



# Iranian Culture and Heritage Tour

9-Day Iranian Culture and Heritage Tour

## Travel Details

In recent years Iran has been featured regularly in world news: the nuclear deal, sanctions against Iran, the presidential election in June 2013 when Mr. Rouhani was elected as President was beamed to every corner of the world through official news channels, and on social networking sites. And now, after all negative news The World Travel Market 2015 Industry report said Iran was set to become a tourism hot spot and tourists rushing to discover the riches the country has to offer.

Starting in Tehran by a comfortable coach, journey through beautiful landscapes and some of the world's oldest archaeological sites, arid mountains and rural villages, learning about the traditions and cultures of a land whose influence has been felt for thousands of years. Welcome to the once-forbidden land of Iran.

On this trip we explore the beautiful cities of Tehran, Shiraz, Yazd, Meybod, Na'in, Isfahan and Kashan and uncover Persian history at the impressive Persepolis. Though the real highlight of any trip to Iran is meeting the locals, arguably the friendliest and most hospitable people on earth, always ready to welcome visitors with a smile.

## Tour Highlights

- Journey to Tehran. The city of colourful lights, intriguing sounds and never-ending motion
- Nasir Al Molk, the pink mosque in Shiraz
- Discover Persepolis, home of Darius the Great
- Visiting Yazd, the city of Zoroastrian religious as well as beautiful Meybod and Na'in
- Spend the day in Isfahan exploring Imam square and it's mosques
- Wandering through the bazaar in Kashan
- Meeting the Iranian people and being welcomed to their country

Departure Date (s)	29 June 2017, 7 July 2017, 23 July 2017, 1 Aug 2017, 9 Aug 2017, 17 Aug 2017, 26 Aug 2017, 10 Sep 2017, 20 Sep 2017, 18 Oct 2017, 26 Oct 2017, 30 Oct 2017, 11 Nov 2017, 20 Nov 2017	Included meals	9 Breakfast, 0 Lunch, 1 Dinner
Duration	9 day trip	Accommodation Grade	Standard
Start	Tehran, Iran	Transport	Middle Bus / Bus
Finish	Tehran, Iran	Ages	Min 15
Group size	Min 1, Max 12	Style	Small group

## Itinerary

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### Day 1. Welcome to Tehran

Arrive at any time. There are no activities planned until an evening welcome meeting. Flights often arrive very late at night or early in the morning in Tehran. Keep in mind the evening welcome meeting when booking your travel. Arrive at Tehran Imam Khomeini International Airport, where you are met and transferred to our hotel located in city centre of Tehran. Feel free to explore Tehran tonight, but make sure you're back in time to meet the group. After introductions, your tour leader will review the details of your tour.

**Overnight:** Standard Hotel

Single Room Available

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

### Day 2. Fly from Tehran to Shiraz

This morning we take you a World Heritage Site, the lavish Golestan Palace. Built during the Qajar Dynasty that rose to power in the late 1700's, this fabulous walled complex is centered on a landscaped garden with tranquil pools. Many of the elements you'll admire today's date to the 19th century, when local Qajari architects and artisans were looking to integrate traditional Persian style with elements of Western and Russian origin. The palace buildings are among the oldest in modern Tehran and they are still regarded as a crowning achievement of the Qajar era.

Time permitting, we can walk around the Tehran Bazaar, few steps far from Golestan Palace. Continue along the Bazaar route, we go to the Timche Akbarian. Timche Akbarian dates back to almost 260 years from the Qajar era when its main purpose was for exchange and gold. Later it was developed into the first bank of Iran ran mainly by Jews who were the prominent residents of Oudlajan neighborhood.

As of today, there's no bank or money exchange, but the place has been delicately restored into a Dizi Sara and tea house (Optional) where tea comes in thin waist cups and along with sugar canes.

