been explored up to 751 meters.

The third place is held by Som Cave with a depth of 406 meters.

Ghar Parau is a cave in the Zagros mountains, north of Kermanshah. This cave was registered as a natural monument by Farshad Fattahi in the Department of Environment.

Deep caves, also known as caverns, often have several different entrances, thus they are called cave systems. Their many areas of vertical descent make them

attractive to adventurers who enjoy cave exploration and for those interested in spelunking.

Note

Exploring the Parau Cave is not suitable for ordinary tourists or even unprofessional cavers. You need to be fully prepared and have enough caving skills and rappelling techniques

Hiring a professional guide, or being a part of a professional group is a must

It's completely impossible and dangerous if you go by yourself especially if it is your first time going to this deep slippery cave

In order to explore the cave you should be mentally and physically prepared as there are a few places to rest except in pitches 5, 18. You should be ready not to sleep for hours and hours

The entrance of the cave is totally riddled with pits. Going deep down the vertical pitches is just the beginning of the journey

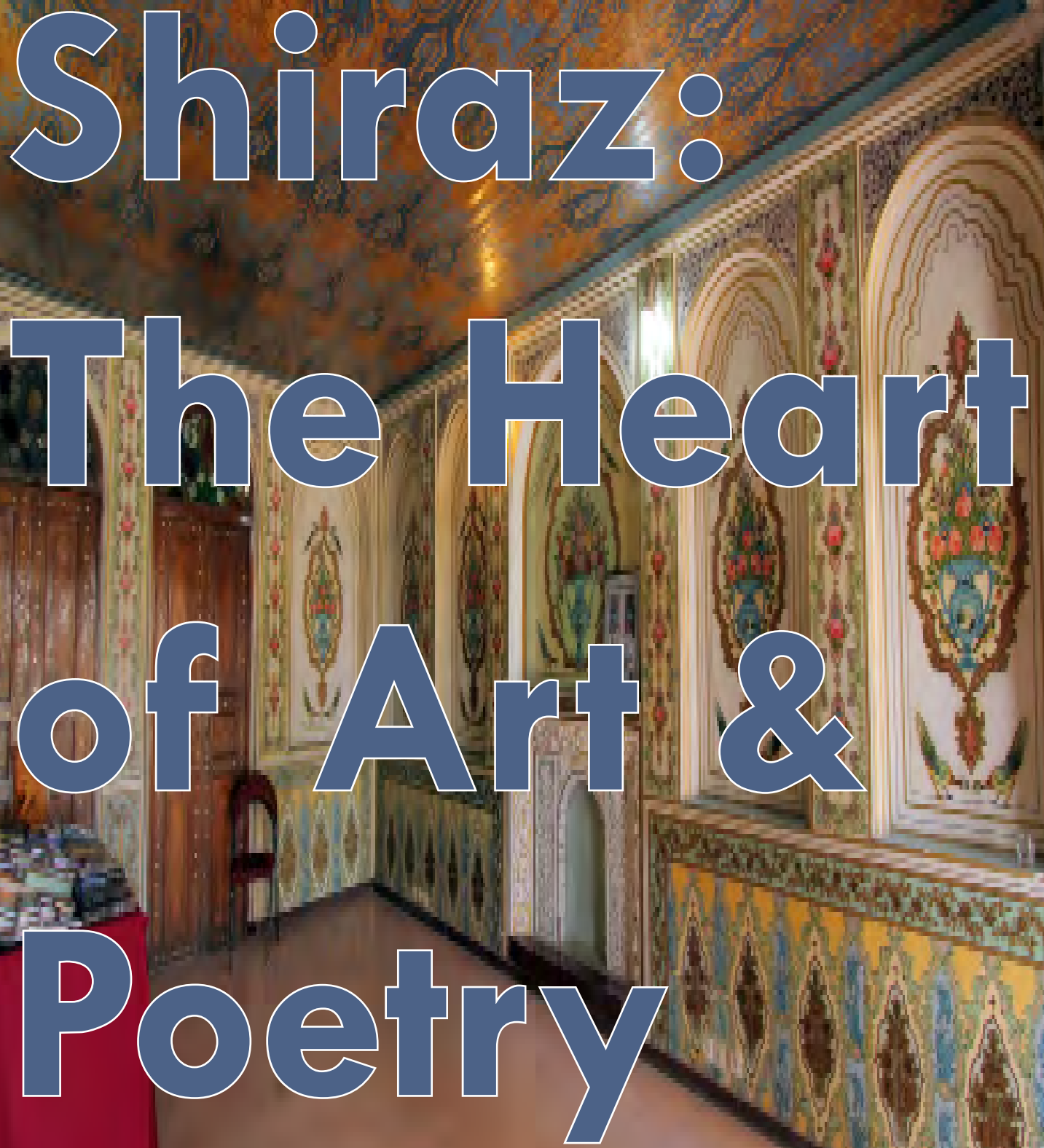
While you are in Parau Cave spare a little energy to get out of it. 26 pitches should be ascended by rappelling techniques while you might get wet by the cold pouring water. Water makes it hard to work with the ropes

The tight and craggy passageways, sliding walls, dangerous traverses and deep narrow wells add to the difficulty of the cave

The temperature of the cave never surpasses 1-3 degree and chilly air sometimes teases the cavers, so it is recommended to explore the cave in spring and summer.



