

# IRAN

PERSIAN SIMORG TOURS



**STANDARD PACKAGES**

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Iran Persian Simorg Tours are smaller, boutique excursions created for both the first-time and the experienced traveller who is looking for more than a standard tour holiday. As Iran is known and famous for its hospitality the theme is to encourage greater interactions with locals, rather than being hemmed into a strict itinerary.

Simorg Tours are designed to give you the experiences of both being a tourist and a local by including highlight attractions as well as "off-the-beaten-track" or local haunts that would normally be overlooked or require the local knowledge.



# PACKAGES

## 12 DAY(MAMOOOI) TOUR



### TEHRAN AND THE GOLDEN CITIES: SHIRAZ, ISFAHAN, AND KASHAN

*(including Persepolis, Pasargadae, Nash-e Rostam and Abeyaneh village).*

**\$AU3450**  
p/person.

Includes: all internal transportation and airport transfers, hotel accommodation, entry site fees, and 2 daily meals. Please inquire about our inclusive airfare and visa packages.

## 20 DAY BIG (BOZORG) TOUR



### TEHRAN AND CENTRAL IRAN: SHIRAZ, ISFAHAN, YAZD AND KASHAN

*(including Chaharmahal va Bakhtiari, Persepolis, Pasargadae, Nash-e Rostam and Abeyaneh village).*

**\$AU5450**  
p/person.

Includes: all internal transportation and airport transfers, hotel accommodation, entry site fees, and 2 daily meals. Please inquire about our inclusive airfare and visa packages.

## 15 DAY(SHOMALLI) TOUR



### TEHRAN TO TABRIZ: QAZVIN, ZANJAN, RASHT, ARDABIL, ASTARA, MASHAD AND TURKMENSAHRA

*(including Kaylebar, Kandovan, Aras River Valley and Alumut Valley).*

**\$AU3750**  
p/person.

Includes: all internal transportation and airport transfers, hotel accommodation, entry site fees, and 2 daily meals. Please inquire about our inclusive airfare and visa packages.

## 21 DAY COMBINED TOUR



### NORTHWEST AND CENTRAL IRAN: TEHRAN, QAZVIN, ZANJAN, RASHT, ARDABIL, TABRIZ, SHIRAZ, ISFAHAN, YAZD, AND KASHAN

*(including Kaylebar, Kandovan, Aras River Valley and Alumut Valley).*

**\$AU5750**  
p/person.

Includes: all internal transportation and airport transfers, hotel accommodation, entry site fees, and 2 daily meals. Please inquire about our inclusive airfare and visa packages.

Please talk to us today and see how we can build a suitable package for you.

# EXTENSION TRIPS

## 3 DAY EXTENSION



KASHAN - ABYANEH - ISFAHAN

**\$AU990**  
p/person.

Includes: all transport and airport transfers, insurance, entry site fees, hotel accommodation, and 2 daily meals. Departs and returns to Tehran. \$990.

## 3 DAY EXTENSION



**SOUTH EASTERN DESERT:**  
KERMAN - MAHAN - KALUTS

**\$AU990**  
p/person.

Includes: all transport and airport transfers, insurance, entry site fees, hotel accommodation, and 2 daily meals. Departs and returns to Tehran. \$990.

## 3 DAY EXTENSION



**NORTH EASTERN -  
KHOROSAN REGION:**  
TURKMENSAHRA - MASHAD

**\$AU990**  
p/person.

Includes: all transport and airport transfers, insurance, entry site fees, hotel accommodation, and 2 daily meals. Departs and returns to Tehran. \$990.

## 6 DAY EXTENSION



**NORTHERN IRAN:**  
TABRIZ - ARDABIL - CASPIAN SEA

**\$AU1550**  
p/person.

Includes: all transport and airport transfers, insurance, entry site fees, hotel accommodation, and 2 daily meals. Departs and returns to Tehran. \$990.

## 7 DAY EXTENSION



**KORDESTAN:**  
HOWRAMAN - SANANDAJ -  
KERIMANSHAH - KORRAMABAD - SHUSH  
CHOOQAZANBIL ZIGGURAT SHUSHTAR

**\$AU1750**  
p/person.

Includes: all transport and airport transfers, insurance, entry site fees, hotel accommodation, and 2 daily meals. Departs and returns to Tehran. \$990.

Please talk to us today and see how we can build a suitable package for you.





