



## Itinerary Ziyarat tour (15 Days)

### Day 1: Arrive in Tehran, visit Tehran, and fly to Bushehr (flight time 1 hour and 35 mins)

Sightseeing: The National Museum of Iran, Golestan Palace, Bazaar, National Jewelry Museum

Upon your pre-dawn arrival at Tehran airport, our representative carrying our show card (transfer information) will meet you and transfer you to your hotel. You will have time to rest and relax before our morning tour of Tehran begins. To avoid heavy traffic, taking the subway is the best way to visit Tehran. We take the subway and charter taxis so that we make most of the day and visit as many sites as possible. We begin the day early morning with a trip to the National Museum of Iran; an institution formed of two complexes; the Museum of Ancient Iran which was opened in 1937, and the Museum of the Islamic Era which was opened in 1972. It hosts historical monuments dating back through preserved ancient and medieval Iranian antiquities, including pottery vessels, metal objects, textile remains, and some rare books and coins. We will see the “evolution of mankind” through the marvelous display of historic relics.

Next on the list is visiting the Golestan Palace, the former royal Qajar complex in Iran's capital city, Tehran. It is one of the oldest historic monuments of world heritage status belonging to a group of royal buildings that were once enclosed within the mud-thatched walls of Tehran's Arg (Citadel). It consists of gardens, royal buildings, and collections of Iranian crafts and European presents from the 18th and 19th centuries.

Then we go for a walk through bazaar. Bazaar, in Iran, is the economic life of the country. Moreover, social relations are formed here and a fairly wide range of people get the chance to socialize more. It is also a logical place for political parties to rule their own policies. Soon after, we go to have lunch.

Our Tehran excursion will end at the priceless National Jewelry Museum where we will visit a world of jewels, one of which includes one of the two greatest diamonds; Darya-e-Noor (sea of light). Afterwards we will transfer to the airport for the flight to Bushehr. Stay overnight in Bushehr.

**Attention: The priority in sightseeing may be changed due to the time of your arrival, preference of your guide and also official and unofficial holidays of some museums.**

### Day 2: Visit Bushehr & Kharg Island

Sightseeing: Bushehr city, Persian Gulf, natural attractions of Kharg Island



Today we take a tour of Bushehr. The city lies in a vast plain running along the coastal region on the Persian Gulf coast of south-western Iran, it is built near the ancient port city of Rishahr/Reshire (Sassanian, Riv Ardasher). It was the chief seaport of the country and is the administrative center of its province. Its location is about 1,218 kilometers (757 mi) south of Tehran. The local climate is humid. Bushehr was the main trade center of Iran in the past centuries. The city structures are traditional in style, modest in proportion and cost. Due to its lack of rail connection to the interior of the country and its shallow anchorage, it has lost its position as the primary port of Iran. Among the attractions of Bushehr are the coast line, seasonal bazaars, and historical relics of different times. We will also see the beauties of the Persian Gulf.

Then we will visit Kharg Island. Kharg Island is a continental island in the Persian Gulf belonging to Iran. The island is located 25 km (16 mi) off the coast of Iran and 483 km (300 mi) northwest of the Strait of Hormuz. Administered by the adjacent coastal Bushehr Province, Kharg Island provides a sea port for the export of oil and extends Iranian territorial sea claims into the Persian Gulf oil fields. Stay overnight in Kharg

### **Day 3: Drive to Shiraz, visit Bishapur & Chogan Gorge on the way (320 k.m. nonstop drive, approx. 5 hours)**

Sightseeing: Bishapur, Chogan Gorge, Anahita Temple

Today we move towards Shiraz. On the way, we will visit Bishapur which is an ancient city situated south of modern Faliyan, on the ancient road between Persis and Elam. The road linked the Sassanid capitals Istakhr (very close to Persepolis) and Ctesiphon.

