

# treasures of iran ~ explore the art & architecture of an ancient civilization



## trip highlights

Group Leader - Barry Till - Curator of Asian Art at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria

The surrounding hills of Tehran

Imam Square and the ancient bridges in Isfahan

The extraordinary ancient city of Persepolis; the capital of the Persian Empire during the Achaemenid dynasty

The poets tombs in Shiraz

The desert city of Yazd

Takhte e Soleyman



<b>Trip Duration</b>	13 days	<b>Trip Code:</b> SOG3955
<b>Grade</b>	Adventure touring	
<b>Activities</b>	Adventure Touring	
<b>Summary</b>	13 day trip and 13 nights hotel	

## welcome to World Expeditions

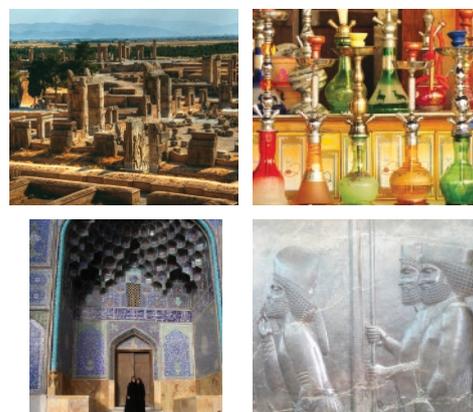
Thank you for your interest in our Treasures of Iran ~ Explore the Art & Architecture of an Ancient Civilization trip. At World Expeditions we are passionate about our off the beaten track experiences as they provide our travellers with the thrill of coming face to face with untouched cultures as well as wilderness regions of great natural beauty. We are committed to ensuring that our unique itineraries are well researched, affordable and tailored for the enjoyment of small groups or individuals - philosophies that have been at our core since 1975 when we began operating adventure holidays. Our itineraries will give you the very best travel experience, designed by people with incredible local knowledge who share our vision of authentic exchange and real exploration with a responsible tourism approach. Whether you like your adventures to include trekking, touring, cycling, mountaineering, kayaking or cruising World Expeditions can make it happen for you. We hope you will join us for a life changing experience!!

## why travel with World Expeditions?

When planning travel to the far flung corners of our globe, many factors need to be considered. Our extra attention to detail and operations on the ground ensure that you will have a memorable experience. We take every precaution to ensure smooth logistics, our vehicles and equipment are the best available on the market. Most importantly, our adventures have always sought to benefit the local peoples we interact with, safeguard the ecosystems we explore and contribute to the sustainability of travel in the regions we experience. You will be accompanied by a guide whose knowledge and passion for this region will add a unique dimension to your trip. Their experience and enthusiasm ensures that we maintain the leading edge in adventure travel and therefore providing excellent value for money. Given our local knowledge, experience and excellent leadership, we are quite sure that this tour will be a trip of a lifetime and a fantastic adventure.

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*Journey through Iran experiencing the fascinating Persian history and culture*



## trip dates

**2017** 05 Apr - 17 Apr

## important notes

**S** - Surcharge  
**O** - Option

## trip cost

: \$6575

All prices are per person

## options & supplements

**S - Single Supplement:** \$1490

**O - Discount - Book by 31 July, 2016:** \$-300

Single travellers are required to pay a single supplement when joining this adventure. The cost of the single supplement is listed above.

## the trip

There are few places in the world which have a history and culture as rich as this remarkable country. You'll find a refined society that has been misinterpreted by world press, yet travelers to these countries consistently attest that Iran has one of the worlds warmest and most welcoming people. It's history provides endless fascination and an atmosphere that is most definitely relaxed, and certainly enriching. Our journey traces the magnificent legacies of the Persian Empires which will not fail to inspire, yet its the snow clad mountains, vast deserts, oasis towns and spontaneous engagement with the locals that provide surprise at every turn of our diverse itinerary. From the vibrant city of Tehran we fly north to the ancient city of Tabriz. Travelling overland to appreciate all the cites we return to Tehran before we fly south to Shiraz, the home of the famous Poets Tombs and to Persepolis, an incredible example of the rule of Achaemenid Empire. Our trip returns to Tehran via Yazd, the second most ancient city in the world and Isfahan, famous for its ancient bridges, mosques, minarets, and tree lined avenues.

## about your leader/escort

Barry Till has been Curator of Asian Art at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria and has travelled extensively to Asia and lectured on more than 60 trips with well known tour companies. His interests are in the art, architecture, history and cultures of Asia. He travelled to Iran in 2015 and has glowing praise for the sites and people to be experienced in Iran.