## TEHRAN

The capital and Iran's most liberal and secular city, is typically skimmed over in a day or two by most tour companies due to being architecturally unattractive and heavily polluted by peak-hour traffic. We will help you spend a few days in dynamic Tehran to discover the city's more exciting and beautiful side. Historically, the capital was the seat of both the Qajar dynasty and then the Pahlavi era, and during which the 1953 coup'de ta of Mohammad Mossadeq' took place. It was later the staging point for the 1979 anti-Shah Pahlavi revolution.

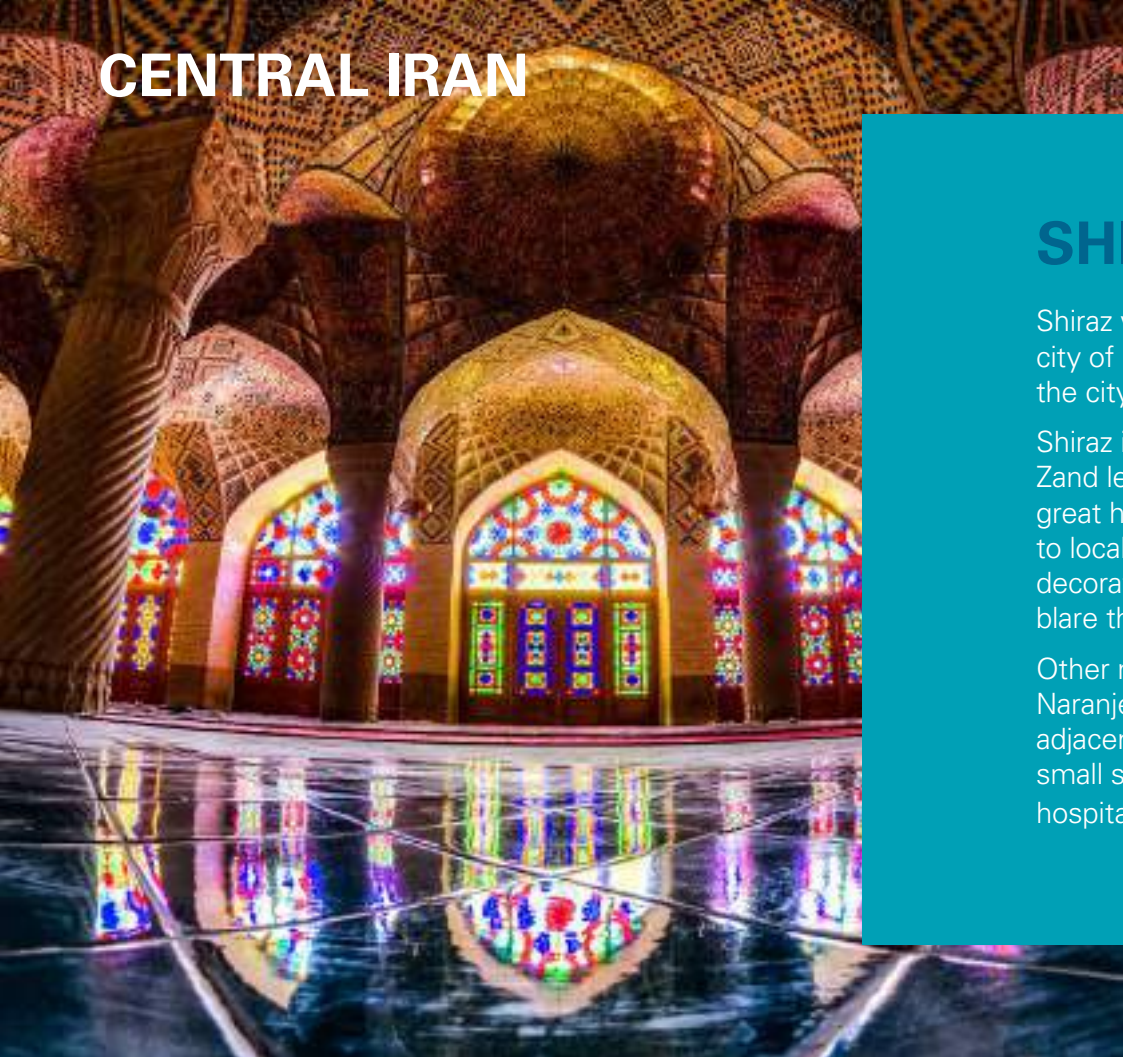
On your first night be greeted at IKA, then check into your hotel and meet for dinner. In these first few days in Tehran you will visit the must see highlights: The Qajar Golestan Palace, Grand Bazaar, Imam Khomeni Mosque, Azadi Tower, the former Shah's Sa'Abad Complex, Treasury of National Jewels, Glass and Ceramics Museum, Malek National Library and Museum, The Holy Defence Museum, and the recently opened and controversial U.S. Den of Spies.