The next stop will be at 'Chogan Gorge' which is a valley with a river north of the ancient city of Bishapur. There are 6 giant rock carvings on walls telling the story of the Roman Empire defeat by the Sassanid king, Shapour II (309 - 379) and also King Bahram II (276–293) conquering Arabs and rebels. At night we arrive in Shiraz and transfer to our hotel. We stay overnight in Shiraz.

### **Day 4: Visit Shiraz**

Sightseeing: Karim Khan Palace, Vakil Mosque, Vakil Bazaar, Saraye Moshir, Nasir Almolq Mosque, the tombs of Hafez and Saadi, Ali-Ebn-e-Hamzeh, Jahan Nama Garden, Delgosha Garden, and the tomb of Khajoy-e-Kermani

Shiraz has a reputation for being an enlightened city that has been at the cultural heartland of Iran for more than 2,000 years. It had once been the country's capital.



Shiraz is crowned as the heartland of Persian culture, and this city of sophistication will never fail to conjure up images of roses and nightingales, gardens and poetry. Early in the morning, relish in the highlights of Shiraz when it was the capital of Iran during the Zand Dynasty. Be inspired by the glorious Karim Khan Palace, the splendid Vakil Mosque, Vakil Bazaar and Saraye Moshir with its splendid architecture and interesting ethnic souvenir shops, and the Nasir Almolq Mosque. Next, we will stop for a mouth-watering Iranian lunch at one of the traditional restaurants in Shiraz.

This gorgeous city is home to famous poets such as Hafez and Sa'adi, and historical sites from different eras dating back to 6,000 years ago can be found. Hafez is one of the great poets who impressed everyone with his mastery. His poems give us a special feeling and the peace in his tomb is really outstanding. Saadi is a poet, philosopher and mystic who is known as the father of tourism. He travelled to different countries and cities about seven centuries ago. Then he collected all his experiences in verse and rhyme 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 the tombs of these great poets.

In the evening, we will visit Ali-Ebn-e-Hamzeh and be prepared to marvel at its beauties. We will take a stroll through the Jahan Nama Garden and witness its tall and proud cedars. Finally we will visit the Delgosha Garden and the tomb of Khajoy-e-Kermani from where the perspective of the mysterious city of Shiraz will remain in our mind. Stay overnight in Shiraz

**Day 5: An excursion to Persepolis & Necropolis, visit Shiraz (the ancient historical-cultural heritage of Sang-e-sia District) (60 k.m. nonstop drive approx. 1 hour and 10 mins)**

Sightseeing: Persepolis, Necropolis, Sang-e-sia District, Bibidokhtaran, Mirhadi Mosque, Moshir Mosque, the tomb of Sibooeyeh, Niayesh traditional chain hotels

In the morning, we first pay a visit to Persepolis. Founded by Darius I in 518 B.C., Persepolis was the capital of the Achaemenid Empire. It was built on an immense half-artificial, half-natural terrace, where the king of kings created an impressive palace complex inspired by Mesopotamian models. The importance and quality of the monumental ruins make it a unique archaeological site. It seems that Darius planned this impressive complex of palaces not only as the seat of government but also, and primarily, as a showplace and a spectacular center for the receptions and festivals of the Achaemenid kings and their empire such as Nowruz.

The second place we stop by is Necropolis. Opposite Mount Rahmat, ten minutes to the north, proudly stands the Necropolis, the magnificent burial place of Achaemenid kings. The site also provides seven bas-reliefs dating back to Elamite and Sassanid periods.



