

## A PEARL IN THE MIDDLE EAST



Soaked in a rich history and culture, Isfahan is a stunning and romantic city located in central Iran. This truly magnificent city is renowned both domestically and internationally for its many architectural wonders such as unmatched Islamic buildings, bazaars, museums, covered bridges, splendid palaces, grand mosques, and impressive minarets.

Isfahan is renowned not only for the abundance of great historical wonders but also for its astonishing natural beauties such as Persian gardens, and tree-lined boulevards that combine natural elements with manmade components to create a unique artistic achievement that reflects the heights of art, philosophy, and religious concepts. Moreover, the city is known for its 'life-giving river', the Zayandeh-Rood, which has long bestowed the city an original beauty and fertility. The cool blue tiles of Isfahan's Islamic buildings, and the city's majestic bridges, contrast perfectly with the encircling hot, dry Iranian countryside. Sitting majestically on both the east-west and north-south trade routes which traverse the country, the city was once a crossroads of international trade and diplomacy in Iran. The city was once one of the largest cities in the world. It flourished from 1050 to 1722, particularly during the 16th century under the rule of the Safavid dynasty, when it became the capital of Persia for the second time in its history and it has retained much of its past glory. Today Isfahan is the third largest city in Iran and a major tourist attraction. It produces fine carpets, textiles, and handicrafts. Isfahan also has excelled in terms of science and technology with the many scientific institutes and young scientists it has. Also, it is now home to some heavy industry, including steel factories and a nuclear facility on its outskirts, however, its inner core wants to be preserved as a priceless gem.

Isfahan is a city for walking, getting lost in mazing bazaars, dozing in beautiful gardens, and meeting people. This has led to the Persian proverb "Esfahan nesf-e jahan" which means "Isfahan is half the world".



## NAGHSH-E JAHAN SQUARE

### See the World Here!

Every day in the tranquility of morning, the sun rises over Naghsh-e Jahan Square, one of the most beautiful UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and shines over the mosaic work of Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque to create a beautiful scene with cream and pink colors in front of your eyes. Naghsh-e Jahan square, which is also named Imam Square, is a showcase of Safavid Dynasty, which makes it obvious for every visitor who takes a tour to Iran that Isfahan was the capital of Persia not too long ago.

The three main components of power in Persia during Safavid days are present at Naqsh-e Jahan square: bazaar, as merchant's point of power, mosque as the clergy's point of power, and a palace, as the king's point of power are all gathered together in this square. Moreover, almost hundreds of stores

sit around Naqsh-e Jahan square selling handicrafts unique to the city.

There are two striking mosques facing Naghsh-e Jahan square: the smaller one, Sheikh Lotfollah was built for the women of Shah's harem. A precise look at the numerous mosques of Iran indicates that minarets and courtyards are among the main parts of a mosque. But Sheikh Lotfollah's mosque neither has minarets nor a courtyard, because it was not constructed for public use and the Shah decided to make it in a special way.

Lattice windows, exquisite tile works, and elaborate decorations in light Turkish blue and dark Persian blue make the Imam mosques' atmosphere calming and spiritually healing.

There is a palace on the opposite side of Sheikh Lot-

follah Mosque. A six-story palace named 'Ali Qapu' meaning 'The Great Gate'. The king of Persia would sit on the terrace of Ali Qapu's third floor with his special guests to watch Chowgan (polo), maneuvers, and horse-racing matches. The walls and ceilings of rooms, corridors, and stairways of the building are decorated with stunning paintings of Safavid artists. Naghsh-e Jahan Square, a showcase of the most beautiful artistic works dating back to the Safavid era, became a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1979 and is the highlight of every cultural tour to Iran.



## QEYSARIE BAZAAR

Dating to the 17th century (built in 1620), the historic Qeysarie Bazaar or Soltani Bazaar is one of the oldest and largest bazaars in the Middle East. In fact, the bazaar was one of the greatest and luxurious trading centers in the Safavid era. It is located in downtown old Isfahan, on the northern side of the Naqsh-e Jahan Square. The bazaar is a vaulted two-kilometer street linking the old city with the new. The main entrance called Qeysarie extends into the Friday Mosque/Jameh Mosque, the oldest mosque in Isfahan, and one of the oldest in Iran.

The main commercial activities in Qeysarie Bazaar are carpet and kilim selling. The Qeysarie Bazaar has two floors: on the first floor it has a wide variety of different shops and the second floor is designed for office and commercial affairs. In addition, Qeysarie Bazaar includes other parts such as Orian bazaar, Harounieh, Nimavard-e Golshan, Makhlas, Samavarsazha (Samovar makers), and Maqsudbeyk. In Qeysarie Bazaar, there are many historic buildings such as Nimavar school, Sadr school, Khayyatha mosque, New mosque, Zolfaghar mosque, Shishe mosque and Jarchi mosque.

## IMAM MOSQUE

Imam Mosque (Masjid-e Jam 'e Abbasi) is one of the finest and the most stunning buildings in the world standing in south side of Naghsh-e Jahan Square. Built during the reign of Shah Abbas I, the Mosque represents the culmination of a thousand years of mosque building in Iran and a magnificent example of Persian architecture, stone carving, and tile works, with a majesty and splendor that places it among the world's greatest buildings. The Mosque is also an excellent example of Islamic architecture of Iran, and regarded as one of the masterpieces of Persian Architecture. It is registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site along with the Naghsh-e Jahan Square. Its construction began in 1611, and its splendor is mainly due to the beauty of its seven-color mosaic tiles and calligraphic inscriptions.

To the east and west of the mosque, there are two madrasahs (theological colleges). Two long seminaries at the back are suitably studious in their architectural tranquility. According to A. U. Pope<sup>1</sup>, both the ground plan and the structure of the building reflect the doctrinal simplicity of Islam. Circulation and communication are everywhere facilitated, nowhere impeded.

1. Arthur Upham Pope (February 7, 1881 – September 3, 1969) was an American expert on Iranian art and the editor of the Survey of Persian Art.





## SHEIKH LOTFOLLAH MOSQUE

As one of the architectural masterpieces of Safavid Iranian architecture, Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque is standing on the eastern side of Naghsh-e Jahan Square. The construction of the mosque started in 1603 and completed in 1619. It was built by the chief architect Shaykh Bahai, during the reign of Shah Abbas I of the Safavid dynasty.

The mosque was built to be private for the royal court, unlike the Masjed-e Shah, which was meant for the public. For this reason, the mosque does not have any minarets and is of a smaller size.

It wasn't until centuries later, when the doors were opened to the public, that ordinary people could admire the effort that Shah Abbas had put into making this a sacred place for the ladies of his harem, and the exquisite tile works, which is far superior to those covering the Shah Mosque. To avoid having to walk across the square to the mosque, Shah Abbas had the architect build a tunnel spanning across the piazza, from the Ali Qapu palace, to the mosque.



## ALI QAPU PALACE

Ali Qapu Palace is located in Naghsh-e Jahan Square facing Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque. It was constructed at the end of the 16th century as a residence for Shah Abbas I. The palace once served as a monumental gateway to the royal palaces. It also functioned as a reception pavilion for foreign dignitaries and embassies to the royal court.

Ali Qapu Palace has six floors, each accessible by a spiral staircase and short doors. Many of the valuable paintings and mosaics that once decorated the 52 small rooms, corridors and stairways were destroyed during the Qajar era. Fortunately, a few have remained in the throne room off the terrace.

The upper floor, which is definitely worth a climb, leads to the music room. The stucco ceiling is riddled with shapes of vases and other household utensils cut to enhance the acoustics. This distinctive craftsmanship, considered by some to be one of the finest examples of secular Persian art, extends to the walls.



## CHEHEL SOTOUN

### Persian Garden & Royal Palace

Chehel Sotoun (also spelled Chihil Sutun) is a pleasure pavilion built by Shah Abbas II (r. 1642-66) in the midst of a large park and has once been the venue for hosting special guests from all over the world. The name of the pavilion, which literally means 'Forty Columns', derives from the illusion that the twenty columns of the front portico are doubled by the reflecting pool to the south.

The building was initially constructed in 1647 and rebuilt in 1706 following a major fire. Since the site is aligned with the axis of the Naghsh-e Jahan Square, or central square of Isfahan, it may have been part of Shah Abbas' overall urban plan for the city.

Like many of Isfahan's famous buildings, the Chehel Sotoun grew by accretion as new additions which were merged into existing structures. The original core of the pavilion, at the rear, was erected with the somewhat novel feature of two porticos accessing the structure from the sides. These opened into a large triple-domed chamber.

The next phase of construction saw the addition of two halls flanking an open pond. This formed a portico-like ensemble at the front of the building with a deep muqarnas vault decorated with Venetian glass. Chehel Sotoun Palace and its royal garden were registered on UNESCO Cultural Heritage list in 2011.