## at a glance

DAY 1	ARRIVE TEHRAN
DAY 2	FLY TO TABRIZ
DAY 3	TABRIZ - TAKAB
DAY 4	TAKAB - QAZVIN
DAY 5	QAZVIN - TEHRAN
DAY 6	IN TEHRAN
DAY 7	TEHRAN, FLY TO SHIRAZ
DAY 8	IN SHIRAZ
DAY 9	SHIRAZ - YAZD
DAY 10	YAZD - ISFAHAN
DAY 11	IN ISFAHAN
DAY 12	ISFAHAN - TEHRAN
DAY 13	DEPART TEHRAN

## additional deposits required

International Airfare not included in land only package rate.  
For group air pricing contact Jackie Matthews 250 412 1876.

## what's included

- All Meals as per itinerary
- Comfortable hotel accommodation on a twin share basis or best available hotels in remote towns (specifically Takab and Qazvin)
- Sightseeing and entrance fees as listed
- All internal transport by private bus, jeep or car
- English speaking tour guides throughout
- Internal flights Tehran to Tabriz, Tehran to Shiraz
- Emergency medical kit

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- Arrival and departure transfers for all flights and international flights on days 1 and 13
- Assistance in arranging visas
- One bottle water daily
- Tips

## detailed itinerary

### DAY 1 Arrive Tehran

On arrival in Tehran, we are met by our local guide and transferred to our hotel where you will be able to immediately check-in. First impressions of Tehran will be the rich culture and history of this ancient land. You will have the opportunity to meet the group at lunch today. We will visit the Laleh Park and Contemporary Art Museum this afternoon before our group dinner.

Overnight Tehran - Laleh Hotel or similar

**meals: B,L,D**

### DAY 2 Fly to Tabriz

This morning we depart early for Tabriz, a large, sprawling city with a population of over 1 million. Once Persia's national capital, Tabriz came into its own in the mid 1400's when the city saw a remarkable growth in arts and architecture, culminating in the beautiful and impressive Blue Mosque (Sultan Ahmed Mosque). We will visit this mosque, the Catholic Church of Tabriz built in 1912, Arg - e -Alishah and the Jame mosque. Get your camera ready for the square lake of El Goli and visit the bazaar of Tabriz. The fascinating bazaar covers 7 square kms with 24 separate caravanserais and 22 timches (domed halls).

Overnight Tabriz - Bein-ol Melal (Tabriz) hotel or similar

**meals: B,L,D**

### DAY 3 Tabriz – Takab

Today we will visit Kandovan in East Azarbaijan – a volcanic region where rocks were formed from lava, known as Troglodyte. It is believed that wind over time formed the cylindrical shaped cones of rock that the area is well known for. Kandovan is also well known for its cliff dwellings, some as old as 700 years and seven stories high, many of them are still inhabited.

We continue our journey to Azarshahr, Ajabshir, Bonab, Maragheh, visiting Ghaffarieh Dome, Round Tower, Sorkh Dome and Mehri Temple. These sites impart the variety of the history of the area. Finally we visit, Miandoab and Shahindej ending our day in Takab.

Overnight Takab - Ranji hotel (basic accommodation, best option in Takab)

**meals: B,L,D**

### DAY 4 Takab – Qazvin

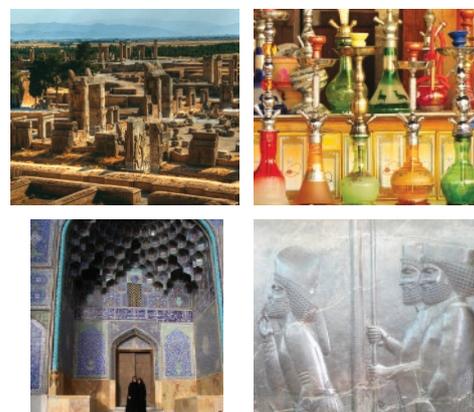
This morning we leave for Takhte e Soleyman with a total distance covered today of about 350km. The ancient historical fort occupies an area of about 124000 square meters and is one of the most important ancient Monuments comprising ruins dating back to the Sassanid, Partian and Moghul periods. Afterwards, we make our way to Zanjan and Soltaniyeh ending our day in Qazvin, the capital of the province and was an ancient capital of the Persian empire.

Overnight Qazvin - hotel Marmar or similar (moderate accommodation, best option in Qazvin)

**meals: B,L,D**

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## fast facts

### Countries Visited:

Iran

### Visas:

Yes\*

### Vaccinations:

Please consult a travel vaccination specialist for up to date information

\*Ask our staff for more information.