Then we return to the hotel and get some rest. In the evening, we take a walking tour of the historical and cultural district of Sang-e-sia (black stone), visit the shrine of Bibidokhtaran with its unique architecture which is a sample of the well-known Dome of Soltaniyeh in Zanjan (the third largest dome in the world after the domes of Florence Cathedral and Hagia Sophia, its importance in the Muslim world may be compared to that of Brunelleschi's cupola for Christian architecture.), visit the historical cypress in Mirhadi Mosque, visit Moshir Mosque and walk past an Armenian church (as a Christian, you may get the chance to pay a visit if you ask for), visit the tomb of Sibooeyeh, visit Niayesh traditional chain hotels which include the historical houses of Moayedi, Mostafavi, and Nematollahi. You will see the evolution of the Iranian architecture from 200 years ago to the Qajar era and the present time. You will get to know some elements of the architecture in the interior decoration of the ancient Pahlavi houses such as backyard, courtyard, and chambers around the courtyard, guesthouse, pool, shahneshin, orsi, panjdari, and gushvareh. We will make our day by having Shirazi dinner and drink at Delgosha restaurant. We stay overnight in Shiraz.

**Day 6: Drive to Zeinoddin, visit Pasargadae and Abarkuh on the way (77 k.m. nonstop drive approx. 1 hour and 30 mins)**

Sightseeing: Pasargadae, Abarkuh (the ancient living cypress tree, and Abarkuh Icehouse), Zeinoddin caravanserai

Today we move towards to Zeinoddin caravanserai. On the way, we will have a stop at Pasargadae to visit the most important and majestic monuments. The tomb of Cyrus the Great, the great founder of the Achaemenid Empire (500 years BC), is the oldest historic monument there. The wonderful architecture of his tomb and the huge fertile land over there inspires the visitors. This archeological environment was the worshiping place for the followers of several religions and it is still so. Followed by the relief of the winged man and get familiar with its historical elucidations some researchers gave specific theories regarding the relation between personality of Cyrus the Great and one of the prophets of Holy Book.

Then we head for Abarkuh, the place of historical sightseeing and wonderful desert architecture. We will see the 4500 year old cypress tree in Abarkuh which is a marvelous attraction out there. These beliefs and the beauty of the 4500 year old cypress tree remain a trace of eternity in the heart and on the mind of all travelers. Abarkuh Icehouse is definitely another attraction to which we will pay a visit.

In the end, we continue all the way to Zeinoddin caravanserai and stay overnight there. In the past, for safety, people used to travel in small or large groups called caravans. Each caravan traversed 6



farsakhs (1 manzel) every day. Farsakh is a historical Iranian unit for measuring distance, equal to 6.24 kilometers. Passing through a manzel, the caravan arrived at a caravansary in which they could stay to rest and relax. Saryazd, Fahraj, and Zeinoddin were the first caravansaries on the roads between Yazd, Shiraz, Kerman, and Sirjan. Staying overnight in one of these caravansaries will be an unforgettable experience if there is a vacancy by luck. We stay overnight in caravanserai.

**Day 7: Drive to Yazd, visit Saryazd & Mehriz on the way, visit Yazd (161 k.m. nonstop drive approx. 5 hour and 30 mins )**

Sightseeing: Mehriz, Saryazd Castle, Zoroastrian Towers of Silence & Fire Temple, Amir Chakhmaq Complex

Today we get an early start to arrive in Yazd. On the way, we will first visit Mehriz which is located 30 kilometers south of the city of Yazd. It consists of one central district and five village centers. According to historians, the name belongs to "Mehrnegar" the beloved daughter of Anoushirvan, the Sassanid King. Mehriz was known, during the late Sassanid era (4th century AD), as a natural pleasant area.

The next place we will stop by on the way is the Saryazd Castle which is a historical castle built during Sassanid Dynasty (the 3th\_ 7th century) in Saryazd village. The castle has been one of the oldest and largest bank safe-deposit boxes in Iran and the world where cereals, money, gold and jewelry were kept during invasions. The castle has nested concentric walls with impregnable high towers that is surrounded by a moat. The moat has a width of 6 meters and a depth of 3 to 4 meters. The castle has two doors that one is a main door and another is a guardian door. The castle has three floors that are made with mud brick.