Up: The ceiling of Chehel Sotoun's mirror hall that contains mirror work





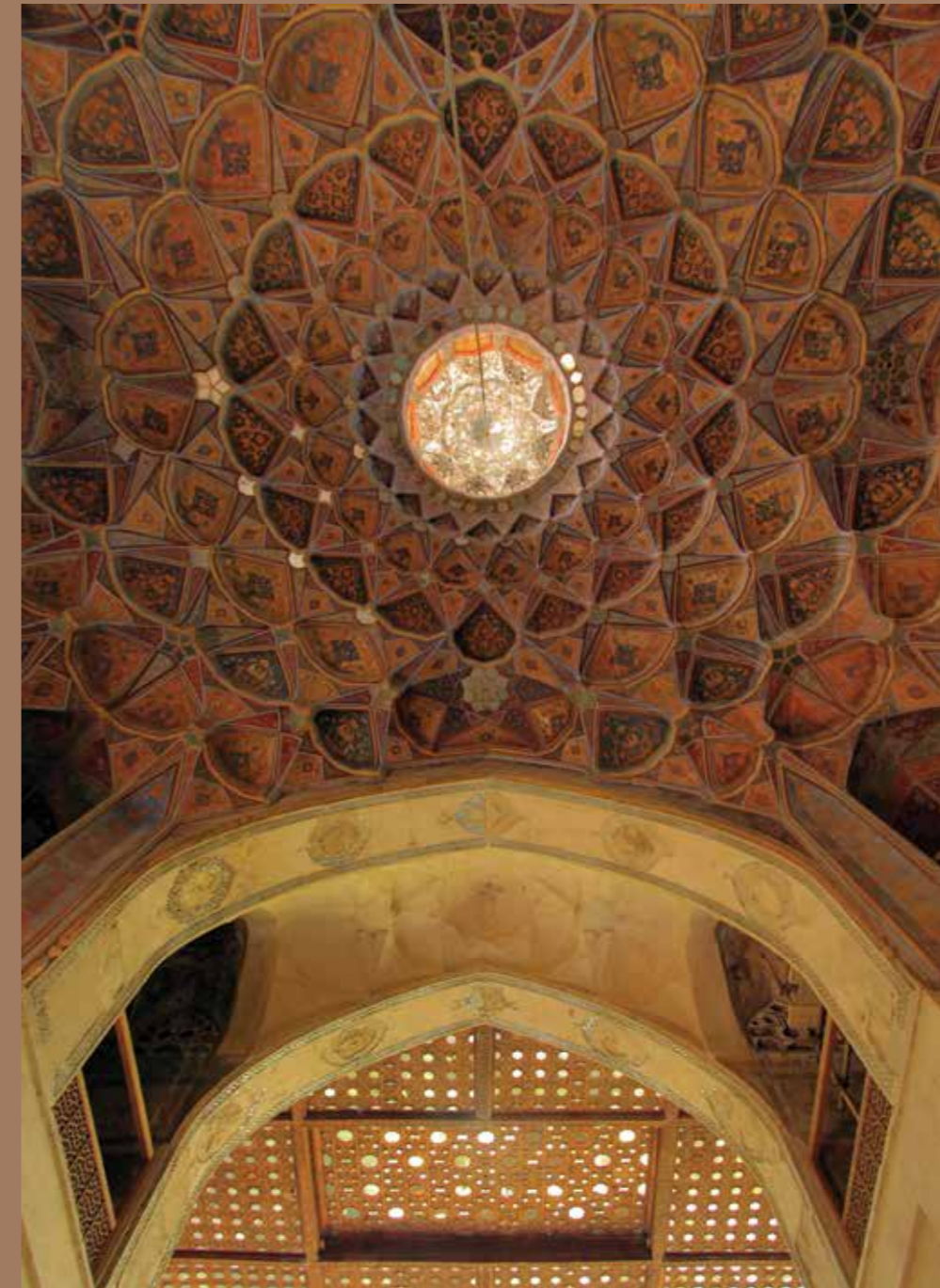
## HASHT BEHESHT

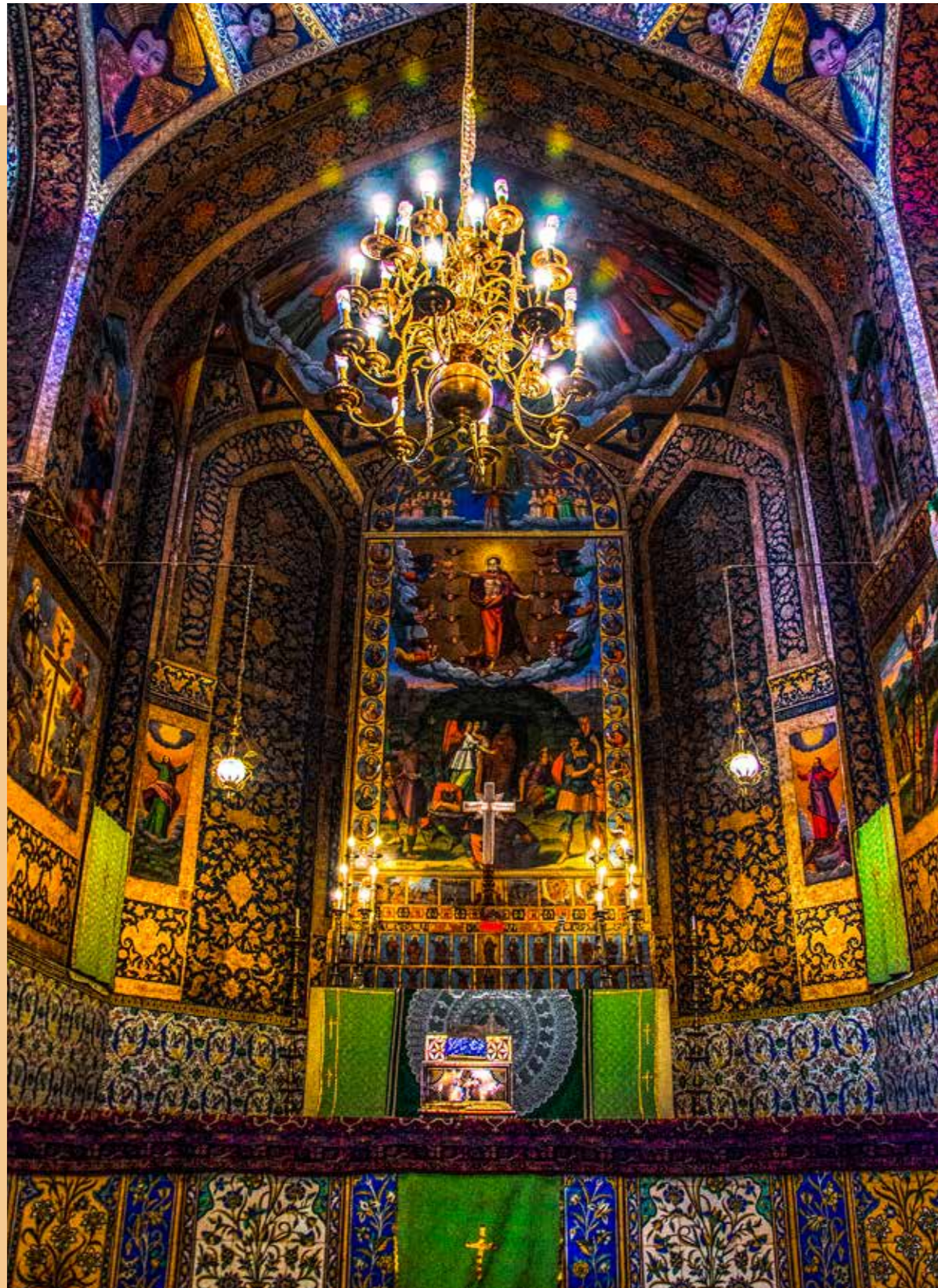
### Majestic & Legendary Garden & Palace

One of the two gardens located in glorious and well-known Chahar Bagh Street (the Four Gardens) is Hasht Behesht Palace and its garden. This spectacular historic structure is in the western part of Chahar Bagh Avenue across from Sheykh Bahaei Street. The historic Hasht-Behesht Palace in Isfahan dates back to the Safavid era. The building was construct-

ed at the time of Shah Soleiman and according to some historians, there used to be a huge garden in front of the palace. In addition to the beautiful architecture, marble stones, paintings and tiles used in Hasht-Behesht add to the beauty of this historic monument.

The two-story palace building comprises several rooms allocated to the royal family and their servants. The balconies of the palace have been decorated with golden paintings. Hasht-Behesht Palace is one of Iran's main tourist attractions and there are so many manuscripts on the glory and beauty of Hasht-Behesht Palace. The walls of the unique palace have been infused with pictures of birds and colored tiles. The mirror works by skillful Iranian artists is another significant characteristic of the palace.





## VANK CATHEDRAL

### A Glorious Church Architecture

Holy Savior Cathedral also known as Vank Cathedral and The Church of the Saintly Sisters is the most visited cathedral in Julfa Quarter, Isfahan. Julfa is the Armenian and Christian quarter of Isfahan which was established in 1603 during Shah Abbas I Safavid. Julfa is located on the south bank of the Zayanderud<sup>2</sup> and is linked to the Muslim part of Isfahan by Si-ose-pol Bridge<sup>3</sup>. Today, Julfa is a quiet area of Isfahan with predominant Christian community. The varying fortunes and independence of this suburb across the Zayanderud and its eclectic mix of European missionaries, mercenaries and travelers can be traced almost chronologically in the cathedral's combination of building styles and contrasts in its external and internal architectural treatment.

The area surrounding the cathedral also includes a bell-tower, erected in 1702, a printing press, founded by Bishop Khachatur<sup>4</sup>, a library established in 1884, and a museum which was opened in 1905 and which contains many historical objects and manuscripts, including the original grant of land. Construction is believed to have begun in 1606, and completed with major alterations to design between 1655 and 1664 under the supervision of Archbishop David.

2. The largest river of the Iranian Plateau in Isfahan  
 3. The largest of the eleven historical bridges on the Zayanderud  
 4. Khachatur Kesaratsi (1590-1646) was an archbishop in the Safavid Empire of Armenian ethnicity.



## WALKABILITY IN THE CITY HISTORIC CENTRE

Chahar Bagh Avenue has been changed to a car-free zone

Chahar Bagh Avenue is located on the south side of Sio-Se-Pol Bridge. It was once one of the most splendid avenues in the world, 5km long and 47m wide. Madar-i-Shah, a complex placed on this avenue, consisting of a Caravanserai, a Bazaar and a school. The Caravanserai and The Bazaar were dedicated to the school and school expenses were provided in this way. The school of Chahar Bagh was built in Iranian Islamic architecture, which was built under orders of Shah Sultan Hossein Safavi.

There was no pollution or annoying sound here; when cars had not been born yet. But as their age began, like any other city across the world, Isfahan reshaped and motor vehicles surrounded the avenues. Therefore, for many years, Chahar Bagh was rarely as a pedestrian-friendly district. However, as a historic avenue, it was banned to cars and changed to a walkable zone by the municipality in 2016 to encourage the residents walking and cycling. Today, this avenue is a car-free zone with old leafy trees planted along it which creates an extraordinary view. This pedestrianisation aimed to provide better accessibility and mobility for pedestrians, to enhance the amount of shopping and other business activities in the area and/or to improve the attractiveness of the local environment in terms of aesthetics, air pollution, noise and crashes involving motor vehicle with pedestrians.

This car-free development generally implies a large scale pedestrianised area that relies on modes of transport other than the car, such as bikes, electric scooters, etc.



Photo: Hamidreza Nikoomaram

## MENAR JONBAN

### The Shaking Minarets

The Monar Jonban or the Shaking Minaret is a monument located in Isfahan. This structure and its system still remain of wonder to architects and engineers around the world. It was constructed to cover the grave of Amu Abdollah Soqla<sup>5</sup> in 14th century. What makes this building a wonder is the fact that the minarets on top of the building would shake side to side for up to 10 inches to each side, and if one minaret is shaken, the other will shake in unison. This remarkable structure is so carefully designed, that the weight distribution, height to width ratio of the minarets, minarets dimensions to the iwan's ratio all

are essential to the shaking of the minarets. This coupled oscillation can be observed from meters away at the ground level. Unfortunately, the damages done to this structure resulted in the disconnection of the shaking mechanism. The two minarets no longer shake at the same time. Many believe this is due to the rapid, aggressive shakes the towers endure during the high seasons of tourists visit. Some believe the main damage has been done when the British archaeologists try to find out what mechanism lies behind the swinging of the structure.

5. Amu Abdollah Karladani (or Amu Abdollah Soqla) a Sufi of 14th century.



## TAKHT-E-FOULAD

### The 2nd Largest Cemetery of the Islamic World

Isfahan has been the capital of many dynasties for the past centuries, and due to its vast territory, it has different cemeteries. Usually each ward had its own graveyard beyond the residential area. Moreover, most religious characters and scholars are buried in their own shrine where they lived.

Prior to the Safavid period, there were no centralized cemeteries in the city; however, during the reign of the Safavid dynasty, Takht-e-Foulad turned into the city's central cemetery where most residents were buried.

With an area of 75 hectares, Takht-e-Foulad cemetery is located on the southern edge of the Zayandehrud and at the end of one of the northern-south-

ern historical axes of the city. This historic cemetery is considered as one of the most important historical and cultural sites of Iran due to its vastness, the large number of buried personalities, and the existence of valuable historical monuments.

The cemetery has been known throughout history by different names such as "Lassan al-Arz", "Baba-Roknoddin" and "Takht-e-Foulad". Each of these names carry stories of their own which might be nothing but fiction which lacks a scientific or historical basis, but the fact that it has been mentioned in so many different historical periods is a testimony to the antiquity of this cemetery.

## ASHRAF HALL

### Safavid Lesser Known Palace in Isfahan



Located within the premises of Isfahan governor's office, Ashraf Hall is a small part of a Safavid glorious complex that included the Roofed Hall, Eight Palace, Poshte-e Matbakh palace, Rakib Khaneh, and Timurid Hall which have been totally destroyed.

The construction of this Safavid monument begun under Shah Abbas II and was completed by Shah Soleiman as a residential palace of the shah and his harem. The beauty of the structure is reflected in its name - "the Splendid Hall"; though some erroneously attribute this name to Ashraf-e Afghan.

It is particularly remarkable for its 11-meter-high curved ceiling, featuring a medallion of pure gold. The gold decorations and paintings, beautiful muqarnases, and azure colored plasters are the unique characteristics of this monument. There is a large hall in the middle of the building with several rooms surround it. The main material used to build this monument is wood. Pillars of this structure passing through the ceiling add to its beauty and attract everybody's attention due to the golden ornaments.

During World War I, the palace housed the military head-quarters of the Russian army. Not surprisingly, the exquisite decorations of the palace's interior were badly mutilated during this period. Fortunately, several series of restoration work have returned the building its original grandeur.

In its present state, the edifice consists of a large hall and two adjoining chambers, decorated in the best techniques of Safavid art. Today the palace houses the reception area of the administration of the Isfahan province and is closed to the public.

Detail of the exquisite artworks of Ashraf Hall ceiling.

Photo: Mir Saeed Hadian

## CAPITAL OF 'CHOGAN'

### A UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Iran

Polo or Chogan (or Chovgan) has been the traditional Persian team sport, played on horseback since two thousand years ago. It was inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2017.

Polo was known as the sport of kings as it was most popular among the kings and rich people and was played in the royal courts. The playing style has changed over time; however, in this ancient game, two teams riding on the horses try to pass a small white ball through the opposing team's goal posts (with 7m length) using a long-handled wooden mallet.

The game is played by both men and women while musicians perform traditional music and the storytellers narrate the old stories. Therefore, it is a combination of athletic, artistic, and cultural elements displaying the history and identity of a nation which has been safeguarded during the history in different ways.

Chogan was first played in the Achaemenid era (though some claim that it goes back to the Median era) and then found its way to other countries through the extension of the Achaemenid borders. But it was the Mongols who promoted Chogan among East Asian countries after invading Iran and getting

familiar with Persian culture. However, the first document that mentions Chogan as an Iranian game dates back to the Sassanid era. The match was held between Turkmans and Persians around the year 600 AD and the Turkmens won the game. Later, in the Safavid era, when Shah Abbas I (1571-1629) chose Isfahan as his capital city and ordered Naqsh-e Jahan Square to be built, Chogan was played in the square. The two original stone goal posts are still available in the square used as the standard to the present time. The king watched the game from the terrace of Ali Qapu palace. In fact, the Safavid era was the time when this ancient Persian game fully flourished.

The theme of Chogan has been widely used in different areas of art and literature. For example, it's been mentioned in the Ferdowsi's poems (widely known as the preserver of the Persian language and the author of Shahnameh or Book of Kings- that is the longest epic poem in the world), Rudaki (regarded as the first great literary genius of the Modern Persian language), Nezami (in the love story of Khosrow-the Sassanid king- and Shirin- the Armenian princess), Sa'adi, Hafez, and other great Persian speaking poets. It has also been the theme of many valuable Persian miniatures and pottery designs.



# ISLAMIC TOURISM IN ANCIENT MOSQUES

## Fusion of History & Architecture

Although Imam, Sheikh Lotfollah and Jameh are the most magnificent mosques of Isfahan registered by UNESCO, the city boasts of many other mosques which are elements of historical heritage and religious monuments; Some of them are as follows:

## JAMEH MOSQUE OF ISFAHAN

### A Journey through the Islamic Jewel

Located in the historical center of Isfahan, the Masjed-e Jame ('Friday mosque') can be seen as a stunning illustration of the evolution of mosque architecture over twelve centuries, starting in 841 AD. It is the oldest preserved edifice of its type in Iran and a prototype for later mosque designs throughout Central Asia which has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2012.

