



8 Days

# Iran

## Beneath the Veil

This cultural tour of Iran journeys through some of the most spectacular sites in the country and offers countless examples of fascinating history as well as beautiful architecture and design. Often considered a restrictive society for women, this trip raises the veil on life as an Iranian woman. Throughout the trip we hold discussions with local women from all backgrounds on all aspects of their life, from a ladies-only gym to the revered shrine of Fatima Masumeh. It surely is a fascinating insight and will leave you and your students questioning your preconceptions of this beautiful country.

**A WOMAN'S  
PERSPECTIVE**



# Recommended tour itinerary

Day  
1

## Arrive Tehran

Today we fly from the UK to Iran's bustling capital: Tehran. Upon arrival we will be met by our female Trip Leader before transferring to the hotel to relax. This evening we meet with a local business woman to hear her talk about challenges she faces as a woman in her daily and working life in Iran.

Day  
2

## Explore Tehran, Cookery Centre & Flight to Shiraz

After our first Iranian breakfast, we pay a visit to the Archaeological and Islamic Art Museum, which follows Persia's history from the fifth millennium BC to 648AD and includes beautiful examples of Islamic works of art. We will see the Golestan Palace, one of the oldest monuments in Tehran. It was once part of a group of royal buildings and is a masterpiece of architecture and design. Having enjoyed a much needed lunch, we will view what is quite possibly the World's finest collection of stones at the Jewellery Museum. Our last activity in Tehran will be a visit to a local cookery centre to meet with the women who work here, learning about their lives and the secrets of Iranian cookery. We then transfer to the airport to fly to Shiraz.

Day  
3

## Sights of Shiraz & Women's Gym

Our first stop is the Naranjestan Gardens; the mirrored hall and rooms covered in intricate tiles with stained glass windows, a sight to be seen! From here we pay a visit to the Nasir al-Mulk mosque. Built in the Qajar era and still in use, famed for its intricate glasswork. In the afternoon, we see the Hafez Mausoleum, erected in memory of the celebrated Persian poet Hafez as well as the breath-taking mirrored interior of the Ali Ibn Hamzeh shrine; the only one of three such designs in Shiraz which will allow foreign visitors. This evening we pay a visit to a local women-only gym, an important place for Iranian women where they are able to exercise without having to endure the restrictions on what they may wear in public. It is an interesting opportunity to discuss with local women how they feel about the morality laws in Iran and how it affects their lives on a day to day basis.

Day  
4

## Persepolis, Pasargadae & Yazd

Today we say goodbye to Shiraz as we depart through the Quran Gate. Our first stop is Persepolis, the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire. Here we see the remains of the imposing palaces of Darius the Great, Xerxes and Artaxaxes. We continue onwards to Pasargadae, where Cyrus the Great built his capital in the Achaemenid Dynasty. The most important feature we see here is Cyrus the Great's tomb. The site is home to the earliest known example of the Persian *chahar bagh*, the traditional fourfold garden design. Our journey finishes in Yazd where we reside overnight.





Day  
5

## Yazd and Transfer to Isfahan

Marco Polo wrote about the beauty of Yazd and this ancient city is thought of as a living museum. First, we visit the Amir Chakhmaq Mosque and Square, noted for its symmetrical sunken alcoves and dating back to the 14th century. From here we move on to the local bazaar to witness the art of haggling first hand, before paying a visit to the Atash Kadeh, also known as the Zoroastrian Fire Temple. This building was built in 1934 to enshrine the Atash Bahram, the 'Victorious Fire' which dates back to 470AD. It is one of nine Atash Bahrams with the other eight located in India.

As the day continues, we will witness the Water Museum, highlighting the importance of water in the history of Yazd; a city which is in the midst of the desert but has still been settled for over 3000 years. Afterwards we visit the Alexander Prison, a misnomer as the building was actually a school, though the poet Hafez suggests that it was built by Alexander the Great and that the well in the courtyard was used as a dungeon. Our final stop in Yazd will be to a Zurkhaneh to watch the sport/rituals of zoorkhaneh. The Zurkhaneh is a place for strengthening the body, boosting athletic morals, practising humility and avoiding arrogance and were traditionally used to train warriors in Iran. Over the centuries, religious hymns and chants were incorporated into the training and it is often touted as the reason for Iranian success in wrestling. After a fulfilling day in Yazd, we transfer to Isfahan where we reside overnight.