Then we continue all the way to Yazd. On our way to the hotel, we will pay a visit to Zoroastrian Towers of Silence; circular raised structures built by Zoroastrians for excarnation (for dead bodies to be exposed to carrion birds), and Fire Temple; the place of worship for Zoroastrians. At night, we will visit Amir Chakhmaq Complex; a prominent structure noted for its symmetrical sunken alcoves. It is a mosque located on a square of the same name. It also contains a caravanserai, a tekyeh (a place where Shiite gather for mourning of Muharram), a bathhouse, a cold water well, and a confectionery. At night, the building is lit up after twilight hours after sun set with orange lighting in the arched alcoves which makes it a spectacle. Overnight in Yazd



**Day 8: Drive to Mesr village, visit Shah Abbasi Caravanserai and ancient villages on the way (372 k.m. nonstop drive approx. 5 hour)**

Sightseeing: Shah Abbasi Caravanserai, Chak Chak & Kharanaq, Robot-e Posht-e Badam, Bayazeh, Arusan, Garmeh & Khur villages

Today we hit the road to Mesr, a village in Jandaq Rural District, Isfahan Province. On the way, we will have short stops to enjoy visiting some ancient villages and the road side Shah Abbasi Caravanserai. Located near the city of Ardakan in Yazd Province, Chak Chak serves as a pilgrimage point for pious Zoroastrians. Each year from June 14–18 many thousands of Zoroastrians from Iran, India and other countries flock to the fire temple at Pir-e Sabz. Notable features of Chak Chak include the ever-dripping spring located at the mountain. The actual temple of Chak Chak is a man-made grotto sheltered by two large bronze doors. The shrine enclosure is floored with marble and its walls are darkened by fires kept eternally burning in the sanctuary. The deserted mud-brick village of Kharanaq is crumbling back into the valley out of which it emerged over 1000 years ago. What remains in this ghost town, 70km north of Yazd, is a Qajar-era mosque, a cylindrical 17th-century shaking minaret and a caravanserai near the entrance of the village. Shah Abbasi Caravanserai is a road side inn, located in Meybod, Yazd Province. Robot-e Posht-e Badam is a village in Ardakan County, Yazd Province. Bayazeh is a village in Nakhlestan Rural District, Isfahan Province. It was founded more than 2,500 years ago. Bayazeh had been known as the cultural and scientific center of this part of the desert. An ancient old castle (remaining from the Sasanian Empire or before), mosques, houses, covered narrow alleys, and a qanat, are sites that attract tourists. Arusan, Garmeh, and Khur are three other villages in Biabanak Rural District, Isfahan Province. We stay overnight in Mesr village.

**Day 9: Move from Mesr village to Jandaq by camel (40 k.m. approx. half day) this camel riding will be arranged based on your desire to how much camel riding you may like.**

Sightseeing: Mesr and Jandaq villages

Before the invention of cars and the development of roads, old Iranians used to travel between the cities by camel in small or large groups called Caravans. Today we move from Mesr village to Jandaq by camel in the form of a caravan, and experience the traditional way of travelling in the remote past. We are greatly amused and enjoy the natural beauties along the way. We stay overnight in Jandaq.



**Day 10: Drive to Shahroud, visit Damghan on the way (327 k.m. nonstop drive approx. 4 hour and 10 mins)**

Sightseeing: Tappeh Hessar, Tarikhaneh Mosque

Today we drive to Shahroud. On the way, we will visit Damghan in Semnan Province. It is one of the oldest cities on the Iranian plateau, stretching back 7000 years, and boasts many sites of historic interest. The oldest of these is Tappeh Hessar, lying to the southeast of the city, which holds the ruins of a castle dating from the Sassanid period. The Tarikhaneh is one of the oldest mosques in Iran, built as a fire temple during the Sassanid dynasty it was converted into a mosque after the advent of Islam. There are also many other historical buildings belonging to Seljuks and other periods. Apart from its historical interest, the city today is mainly known for pistachios and paper almonds (kaghazi) with very thin shells. Damghan shines like a bezel in the desert region. With its ample cultural heritages and authentic background Damghan's ancient civilization is undeniable and each relic in the city can substantiate its genuine past. By rubbing the dust of forgetfulness off this shining bezel we can display Damghan's ancient shining face to the world and introduce it as an important tourism and sightseeing place in Iran. Overnight in Shahroud