Exploring the Parau Cave is not suitable for ordinary tourists or even unprofessional cavers. You need to be fully prepared and have enough caving skills and rappelling techniques



Shiraz: The Heart of Art & Poetry

TOURISM

Shiraz is the city of art and poetry; it is the birthplace of renowned poets such as “Hafez” and “Saadi”; it is also famous in Iran for being the city of love, wonderful colors in the season of spring and fun-loving people. The city of Shiraz is located at the foothills of the Zagros mountain range and features mild temperatures throughout the year; it is for this reason that this city has always been a favorite location either for the capital or for winter retreats for many great Iranian dynasties throughout the grand history of the Persian Empire.

As mentioned above, Shiraz has always been the capital of art and poetry in Iran. Having mild weather all around the year, beautiful nature scenes and being in the center of global trade routes throughout history, was a main factor that most master artists and famous poets chose this city as their home and a base to expand their influence throughout the country.

Apart from having a wonderful scenery, Shiraz is also known for its beautiful and magnificent architecture and majestic buildings that can be seen in various types such as mosques, traditional baths, tombs, museums and old traditional houses. Top hierarchy officials or influential citizens of Shiraz mostly owned these traditional houses in older times.

The houses that usually include a private garden and grand interiors, are mostly today, converted into public museums for all visitors to stroll and enjoy.

Shiraz is a city that has a glorious history of over 2000 years. In this span it has witnessed empires grow and fall; it has seen the rapid expanding of the Persian Empire and its darker days. Shiraz is the capital of Fars province, a region that stories say was named in the depth of history and in times of Prophet Noah. Shiraz itself has been present in most of the Iranian myths and legends and was a centerpiece in many “Shahnameh” stories written by the famous poet Ferdowsi. Even till now the city of Shiraz has a great influence on the Iranian culture.

Travelers will enjoy the great Persian architecture seen throughout the domes and tiles of the historic side of Shiraz.

This city enjoys both sides of the Persian culture; pre-Islam and Islamic designs can be viewed on historic walls and monuments across the city and speaks of the great heritage Shiraz has to offer.

The people of Shiraz are very welcoming and warm-hearted. Travelers will be able to glimpse this aspect of the population very often and all over town. The locals are famous for giving importance to family traditions and having a relaxed attitude towards life. In short, Iranians say that the people of Shiraz “live life and enjoy it as it was meant to be”.

Many consider Shiraz as a birthplace of democracy as many kings such “Kourosch”(Cyrus the great) and “Karim Khan Zand” based their reigns on the philosophy of giving importance to the citizens of their kingdoms. Even today, these kings have deep roots in the hearts of the people of Shiraz and talk of them very highly.

Continuing on the topic of kings & kingdoms, the great historic city of Pasargadae is located approximately 1 hour from Shiraz. This ancient city was the capital of the Achaemenid Empire under Cyrus the Great and is also the location of his tomb. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is visited by many foreign and domestic tourists every year and is considered one of the main attractions of Iran, it even highlights as a symbol of the Iranian culture and heritage. Later King Darius built nearby Persepolis, which matches the grand atmosphere of Pasargadae and together with their amazing pillars, magnificent statues and mystic drawings, create a key ancient wonder that is renowned all over the globe and make Shiraz a must see for every world traveler.

Top Attractions in Shiraz

Tomb of Saadi

Saadi is one of the most famous Iranian and Shirazi poets; his mausoleum is found in the city of Shiraz and is visited by thousands of local and international tourists each year. The Tomb of Saadi was initially built in the 13th century, but after being destroyed in the 17th century,



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TOURISM



it was re built in the Karim Khan era. The current structure is about 70 years old and featured on the walls of the structure are some verses of Saadi's poems.

Vakil Bazaar

Originally believed to be built more than 900 years ago, the Vakil Bazaar, is the main bazaar of Shiraz. This historical trading center was renovated and renamed after Karim Khan Zand in the 18th century. The Vakil Bazaar is placed in the historical center of Shiraz and features a wonderful collection of structures and buildings such as caravansarais, bath houses and mosques. Tourists traveling to Shiraz will find the best of handicrafts the city has to offer in this bazaar.

Qavam House

Qavam House is a beautifully designed traditional house in the city of Shiraz that belonged to the Qavam family who were wealthy merchants. This historical house is over 120 years old and features a wonderful design mixture consisting of Persian and Victorian patterns and art. The Qavam also known as the Narenjestan-e-Qavam includes an elegant garden with some lovely date palms and plants.

Eram Garden

The Eram Garden is one of the most magnificent traditional Persian gardens in Iran with a history of over 150 years. This wonderful Persian garden is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site and features some remarkable technology for its time in the field of water management, agriculture and landscaping. Travelers visiting Shiraz will enjoy taking a stroll through the botanical courtyard and enjoying the structure built at the end of the garden. The building is beautifully designed based on traditional Persian patterns and in front of it features a collection of water pools and fountains.

Hafezieh (Tomb of Hafez)

Hafezieh is the name of the memorial complex housing the tomb of the famous Persian poet, Hafez. The tomb of Hafez is considered to be one of the main tourist highlights of Shiraz and each year is visited by thousands of tourists from all over Iran and the world. The tomb structure, elegantly designed by the famous French architect, Andre Godard, stands in the middle of a beautiful garden. The Hafez tomb consists of some wonderful arabesque designs and mesmerizing turquoise tiles.

TOURISM



Vakil-Mosque-Shiraz



Vakil Bazaar



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