



## Persia in Depth – Discover Iran in 15 Days – 14 Nights

Day	Destination
1 Night	Tehran
1 Night	Kashan
3 Nights	Isfahan
1 Night	Rig-e Jenn Desert
1 Night	Mesr
1 Nights	Garmeh
2 Nights	Yazd
2 Nights	Shiraz
2 Nights	Tehran

### Day 1: Day (1): Tehran

After arriving at Imam Khomeini International Airport (IKA) in Tehran, our representative will meet and greet you; then, you will be transferred to the hotel to take a rest.

Overnight stay at the Hotel.

### Day 2: Day (2): Tehran – Kashan 2 H 50 MIN (245 km)

Leaving Tehran behind, we'll travel south to Kashan, a town originally famous for its textiles and ceramic production, but now better known for Fin Garden and its extensive bazaar and hammams.

Fin Garden (A UNESCO World Heritage Site) is our first stop; a relaxing and visually impressive Persian garden with water channels all passing through a central pavilion. There is also the chance to buy some rose water, a local specialty, outside of the site.

Then, you will visit Boroujerdi Traditional House. It was built about 130 years ago in the reign of Qajar dynasty (1857) by Iranian famous architect Ustad Ali Maryam. The owner was Haj Seyed Hasan Natanzi, a well-known merchant who mostly dealt with people of Boroujerd city. That's why the house is known as Boroujerd's House.

Afterwards, we will visit the bazaar area, a widespread complex filled with hammams and mosques; one hammam has been converted to a traditional teahouse where we will stop for those who need a break from shopping.

Overnight stay at the Hotel.

### **Day 3: Day (3): Kashan – Abyaneh – Isfahan 3 H 35 min (270 km)**

Leaving Kashan behind, your first stop this morning will be in Abyaneh village. Abyaneh village is known as the Red Village because of its red soil and houses. The houses of Abyaneh bear an ancient architectural style, featured by the use of clay as the construction material and latticed windows and wooden doors.

Your overland journey continues to Isfahan. As the 17th-century capital of the Safavid Empire, Isfahan was one of the world's greatest cities— architecturally striking, wealthy beyond imagine, and politically powerful with Europeans, Ottomans, Indians, and Chinese coming 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 e jahan (Isfahan is half of the World).

Together with your expert guide, you will begin your exploration of the city by visiting some of the centuries-old, still elegant bridges that span Zayandeh River. The 14th-century Shahrestan Bridge, for example, evokes the greatest aqueducts of ancient Rome and is the oldest bridge in Iran. Other famous bridges on Zayandeh River are Sio-ce-pol and Khaju. There are sluice gates below the bridge to let the water runoff Zayandeh River in the spring, and there are beautiful stony archways above each gate. These archways provide a great acoustic place for every man who wants to sing. You can always find a man or a group of men singing under the bridge. The songs are usually about betrayal or unrequited love. You have the chance to chat with these men and listen to their songs.

Overnight stay at the Hotel.

### **Day 4: Day (4): Isfahan**

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. You will also visit Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque, also known as the Ladies Mosque, as it was built for the Shah's harem, renowned for the brightly colored domed ceiling, where the light creates the image of a peacock. 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 exploration of the square by visiting the Qeisarieh Bazaar. 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.

Next up is Chehel Sotum Palace. 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!

The last to visit today is Mount Sofe in the south of the city. At this place, you have the chance to see the whole city altogether. You can have a tea or a coffee at one of the cafes or even dine in one of the restaurants.

Overnight stay at the Hotel.

## **Day 5: Day (5): Isfahan**

Continue your exploration in Isfahan at a 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 historical city. This is one of the oldest congregational mosques of the country, and its construction and embellishment over the past twelve centuries illustrate a number of important periods in Islamic architecture.

In the city's Armenian quarter, you'll delve more deeply into the region's complex history as you will visit several churches including the 17th-century Vank Cathedral with its lavishly decorated interior and unique blend of Islamic and European architectural elements.

In the same quarter, we will also visit the Music Museum where you will find a collection of local and national Iranian instruments.

In the afternoon, we will visit Hasht Behesht Palace and Garden. At this octagonal palace, you can see gangs of retired men who pass their free time chatting with the visitors.

Overnight stay at the Hotel.