**Day 11: Visit Shahroud, Bastam, and Abr forest (50 k.m. nonstop drive approx. 1 hour and 35 mins)**

Sightseeing: Shahroud city, Bastam village, Abr forest

Half-way between the capital and Mashhad, and at the junction with the Gorgan road, sits the modern city of Shahroud, which has grown to absorb the historic town of Bastam situated in the hills a few kilometers to the north. From the north, it is surrounded by the Alborz Mountains, and from the south by the arid salty deserts. The main launch site of the Iranian Space Agency is near Shahroud. It is also well known for unique types of grapes which are cultivated especially in Shahroud. Therefore, this city is called as Grapes-City. We will visit Shahroud and the beautiful village of Bastam, as well as the tomb of the great theosophist Bayazid Bastami in Bastam and get to know Sufism in Iran. Then we enjoy visiting Abr forest at the foot of Chogholgir mountain range. It's a beautiful valley covered with dense forests in a short distance to the desert filled with the clouds risen from the moisture of the Caspian Sea. We stay overnight in Shahroud.

**Day 12: Drive to Nishabur, visit Sabzevar on the way, visit Nishabur (378 k.m. nonstop drive approx. 4 hour and 35 mins)**

Sightseeing: Sabzevar, the tombs of Khayam & Attar



Today we get a ride to Nishapur. On the way, we will visit Sabzevar. The history of Sabzevar goes back to the 1st millennium BC. Ancient remains include fire-temple 'Azarbarzin' which is still visible. After the Mongol invasion of Iran, the city was the first part of Iran that moved towards its freedom, under the lead of the Sarbedaran movement. In 14th century Timur invaded Iran, and despite the brave defense of Sabzevar's population, he destroyed the city quite completely. It is now the commercial center for an agricultural region producing grapes and raisins. There is some small-scale industry for food processing, copperware and electric motors. Through the old bazaar of Sabzevar fresh, dried, and preserved fruits and vegetables are exported. Then we continue all the way to Nishapur. The city was founded in the 3rd century by Shapur I as a Sasanian satrapy capital. Nishapur later became the capital of Tahirid dynasty and was reformed by Abdullah Tahir in 830, and was later selected as the capital of Seljuq dynasty by Tughril in 1037. From the Abbasid era to the Mongol invasion of Khwarezmia and Eastern Iran, the city evolved into a significant cultural, commercial, and intellectual center within the Islamic world. What remains of old Nishapur region is a 3500-hectare "Kohandehj" area, south of the current city of Nishapur. We will stop by the tomb of Omar Khayyam, a scholar, mathematician, astronomer, philosopher, and poet from Nishapur. We will also visit the tomb of Attar, a Persian mystic poet and theoretician of Sufism, from Nishapur, who had an immense and lasting influence on Persian Poetry and Sufism. Overnight in Nishapur.

**Day 13: Drive to Mashhad, visit the holy shrine of Imam Reza (50 k.m. nonstop drive approx. 1 hour and 35 mins)**

Sightseeing: the holy shrine of Imam Reza

Today we hit the road towards Mashhad, the second most populous city in Iran, located in the northeast of the country, close to the borders of Turkmenistan and Afghanistan. The city is most famous and revered for housing the tomb of Imam Reza, the eighth Shia Imam. Every year, millions of pilgrims visit the holy shrine of Imam Reza. Upon our arrival in Mashhad, we head for the holy shrine to pay our tributes to Imam Reza. This shrine is a live museum in which you can see a wonderful collection of throughout-the-history masterpieces by the best artists of mirror work, stucco work, moqarnas (stalactite work), marquetry, wood carving, stone carving, carpet weaving. Visiting the shrine will give you a real insight into Iranian art and sociology from the remote past to the present. It is actually a complex containing the mausoleum of Imam Reza, the Goharshad Mosque, a museum, a library, four seminaries, a cemetery, the Razavi University of Islamic Sciences, a dining hall for pilgrims, vast prayer halls, and other buildings. The complex is one of the tourism centers in Iran. Overnight in Mashhad