Covering more than 20,000 m<sup>2</sup>, the complex is also the first Islamic building that adapted the four-courtyard layout of Sassanid palaces to Islamic religious architecture. Its double-shelled ribbed domes represent an architectural innovation that inspired builders throughout the region. The site also features remarkable decorative details representative of stylistic developments over more than a thousand years of Islamic art. The prototype character is well illustrated in the earliest double-shell ribbed Nezam al-Molk dome, the first use of the four portico (Chahar Ayyān) typology in Islamic architecture, as well as the textbook character of the Masjed-e Jame' as a compilation of Islamic architectural styles.

The Masjed-e Jame' of Isfahan is an outstanding example of innovation in architectural adaptation and technology applied during the restoration and expansion of an earlier mosque complex during the Seljuq era, which has been further enlarged during later Islamic periods by addition of high-quality extensions and decoration.



Above: A View of the Southern portico as seen from the Northern portico



Right: Vault of the Jameh Mosque of Isfahan

## HAKIM MOSQUE

Aloof from the bustle of the main streets, the Hakim Mosque was built in 1656 on the site of the 10th-century Buyid mosque called Jorjir. The Jorjir Mosque was founded by Saheb ibn Ebad, the renowned Buyid vizier. For a long time, it served as a smaller Congregational Mosque of the city (compared to the Great Congregational Mosque). In its heyday, it had a minaret exceeding 100m in height. Today, only a portal of the Jorjir Mosque exists. Its rich brickwork exemplifies the main characteristic of Buyid architecture.

During the Safavid period, a mosque was built here by Hakim Davud, a royal physician who fell afoul of Shah Abbas II and was forced to seek refuge in India. There, at the court of Jahan Shah, he grew rich; it was with the money that he sent back to his family in Isfahan that the mosque was created.

The mosque's spacious and harmonious Court produces an overwhelming impression on the visitor. Although showing numerous signs of restoration, it still retains much of its original charm. The mosque's highlights include number of glistening brick-and-tile decorations, stunning pieces of calligraphy, and abundant inscriptions in angular Kufic. The other conspicuous features are an exquisite muqarnas decorated mihrab, a beautiful inlaid minbar, and a beautiful pierced screen on the western side of the courtyard. The dome of the sanctuary has the same echo effect that one can observe in the Royal (Imam) Mosque. The total area of Hakim Mosque is 9,680 m<sup>2</sup>.





## SEYYED MOSQUE

Located in Bidabad neighborhood, adjacent to Bidabad bazaar, Seyyed Mosque is the largest and most famous mosque in Isfahan. It is one of the most prominent architectural works of the Qajar period and is worthy of study and consideration due to its architectural and decorative characteristics both in tiling and sculptures.

The mosque was constructed by Hojatoleslam Haj Seyyed Mohammad Baqer Shafti (1766-1863) who was one of the great clerics of Isfahan in the late first half of the 18th century. After his death, parts of the mosque's construction were carried out by his son Haj Seyyed Asadullah and partly by his nephew Haj Seyyed Mohammad Bagher, and apparently some pieces of decorations were left unfinished.

The mosque's rectangular (95 × 85 m) map covers a total area of 8075 m<sup>2</sup> and has doorways on all four

sides, consisting of parts that are common in other significant mosques.

On the southern side of the courtyard, there is the main portico and around its back, are the dome and pillared shabistans. The surface of porticos, porches and vaults are mainly covered with clay tiles of the Qajar era and plinths are made of stone. The north side tiling belongs to the recent period. The teaching hall and the tomb of Hojatoleslam Shafti are among other important parts of the mosque. The tomb consists of a dome and a portico with various decorations of tiling, plastering, mirroring and painting with numerous inscriptions emblazoned. The inscriptions of the mosque mainly date back to 1839-1900.

## ALI MOSQUE & MINARET

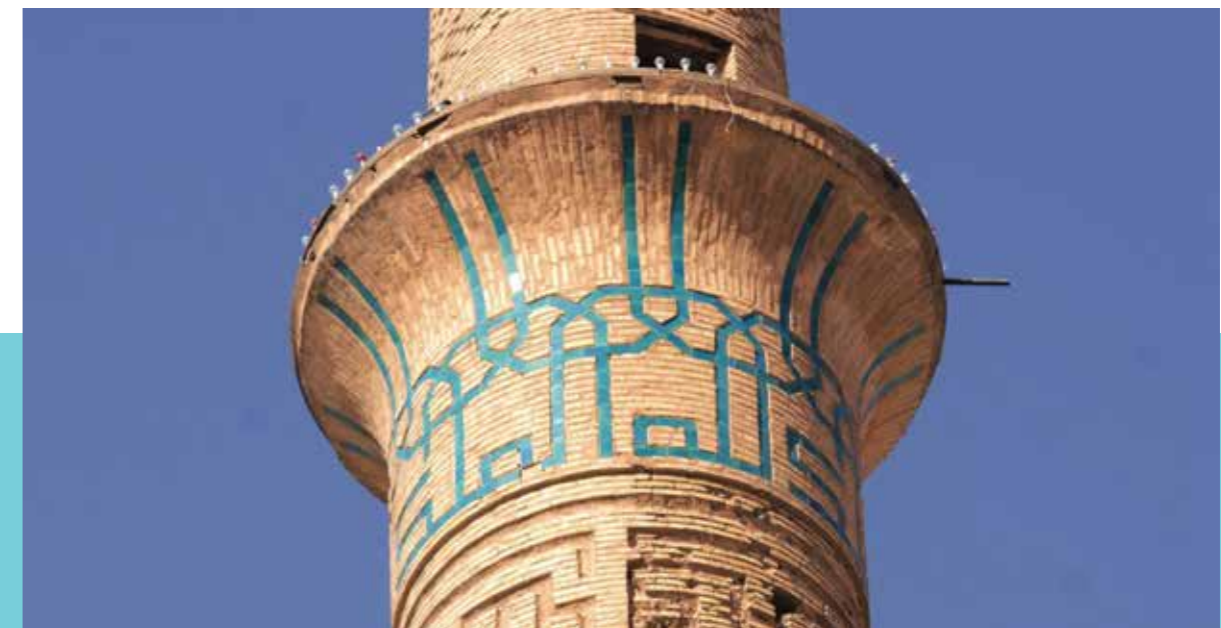
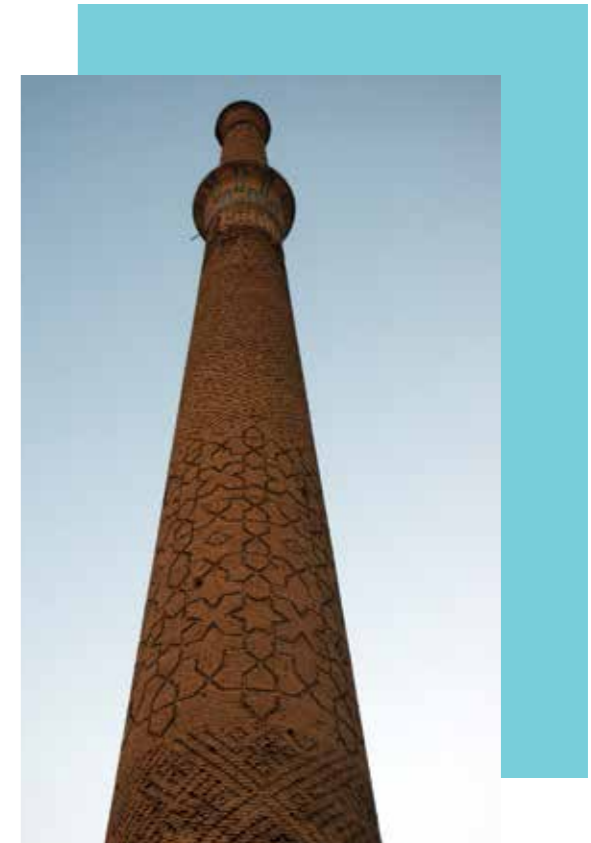
The historic and valuable monument of Ali Mosque is in fact a building of Seljuk origin and the name of the building in that era used to be "Sultan Sanjar Mosque" or "Sanjari Mosque". This mosque, which is located on the Haruniye Street and is adjacent to the tomb of Haroon, is one of the most important mosques in Isfahan due to architectural and decorative features.

The existence of the Seljuk minaret next to this mosque is a solid proof of its historic roots, since this mosque was built during the Seljuk period after the destruction of an older mosque in 1522 and reconstructed during the time of Shah Isma'il I and Mirza Shah Hussein Ministry.

The present building of the mosque has four porticos and features an entry gate, courtyard, dome room and summer and winter shabistans decorated with beautiful mosaic tiles, muqarnas and historic inscriptions. The courtyard of the mosque is a rectangular square and, in the middle, there is a pool. The southern portico is larger than the others and behind it, there is a domed shabistan. From the outside the dome of this tall mosque is covered with tiles and has gypsum muqarnas inside. The interior surface of the dome is decorated with segmented arches and the impost of the dome is covered by series of Quranic verses showing the date of 1522.

The 48m minaret contains three sections of brickwork bearing five Kufic inscriptions, made of turquoise tiles. The decorations include multilateral shapes, tetramerous flower patterns, and mostly diamond patterns descending in size as the minaret

sours. The crowned shape part constitutes 93cms of the minaret decorated with vertical, octagonal brickworks. At present, except for the minaret inside the Ali mosque, no trace of the old mosque has been remained.





A Walk through the History

## THE LAND OF BRIDGES

Isfahan historic bridges have been constructed across Zayandehrud river in Isfahan since Sasanian era. By the time Isfahan had been designated as the capital of Safavid dynasty, building bridges became a part of the urban expansion. Built in a harmony with other imperial buildings, Safavid bridges were multifunctional. They were masterfully built not only for crossing the river but for controlling the water flow of the river to irrigate the nearby gardens and also for recreational purposes.

The city's most important bridges include:

- Khaju
- Si-o-se-pol
- Choobi
- Shahrestan
- Marnan



## KHAJU BRIDGE

### The Prettiest Bridge of Isfahan

Khaju Bridge is very famous bridge in Iran, due to its pleasing construction idea. It is one of the oldest bridges in Isfahan. After 17th Century, travelers visiting Iran and tourist admiration has increased. Shah Abbas II, built new bridge on foundation of old bridge which was constructed in 1650 or so. The bridge serves as a link between Zoroastrian quarters and north banks, through the Zayandehrud. The bridge is constructed with multi-purpose; it is not only used for transportation but also as weir. The primary function of this bridge was abode for public meeting or as a tea-house.

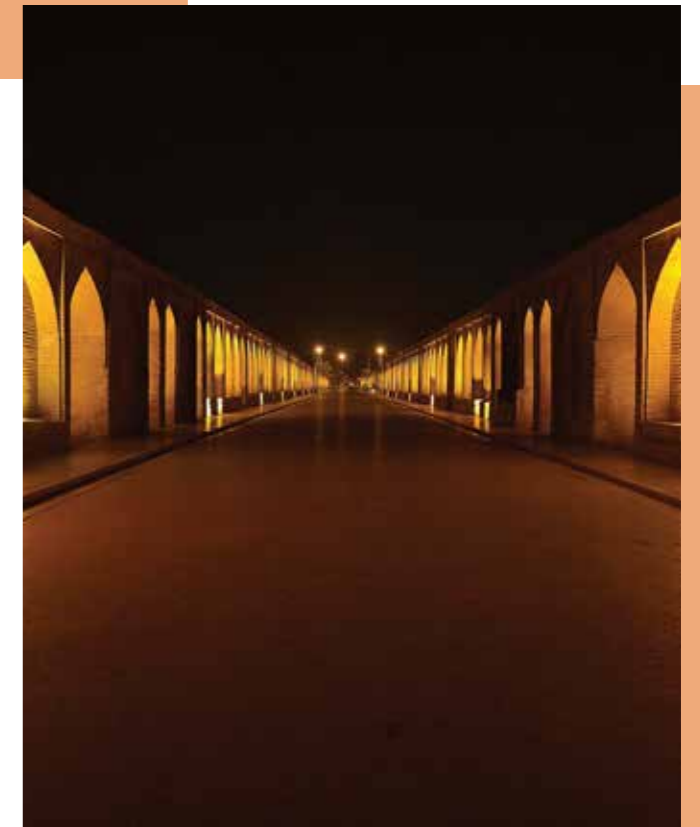
Today, the Khaju Bridge is known for its Persian architecture. Inside the bridge, a pavilion sort existed, on which the 'Shah Abbas' would sit and admire the view. At present only miscellanies of the king chair and stone seat exist. It provides irrigation water to surrounding areas, through series of water channels. The sluice gates help a lot to regulate the flow of water. On western side of the bridge there are steps, over which the water pours; the spot is more popularly used for social events.