Dizi doubtlessly is one of the most delicious and traditional Iranian food. Eating it has a special custom. Dizi is a Mesopotamian stew usually made with lamb, chickpeas, white beans, onion, potatoes, tomatoes, turmeric and dried lime. Everything is mixed and cooked together.

In the afternoon you will visit the National Museum of Iran, where you can see fabulous historical items from 5000 BC to the advent of Islam in Iran which shows a brief history of our Land. In the afternoon, we take you to the airport for your included flight to Shiraz where you'll be escorted to the Hotel.

**Overnight:** Standard Hotel

Single Room Available

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

### Day 3. Shiraz

After breakfast, will start your full day tour of Shiraz. At first, you will visit Karim Khan Citadel. Built during the Zand Dynasty. Then you'll have time to explore and shop in the bustling Vakil Bazaar, home to hundreds of stores, beautiful courtyards, and even an ancient caravanserai.

After that, you will visit Nasir-al-Mulk Mosque (Pink Mosque) few steps far from Vakil Bazaar. It's built by the order from one of the lords of the Qajar Dynasty, Mirza Hasan 'Ali Nasir-al-Mulk, it took 12 years to complete in 1888. Its interior reveals a magnificent masterpiece of design with stunning colors. This is a space where light and worship intertwine. The mosque comes to life with the sunrise and colors dance throughout the day

like whirling dervishes. It reflects on the ground, walls, the arches and the towering spires. It even reflects on the visitors as if a colored ball is hit by the first sun ray and explodes to thousands of butterflies all around.

End your day in Shiraz on a tranquil note in the lovely garden the tomb of Hafez, one of our most outstanding poets to feel the taste of Persian Literature. Hafez is one of the greatest poets who impressed everyone with his mastery. His poems give us a special feeling and the peace in his tomb is really outstanding.

**Overnight:** Standard Hotel  
Single Room Available  
Included Meals: Breakfast

## Day 4. Shiraz – Persepolis – Pasargadae – Yazd

We have a full day of driving today to reach our destination of Yazd; it is a good idea to stock up on locally bought and easily found dates and pistachio nuts for the journey.

We will have stop in our way to visit the legendary city of Persepolis, former capital of Darius the Great and founded in 512 BC. There was no more impressive construction in the ancient world, except perhaps Karnak in Egypt,

Darius built the terrace, the Apadana (great audience hall), the Tachara (palace), the monumental staircases and his son, Xerxes, added the harem and the Hall of 100 Columns. Alexander the Great entered Persepolis in January 330 BC and then committed an uncharacteristic act of wanton destruction that still mystifies historians today, burning the mighty city to the ground. Though a shadow of its former self, the soaring pillars, terraces and sculptures of Persepolis still remain, but probably most impressive are the bas reliefs which line the site, telling the story of ancient governors and kings that came to Persepolis to pay tribute to the Persian Emperors.

From here we will drive a couple of miles to Naqsh-e-Rustam, the Necropolis where Darius and his successors are buried. Carved into the side of a cliff, the site is extraordinary in its magnitude and sheer ambition and does not disappoint even after the impressive Persepolis.

Then visit Pasargadae, UNESCO World Heritage Site, the tomb of Cyrus the Great and the former capital of the Achaemenid Empire. We will spend some time exploring the site and though not as striking as Persepolis, there is a great viewpoint where we can look over the site and the surrounding area.

Continue to Yazd and check in to our hotel.

**Overnight:** Standard Hotel  
Single Room Available  
**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## Day 5. Yazd

At an elevation of nearly 4,000 feet with the rugged granite peak of Shir-Kuh in the distance, Yazd is one of Iran's oldest continuously inhabited towns, its silhouette punctuated by minarets and the ingeniously-designed wind towers that capture desert breezes to cool homes during the hot summer months. Yazd is also the centre of Iran's Zoroastrian community, which is where you'll begin the day's sightseeing.