## DAY 5 Qazvin – Tehran

Today we have the opportunity to explore the calligraphy capital of Iran. We will visit the local bazaar, the Qazvin museum, Kabir Jame Mosque, Imam Zade Shah Husein-Chehel Soton and in the afternoon depart for Tehran. The drive is about 162km.

Upon arrival, check in to your hotel to freshen up before heading out for dinner at a local restaurant.

Overnight Tehran - Laleh hotel or similar

**meals: B,L,D**

## DAY 6 In Tehran

Today we will visit elegant Golestan palace, the Grand Bazaar which has been the centre of trade for hundreds of years, the Imam mosque and the National museum. Lunch will be enjoyed about midday in a nice restaurant next to the river in the Dareke Alborz mountains.

Overnight Tehran - Laleh hotel or similar

**meals: B,L,D**

## DAY 7 Tehran, fly to Shiraz

This morning we will catch our flight to Shiraz. From Shiraz we journey about 60km to begin our exploration of the ancient city of Persepolis & Naqshe Rostam. King Darius the Great began construction around 515BC with his successors adding new buildings until 330BC. At this time Alexander the Great invaded Iran and razed it to the ground.

Our stop at the necropolis of Naqshe Rostam is an one of the most spectacular visits of the day where the ancient tombs will leave you feeling small indeed.

We return to Shiraz for dinner this evening.

Overnight Shiraz - Setaregan hotel or similar

**meals: B,L,D**

## DAY 8 In Shiraz

Today you will enjoy a full day sightseeing tour of Shiraz, which was the capital under the rule of Karim Khan Zand in the 18th century. Visit the beautiful pink Nasir al Molk Mosque and the Naranjestan Gardens and House. Wander around the large courtyard and shining shrine of Shah Cheragh close to the nomad's bazaar and in the afternoon head for the Vakil Mosque and the Vakil Bazaar and bath . In the evening, the tomb of Hafez or Saadi attracts locals to wander around and sit and recite poetry in the gardens.

Overnight Shiraz - Setaregan hotel or similar

**meals: B,L,D**

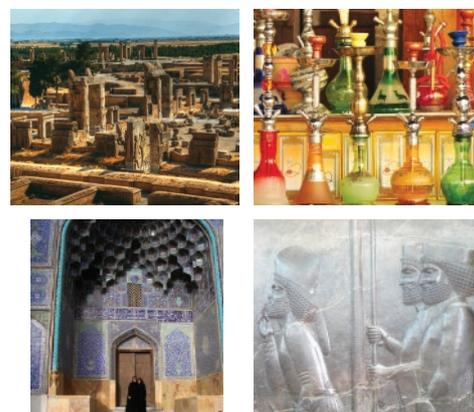
## DAY 9 Shiraz – Yazd

This morning, we leave Shiraz early to drive to Yazd. We will pass through a variety of terrain and by many interesting sites. The terrain is mountainous at the beginning of the journey and progresses through the desert and mountains before arriving to Yazd. There are a few high points on the route where we are at about 2500m in altitude and have great expansive views.

Along the route, we will spend time visiting the World Heritage Site of Pasargadae. Built by Cyrus the Great in 546 BC, Pasargadae was the first capital of the Archaemenid Empire and maintained this

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## responsible travel

The environments we travel through are fragile. It is our responsibility as visitors to minimise the impact of our presence. World Expeditions were the proud recipients of the inaugural Australian National Travel Industry's Environmental Achievement award for our Responsible Travel Guidebook. This detailed guide to responsible and sustainable travel is provided to all World Expeditions clients before they travel. Please ask your consultant if you have not received your copy of our award winning book. Alternatively, you may like to download a copy from our website [www.worldexpeditions.com](http://www.worldexpeditions.com)

## trip grading Adventure touring

Although there is no commitment to extended walking on this journey we nonetheless want to keep the 'accent on the active'. We therefore advise that any physical training you complete before undertaking the trip will be to good effect.

## adventure travel

By its very nature adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected. In remote and developing countries do not expect standards you are used to at home. Remote areas are sometimes unpredictable and itineraries may be altered. To get the most out of your adventure it is important that you are flexible, positive and eager to take on all the challenges that arise. If you are uncertain about your suitability for this trip we recommend that you speak with your consultant or travel agent.

status until Darius the Great began assembling the new seat of the government at Persepolis. See the six tiered tomb of Cyrus standing on a windswept plain and the remains of three Achaemenid palaces.

Later on the route but still on the plain you will also see ancient Yakhchal, the Persian towers that would store ice year round when temperatures soar above 40 degrees Celcius and higher.