## SI-O-SE POL

### A Safavid Masterpiece

Most of Iranians call it Si-o-Se Pol, meaning 'the bridge of 33 arches'. Built in 1602 during the reign of Shah Abbas I, it is a unique bridge displaying the grandeur of Iranian architecture of the era. Connecting the central to lower part of Chahar Bagh Avenue, the bridge was constructed under the supervision of Allahverdi Khan and is considered the largest Iranian construction on water. The bridge is 300 m long and 14 m wide. There are low arcades on both sides of the bridge. A beautiful view of the river can be seen from alcoves built on the two sides of pedestrian passages. Underneath the bridge's vaults, there are cobblestoned areas which are frequented by people, whenever the water level is down.





## CHOOBI

### A Royal Passage

Located between Si-o-Se Pol and Khaju bridges, Joubi bridge is also called 'Choobi' (wooden); but the original name was chosen because this bridge is actually a semi-aqueduct. It was only used by the court or high-ranking officials coming to visit the king and ordinary people were not allowed to use it.

The bridge spans about 150 meters and is about four meters wide. It has 21 arches. Shah Abbas II commissioned the bridge for irrigating his gardens on the two sides of the bridge, thus name it Joubi (creek). The two parlors of the bridge were originally used by Shah Abbas for enjoying the view, but are now a gathering place for the youth to congregate and have fun.



## SHAHRESTAN BRIDGE

### City's Oldest Bridge

Founded in the 14th Century C.E. on the east of Isfahan, Shahrestan Bridge is the oldest in the city. It connects the Shahrestan village on the north to the farmlands on the southern bank of Zayandehrud. The construction clearly derives from Roman prototypes and the huge piers were designed to defend its pontoons from the torrent of the Zayandehrud. The large piers are repeated on the down-stream side of the bridge where they were meant to reduce eddies which might otherwise erode the masonry.

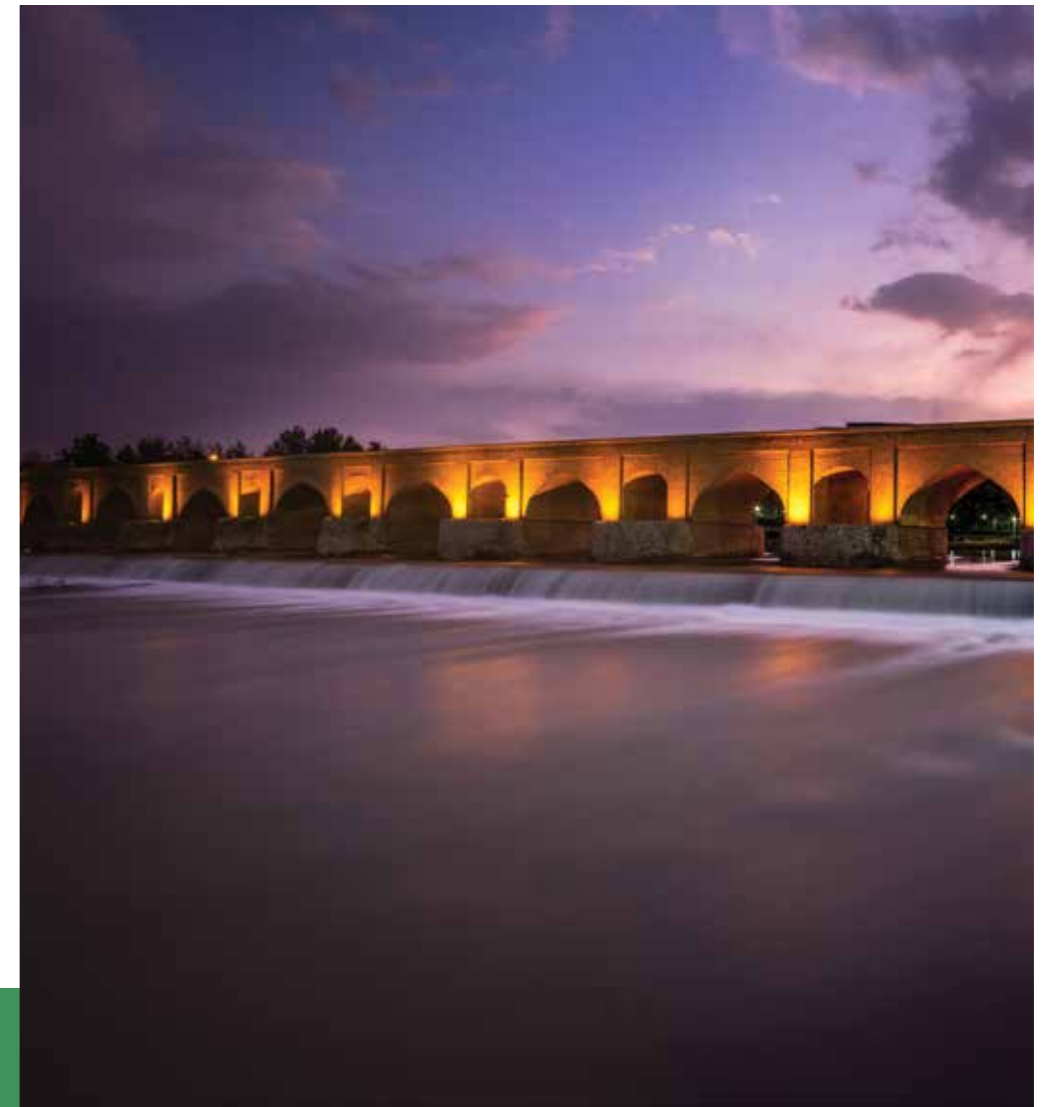
Following the Roman model, there are secondary water channels set into the piers. These expand with the curvature of the main arches and can, therefore, carry off a greater volume of water. Because of the risk of damage as high volumes of water poured through the narrower sections, additional venting channels run from the secondary channels back into the main ones, where, because of their greater width, the water level was likely to be less.

The bridge was the scene of the assassination of Al-Rashid Bellah, one of the Abbasid Caliphs, who was killed by Ismailis in 1138. It is possible that the shrine in the village of Shahrestan, known as that of Shahzadeh Hossein may actually hold the remains of the unfortunate Caliph.



## MARNAN BRIDGE

### Vision of the Sun



The Marnan Bridge is Isfahan's only historical bridge in the west of Chahar Bagh Avenue. The Bridge is 185 m long and 4.7 m wide. Its present structure dates to the Safavid era. However, its piers may belong to a much earlier date contemporary with the Shahrestan Bridge.

According to a historical record, it was rebuilt by Khajeh Sarfaraz, the Armenian administrator of the district, appointed to this lucrative post in 1636 after the death of his father, Khajeh Nazar. The name "Marnan" seems to be a distorted form of mehrbin ("vision of the sun") - the name of the district reportedly called so because the Fire Temple could be observed from here.

## FLOWER GARDEN OF ISFAHAN

### Here, It's Always Spring

The Flower garden of Isfahan, which is a recreational, cultural, educational, and research Centre, was one of Iran's great natural environment projects. Completed in 1990s, it is located near Bozorg-mehr square. The buildings of the garden have been decorated with traditional elements. The entrance pavilion includes a building with the dimensions of 6×9 m and a height of 6 m. At the ground floor, there is an information office. The whole landscape of the garden can be viewed from the deck of the building's first floor. The second floor includes a hall for showing movies and slides about various kinds of plants and flowers. The rock garden has 250 rock plant spe-

cies covering an area of 2500 m<sup>2</sup>. A waterfall is located on the eastern side of the rock garden. The pond on the south eastern side of the garden stretches over 3500 m<sup>2</sup>. The playground for children is separated from other parts of the garden by various kinds of hedges. The garden has been varied by planting different species of herbs, seasonal and permanent flowers and ornamental shrubs. In the centre of the garden, a carpet-like design has been made by different flowers. A greenhouse has been built over 700 m<sup>2</sup> on the north eastern side of the garden due to the shortage of flowers in winter.



## NAZHVAN FOREST PARK

### Lungs of the City & a Recreational Resort

The Nazhvan recreational complex is one of the few gardens in Isfahan, which is secured of the flow of expansion and development of the city which freshens the air of Isfahan. It has an area of 1200 ha and is located in the western part of the city. This forest park is the only remaining part of the green space in the suburban area of Isfahan. The river of Zayanderud flows through the park and this is one of the distinguished features of Nazhvan that makes it different from other parks in Isfahan.

Nazhvan encompasses a large complex of attractions that makes it pleasant. It includes the Birds Garden, the Isfahan Aquarium, a Sea Shell Museum, a Reptile House, and a Butterfly Collection. As a lovely picnic spot, the park makes a perfect option for a pleasant day outing, particularly in autumn when the leaves change color. Other attractions inside the park include a small chairlift over the river, horse-drawn carriages, a miniature train and a water park for kids. A Ladies Garden (8am to sunset) gives a bit of respite for women wanting to avoid unwanted attention.



## A WORLD CRAFT CITY

### A Member of UNESCO Creative Cities Network

Isfahan has been Iran's largest handicrafts hub for many years, and many Iranians remember Isfahan with its rich art and architecture history. Considered as a hub for crafts and folk art, Isfahan's creative sector comprises the Iran's most specialized craft people in 167 different disciplines, including carpet weaving, metalwork, woodwork, ceramics, painting and inlay works of various kinds.

According to Isfahan Territorial Planning, at least 9,000 craft and folk-art workshops and enterprises contribute to the Isfahan economy, the majority of which are located in the historic Naqsh-e Jahan Square, inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1979 and dedicated to the sector.

In 2015, Isfahan was officially registered by the World Crafts Council (WCC) and UNESCO as World Crafts City and Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art respectively.



## TURQUOISE FIXING

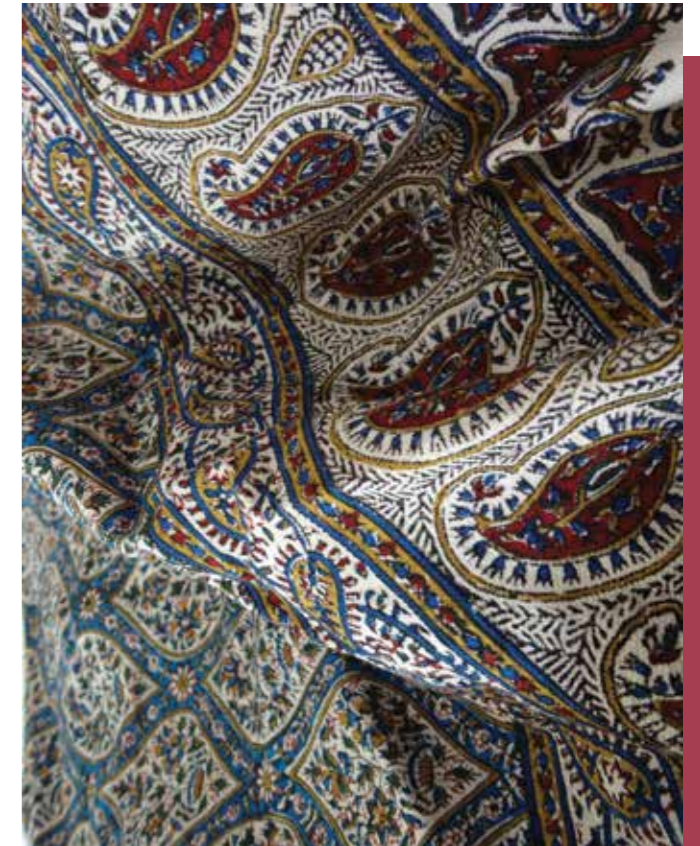
Turquoise fixing is one of the handicraft types which holds the beauty and attraction of a good handicraft product. It is believed that the antiquity of this industry goes back to about seventy years ago. At that time, Yousef Hakiman known as Mohammadreza, started turquoise fixing on jewelry in Mashhad and about twenty years later, the art was brought to Isfahan by another craftsman named Haj Dadash and the art has continued to flourish in Isfahan to date. Turquoise fixed products generally consist of jewelries and containers made of metals such as copper, brass, silver, nickel silver, or bronze on which small pieces of turquoise stones are placed side by side using special glue which gives specific beauty to the object.

Turquoise fixing consists of two general stages: First is the work of a goldsmith or metalworkers who through using hand, press, or both methods, produces the desired object using one of the

abovementioned metals. Making the carrier object, whether container or jewelry, the part to hold the turquoise is marked. Then a thin layer of the same metal is used and soldered to specify the boundary, commonly called "carving" or "Makr". Second is the process of turquoise fixing. In this process, first dirt and other stone fragments are separated from 'soft' turquoise and then, small pieces of turquoise are grouped based on color and size. In the next stage, the desired object is heated and a layer of "walnut shellac" powder is sprayed on it. The shellac powder almost melts and covers the surface of the object which is sticky, soft, and in a melting state. The already prepared turquoise stones are placed on the object. The pieces of stones should be placed near each other with the least space between them. After this stage, the product is ready and abraded by special devices in order to be delivered to the market.