## **Day 6: Day (6): Isfahan – Rig-E-Jenn Desert 4 H 30 min (380 km)**

Today, the safari experts of RO Nature Adventure will pick you up from your hotel and for the next 4 days, they will show to you spectacular parts of the central desert with their equipped four-wheel drives. Our route to the desert will take us through different desert climates, from colorful mountains to the dunes of Rig-e Jenn Desert. We will go off-road to get on the dunes and explore this desert.

After that, we will drive to the place where we will stay overnight, in a desert village. We will show you the lifestyle of the villagers as well as the artists who moved to these villages to develop their art in a

pure environment. Camping is also possible upon request.

Overnight stay at Camp or Local House.

### **Day 7: Day (7): Mesr Desert**

We continue our journey to the desert named Mesr, which means Egypt in Persian. A few hundred years ago, a cameleer came to this side of the desert to find his lost camel. When he saw the beauty of the place he said: "I will make my own Egypt here". He started to dig a water channel for 5 km to bring water into the area and build a small village with the name of Mesr. This village was destroyed by a flood a few years ago.

The beautiful desert in this region is named after the village. We will pass through some small oases which still bear traces of old desert architecture. In the evening we will sit around the fire on the dunes until the sky is full of stars. At night, we will drive back to a village on the side of the central desert and stay in a beautiful local house and enjoy their hospitality.

Overnight stay at Camp or Local House.

### **Day 8: Day (8): Garmeh**

Today, we will continue to explore the desert. As we cross it, we will see dunes, colorful mountains, and canyons. In the evening, we will arrive in Garmeh. This village has the biggest palm gardens in the region and is the beautiful home of the pioneer of traditional local accommodation in Iran, Maziar Aledavood. We will stay at his Ateshooni House for the night and enjoy the live special music that you will not hear anywhere else in the world.

Overnight stay at Camp or Local House.

### **Day 9: Day (9): Garmeh – Yazd 6 H 10 Min (470 km)**

After a morning stroll through the palm gardens and the water cave in the village, we will head to our next desert destination, the ancient village of Kharanagh. It has fortress-like 4-story buildings which are at least 3000 years old. Upon request of our guests, we can visit the Zoroastrian temple of Chak-Chak before we bring our guests to their hotel in Yazd.

Overnight stay at the Hotel.

### **Day 10: Day (10): Yazd**

Yazd is one of the oldest continuously inhabited towns of Iran. 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 center 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-1900s, 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 will 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 Chakmaq 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 facade is one of the city's most photographed landmarks.

The next place to visit is 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 stay at the Hotel.

## **Day 11: Day (11): Yazd – Shiraz 5 H 20 min (450 km)**

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

First, you will visit Pasargadae, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Tomb of Cyrus the Great and 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.

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, we will have some stop on our way to visit the Legendary City of Persepolis, the former capital of Darius the Great which was founded in 512 BC. There was no more impressive construction in the ancient world than Persepolis, except perhaps the Karnak in Egypt. Darius built the terrace, Apadana (great audience hall), Tachana (a palace), and the Monumental Staircases; 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.

Continue to Shiraz and check into the hotel.

Overnight stay at the Hotel.

## **Day 12: Day (12): Shiraz**

After breakfast, you will visit Nasir-al-Mulk Mosque (Pink Mosque) which is few steps far from Vakil Bazaar. It was built at Mirza Hassan Ali Nasir-al Mulk's command (one of the lords of the Qajar Dynasty); it took 12 years to complete it 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 the 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 colorful ball is hit by the first sun ray and has exploded into thousands of butterflies all around.

Continue your exploration in Shiraz at the beautiful orange-scented Narenjestan Garden, laid out in the 19th century during the Qajar Dynasty.

Then, you will visit Karim Khan Citadel. Built during the Zand Dynasty.

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.

Overnight stay at the Hotel.

## **Day 13: Day (13): Shiraz – Tehran (Flight) 1 H 20 Min**

After breakfast, we will continue our exploration of the city. Shiraz is famous for its gardens and we'll visit Eram Garden with its aromatic myrtles, beautiful flowers, fruit trees, and towering cypresses (one of which is said to be 3,000 years old).

Then, we will visit the Shrine of Ali Ebne Hamzeh. Built in the 19th century over the tomb of Emir Ali, a nephew of Shah Cheragh who also died in Shiraz while en route to Khorasan to help Imam Reza, this shrine is the latest of several earlier incarnations destroyed by earthquakes.