At the Tower of Silence, you'll learn about one of the traditions of this ancient pre-Islamic religion: Until the mid-1900's, the dead were transported to this tower where they were left to decompose and be devoured by birds.

Zoroastrian tradition considers a deceased body to be "unclean" and this process of excarnation prevents contact with either fire or earth – both of which are considered to be sacred. At the still-active Zoroastrian Fire Temple, you'll see a flame that is said to have been burning for the past 1,500 years. It's an important

pilgrimage site for the faithful and here our expert guide will offer additional insight into one of the world's oldest monotheistic religions.

In Amir Chakhmaq Square, you'll see a very impressive Hussainiya – a congregation hall for Shia commemoration ceremonies. With three tiers of recessed alcoves, all perfectly proportioned, its façade is one of the city's most photographed landmarks. Then visit the Friday Mosque, built in 1324, where you can gaze upon the tallest minarets in the country.

Among the many other historic sites to be seen in Yazd are beautiful old homes and the Dowlat Abad Garden. Standing by the garden's long reflecting pool, you'll be shaded by ancient cypress trees. Ahead of you is an 18th-century hexagonal pavilion with a beautiful stained glass window and a graceful wind tower – the tallest in Iran. All around are flowering fruit trees and other ornamental plants and trees.

**Overnight:** Standard Hotel

Single Room Available

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## Day 6. Yazd – Meybod – Na'in – Isfahan

Leaving Yazd behind, your first stop this morning will be in Meybod, where your first impression might be its striking monochromatic architecture of desert brick. But set along an ancient trade route, Meybod also offers a number of fascinating sites to visit including its Caravanserai. Built in typical Safavid style, this ancient desert inn features verandahs, shaded passageways, and nearly 100 rooms – some of which are now used as artisan workshops. At the local ice-house, you'll learn about the thick-clay construction and subterranean chamber that allowed local residents to have ice and food storage before refrigeration – even during the intense desert heat of summer!

Your overland journey continues to the small town of Na'in, an ancient community with origins dating back to the 8th century. At the local Ethnographic Museum, set in an erstwhile private residence of the Safavid era, you'll learn more about the region's cultural traditions. Continue to Isfahan and check in to our hotel.

**Overnight:** Standard Hotel

Single Room Available

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## Day 7. Isfahan – Kashan

As the 17th-century capital of the Safavid Empire, Isfahan was one of the world's greatest cities – architecturally striking, wealthy beyond imagining, and politically powerful with Europeans, Ottomans, Indians and Chinese came to its court – the heart of a vast Persian Empire that stretched from the Euphrates River in present-day Iraq to the Oxus River in Afghanistan. Indeed, its grandeur inspired the rhyming proverb, Isfahan nesf-Jahan (Isfahan is Half the World).

Today you'll join our expert guide to begin your exploration of the city, starting with some of the centuries-old, still elegant bridges that span the Zayandeh River. The 14th-century Shahrestan Bridge, for example, evokes the greatest aqueducts of ancient Rome and is the oldest bridge in Iran.

Continue your exploration in Isfahan at another UNESCO World Heritage Site. Simple at first glance, but wondrous in its rich detail and bold design, the Masjed-e Jame is another masterpiece of Iranian architecture, covering nearly 5 acres in the heart of this historic city. This is one of the oldest congregational mosques in the country, and its construction and embellishment over the past twelve centuries illustrate a number of important periods in Islamic architecture.

Next up is Chehel Sotun. Set in a landscaped and forested park in front of a tranquil reflecting pool, this graceful pavilion was built by Shah Abbas II for entertainment and court receptions. Entering through a portico

with twenty slender wooden columns, you'll discover soaring halls embellished with frescoes, paintings and mosaics; the Hall of Mirrors is especially breathtaking!