## CALICO PRINTING

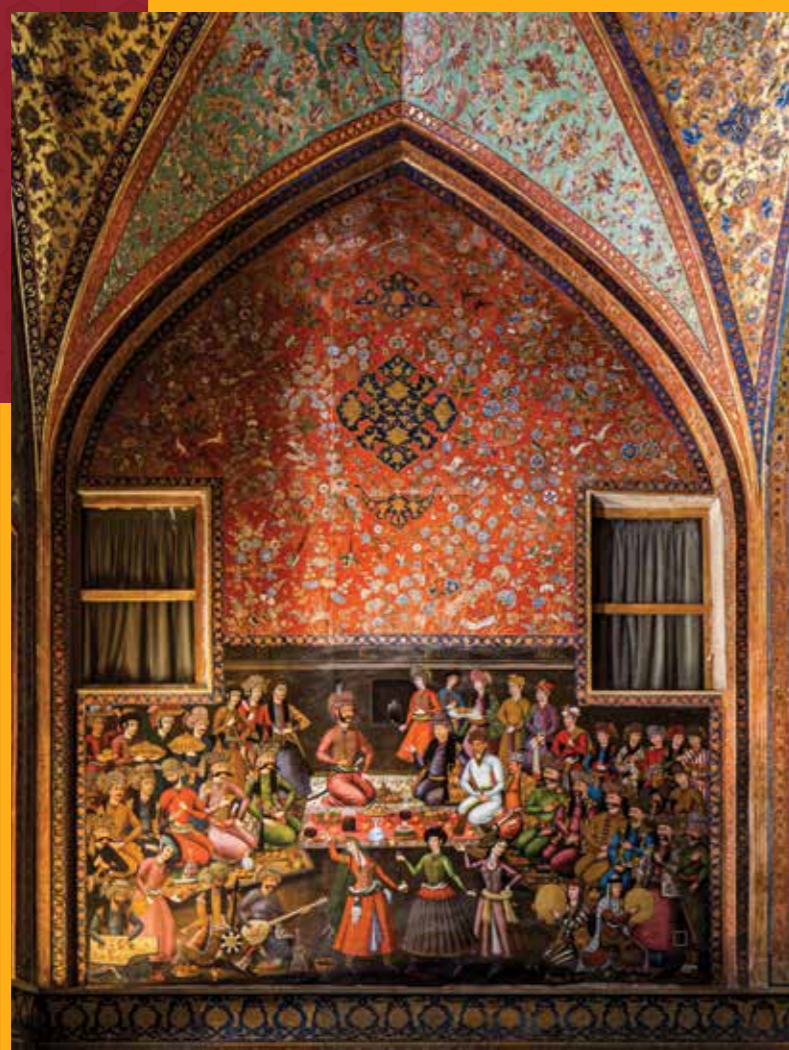
Calico Printing (Qalamkar) or the craft of wood-block-printing on cotton tablecloths, bedspreads, and curtains has been a specialty of Isfahan for the last two centuries. In this method, special patterns each with enjoyable and beautiful designs are used. Mostly, the main pattern is in black by which the marginal lines and the designs are transferred. Indian imports had dominated this branch of the textile industry in the pre-1800 period. Impoverishment and insecurity in the 18th century had created a situation where domestic output had to compensate for the shortfall in imports. As a result, there was an initial increase in the output of the textile industry in general, and of qalamkar in particular, during the early part of the 19th century, when security returned to Iran. However, this period of growth did not last, for after 1840 domestic qalamkar production suffered a structural decline, albeit less so than all other branches of textile crafts, due to the import of fabrics of cheaper and better quality. In the 1870s, the guild of the qalamkar makers had four connecting bazaars and between the bazaars, there were five caravanserais and timches with 284 shops and offices. The art spread more during Safavid era.



## PORTRAYING

Portraying or miniature in Iran enjoys a long history. It is inferred from the historical studies that Iranian miniaturists have changed the Chinese design, coloring, and statuary with their own concepts and talents and have made many changes in them. During the rule of Safavids dynasty, when Isfahan was chosen as the capital of Iran, portraying also flourished in this city. By supporting artists, painters, and portrayers, very dexterous and skillful artists, masterpieces of whom are now decorating the museum of the world, emerged. Due to the expansion of relations between Iran, Asia, and Europe, Iranian art was introduced to foreign countries and the Safavids period was the beginning of a new season in the history of Iranian Miniature. The Iranian miniature flourished brilliantly during that period and so many magnificent works have been created since then.

The methods employed in miniature are watercolor, niello, white- open, and under- oil- coated miniature which are not only used for decorating the historic buildings and palaces, but is also used in hundreds of other types of art including album covers, book illustrations, mirror frames, etc. which are exhibited in the museums of Iran and abroad.



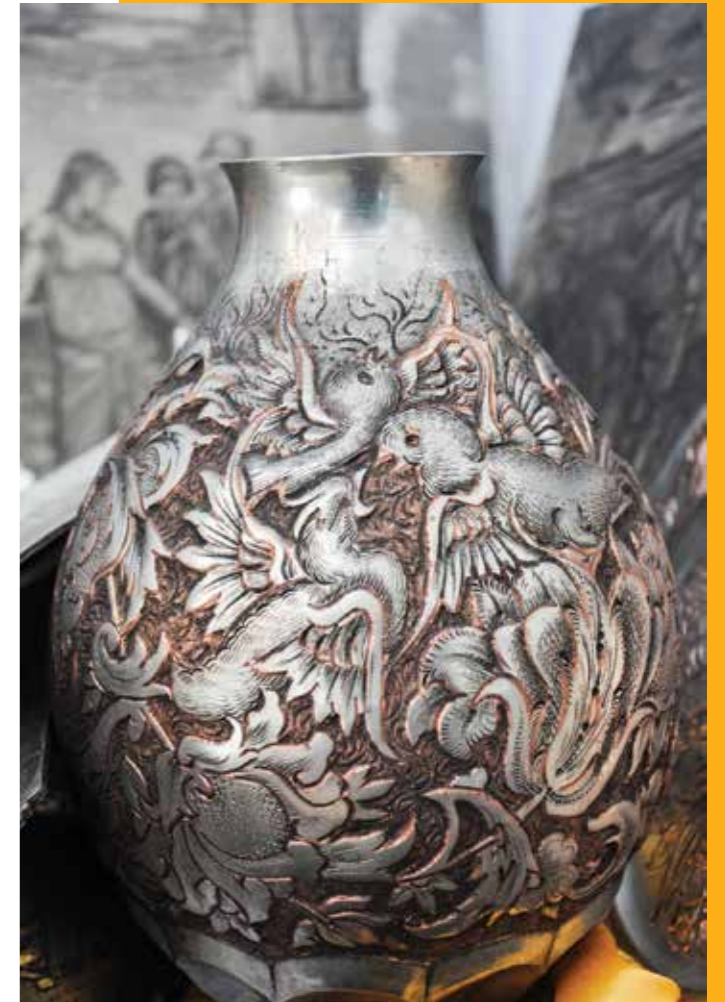
**Detail of a miniature at Chehel Sotoon Palace in Isfahan: Reception by Shah Abbas II for Nader Mohammed Khan, King of Turkistan in 1646, Isfahan, Iran.**

## GHALAMZANI

Engraving (Ghalam Zani) is the art of carving superb designs on various metals such as copper, brass, silver and gold. Isfahan is the main centre for engraving. The artistic works of this art are glorious and undeniable reflections of previous metal work of Iran and in particular Isfahan. The historical discoveries belonging to the ancient times of the Sassanid (700AD), the Seljuk (100 AD) and the Safavid (1600 AD) dynasties indicate a few of the outstanding periods of the flourishing of metal work.

The art survived due to the diligent attempts of the Late Ostad Mohammad Oraizi and the Late Ostad Mohammad Taghi Zufan during the past eighty years, which led to the creation of tens of outstanding and distinguished metal engravings on one hand and training of the new generation on the other; and also producing golden and silver goblets as well as receptacles made of some other metals such as nickel and copper in particular. Meanwhile, using various methods and different patterns, engraving has led to increase in the amount of engraved production, the current methods of which include:

1. Embossing: In which engraving is performed on both sides of the metal making the embossed part on the metal sheet of high appreciation.
2. Half embossing: In which the background is hammered down by an engraving chisel and therefore, the design engraved on the metal looks to some extent embossed.
3. Picture method: In which only the lines of the circumference of the design are engraved making tiny and multi – designed backgrounds without any embossed part.
4. Engraving through removing metal: In this method, some parts of the metal are removed using chisel depressing the metal. In special cases, (if copper has been covered by tin) the red color shine of copper can be observed beside tin's silver color. This method is considered to be the oldest among all the methods of engraving being performed in a similar course known as carving without hammer.
5. Latticing (Moshabbak): In this method, some parts of the metal are removed using cutting tools and



hammer and a netted shape will be created.

6. Gold blocking (Kufteh-gari): This is an excellent method of engraving in which the circumference lines of the design are carved placing new soft metals in their groves. This method is mostly performed on steel.

The preparatory stages of all methods mentioned above are the same: metal selection; covering of the back of the metal to absorb the hammer pressure; copying design on the material and finally, engraving with different tools. The final product will be a metal receptacle decorated with geometric and miniature designs.

## MOARRAGH

Similar to abaculus, Abaciscus, Moarragh is a type of art created by arranging small parts of different materials next to each other. Different types of Moarragh exist, e.g., Moarragh of tile, leather, wood, etc. Here we deal with Wood Moarragh.

In the historic city of Isfahan, there are beautiful and novel designs on domes and minarets of mosques made out of small pieces of colored ceramics which are accurately mounted on the surface. This old component of architectural decoration is called "In-laid tile" and the wood in-lay (Moarragh), nowadays well-known in world markets, has been inspired by the above ancient art.

For making wood in-lays, one should be experienced and skilled in cutting and harmonizing. Moarragh is a hard and time-consuming art. The designs must be cut out of the main panel and then various pieces with various colors should be fixed in the empty spaces. In the Iranian genuine art of Moarragh, there is absolutely no application of paint and brush. The pieces of the design, apart from being small and delicate, are generally made of 72 types of wood in natural colors along with camel bone, mother of pearl, and natural or synthetic ivory. Metals such as copper, brass, aluminum, silver and gold are also used in Moarragh.

Wood Moarragh by  
Mohsen Kaveh



## KILIM WEAVING

In simple words, Kilim is a simple carpet with flat weaving; that is a carpet without pile. The technique of flat weaving consists of strands of wool, animal hair, vegetable fibers which are interwoven. The artwork should have been created according to the basic needs of the early civilizations for covering, shelter or storage as well as for simple convenient means of life such as carpet. The type of Kilims' patterns along with jewelry, clothes, tent furnishings and animal trappings were specific to each village tribe and tribal Bedouins.

Weaving Kilim was widespread during pre-Islamic times but after that, the talent of tribal Bedouins, villagers and natives of different lands surprisingly af-

ected the weave which resulted in artistic innovation and technical growth of the art. The raw materials for Kilim weaving are sheep and goat wool, horse hair, and cotton. The application of different dyes in Kilim weaving is also important point to consider. There are two types of weaving: horizontal which can be transported and the permanent or vertical one, which is used in cities and villages. Kilim weaving is performed in different ways: simple, regular (mat weaving), cleft, rotary cords, dovetail and one-twist, two-twist weaves, extra-woof weave and bent-woof weave, woof-like weaves, warp-like weaves, colored bands, etc.

## ENAMELING

For the past recent centuries, Isfahan has been the most important Iranian Minakari (enameling) hub. Minakari is the art of painting, coloring and ornamenting the surface of metals by fusing brilliant colors arranged in an intricate design over the surface. Mina is the feminine form of Minoo in Persian, meaning heaven and Mina, refers to the Azure color of heaven. The Iranian craftsmen of Sassanid era invented this art and Mongols took it to India and other countries. Some experts link the history of enameling in Iran to the Arsacide and Sassanid periods.

Fine silver is used in almost all enameling works because the enamel melts and sticks best to a pure metal. In other words, enameling is the process of making metal models (fine silver usually) and then melting various colors and types of glass on to the model to create an objet d'art. The powder melts, flows, and hardens to a smooth and durable vitreous coating on metal, glass, or ceramic.

Enamel is usually used to embellish vase, jewelry and candleholder in addition to doors and chandeliers of holy shrines. Enamel works can be washed with lukewarm water, soap and even ordinary detergents. Gold has been used traditionally for minakari jewelry as it holds the enamel better, lasts longer, and its luster brings out the colors of the enamels. Silver, a later introduction, is used for artifacts like boxes, bowls, spoons, and art pieces while copper which is used for handicraft products were introduced only after the Gold Control Act, which compelled the minakars to look for a material other than gold, was enforced around the world.

Enamel working and decorating metals with colorful and baked coats is one of the distinguished disciplines of art in Isfahan. Although this discipline is of abundant use industrially for producing metal and hygienic dishes, it has been paid high attention by painters, goldsmiths and metal engravers since long times ago.





Interior tile works of  
Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque,  
Isfahan, Iran

## TILE MAKING

Tile making is one of the most important handicraft industries in Isfahan. The origin of the old designs and patterns has been well preserved and reflected in this art and today it attracts many art-lovers.

