

# IRAN

## Where history comes alive

It's Iran, but not as you think you know it. Take a walk through the quieter side of the country as its past and present unite.

This journey through Iran will reveal more than mountain views and bazaar bargains. Acquaint yourself with the real Iran as you travel through cities and villages following a path that will reveal Persia's history and culture.

## **Day 1 Tehran**

Arrive in the capital and visit the National Museum of Iran, with its collections of artefacts from ancient times and treasures from the Islamic Era. Visit the vast 18th and 19th century Golestan Palace complex, as well as Tehran's impressive Grand Bazaar.

Overnight: Escan Alvand Hotel or similar

## **Day 2 Masuleh**

On the way to Masuleh, a car-free mountain village, you'll visit Qaleh Rudkhan, a Seljuk-era walled fortress defending a steep, wooded spur of the Alborz Mountains. The tiny, stepped village of Masuleh, where the roofs of houses act as a path to higher ground, has existed for around a thousand years.

Overnight: Local guest house

## **Day 3 Masuleh**

Enjoy a four-hour hike over the forest-covered mountains in Masuleh, finishing at your camping site by Shah Moalem Mountain.

Overnight: Camping

## **Day 4 Masuleh**

Arise early for a day's trek through the thick forest landscape. Once you arrive at your riverside destination, you'll set up camp for the night.

Overnight: Camping

## **Day 5 Masal**

An hour's walk will take you to the first village in Masal County, where you'll enjoy breakfast with the villagers. Continue trekking to Masal, the centre of the county. The rest of the day is at your leisure.

Overnight: Local guest house

## **Day 6 Kashan**

On the way to Ardabil, pass the mountainous Asalem-Khalkhal Road, one of the most beautiful in Iran. When you get there, visit the Sheikh Safi mausoleum and shrine complex, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Drive to the airport to catch your flight to Tehran, where you'll be met and transferred to Kashan.

Overnight: Khaneh Irani or similar

## **Day 7 Esfahan**

Visit Fin Garden, a 16th to 19th century classic Persian walled garden. Drive to Esfahan in the early afternoon, where you'll stroll around the great Naqsh-e Jahan Square (also called Imam Square) and visit the historical bridges where locals hang out after dark and practise their singing.

Overnight: Bekhradi Hotel or similar

### **Day 8 Esfahan**

Esfahan is home to some of Iran's finest architecture. The nearby 17th century bazaar, filled with locals, is a masterpiece of urban design. Visit Julfa, the historic Armenian neighbourhood, which features churches that display a distinctive mix of Christian symbols and Iranian architectural style.

Overnight: Bekhradi Hotel or similar

### **Day 9 Shiraz**

En route to Shiraz, visit Pasargadae, the first Achaemenid capital and home to the tomb of Cyrus the Great. If time allows visit Persepolis, one of Iran's most impressive pre-Islamic monuments before heading toward the necropolis of Naqsh-e Rostam, the burial place of Achaemenid emperors.

Overnight: Elysee Hotel or similar

### **Day 10 Shiraz**

Shiraz is widely regarded as the cradle of Persian civilisation. Walk through one of the city's celebrated gardens and visit the tombs of the great Iranian poets Hafez and Saadi. Take an afternoon stroll in the city's covered Vakil Bazaar.

Overnight: Elysee Hotel or similar

### **Day 11 Departure**

Today you will be transferred to the airport for your onward flight from Shiraz.

## **Inclusions**

- Return airport transfers
  - 10 nights' accommodation
  - Camping equipment
  - All meals daily except on day one and day 11
  - Transportation throughout
  - Local English-speaking driver/guides
  - Sightseeing as mentioned in the itinerary
  - Entrance fees
  - Refreshments – e.g. water, tea, coffee – on long distance days
  - Domestic flights as per the itinerary
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## **Exclusions**

- International flights to/from Iran, some domestic flights
- Drinks unless otherwise mentioned
- Visas
- Tips
- Travel Insurance
- Inoculations
- Items of a personal nature
- Anything not mentioned in the itinerary