The evenings and late into the night is when the city becomes abuzz with locals. Mingle with locals as you wander the atmospheric bazaars beneath domed ceiling, ride the metro, and people watch in teahouses at popular local spots to gain a feel for the heart-beat of this city. Walk the famous streets and admire street art and the serene parks including the Tabiat Bridge park complex, Park-e Laleh, Park-e Shahr, and join locals as they relax above the mountain trails of Darband and Darakeh. Late at night experience Tehran's hip late-night cafes, including the Film Museum or one of Tehran's contemporary art galleries.

Let us guide you seamlessly through what would otherwise be a difficult city to navigate.



# CENTRAL IRAN



## SHIRAZ

Shiraz was once the national capital under the Zand dynasty, and known as the city of poets and nightingales. An important cultural city from the 12th century, the city was also the heartland of Persian culture for two millennia.

Shiraz is famous for its UNESCO listed sites such as the Bagh-e Eram and the late Zand leader's Karim Khan's Citadel. You will also find the mausoleums of Iran's two great historic poets- Hafez and Sa'di, and in the evenings you can gather to listen to locals recite their poetry. At night you can marvel at the spectacular mirror decorated Shah-e Cheragh Mosque, and in the morning witness the sun rays blare through the multi-coloured glass work of the Nasir al-Molk "Pink" Mosque.

Other main attractions include, the Vakil quarter's ancient Bazaar and Hammom, Naranjestan Palace, the sunset over-looking the city at Quran's Gate, and the adjacent park where families picnic together and hike up the cliff-side. Visit the small surrounding villages of Shiraz like Qalaat and experience the real laid-back hospitality of locals.

## PERSEPOLIS, NASH-E ROSTAM AND PASAGARDE

As a full-day bus trip from Shiraz visit the Unesco World Heritage Site ruins of Persepolis (520 BC), the magnificent capital and once greatest empire in the world of the Achaemenid Empire. Included in the excursion also are the key historical sites of the Achaemenid and Sassanid eras, Nash-e Rostam and Pasagarde.



# ISFAHAN

Isfahan (half-the-world) has twice been Iran's capital; once under the former Seljuks (1037-1194 AD) and later the Safavids (1501-1747 AD).

With the reputation of a living museum of traditional culture Isfahan is Iran's top tourist destination. Adorned for its architecture, this aesthetic became synonymous with the city, known as the influential "Isfahani School" of art and design characteristic in their mosques, bazaars, palaces, bridges, baths, mausoleums, seminaries, caravanserais, and by order of King Abbas 1 in 1602 the magnificent Unesco heritage-listed Naqsh-e Jahan Square.

Other must-see attractions include the Chehel Sotun (Forty pillar) Palace combining the Persian love of exquisite interior decoration with the classic Persian garden. Dating back to the 17th century, Jolfa, the Armenian quarter has the Kelisa-ye Vank (Vank Cathedral) as its focal point.

Proud of its artistically visual appeal and famously represented in its Islamic buildings, historic square, and their famous picturesque bridges and parks, the city still attracts sizeable crowds of welcoming locals year-round.

The city has many modern and traditional restaurants with a romantic ambience where you can enjoy live music. Many of them are also built in the traditional design using fountains, splendid murals, and elegant courtyards. Afterwards, congregate with locals as they line up at humble shopfronts to buy local deserts too.

There is so much to see around Isfahan, too. Explore and traverse the nearby villages and towns of the Zagros Mountains home to a large number of Nomads. Places to visit include Shahre Kord, Chaleshtar, Borujen, Kuhpayeh and Toudeshk located in Chaharmahall va Bakhtiari.





## YAZD

Originally settled 5000 years ago, Yazd has historically been an important trading post. This desert city is also home to Iran's largest Zoroastrian population, including a fire temple. With the appeal of a Unesco heritage-listed ancient old city quarter comprising adobe mud-brick homes and buildings with beautiful rooftops views, interconnected with criss-crossing lanes and alleyways makes this a perfect walking destination to wander, discover, or to get lost.