Generally, tile is a mud brick which is glazed and fired again. First, the body of tile is exposed to fire at temperatures between 800 to 900 °C and when glazed, it is exposed at 950 to 1000 °C. Tile decorations are usually produced through two methods: seven-color and Moaragh. Moaragh tile is created by arranging scraped tiles side by side the way plaster is applied on painting canvas for the creation of a complete design. The seven-color tile is in fact the transfer of the design on the simple mud bricks and glazing

them with different colors and firing the glaze in a kiln. The tile makers place order for the desired designs to be made and then the prepared design is laid off.

To make a Moaragh tile, different parts of the design previously drawn on a piece of paper are glued on the surface of the colored, glazed mud bricks. Then the tiles are cut with a chipping axe in compliance with the glued designs and finally, all the cut pieces are put together on the surface to match while their glazed surfaces are down. A coat of mortar covers the back of the tiles as a support so that a complete design is made and ready for installation.

## GOLD-STUDDING & SIGN-MAKING

Metal arts include the production of signs and steel statues. The major products of metal sign-making are used in mourning ceremonies and performing tragedy songs. The material employed is often steel which is shaped by hand and hammer through all stages of production and at the end, all the pieces are connected to each other and then final product is polished.

In addition to common tools, steel is also used for the making of flagpoles. Besides, the flagpole usually contains statues of some birds, animals, and Boragh (a fast-moving horse) as well as vase and candlestick. All of these components are placed on a pole on which the frame rests and the sacred names are gold studded on the statues on the blades of the banner especially on the middle one which is longer than others.

The final product is then gold studded and decorated. To this purpose, first, all the pieces considered for gold studding are scratched by a special knife and the intended design is carved on the surface of the steel. A gold wire as thick as a human hair is then placed in the carved grooves and is beaten by a hammer so that the gold wire is completely hidden in the groove. Then, the piece is polished with a piece of jade stone to the extent that the gold and steel are welded together. At present, gold studding



is carried out on statues of birds and animals such as peacock, deer, lion, etc.

A steel and gold studded piece under production (statue, blade or other cases) should enjoy proper quality. Appropriate, artistic and meticulous molding, filing, and polishing add to the value of the product. The more gold studded designs, patterns or lines are on the body of the work and the more delicate, innovative, and artistic are gold wire decorations, the higher the quality of the work piece will be. After the completion of the job, a special type of acid is wiped on the object and the whole surface is heated to turn black. Finally, all pieces are polished by a file so that it is completely varnished.



## BROCADE WEAVING

The art of brocade weaving has a long history in Iran and has enjoyed a worldwide fame during its golden age. According to some historical documents, weaving brocade in Iran was highly fashionable since the Achaemenid Empire to the reign of Sassanid dynasty, when a plenty of pieces were used for decorating the palaces and churches all over the world. With the advent of Islam, brocade weaving suffered loss but continued to survive, and during the Safavid Age, the art revived through the supports of the artists and the development of several workshops.

The brocade weaver uses traditional fabric, that like many others, is composed of two groups of warp and woof threads. In traditional brocaded silk weaving, both warp and woof threads are of pure silk; and when the fabric is woven, it enjoys special sheerness and softness. There is no need for composite dyeing of the fabric. For the warp thread, two colors are ultimately required and for the woof thread six colors are used.

One of the key features of the art is the use of thin threads of gold and silver and the other one, is the complexity of the fabric's designs and patterns made by the same few colors.



## FILIGREE MAKING

As one of the exquisite handicrafts of Iran, Filigree Making or Malileh Sazi is a craft in which wire-drawn gold or silver are formed and designed in pre-fabricated molders, and are then heated and matched to each other with a substance called 'silver-boiler'. Gold filigrees are employed in jewelry such as necklaces, rings and earrings, whereas the silver filigrees are used to make utensils including trays and glasses, as well as some jewelry. The cities of Isfahan, Zanjan and Tehran are among the main centers of filigree making in Iran.

The first step of Filigree making is to prepare the mold to make the filigree in a particular shape by using iron or copper. A piece of iron plate is used to arrange the pattern on it. The next step is to put the silver wires beside each other on the surface of the iron plate which has been previously coated with wax. This step must be performed very carefully and artistically and more attention must be paid to details. Afterwards, the artist heats the wax to remove it and arranges the wires accurately. Acid washing and polishing is carried out to make the handicraft shiny.



## CARPET WEAVING

The art of carpet weaving was one of the main interests of the Safavid kings. All workshops producing carpets in Isfahan were under Shah Abbas's patronage and the immense interest in the art in that era led Isfahan to become one of the most prestigious centers in handmade carpet weaving; therefore, the most exquisite and precious carpets belong to this era.

Most Safavid carpets are kept in national and foreign museums, and Isfahan has a huge share of such in the Museum of Antique Carpets. Most of antique carpets are woven with the finest raw materials, and a very high percentage of silk is used. Also, many historic sites have already been paved with silk carpets, which are now under the care of collectors and museums.

In the past, traditional method of herbal dyeing was used and the durability and color stability were high. Moreover, Isfahan carpet motifs were designed by the best experts of the field. After the fall of the Safavids, carpet weaving faced a sharp decline in all regions of Iran and almost went into extinction. Only some villagers living in some rural areas and small towns were engaged in the job. With the downfall of

the dynasty, no valuable carpet was woven for a long time and the situation did not improve till even the end of the Qajar era.

This art is also very popular in Kashan. Being a Centre of production of fine carpets, almost one in every three residents of Kashan are employed in carpet-making, with more than two-thirds of them being women.

The carpet-weaving process starts with a design, elaborated from among a series of established styles, including motifs such as flowers, leaves, branches, animals and historical scenes. Woven on a loom known as 'Dar', the warp and woof of the carpets are of cotton or silk. The pile is made by knotting wool or silk yarns to the warp with the distinctive Farsi knot, then held in place by a row of the woven woof, and beaten with a comb. The Farsi weaving style (also known as asymmetrical knotting) is applied with exemplary delicacy in Kashan, so that the back side of the carpet is finely and evenly knotted. The colors of Kashan carpets come from a variety of natural dyes including madder root, walnut skin, pomegranate skin and vine leaves.



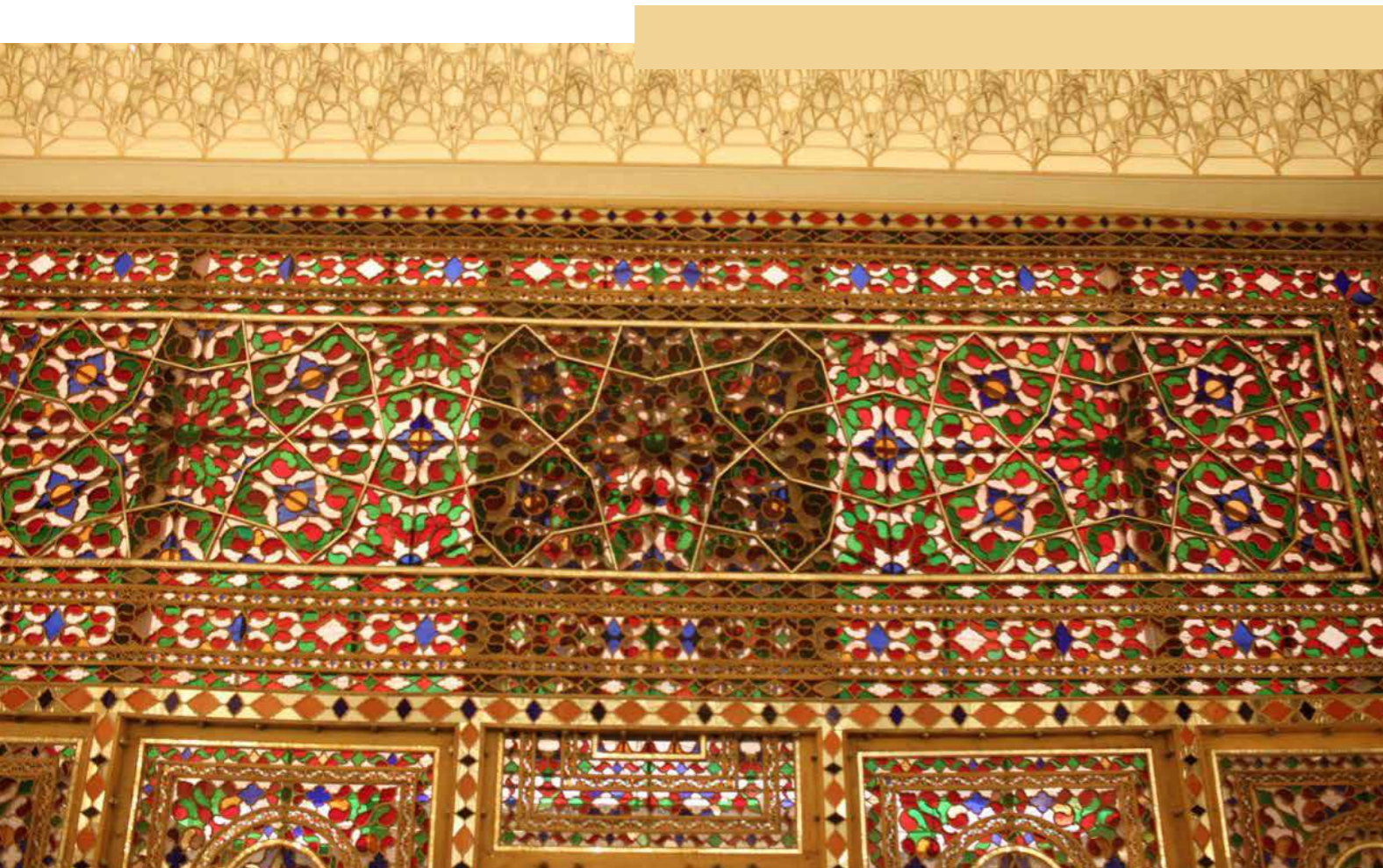


Photo by Sara Abbas Nejad

## GEREH CHINI

One of the traditional decorative and applicable handicrafts of Iran is "Gereh Chini", literally meaning arranging the knots, that is the art of laying finely cut pieces of wood on a surface based on a specific design.

Geometric knots that are beautifully and rhythmically repeated are considered an essential part of Gereh. The beginning of Gereh Chini has not been dated exactly, but the Seljuk dynasty is known to be the first time this craft was used and Isfahan is its birth place. Safavid dynasty is known to be the time Gereh flourished. For Gereh Chini, pieces of wood are used in their raw color and no paint is added.

According to masters of this art, plane tree is the best wood to make Gereh. However, wood from other trees such as walnut, beech, morus, almond, silverberry, zelkova, pear and jujube are also used to make structures such as doors of shrines, pulpits, doors and windows, frames, tableaus, dividers, cov-

ers for tables and many other decorative objects.

Gereh Chini can be divided into three groups: 1. All wood, 2. Moshabbak (lattice trelliswork), and 3. Orosi or Sash window. Orosi is a kind of window made by Gereh and color glasses. It is specifically beautiful and was most used during Zand and Qajar dynasty. In terms of artistic aspects, Orosi has a great importance.

In the art of Gereh Chini, the Gereh or knot is, in fact, intersections of pieces of woods that have been attached by locking in each other and create delicate designs. The finer the wood pieces the more valuable the product. Using tongue and groove joints make Gereh Chini pieces endure in different climatic zones of Iran. That is the reason we can find Gereh Chini artworks in many historical buildings. The best remaining examples are Chehel Sotoon, Hasht Behesht, and historic houses like Alam's House and Shekh ol-Islam in Isfahan.

## KHAATAMSAZI

Khaatam is a Persian version of marquetry, a type of art formed through decorating the surface of wooden articles with delicate pieces of wood, bone and metal precisely cut in geometrical shapes. Common materials used in the production of inlaid articles are gold, silver, brass, aluminum and twisted wire. It is unknown as to when the art first emerged and its history is associated with a legend. Some of the experts of the art still believe that Khaatam is a miracle of Prophet Abraham.

Anyways, the art evolved during Safavid era, when the artists from all around Iran came to Isfahan, the capital city of Iran at that time, and revived the

forgotten arts of this province. The artists not only used Khaatam or inlaid, wood carving, tile and Gereh tiles or Gereh Chini, they were also eager to repair and renovate old buildings, monuments and sacred shrines. Later, during the Qajar era, due to the lack of attention to this art as well as other art disciplines, Khaatam lost its importance and Khaatam artists lived in poverty. During early Pahlavi reign in 1928, Mohammad Ghaffari (Kamal-ol-Molk) established Fine Arts School and contributed to the promotion of Iran's handicrafts. Following this measure, several workshops of Khaatam and other handicrafts were organized in the former Ministry of Culture and Art.





## SOUR & SWEET

### Isfahan's Food Culture

Most foods of Isfahan have a taste of sour-sweet which is very popular amongst Iranians. Generally speaking, this city is one of the best places for food lovers who like to gain memorable gastronomic experiences in Iran. There are several streets and public places in which you can walk, buy a drink or an amount of local food to taste.

## KHORESHT MAST

Comprised of beef neck, plain yogurt, saffron, onion, turmeric, egg yolk, sugar, orange zest, Khoresht Mast (yogurt stew) is a kind of dessert, and perhaps one cannot find it anywhere else but in Isfahan.