You will end your visit on a tranquil note in the lovely garden-tomb of Sa'adi and garden-tomb of Hafez, two of our most outstanding poets to feel the taste of Persian Literature. Hafez is one of the great poets who has impressed everyone with his mastery. His poems give us a special feeling and the peace in his tomb is really outstanding. Sa'adi is a poet, philosopher, and mystic who is known as the father of alternative tourism. About seven centuries ago, he traveled to different countries and cities. Then, he collected all his experiences in verses and rhymed prose in two books named Boustan and Golestan. These two books give you lots of inspiration and information. We will get a chance to pay homage to tombs of these great poets.

In the afternoon, you will fly back to the capital.

Overnight stay at the Hotel.

## Day 14: Day (14): Tehran

This morning, we will take you to a World Heritage Site, the lavish Golestan Palace. Built during the Qajar Dynasty, that rose to power in the late 1700s, this fabulous walled complex is centered on a landscaped garden with tranquil pools. Many of the elements you'll admire today, 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.

Then, we will walk around Tehran Bazaar.

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.

We will also visit the Carpet Museum of Iran, home to a dazzling collection of Persian carpets collected from around the country and representing centuries of extraordinary art and skill.

Overnight stay at the Hotel.

## Day 15: Day (15): Tehran (Departure)

Our representative will transfer you to Imam Koheimi International Airport according to your flight time.

## Highlights

Exploring both the nature and culture of the central regions of Iran will take us all the way into a deep and pristine desert which has not been crossed by humans until a few years ago. We will experience why Rig – Jen desert was abandoned throughout history. We will learn how people brought water and civilization into a remote village and named it Mesr Desert. Moving through the old and abandoned routes, we will visit other desert civilizations and will experience the microclimates. They lead us to our final destination of Yazd, the main civilization in the center of Iran.

## Tour Includes

- Visa Authorization Code
- All Ground Transfers and Transportations
- Accommodation (BB)
- Meals: 14 breakfasts, 3 lunches, and 3 dinners.
- A Certified English-Speaking Tour Guide
- A Domestic Flight from Shiraz to Tehran.

## Tour Excludes

- Airfare / Visa / Insurance.
- GST 5%
- TCS at 5% (Tax Collected at Source)
- Any increase in Airfare, Visa fees, Airport taxes, Govt. Taxes, Fuel Surcharges and any applicability of new taxes from Govt.
- Any up gradation in Airline class or hotel room category
- Cost of Air ticket deviation charges
- Any Increase in the rate of exchange leading to an increase in all land arrangements which may come in to effect prior to departure
- Cost of pre or post tour hotel accommodation
- Any extra expense such as route change, Airline change, Date change, Accommodation facilities, etc incurred due to the unforeseen, unavoidable forced majeure circumstances during the tour
- Cost of insurance for 61years and above
- Porterage, laundry, telephone charges, shopping, wines & alcoholic beverages, items of personal nature and food or drink which is not part of a set group menu
- Any extra cost incurred on behalf of an individual due to illness, accident, hospitalisation, or any personal emergency
- Any services or activity charges other than those included in the group tour itinerary
- To and fro Air fare, Airport transfers, insurance, visa fees to join/leave the group for joining and leaving guests
- Anything specifically not mentioned in the 'tour price includes' column
- Conversion Rate on the date of actual payment will be based on the Rate of Euro on XE.com + INR 1.50
- Airfare to be calculated at the time of booking as per actual.

## IMPORTANT NOTES:

1. Arrival & departure transfers are included on this trip.



2. This trip starts at 9:00 in the morning on day 2.
3. On day 13, there is an included domestic flight from Shiraz to Tehran.
4. The maximum check-in baggage allowance is 17 kg per person plus hand luggage.
5. Please note that deposits for this trip are refundable and transferable (we only deduct the bank transfer fee) as per our terms and conditions.
6. A single supplement is available on this trip.

#### **TOUR HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Journey through a vast ocean of untouched nature in Rig-Jen and the Central Desert
- Explore the beginnings of different desert civilizations
- Visit beautiful villages with unique histories and stories
- Visit the main cities of Iranian civilization (Isfahan, Shiraz, Yazd & Kashan)
- Travel with an experienced team who are committed to the maxims of eco-friendly tourism