This afternoon, your exploration continues in Imam Square. This 17th-century site is one of the largest public spaces in the world. Here in the square, you'll visit the 17th-century Shah Mosque, revered as a masterpiece of Islamic architecture and easily recognized by its magnificent tile-work and soaring cupola and minarets. In the Ali Qapu Palace, you'll marvel at its beautiful music rooms and the balconies where Safavid kings would sit to enjoy the polo matches unfolding in the square below. You'll end your day exploring the Qeisarieh Bazaar that surrounds Imam Square. With hundreds of local vendors that specialize in traditional arts and crafts, it's a wonderful place to shop for pottery, enamel, jewelry and delicately inlaid board games.

Later, we take you to Kashan, the city of textiles and ceramic productions.

**Overnight:** Standard Hotel

Single Room Available

**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## Day 8. Kashan – Tehran

In the morning we will visit Bagh-e Fin Garden. This very early Persian garden reflects ancient landscaping principles that trace their roots to the time of Cyrus the Great in the 6th century BCE. Today, it's a delightful setting where you can meet young Iranian families who are out to enjoy their day. You'll also visit the historic Borujerdi House here in Kashan. With fine decorative motifs handcrafted of stucco, impressive domes, wall paintings and inlaid mirror mosaics, this former merchant's home is regarded as a masterpiece of traditional Persian architecture. It also boasts 130-foot tall wind towers to catch lofty breezes that can cool the entire house. Then leaving Kashan behind, we'll come back to the capital.

**Overnight:** Standard Hotel

Single Room Available

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

## Day 9. Tehran (Departure)

Our tour guide will transfer you to Imam Khomeini International Airport, according to your' flight time.

## What's Included

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Arrival and departure airport transfer from/to Imam Khomeini (IKA) Airport

Domestic flight from Tehran to Shiraz

8 nights' accommodation in standard grade hotels

Land travel in Iran by air-conditioned coach

Services of an Iranian tour lecturer throughout the tour

Meals: 9 breakfasts, 0 lunches, and 1 dinner.

All entrance fees to sites mentioned on itinerary

## What's Excluded

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International air fares, taxes and surcharges

Travel insurance

Items of a personal nature such as laundry or phone calls

Visa process fee

Visa costs

Tips to local guides and drivers

## IMPORTANT NOTES

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1. An arrival transfer is included on this trip
2. This trip starts at 9:00 in the morning on day 2
3. On day 2 there is an included internal flight from Tehran to Shiraz. The maximum check-in baggage allowance is 17 kg per person plus hand luggage.
4. Please note deposits for this trip are non-refundable and non-transferable as per our terms and conditions. You are required to pay a non-refundable deposit of 250 per person per trip for your booking to be confirmed.
5. A single supplement is available on this trip.

## Accommodation

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We use good quality hotels rated at the Iranian 3 and 4-star level on this tour. Local star ratings may vary slightly from international standards and where 4-star hotels are used these can be considered around the 3-star level. Accommodation is based on double or twin en-suite rooms with air conditioning. All couples will have a private double room. Single travellers may choose to pay a single room supplement to guarantee themselves a single room throughout the tour. Alternatively, they may choose to share a twin room with another traveller of the same sex. If there are no other single travellers available to pair up with at the time of

your booking, then we will add the single supplement to the tour price, but will refund this or deduct it from your balance payment if we are able to pair you up later on.

## Transport

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In your trip we use private AC Middle Bus or Bus throughout this tour, subject to the final size of the group.

## Transfers

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The tour includes a 24-hour airport meet & assist service in Tehran Imam Khomeini International Airport, your arrival and departure airport-hotel transfers and all other transfers.

## Entrance Fees

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The tour price includes entrance fees to all the tourist sites mentioned in the itinerary. You will need to cover the cost of entrance to any other extra sites that you may wish to visit.

## Dates & Prices

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We run regular small-group departures on this tour. All departures are guaranteed to run if a minimum of 5 travellers is reached. If we do not reach this minimum number (which happens very rarely), we will offer you the option to either pay a small supplement to do the tour exactly as planned, to change your date, to transfer to another tour, or we will provide you with a full refund. Departure dates and prices are listed on our website and in our brochure. Please check the website for the most up-to-date prices and any special offers.