Unlike other stews, it is not served as a main dish with rice; since it is more of a sweet pudding it is usually served as a side dish or dessert. The dish is made with yogurt, lamb/mutton or chicken, saffron, sugar and orange zest.

Iranians either leave the orange zest in water for one week or longer or boil it for few minutes so the orange peels become sweet and ready to use.



## BERYAN

Beryan is cooked and fried meat mixed with spices, on the copper skimmer. It is the most famous traditional food of Isfahan which is always a part of tourists' favorite list. During Safavid era, a dish called Beryan Polo was made with lamb or chicken, marinated overnight with yogurt; herbs, spices, and dried fruits like raisins, prunes or pomegranate seeds and later cooked in an oven. It was then served with steamed rice. But nowadays, Beryan is served without rice. It is suitable for launce and is served with bread (mostly Sangak), onion and fresh basil. Moreover, kernel of walnut and almond are also used for adoring.

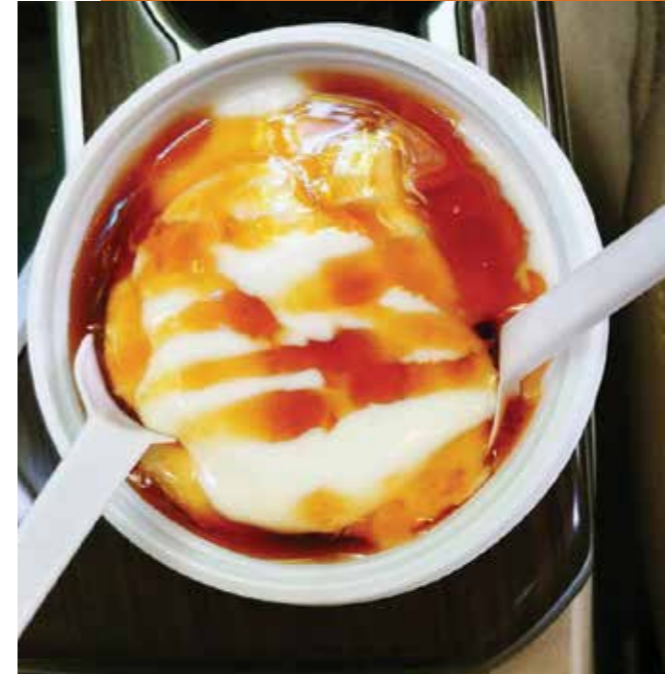
## YAKHMEH TOROSH

Made of dried plums, dried apricot, quince, lamb meat, rice, sugar, salt, pepper and turmeric, Yakhmeh Torosh is one of Isfahan's traditional dishes that is not common anymore and can hardly be seen on Iranian tables. However, due to its ingredients it is a nutritious meal and despite its name, it's sweet.

To prepare this meal, first lamb is cooked with turmeric and water. When the lamb is half cooked, plum, quince and dried apricot are added. A while later, rice is added and cooked till water evaporates. In the next stage, the mixture is smashed and plums cores are removed. Next, sugar is added and heated till sugar melts. The sweetness of this dish depends on the cook's own taste. Palm sap may be used instead of sugar.

## FERENI

It is a kind of dish in Isfahan, mostly popular for afternoon time. The dish is like cream caramel in white color and is served cold with grapes or date syrup. There are only a few ingredients in Fereni, i.e. milk, rice flour, and starch, and the simple fact is that when you boil the starch in liquid, it becomes thick. But the slow cooking process over low heat must be followed for the texture to be just the right thickness. Attempts at shortcuts by increasing the temperature will result in burnt or grainy custard. The dish needs time to slowly soften in the milk and cook over low heat to have smooth yet thick custard with fine consistency.



## GOURMET SOUVENIRS

Accompanying tea, "Gaz" and "Poolaki" are special sweets of Isfahan and their process of preparation has been recently turned into a culinary attraction, since some shops let foreign tourists watch how these sweets are made.

Gaz is one of these popular sweets dating from the Safavid rule in Isfahan and has emerged during the completion of the food called Halva Choobi. The name is derived from the extract of the tree called the hunchback. Nowadays, they use this superb pastry using glucose, rose water, egg white, sugar, pistachio, almond slices, hazelnuts, etc.



# ISFAHAN HEALTH & BEAUTY TOURISM CENTER

Dr. Mina Rezaei<sup>1</sup>

"God is beautiful and loves beauty", says an Islamic Hadith and this beautiful God has created man beautiful, beauty-lover, and beauty-seeker. During the years of his/her life in this world, man has always sought to understand the meaning of beauty and achieve it. Perhaps the first concept that comes to mind upon hearing the word "beauty" is the beauty of expression and appearance; However, beauty has different dimensions, and there is a set of different elements that makes a person beautiful. Man should care not only for the beauty of his body but also for the beauty of his mind and soul, and it is wellness that bring about such beauty, because a healthy man could also be beautiful. Creating beauty is an art, and man steps on the path of beauty like an artist.

Beauty tourism is a means to see various aspects of both inner and outer beauty and take measures towards the wellness of body, mind, and soul. Tourism is a way to bridge the gap between people across the globe and bring people from all cultures, races, and ages to altruism, peace, and love so that they can make life more beautiful together.

It was with this backdrop in mind that after many years of research and effort, I finally established the health and beauty tourism center in Isfahan, the cultural capital of Iran, a city which itself is renowned for its beauty. The center aims to promote not only beauty and health tourism but also wellness of mind, body and soul and help the people of Iran and the world experience a more beautiful, healthier and better life. I hope all of us would respond to this invitation and travel together on the beautiful journey of peace and health.

## Tourism

Tourist means peace and peace means tourist, and peace and reconciliation between nations will not be possible without tourists. Because tourism provides an opportunity for mutual dialogue, trust, and cultural understanding, brings people together from all over the globe, and opens minds and hearts. In addition, tourism,

which takes place for various purposes such as business, religion, recreation, and wellness, provides the means for sustainable development of communities and helps promote the three main pillars of sustainable development, namely economic, environmental, and social development. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), in 2018, 1.4 billion tourist arrivals were recorded, which generated \$1.7 trillion through international tourism exports as one of the most important export sectors. This has made tourism an important tool for economic development and growth, helping create jobs and ultimately make a better life for millions of people around the world.

Unfortunately, the outbreak of the Coronavirus in the world has had a negative impact on tourism. In the first half of 2020, the number of international tourist arrivals decreased by 65% compared to the previous year. This reduction in tourism means a decrease of about \$440 billion in revenues from international tourism exports. Of course, tourism will hopefully regain its former position over time.

Healthy environment and natural resources are of particular importance in the tourism industry, but unfortunately this vast industry can cause environmental damage and pollution. Therefore, the role of sustainable tourism should be taken more seriously than ever to protect natural and social resources. According to the United Nations definition, sustainable tourism is "tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities."

One of the positive consequences of tourism is getting acquainted with different cultures and promoting the socio-cultural pillar of sustainable development. According to UNESCO, no development can be sustainable without considering culture, and respect for cultural diversity creates the conditions for mutual understanding, dialogue, and peace. Indeed, maintaining a connection with the historical and natural environment and with the language, music, art, and

literature is a prerequisite for cultural wellness and is fundamental to our spiritual wellness. Therefore, we have chosen tourism to walk on the path of world peace and wellness, in accordance with science and culture. Therefore:

- "Tourism" is a way to connect with the world.
- "Health" is the ultimate peace with oneself and the whole world.
- "Peace" is love.

May we promote the "culture of peace and reconciliation" and gather all the "health" tourists of the world around the table of "peace". Finally, we reiterate the slogan of famous tourists of Iran, the Omidvar brothers, nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, believing in love and unity and hoping for a better world:

"All different, all relative"

## Culture of Beauty

Beauty encompasses various aspects of human life. The beauty of the body, face, skin, hair, morals, humanity, and spirituality are parts of the inner and outer beauties, which are achieved through the health of body, soul, and mind. Iranian culture is filled of beauty and invites humans to inner and outer beauty to adorn their souls and minds as they treat their bodies.

Our beauty tourism center strives to provide a variety of beauty services to Iranians and even international tourists. We seek to promote the wellness of body, mind, and soul, which is offered in seven different health packages i.e. physical, mental, emotional, social, occupational, spiritual, and environmental health.

The beauty services of this center include skin rejuvenation and lifting, facial rejuvenation, eyebrow implants, hair transplants, hair loss treatment, excessive hair laser, micropigmentation, dental beauty, weight loss through diet and slimming devices, massage therapy, etc., which are carried out using the best methods and modern devices.

## Fashion & Beauty: A Valuable Commodity in Today's World

One of the most important aspects of beauty in human beings is their clothing. Clothing is not only one of the basic needs of every person, but

also a respond to his/her need for beauty. It also allows people to show their culture and mental ambience through their choice of clothing. In addition, the fashion industry, as one of the creative cultural industries, plays an important role in sustainable development and its three main pillars, namely economic, socio-cultural, and environmental. According to UNESCO, culture is a key factor and an enabler of sustainable development and creates the conditions for mutual understanding, dialogue, and peace. Therefore, it puts special emphasis on cultural diversity, preservation of cultural and natural heritage, cultural industries, and sustainable cultural tourism. It is no secret that one of the irreplaceable means of the transfer of culture is clothing. Therefore, clothing, as a part of society's culture that is influenced by people's beliefs and customs, plays an important role in the development of the country.

The fashion and clothing industry is one of the most lucrative industries in the world and helps create jobs, boost economy, and support cultural identity of our beloved homeland. Therefore, supporting the clothing subset industries, including clothing design, can significantly contribute to creation of more jobs wealth.

Unfortunately, the fashion and clothing industry is one of the most polluting industries and has many negative effects on the environment. Air and water pollution being caused by factories and dyeing processes, synthetic materials used in the manufacture of clothing, carbon dioxide emissions due to the long distances the products have to travel before reaching the destination are just some of these problems. In addition, the spread of fast fashion, which focuses on fast and cheap mass production of short-lived designs, has exacerbated these negative effects, and the short lifespan of clothing has increased waste production in the industry. These problems have led to efforts to reduce the health, social, and environmental impact of the fashion and clothing industry and to adhere to the principles of sustainable development.

Unfortunately, over time, clothing designs have drifted away from the rich cultural background of Iran, and today, we are not much witness to the authentic beauty that our culture presents in clothing. Due to the importance of preserving culture and with the help of clothing designers

at home and abroad, our beauty tourism center intends to bring back cultural diversity to the clothing industry with its brand called 'Mina Art' to associate fashion not only to the rich culture of Iran but also to the culture of ECO countries and even the world; and to use artistic designs containing motifs of handicrafts, cultural symbols, and cultural heritage in the production of clothing with the help of aesthetic knowledge and creativity.

### **The Last Words: The Path to Peace & Health**

One of the important goals of Isfahan Health and Beauty Tourism Center is to promote the health of the body, mind, and soul of people, and in this regard, we have developed seven health packages called 'Soshans'. We are of the opinion that people can experience a better life, feel more joyful and experience inner peace when they strive for their health. Thus, the journey of world peace also crosses the path of health. One will make peace with one's family, friends, and community if he/she makes peace with himself/herself first, and the World Health Organization believes that health is a prerequisite for that peace. Therefore, in order to achieve peace, we must build a better and healthier society.

When we strive for positive change and cultivate positive and good qualities in ourselves, we can move towards friendship and the culture of altruism. Then, we can stand together and hold hands and sing the song of peace and health and bring beauty to our lives and existence. May we start this journey of peace and health together happily, and may not leave this train of life till we reach our destination.