Other must-see attractions include Amir Chakmaq complex, Masjed-e Jameh, the Unesco-listed gardens of Dolat Abad, the Yazd Water Museum, Dakhmeh-ye Zartoshtiyun ("Towers of Silence" or "Crypt of Zoroastrian"), and the many famous Yazdi sweet stores.

Around Yazd includes Meybod, an 1800 year-old mud-brick city, Chak Chak a sacred site for Zoroastrians, and Kharanaq the deserted 1000 year-old mud-brick village.



## KASHAN, ABEYANEH, NAEEN, QOM.

On the main routes between the central golden cities are these oasis cities and alluring ancient villages. Important for different reasons that offer idyllic destinations and a peaceful ambience, they offer an authentic experience with a sense of continuity. These destinations are now either growing cities, like the pilgrimage city of Qom, with important histories and/or are off-the-beaten-track stop-overs on the edges of the desert (Dasht-e Kavir), and with mountainous vistas they offer visitors much to see and experience.

Boasting architectural wonders, with some dating from the pre-Islamic period, displaying the talents and creativity of Iranian artists across the centuries, such as the old district of Naeen, the Fin Garden of Kashan, and the village of Abeyaneh. You will find Persian gardens, atmospheric bazaars, mud-brick houses, mansions, hammams (bathhouses), shrines, teahouses and confectionaries, old quarters, and the best traditional hotels, they also offer local textile, ceramics, Persian rugs, and many other handicrafts.



# WESTERN IRAN



## TABRIZ

Rich in Azeri culture and situated at the main intersection of the historic Silk Road, Tabriz is the Iran's second oldest city. During the Sassanian era it was the main trading centre of Iran and the Middle East linking northern Iran to Europe. And during Iran's rule under Tamerlane, Tabriz became the capital of the Qara-qoyonlu dynasty, and later it was briefly made the national capital under the Safavid ruler, Shah Ismail. Its Azeri Turkish speakers have held out Persians, Ottomans, and Russians to maintain their culture and rights.

The magnificent bazaar of Tabriz was registered as the world's first bazaar by Unesco. This, along with the various calligraphic styles and azure mosaic tile works of the Kabud (or Blue) Mosque's high portal, has attracted many tourists and archaeologists.

Interestingly based on Biblical clues, Tabriz and the areas surrounding it suggest it is the mythical Garden of Eden. Another of the areas included in the original Garden of Eden is Kandovan Village and nearby Mt Sahand- the Bible's Mountain of God. With its unique ancient houses that are carved from the stones where volcano lava has formed for thousands of years.

Things to do in Tabriz include many museums to give you a sense of the city's vast histories and treasures of past dynasties and its famous poets. The city is also known for its restaurants and cafés which are a growing trend and cater for its large student population. Tabriz is also a base to explore other parts of East Azerbaijan Province that contain Zoroastrian castles, medieval churches, and beautiful scenic mountain and valleys.





## KALEYBAR AND ARDABIL

Located in one of the most breathtaking regions of Iran, Kaleybar. The road heading west to Ardabil through the Aras River Valley follows a picturesque route of stacked villages, red eroded rocky canyons and cliffs, and mountain peaks on the Armenian side. Its main attraction is the 9th century Azeri crag-top ruin of Qal'eh (castle) Babak. En-route west from the Aras River Valley to visit Iran's medieval churches.

Sitting on a high windswept plateau Ardabil was the capital of the Sajid-dynasty. But Aradabil is best remembered for producing two great leaders of Iran's Safavid dynasty- the dervish-Sufi mystic Sheik Safi-od-Din and his descendant Ismail Safavi. Here you will find the Unesco-listed mausoleum complex of Sheik Safi, known as the most perfect in the world. Ardabil is also very famous for its sweets, particularly helva-siyah.

## KHAL KHAL, ZANJAN, SULTANIYEH, AND QAZVIN.

Khal Khal passes through the incredibly scenic Qezel Owzan valley heading south from Ardabil to Zanjan. On the road to Zajan are the incredible colourful mountains extending for 20km. On the Sultaniyeh Plain by the Qazvin-Zanjan road stands Sultaniyeh Dome (Unesco-listed Gonbad-e Sultaniyeh) formerly a Persian capital built by the Ilkhanid Mongols.