As we leave the high desert towards the end of this day we descend into Yazd, an oasis where the Dasht-e Kavir Desert and the Dasht-e Lut Deserts meet, and is circled by a mountain range, the tallest being 4075m. During its long history, Yazd adapted to the desert surrounds gracing the city with great Islamic architecture and culture, despite it being a full Zoroastrian society.

Upon arrival in Yazd, we will take a short rest before dinner and take the evening at leisure.

Overnight Yazd at Moshir garden or similar

meals: **B,L,D**

### DAY 10 Yazd – Isfahan

When exploring the city of Yazd, one gains a sense that time has stopped as there are plenty of old traditions and buildings that retain the character of the bygone era. The chimney like structures on the roofs of Yazdies' houses is just one example; in fact they are not chimneys but the ancient ventilation systems. They gather even the faintest breezes of the desert and channel them into the building below. Yazd is the holiest city for Zoroastrians who travel from all over the world to see the sacred fire in Yazd that has been burning without interruption for 1500 years. In the outlying southern suburbs of town are the Zoroastrian Towers of Silence, where the bodies of believers were once left to the vultures after death.

Our itinerary includes both the Zoroastrian fire, the Temple of Yazd, the Silence Tower, Friday mosque and the Water Musuem.

We leave Yazd and travel to Meybod for lunch. There you will find a lovely caravanserai and museum about an hours drive north of the city. After lunch we continue to Isfahan which is about 275km.

Overnight Isfahan at Pirouzii hotel or similar

meals: **B,L,D**

### DAY 11 In Isfahan

Isfahan is considered to be one of the finest cities in the Islamic world. Our full day of sightseeing will include visits to the Shaking Minarets and the ancient bridges over the Zayande River, some dating back to the 12th century. Many of the bridges have teahouses beneath them and tend to be the Iranian equivalent of the local pub (strictly tea of course). A visit to Isfahan would not be complete without going to Imam Khomeini Square. It is surrounded by two mosques, a palace and the entrance to the Bazaar. In the middle of the square is a lake with a fountain and still in place are polo goal posts at either end. The Masjed-e Imam (or Imam Khomeini Mosque) is the most exquisite example of Mosaic tile work and the most stunning building in Iran. It is completely covered inside and out with the pale blue tiles for which Isfahan is famous. Other sights we plan to visit include Nasir o Din Mosque as well as Hasht Behesth street.

Overnight Isfahan at Pirouzii hotel or similar

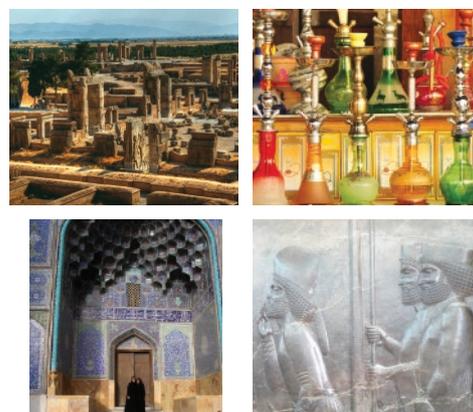
meals: **B,L,D**

### DAY 12 Isfahan – Tehran

Today we begin the return to Tehran and while we will cover a significant distance of about 450km the sites we will see along the way will make the time well spent. We begin with a visit to the Bagh-e Fin garden on our way to Kashan. This exquisite complex has recently been added to the

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## important note

These trip notes represent the most current information for this itinerary, and may supersede any information in the current brochure, including but not limited to the itinerary and price. The itinerary should be seen as a guide only. This itinerary may change at any time due to inclement weather, forces of nature and other circumstances beyond our control.

World Heritage sites list and upon entry you will see why. The epitome of the Persian garden, this site is lush with an abundance of water flowing throughout fed by underwater springs. The contrast to the surrounding dry desert makes you realize the treasure this garden is.

Our next visits will include the traditional house of Iran, examining the use of natural and local materials transformed into luxurious masterpieces. Next we experience the daunting and ancient hill of Sialk, an archeological site thousand's of years old. This site is the remnant of a river culture known to thrive in the region about 5000 years ago.

The second half of our journey leads us to Qom, the 8th largest city in Iran and possibly the holiest in the country. Keep this in mind when we visit the Holy Shrine of Fatemeh Masoumeh as you will need to be dressed conservatively and present a respectful demeanor during the visit. After leaving Qom, we can discuss the sights of the day and we get back to Tehran in time for our farewell dinner.

Overnight Tehran at Laleh Hotel or similar

**meals: B,L,D**

## DAY 13 Depart Tehran

Today you will be transferred to the airport for your flight home.