#### **Day 14: Visit Mashhad & Tous (36 k.m. nonstop drive approx. 1 hour and 10 mins)**

Sightseeing: Astan Quds Razavi Museum, the tomb of Ferdowsi, Harounieh

Today we enjoy a full day tour of the city. We begin the tour with a visit to the Astan Quds Razavi Central Museum, a major museum complex inaugurated in 1964. Its collections contain Islamic art and historical artifacts; the Museum of Quran and Precious Objects, the Museum of Carpets, the Museum of Armaments, the Museum of Coins and Medals, the Museum of Fine Arts, and so on.

Mashhad is the hometown of some of the most significant Iranian literary figures such as Ferdowsi, the Iranian poet of Shahnameh, and Mehdi Akhavan-Sales, the famous contemporary poet. After visiting the Astan Quds Museum, we head for Tous, an ancient city near Mashhad, to visit the tomb of Ferdowsi, the great epic poet of 10th century AD. Ferdowsi wrote the Persian epic Shahnameh (literally "Letter of the King"). This book is as great as the Iliad and the Odyssey of Homer in western literature.

Afterwards, we will pay a visit to Harounieh. Located nearly 600 meters from the tomb of Ferdowsi, Harounieh is the only surviving monument from old Tous. It is believed that this magnificent 15th century monument, which has Azeri architecture, was once a Rabat or a mausoleum. The building is constructed entirely of brick and has no decorations aside from its baroque stucco reliefs. Finally we drive back to Mashhad and stay overnight there.

#### **Day 15: Fly to Tehran, visit Tehran, transfer to IKA, and depart from Iran (flight time 1 hour and 35 mins)**

Sightseeing: The National Museum of Iran, Golestan Palace, Bazaar, National Jewelry Museum, Nature Bridge (by choice, at an extra cost)

Today we fly to Tehran and begin the tour of the city with a visit to the Carpet Museum which houses more than 100 spectacular pieces from all over Iran. Here we will get a chance to see a variety of Persian hand-woven carpets and rugs. We will also be given an insight into the history of these carpets.

Then we pay a visit to Sa'ad Abad Complex with an immense area of 1,100,000 square meters and 18 magnificent historical palaces two of which we will visit. The complex was first built and inhabited by Qajar monarchs in the 19th century. After an expansion of the compounds, Reza Shah of the Pahlavi Dynasty lived there in the 1920s, and his son, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, moved there in the 1970s. After the 1979 Revolution, the complex became a museum. It will undoubtedly leave



a lasting impression on us. Soon after we go to have lunch; a tasty Iranian dish in a traditional restaurant.

Afterwards we stop by the Reza Abbasi Museum located in Seyed Khandan. The museum was named after Reza Abbasi; one of the artists in the Safavid period. It is home to a unique collection of Persian art dating back to the second millennium BC, from both the pre-Islamic and Islamic eras.

Finally we make a visit to Milad Tower; the sixth-tallest tower in the world standing at 435 meters from the base to the tip of the antenna (if it is open). At night we can take a tour of the Nature Bridge by choice (at an extra cost). It is the largest pedestrian overpass built in Iran. The 270-metre (890 ft.) bridge connects two public parks—Taleghani Park and Abo-Atash Park—by spanning Shahid Modarres Avenue, one of the main highways in northern Tehran.

What comes last is our transfer to IKA and depart from Iran, the land of history, culture, nature, beauty and hospitality, of which you will have fond memories forever. (In “Ziarat”, we didn’t consider it necessary to book a hotel for this night. On request, we can book the hotel at IKA for some hours or a whole night in accordance with your departure time).