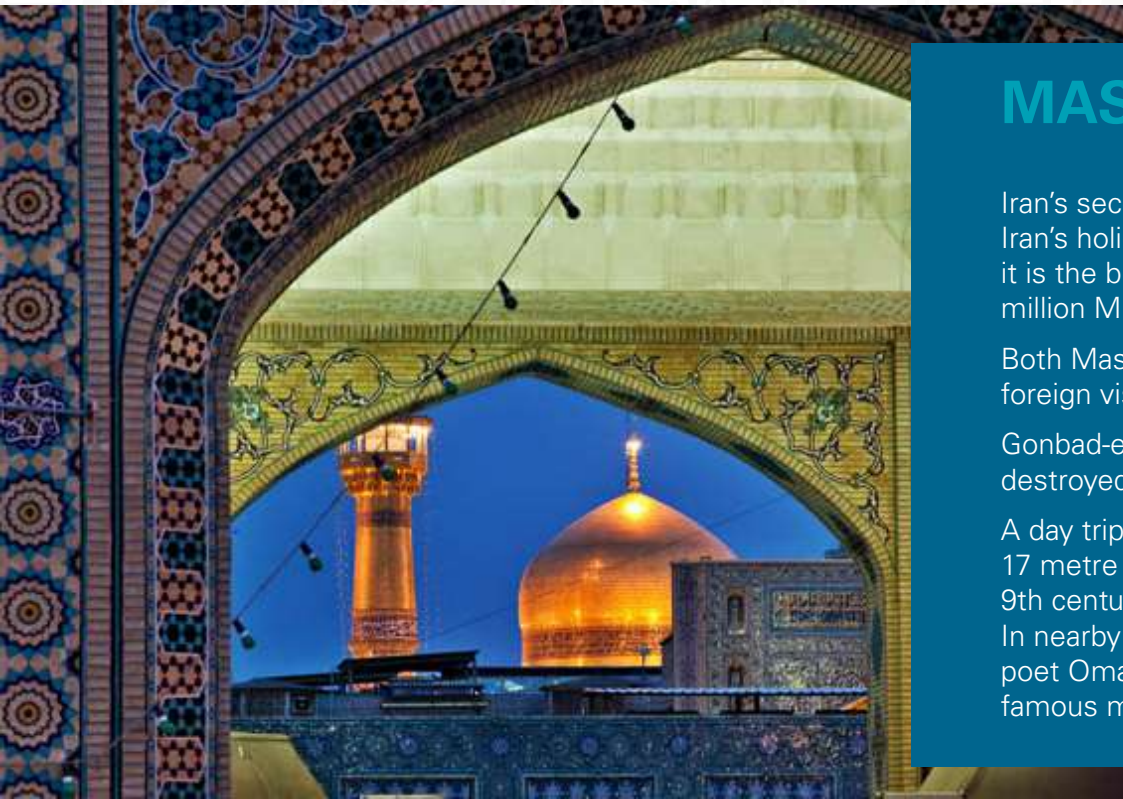
Qazvin, once the nation's capital has a beautifully restored caravanserai dating back 1000 years, an art precinct, and museums. It's primarily a staging point to the famous Castles of Assassins.



## ASTARA AND RASHT

Capital of Gilan province, Rasht, is a vibrant town famous for its local cuisine and the world's main caviar exporter, is a popular get-away destination for city dwellers. And is a staging-post for the millennium old, picture-postcard village of Masuleh and Seljuk-era fortress Qal'eh Rudkhan. At various times, Rasht was occupied by the Russians, Rasht has also experienced attacks from Tehran due to its extended periods of independence.

Astara is also part of Gilan province and is a major tourist destination for Iranians and foreigners especially from the Caucasus. The majority of people here are ethnically Azerbaijani. Astara has a variety of beaches and is close to a rainforest.



## MASHAD AND TURKMENSAHRA

Iran's second largest city, Mashad is a vibrant and modern. The must-see attraction of Iran's holiest city is the magnificent Imam Reza Shrine Complex. Known as Haram-e Reza, it is the burial site and tomb of Shiite Islam's eighth Imam, Imam Reza. Attracting 20 million Muslims pilgrims per year the complex is also welcoming to non-Muslims.

Both Mashad (Khorasan region) and the Turkmen sahra region (culturally Turkic) rarely have foreign visitors yet both have many attractions.

Gonbad-e Kavus, a Unesco-listed tower built in 1006, remains intact after the Mongols destroyed the rest of the city, known at the time as Jorjan.

A day trip from Mashad is welcomed by some very interesting sites. These include the 17 metre Akhangan Tower, a brick building decorated by azure and blue tiles from the 9th century showing the architectural changes from the Ilkhanid to the Timurid ages. In nearby Neishabour is the tomb and complex of the mathematician, astrologist, and poet Omar Khayyam, and in Toos the Cyrus-like tomb mausoleum of Iran's epic poet and famous man of literature Firdowsi.