Day  
6

## Isfahan & Women's Handicrafts

Isfahan was once one of the largest cities in the world. It flourished from 1050 to 1722, particularly under the Safavid Dynasty during the 16th century, when it became the capital of Persia for the second time. In the morning, we will visit the Naqsh-e Jahan Square. Constructed between 1598 and 1629, this is now a UNESCO World Heritage site and is surrounded by buildings from the Safavid era including the Sheikh Loft Allah Mosque (the ladies mosque), Shah Mosque and the Ali Qapu Palace. To the north of the square lies the extensive Isfahan bazaar, brimming with talented artisans and their products. In the afternoon we head to Khajoo and Si-o-se Pol bridges, the latter of which is the longest bridge on the Zayandeh River, running 297.76m in length and formed of thirty three arches. Afterwards, we visit a local women's handicraft workshop to learn about the crafts they make and the traditional roles of women in Iran.

Day  
7

## Kashan & Transfer to Tehran

Today we will return to Tehran stopping en route at Kashan, an oasis town where carpet, silk and textile weaving are the traditional crafts and where the Three Wise Men supposedly began their journey to Bethlehem. Kashan is famed for its traditional merchant's houses and we will pay a visit to the exquisite Fin Garden Complex. From here we will travel to the shrine of Fatema Mae'sume in Qom. Every year thousands of Muslims travel to Qom to honour Fatima Masumeh who is revered as a saint and we will learn about the tradition of making women saints in Islamic culture. Finally, we will reach Tehran for our last night in Iran.

Day  
8

## Depart Tehran & return Flight to UK

This morning we wave goodbye to our lovely Trip Leader as we board the return flight to the UK and rehearse the tales of our adventure for our friends and family at home!

# Further information

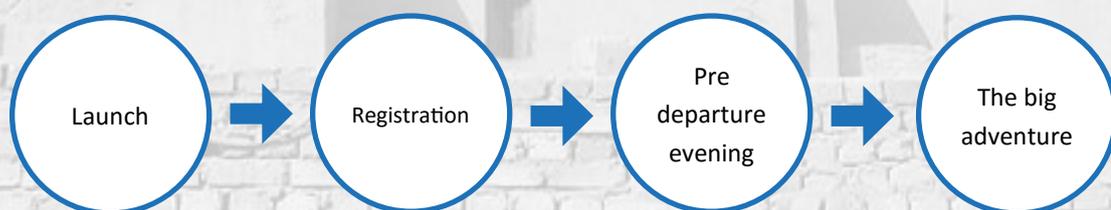
## Look what's included!

- International flights
- All accommodation
- All food
- All transportation and activities
- Bi-lingual, first-aid qualified local tour leader
- Parent and student trip launch evening
- Pre-departure preparation evening
- 1-day offsite safety INSET day for staff
- ATOL financial protection
- Medical Emergency / Repatriation Travel Insurance
- Group first aid kit and prescription meds pack
- BS8848 safety management and risk assessments
- Detailed pre-departure information and kit lists
- Comprehensive teacher travel packs
- Permanent operations team in your destination
- 24-hour UK operational support whilst overseas
- Carbon offsetting of all flights
- Free t-shirt for every participant and teacher

## What's excluded?

- Transport to airport in UK
- Drinks (advice will be given on purification of water)
- Visas or tourist cards if required
- Any required inoculations
- Personal spending money
- Tips for guides, drivers and porters
- Airport departure taxes paid locally
- Cancellation and personal effects insurance

## Your educational journey timeline



## Physical journey rating:



Some low level physical activities included in your trip, including walking on uneven terrain, maybe a morning/afternoon trek of two to four hours. That said, no physical preparation is required to make the most of the tour. High humidity and temperatures can occur at certain times of the year.

## Culture shock rating:



Students should expect some culture shock. You'll be exposed to signs of poverty. The food will be quite different to home and English, whilst still spoken, will be less prevalent. Respecting the local culture will make it easier to fit in and get the most out of your trip. We're likely to visit remoter locations on this tour where access to western style services may be sporadic. Often on trips of this grading there are parts of the itinerary which are more remote, interspersed with sections which are more 'comfortable'.



# A journey of 1,000 miles...

Starts with a single step... Contact us now to start your educational journey.



## 1 Get your tailor-made proposal and further information

If this itinerary doesn't quite scratch your educational travel itch then let us tailor-make one for you. Our wealth of experience and expert in-country contacts means we can design an itinerary just for you. Contact us for more information and a detailed quote.

## 2 Ask for risk assessments and marketing materials

We can provide initial risk assessments and destination threat assessments to help you with your expedition approval process. Ask for posters and your pre-booking information pack too.

## 3 Arrange a trip launch evening at your school

This is a chance for students and parents to hear more about the planned adventure with a comprehensive information evening and an opportunity for questions.



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