## Booking & Payment

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If you would like to book a place on this tour, please complete the online reservation form on our website. We will then contact you with more details about how to complete your booking. Payments may be made by making a bank transfer. Full details will be provided in your booking confirmation email. Please contact us if you would like any more information or have any questions before making a booking.

## Passports and Visas

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Passports should be valid for at least six months after your departure from the country. Please do not bring an almost full or almost expired passport. Visa arrangements are the responsibility of the traveller. For more information about how to get an Iranian visa please visit this page.

## Joining Info

These tour joining details are provided on a provisional basis and may change prior to this tour departing. Any changes to these details will be updated on this page.

Joining Point: Watch this space as we announce the point soon.

Address: Tehran

Time and place: 09:00 am on day 2

## Dates & Prices

START DATE	END DATE	PRICE (P/P)	SINGLE ROOM (OPTIONAL)
19 May 2017	27 May 2017	1235.00 EUR	Contact Us
29 June 2017	7 July 2017	1570.00 EUR	1896.00 EUR
7 July 2017	15 July 2017	1570.00 EUR	1896.00 EUR
23 July 2017	31 July 2017	1570.00 EUR	1896.00 EUR
1 Aug 2017	9 Aug 2017	1570.00 EUR	1896.00 EUR
9 Aug 2017	17 Aug 2017	1570.00 EUR	1896.00 EUR
17 Aug 2017	25 Aug 2017	1570.00 EUR	1896.00 EUR
26 Aug 2017	03 Sep 2017	1570.00 EUR	1896.00 EUR
10 Sep 2017	18 Sep 2017	1570.00 EUR	1896.00 EUR
20 Sep 2017	28 Sep 2017	1570.00 EUR	1896.00 EUR
18 Oct 2017	26 Oct 2017	1570.00 EUR	1896.00 EUR
26 Oct 2017	3 Nov 2017	1570.00 EUR	1896.00 EUR
30 Oct 2017	7 Nov 2017	1570.00 EUR	1896.00 EUR
11 Nov 2017	19 Nov 2017	1570.00 EUR	1896.00 EUR
20 Nov 2017	28 Nov 2017	1570.00 EUR	1896.00 EUR

## Price Information

Prices listed are on a per person basis, sharing accommodation (unless otherwise stated). Prices do not include international flights.

Child prices when listed are applicable for ages 11 and under at time of travel.

Most tours are based on customers sharing twin-bedded rooms. If you book as an individual, you will be roomed with someone of the same sex. However, on many tours we offer the opportunity to pay a supplement to pre-book a single room.

## About SURFIRAN

SURFIRAN is a tour operator and travel agency in Iran.

Services and products provided by SURFIRAN include travel consultation, pre-arranged tours, custom packages, reservations for lodging, rental cars, rail passage etc.

Additional services include assistance with passports, providing access to top-of-the-line equipment and supplies, and a superior offering that includes access to better accommodations, and entertainment.

The value added of SURFIRAN's offering is its knowledge and expertise, competitive rates, and specialty focus on cultural travel, which translates into increased satisfaction for the customer.

SURFIRAN members include distinguished tour guides, travel experts, educators, and conservationists that has more than 15 years of experience.

Our team are all experienced and knowledgeable about frames and the industry we service. They are always willing to give any advice or information you may require and they will attend to your queries & bookings in a fast, efficient and courteous manner.

They also have extensive experience in tailor making tours, so if you have special interests or wish to visit places not visited on our scheduled tours, they would be happy to customize a tour suit your needs.

### Our Mission

Our mission is the total satisfaction of all who travel with us.

### Our Vision

To provide superior travel and tour services with focus on customer satisfaction, within the best competitive prices.



## Contact US

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