**meals: B**

This itinerary is subject to change with any change in Community regulations as well as Governmental changes and natural circumstances beyond our control.

## country information

Seventy million people inhabit this country which is nearly the size of Queensland or a fifth of the United States. It is dominated by three mountain ranges – the fertile and volcanic Sabalan and Talesh ranges, the Zagros range which runs along the western border and the Alborz range, to the North of Tehran and home to the highest mountain – Damavand (5670m). The Alborz range also has the largest area of vegetation in Iran and the northern slopes are densely covered with deciduous trees. These ranges are also home to many mammals including wolf, jackal, wild boar, hyena, black bear and lynx. The lowlands are inhabited by Persian squirrels, mongoose, Persian gazelle, porcupine, badger and Iranian wild ass. However perhaps the most famous of creatures is the Alborz red sheep with its long black beard and spiralling horns.

Ninety percent of the population practice Iran's brand of fundamentalist Shi'ite Islam and this will be noticed by travellers by the modest dress code and the behaviour at mosques. All Iranian and foreign females appearing in public should cover their head and wear a dress that covers the body except the face, toes and hands. Men are advised not to wear short sleeves and short pants are strictly forbidden – refer pre-departure notes for full details on dress requirements.

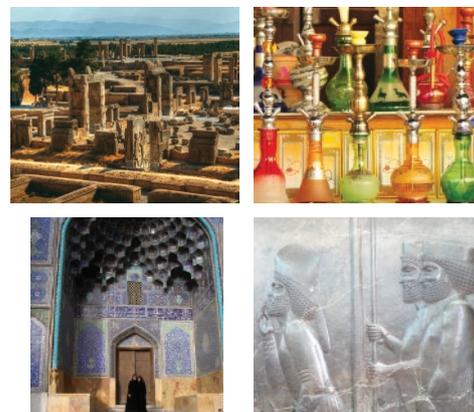
Iran has a long history of almost 7000 years since the Aryans emigrated here and gave their name to the land and called it "land of Aryans" or Iran. Achaemenid appeared in 550BC and was the first unified dynasty and until it was conquered by Alexander of Macedonia in 330BC, Iran prospered as the "Great Persian Empire" for more than 2 centuries. There are many landmarks left from the Achaemenian period, most notably in Persepolis. Many other dynasties and monarchies succeeded the country until the Pahlavi, which was demolished in 1979 by the Islamic Revolution, changing Iran from a constitutional monarchy to a republic. There is an enormous diversity of ethnic types in Iran, the majority are descendants of the Aryan tribes.

## hygiene

Provided we are advised in advance of your departure we are able to cater for vegetarian diets and can assist with medically recommended diets (allergies and intolerances). Please ensure you discuss your requirements with us well in advance (at least 1 month prior to your trip) to determine whether we can cater to such dietary requirements on your chosen adventure. Please note that options are likely to be limited in very remote locations or alternatives may be more expensive or unavailable. There may be times when those with special requirements may need

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to provide their own food. We are unable to guarantee a peanut-free or allergen-free trip, and therefore, we strongly encourage that travellers with life-threatening or severe allergies take all necessary medical precautions to prepare for the possibility of exposure. Passengers must travel with all necessary medications for food allergies and be capable of self-administering these medications.

## accommodation on the trip

The hotels used in Iran will be a mix based on location. The first few days of the tour are in smaller remote locations where only very simple accommodations are available. A 5\* accommodation will be provided in Tehran and 4\* for the remainder of the trip. All rooms have private facilities, however please bear in mind that plumbing can at times be dubious in Iran, even in the best hotels. If you have a problem, advise your group leader, or floor attendant.

## what you carry

You will be required to carry all your luggage between hotels and transportation. On sightseeing days you will be required to carry a day pack with your camera, water proof clothing and any other personal items you may require during the day.

## equipment required

Specialist gear required include walking shoes and day pack (a comprehensive gear list is provided in the pre-departure information provided on booking).

## vehicles & safety

During the course of your trip, we will use a variety of vehicles, all of which are fit for purpose and the conditions encountered. It should be noted that laws governing transportation safety may differ from those in your home country and on occasion some vehicles may not have seat belts fitted. While game viewing within a national park could be one example, public bus transfers or specialised transport such as 'tuk-tuk's' could be another. Where seat belts are not provided we strongly recommend that you hold tight to a fixed part of the vehicle at all times.

## what's not included

- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Bottled water - in additional to the one per day included.
- Aerated and alcoholic drinks
- Items of a personal nature such as phone calls, laundry, etc.
- International flights
- Airport and departure taxes
- Visa
- Travel Insurance