# KORDESTAN PROVINCE



## SANANDAJ

This modern and very hospitable capital city in the verdant, mountainous Kordestan province of Iran is a great place to learn about Kurdish history and culture. The city has a fortress from the 18th century, Qajar and Kurdish mansions and museums, and was the last Iranian Kurdish autonomous principality under the Ardalan emirs.

## HOWRAMAN

Historically, Iranian Kurdistan was a place of importance and danger caught between powerful empires, therefore Kurdish society forgone villages and resorted to nomadism. Howraman (Horoomanat Valley), hemmed between mountains, was an impenetrable exception. The villages here are very unique for their lifestyle, and the houses here are stacked stone terraces. The site was added to the Unesco tentative list in 2007.



## KERMANSHAH AND KHORRAMABAD

Kermanshah developed during the 4th century Sassanian era and was a place of strategic importance. It is from here where Taq-e Bustan and Bistoun (Unesco-listed) the extraordinary Achaemenid and Sassanid stone carvings inscribed into the base of a cliff can be visited. The carvings into niches, tableaus, and the bas-reliefs depict victorious Persian kings' epic battles and the three lost languages.

And housed in a courtyard in the city centre is the famous Hosseinieh, Tekyeh Moaven-ol Molk. Its walls are decorated with colourful tiles depicting scenes of Joseph arriving at Canaan, the palace of Solomon, Iranian kings, and scenes of Imam Ali and Imam Hussein's shrines. The historic and scenic city of Khorramabad passes by the jagged tors of the Zargos Mountains and located here is the picturesque fortress of Falak-Ol-Aflak.

## SHUSH- CHOQA ZANBIL ZIGGURAT-SHUSHTAR.

Choqa Zanbil Ziggurat is the ancient temple remains of the Elamite Gods and was built by the King of Elam, Untash in 13 BC. It is 45kms south of Shush (or Susa), a Unesco -listed archaeological site (over 6000 years old), where the ancient Apadana Palace of Darius I was built about 512 to 515 BC on the ruins of the Elamite buildings. It became the Achaemenids' winter capital and afterwards the Sassanian capital. The Apadana Palace was destroyed and rebuilt a number of times and like Persepolis was finally destroyed by Alexander in 330 BC.

Other historical attractions include the Tomb of Daniel a Jewish pilgrimage site, Shush castle, and Shush Museum.

Shushtar, with its mills and waterfalls is an ancient technological wonder built to exploit waterpower and belongs to the Sassanid era.







## KERAM, MAHAN, KALUTS.

The most important city in the southeast (politically, culturally, and scientifically) was also once of great importance during the Achaemenid era, it has been referred to as “Kerman” in Greek texts too. The Jabali-ye Dome and the world famous unique big bazaar are both decorated with stucco decorations from the pre-Islamic Sassanid eras. Rayen Citadel in Rayen City is the second biggest adobe structure in the world covering an area of nearly 22,000 square meters.

The serene mausoleum of great mystic and poet Shah Ne’mat-ollah Vali in Mahan, which began construction in the 9th century and continued until the 14th century, covers an area of nearly 6000 square meters.

The legendary city of Kaluts (Lut Desert) with its stepped mesas and fortress-like towers was formed by erosion about 20,000 years ago. Its wide landscapes that change colour from light brown to grey to black, sand hills, the highest sand pyramids in the world, and the desert night sky produces an unforgettable experience. The desert attracts many European tourists, despite being one of the hottest regions on earth.

## BANDAR ABASS & QESHM ISLAND

Lying at the Straits of Hormoz, Qeshm Island is the largest island in the Persian Gulf and an eco-tourists dream destination. A Unesco-recognised Geopark for its significant geological formations of caves, canyons, hills, and valleys the island is also known for its beaches, mangrove forests, and abundant wildlife where you can see dolphins, turtles, migratory birds, and reptiles.

Qeshm Island is also home to the traditional Bandari way of life (Iranian Arabs), with local costumes, local music, and handicrafts giving it an authentic village atmosphere.

The people are fisherman, lenges (traditional boat-builders), and miners of the island’s red-soil. Most resorts and hotels are in Bandar Abbas and Qeshm Town, while most accommodation elsewhere on the island are traditional family-run home-stays.

