

ANCIENT PERSIA – CRADLE OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

Day 01 Depart Hometown

Depart hometown for Tehran, Iran.



Day 02 Tehran

Arrive in Tehran late this evening. Our local guide will be waiting to transfer you to our hotel. **Laleh Hotel**

Day 03 Tehran

After a leisurely morning to rest, we begin our sightseeing in the afternoon with visits to the Golestan Palace (the oldest and most beautiful palace in Iran), as well as the Archaeological Museum and Glass & Ceramic (Abghineh) museum, housing a wonderful and delicate collection of ancient and Islamic glass and pottery.

Enjoy a welcome dinner in the evening. **Laleh Hotel**

Day 04 Tehran

Our full day tour begins with a visit to The Carpet Museum, displaying a beautiful collection of old and new Persian carpets and rugs. Continue our exploration of Tehran with a visit to the Museum of Contemporary Arts, and the State (Crown) Jewels Museum, located in the vaults of the Central Bank of Iran and the Reza Abbqasi Museum of Miniature and Calligraphy, as well as Saadabad Palace. **Laleh Hotel**

Day 05 Tehran - Kerman

This morning fly to Kerman and transfer to our hotel. In the afternoon our city tour includes the Ganjali Khan complex and the old Public Bath with its wax sculptures as well as the old bazaar. **Pars Hotel**



Day 06 Kerman - Rayen

Enjoy a full day excursion to the village of Rayen to visit the Arg, a miniature version of the Arg-e-Bam, with all the architectural features of a desert citadel, now being put on the map as a result of the tragic earthquake in Bam, which destroyed the town and its magnificent citadel.

On the return journey stop at Mahan to visit the blue-tiled Mausoleum of the great Sufi Leader, Shah Nematolah-e-Vali and the Shahzadeh Garden. **Pars Hotel**

Day 07 Kerman – Yazd

Drive to Yazd, the center for Iran's small Zoroastrian community, who seeking refuge from the invading Arabs found a safe haven within its walls. En-route visit Zein-ed-Din Caravanserai, dating from the Safavid period.

Moshir Garden Hotel

Day 08 Yazd

Our full day tour features the Zoroastrian abandoned Towers of Silence, dating back to the 17th century, and the active Zoroastrian Fire Temple, the fire of which has been burning for about 1500 years. Visit the mosques of Jame & Mirchakhmaque, Doulatabad

Garden with its beautiful mansion embracing the world's highest ventilation tower and Water museum, as well as the old covered bazaar which is famous for its gold.

Moshir Garden Hotel

Day 09 Yazd – Abarquo – Pasargadae - Shiraz

This morning drive to Shiraz, stopping along the way to visit the 4000 year old Cypress tree in Abarquo. Also stop in Pasargadae, pre-dating Persepolis, site of the simple but imposing tomb of Cyrus the Great, the Founder of the Persian Empire, and remains of his several palaces. Arrive Shiraz and check into our hotel for the next three nights.

Homa Hotel

**Day 10 Shiraz**

Today we'll explore the city of Shiraz, including the famous Eram Garden. See the tomb of Iran's greatest lyric poet, Hafez; the pink tiled 19th-century Nasir-ol-Molk Mosque, and the Qajar period Narenjstan Garden/House.

Homa Hotel

Day 11 Shiraz – Persepolis - Shiraz

Today's excursion brings us to Persepolis, one of the most important sites of the Ancient World, with remains of the palaces of Darius the Great, Xerxes and Artaxerxes, and its famous bas-reliefs, Naqsh-e-Rostam and Naqsh-e-Rajab.

In the afternoon return to Shiraz for overnight.

Homa Hotel

Day 12 Shiraz – Isfahan

This morning visit the Afif Abad garden and the old bazaar of Vakil. The afternoon is at leisure. In the evening, fly to Isfahan and transfer to our hotel. ***Abbasi Hotel***

Day 13 Isfahan

Enjoy a full day tour of Isfahan, the 17th century capital of the Safavids; including the famous bridges of Khajou and Sio-se-Pol, the Armenian Quarter with several churches, including the important Cathedral of Vank and one of the world's grandest squares. Continue to Chehel-Sotun (Forty Columns) Palace and Hasht-Behesht (Eight Paradise) Palace, both set in beautiful gardens. ***Abbasi Hotel***

**Day 14 Isfahan**

Another exciting day in Isfahan includes sights such as the shaking minarets, Jame mosque and the splendid Naghsh-e-Jahan square with its stunning Imam and Sheikh lotfollah mosques as well as Ali Qapu Palace. Also visit the Qeisarieh Bazaar with hundreds of shops displaying the arts and handicrafts for which Isfahan is world-famous.

Abbasi Hotel

Day 15 Isfahan –Abyaneh – Kashan - Tehran

Drive to the ancient village of Abyaneh, and after visiting this vibrant village, continue to the oasis city of Kashan, famous for its lovely Fin garden, which was a source of inspiration for European gardens. Visit the garden, the magnificent houses of Broujerdiha and Tabatabaeiha and the mosque of Agha Bozorg. Continue our drive to Tehran, stopping on the way to visit the tomb of Ayatollah Khomeini.

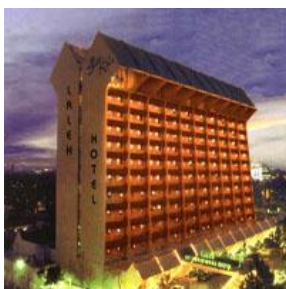
In the evening, enjoy a dinner party to bid farewell to this ancient and fascinating country. ***Laleh Hotel***

Day 16 Depart Tehran

We depart Tehran for our next travel destination or home.

ACCOMMODATIONS

LALEH HOTEL, Tehran
Jr. Suites



Laleh Hotel is located in a prime position in the Laleh Park area, convenient to restaurants and shopping, with spectacular views of Mount Damavand and Alborz.

www.lalehhotel.com

PARS HOTEL, Kerman
Jr. Suites



Located on the edge of town, Pars Hotel is easily the best hotel in Kerman, offering modern room amenities that meet the five star standard. Hotel facilities include a sauna, indoor swimming pool and four restaurants. www.parshotels.com

MOSHIR GARDEN HOTEL, Yazd
Jr. Suites



This is the first Iranian garden hotel with traditional architecture, set around an expansive lovely garden. With modern rooms and amenities, the hotel is conveniently located at one of the entrance streets to the city. <http://www.hgm.ir/english>

HOMA HOTEL, Shiraz
Jr. Suites



Situated in the northwest of Shiraz, one of the best locations in the city, Hotel Homa provides the most modern luxury facilities, including several restaurants and coffee shop, shopping center, laundry, hair salon, pool, sauna and Jacuzzi. www.homahotels.com

ABASSI HOTEL, Isfahan
Pardis or Cheshmandaz rooms



The Abassi Hotel was originally built as a caravanserai during the Safawid Dynasty. The old caravanserai was restored in the '60s as the Hotel Shah Abbas, and after the revolution in 1979, its name was changed to Abassi Hotel. Conveniently situated in the center of the city, it is one of Iran's finest hotels. www.abassihotel.com