1. Dr. Mina Rezaei

- Lifestyle coach from International IFPE Academy
- Founder of Soshans brand, promoter of healthy life & good feeling
- Manager of Isfahan Beauty Tourism Center
- Manager at Kavirmotor factories and Kavir battery's factory since 2018
- Head of Medical Sciences and Psychology Department, Dist. 2 of Isfahan, Bidardel Int'l Group
- Head of Health Tourism Department of Bidardel Int'l Group
- Health coaching for athletes and entrepreneurs
- Mastery of ISO 9001 certificate from QAL-UK in the fields of health, prevention, nutrition, beauty, skin, hair and beauty tourism
- International certificate from Canada
- Exclusive representation of Hattusa in Iran, the best health tourism brand in Europe
- Head of Health Tourism at Hattusa Health Center in Turkey
- Exclusive representation of Ravijen – strategic management of sports centers and clubs in Isfahan
- Vice President of World Karako Martial Arts Organization

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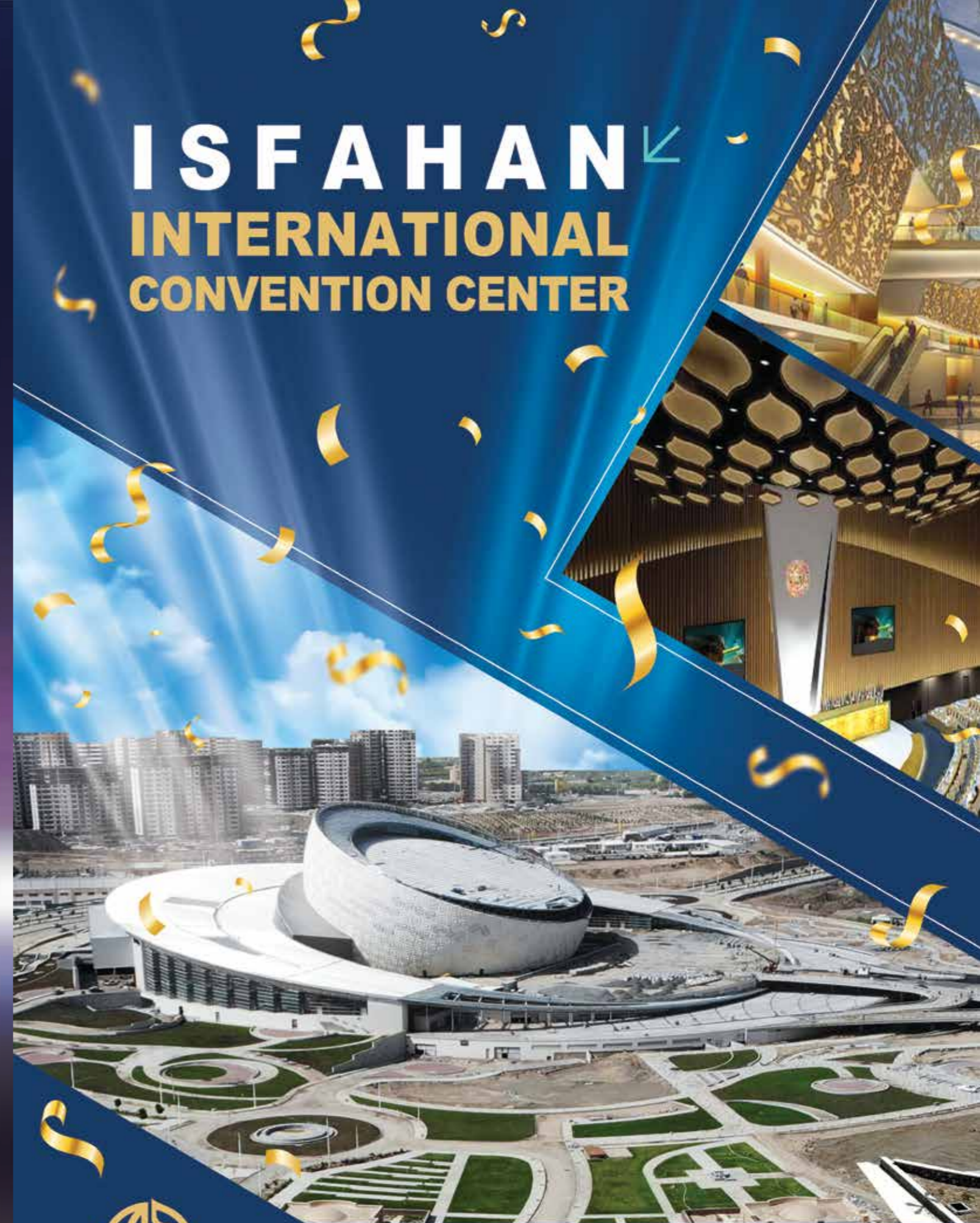
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DR. MINA REZAEI

Mardavij Building, 4th Floor, Resalat  
Jonoubi Sq. ,Mardavij St., Isfahan  
+989052879060 - +989052879070  
Website: [www.drminarezaei.com](http://www.drminarezaei.com)  
Instagram: [dr.mina.rezaei](https://www.instagram.com/dr.mina.rezaei)

# ISFAHAN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTER



Isfahan Municipality

**Coming soon in the heart of Iran...**

Opening by June 2021

Martyr Rohol Amin Street, Isfahan, Isfahan Province, Iran

## Preface Mobarakeh Steel Group

Mobarakeh Steel Company (MSC) located in 65 km of southwest of Isfahan city in an area of 35 square kilometers.

The company produces flat steel products – 0.18-16 mm in thickness – in the form of coils, hot and cold rolled sheets, tin plates, galvanized coils and color coated coils.

In the recent years a number of industrial plants have joined Mobarakeh Steel Company. SABA Steel Making and Continuous Casting is one such unit which is located next to Isfahan Steel Co. on a piece of land 4.5 square kilometers in area. This plant, which joined MSC in 2006, is currently producing up to 700,000 tons of molten steel. That figure can increase to 1.4 million tons.

Hormozgan Steel Company is another industrial plant that joined MSC in March 2011. It is located in Bandar Abbas Special Economic Zone, 13 km to the west of the southern Bandar Abbas city. The plant aims to produce 1.5 million tons of slabs. That figure can increase to 3 million tons a year.

In line with the development policies of Mobarakeh Steel Company, construction of Kashan Amir Kabir Steel Company got underway in early 1996. The plant became operational in 2000 to produce galvanized sheets through continuous hot-dip galvanization. The plant located on an expanse of 72 hectares is 14 km to the east of Kashan.

Chahar Mahal and Bakhtiari Automotive Sheets Company, employing state-of-the-art technology, is another subsidiary of Mobarakeh Steel Group. Sefid Dasht Steel Complex is one of the eight major steel projects to bring about a balanced supply chain. This subsidiary of Mobarakeh Steel Group which is under construction aims to turn out 1 million tons of steel.

## Production Process at MSC

The iron ore powder is taken by train from Gol Gohar and Chadormalu mines as well as the Central Iron Ore Mines Complex to the Raw Material Storage Yard of Mobarakeh Steel Company.

In the Pelletizing Plant, iron ore powder is turned into pellets about 8-16 mm in diameter. In the Direct Reduction Plant, these pellets lose oxygen and turn into sponge iron. Later, at the Electric Arc Furnaces of the Steel Making Plant, sponge iron is smelted along with iron scrap.

The liquid steel is then transferred to the Metallurgy Unit where the chemical composition of steel as per customer orders is worked out. It is then taken to the casting machines to be turned into slabs.

The cold processed slabs are taken to the Hot Strip Mill and to preheating furnaces to be rolled in stages. They come out in the form of coils 1.5-16 mm in thickness. Part of those coils is sent to the market. The rest is taken either to the Hot Strip Mill to undergo complementary processes and turn into hot sheets or to the Cold Rolling Mill to be thinned up to 0.18 mm.

Some of the cold coils produced here are transferred to the lines which produce tin-plate, galvanized and color-coated steel. When the products of these lines are packaged, they are ready to be shipped to local and foreign markets.





## INTRODUCTION:

Foolad Mobarakeh Sepahan Club with more than 60 years sports experience is a polysportive club from Iran that is active not only in football, but also in Hand ball, Track running, Karate, Basketball, volleyball, tennis, Badminton, Judo, Tekvando and Swimming for men and also Handball, basketball, Volleyball, Tennis Karate, Tekvando, Badminton, Swimming and Chess for women.

is five-time Champion of Iran, four-time Cup winner of Iran and the first Iranian club that participated to the FIFA Club World Cup (2007). Sepahan

SC has youth teams at every age from the U8 to the U19 and a U21-team. Moreover, at every age, there is an A-team and a B-team. Finally, Sepahan SC runs a boarding house for youth players in the center of the city of Isfahan, and a 4-star hotel at the training campus of the club.

Athletes in this organization are about 1500 (300 ladies in 20 teams and 10 sport fields and 700 men in 20 professional teams – 5 foreigners in professional senior teams including players and the coaching Staff are from European and Asian countries) that have some championships in different fields. In 2000 this Club was introduced as the model of Iran Clubs by I.R physical Education Organization and in 2002 as the best club in "The Best" festival by Iran press and sportive association.

This club is the first – license holder of quality management system ISO 9001-2000 in Iran Clubs in 2006 and OHSAS 18001 and S5.

## ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE LAST 8 YEARS ARE AS FOLLOW:

1. Championship of senior Football Team in Iran Pro. League and qualified for the Asian Champions Competitions 2003
2. Championship of senior Football Team in Iran Football Cup and qualified for the Asian Champions Competitions 2005, 2007, 2008 and 2009-10-11
3. Qualifying of senior Football Team for the quarter final of Asian Champions Competitions 2007 and taking part in FIFA Clubs world Cup – Japan 2007
4. Championship of men's Professional Handball Team in Iran Pro. League 2004 and 2007 and 2nd position in the Asian Champions Competitions 2004, qualified for the Asian Champions Competitions 2006 and Iran Champion in 2008 and it has been qualified for Asian Handball Competition 2009.
5. Championship for 5 times in Iran men's Pro. Handball League from 2001 to 2005
6. Championship of ladies' Basketball team in Iran Pro league in 2003 (first position) – 2004 (second position) – 2005 (first position) – 2006 (second position) – 2007 (second position) – 2008 (second position)
7. Championship of Ladies Badminton Team in Iran Pro League from 2002 to 2007, second position in 2008 and first position in International Badminton tournament 2007
8. Championship of Ladies senior Handball Team in Iran Pro. League in 2003 (Second position) – 2004 (third position) – 2005 (third position) – 2006 (third place)- 2008(first position)
9. Setting Iran record in 200 m breaststroke for ladies 11-12 years old – 2006 and in 400 m, 800m (open) and 4\*100m (mix) in 2008.
10. Runner up in 2007 and Championship in 2008 in ladies' swimming
11. IFFHS (Int'l Federation of Football History and Statistics) announced Sepahan FC is the best Football Club of the decade among Iranian Clubs and 8 in Asia.

## SISTERSHIP AND SPORTS RELATIONSHIP CONTRACT WITH

1. Kawasaki Frontale –Japan
2. Al-Arabi – Kuwait
3. Jonac – Nigeria
4. Al Sharjah – Emirates
5. Al Mina - Iraq
6. Al-Ahed – Lebanon
7. Bunyodkor - Uzbekistan
8. Alahed- Lebanon
9. RCD Spanyol –Spain
10. F.F. Inter. Milano-Italy



### Address:

Ferdows Sport Complex, Atashgah Blv.  
Isfahan –Iran

**Tel/Fax:** +98-31-37660311

[www.Sepahansc.com](http://www.Sepahansc.com)

[info@sepahansc.com](mailto:info@sepahansc.com)



## ASACHI CARPET Co.

PRODUCER OF THE MOST EXCELLENT HAND  
WOVEN CARPET IN ISFAHAN

Mr. Hosein Asachi, the founder of Asachi Carpet Company, was born in 1946 in the virtuoso city of Isfahan, in an artist family. In youth, due to high artistic taste entered the industry of hand woven carpet and since 1966, he started launching carpet weaving workshop to weave artistic carpets with unique and diverse designs, dimensions and colors with the best quality. The higher quality and creating trust and the customer satisfaction has always driven this company in the path of completion, and the followings are the produced honors:

- 1) Participation in more than fifty domestic and foreign fairs for marketing and obtaining the customers taste.
- 2) Selection in the top handicrafts fair in 2001 and 2002.
- 3) Selected in the first carpet festival in Isfahan province as the top production manager.
- 4) Selection in 100 top brands in Isfahan province in 2007.



Head office: Ferdosi st. Isfahan – Iran  
 Tel: +98 313 36682839  
 Mobile: +98 913 118 6997  
 Address: 2nd floor – carpet commercial center  
 Hakim st – Isfahan – Iran  
 Tel: +98 311 2228973  
 Fax: +98 311 6687055  
 Email: asachicarpet@yahoo.com

# ISFAHAN CITY CENTER

ISFAHAN-IRAN



Isfahan City Center is the largest & the most modern tourism, commercial & recreational complex including International 5-star hotel with 7-star hotel standards, Hyper market, cinematic complex, the biggest indoor amusement park in the Middle East, more than 750 shops with national and international brands, food courts, international restaurants, banks, conference hall, art and exhibition galleries, museum, gym, massage saloon, university of applied science and many other facilities. This complex will be connected to other towers including international finance center, residential and office towers as well as hotel through a bridge whose design is inspired by traditional bazaars of Iran.

Isfahan City Center, Dastgerdy Hwy, Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran  
 Postal Code: 81694-14847 P.O.BOX: 81795-518 Tel: +98 31 5001  
[www.isfahancitycenter.com](http://www.isfahancitycenter.com)



WE CARE FOR  
YOUR HEALTH

# ISFAHAN HEALTHCARE CITY



Isfahan Healthcare City

[www.isfahanhealthcarecity.com](http://www.isfahanhealthcarecity.com)

Superhighway Aghababaei (South to North),  
After the Flyover Hakim Shafaei, Salamat Boulevard,  
Isfahan Healthcare City  
Tel: +98 31 35557407-8 Fax: +98 31 35557409

•Isfahan Healthcare city Company operation was started in 2012 and the first phase of the project was opened in Aug. 2017. This project has 4 phase :

•The first phase of the project is directed to specialized clinics, hyper-health related healthcare centers (providing organic food products), and multi-story and sub-surface parking spaces.

•The second phase is directed to the Para-clinical centers, including the Rehabilitation Center and the Cancer Control Center, which is the largest in the Middle East.

•The Third Phase of this project is a 4-star hotel thus to host patients travelling to the city of Esfahan from around the world.

•The Fourth Phase: Hospitalization services require a hospital with features that have been implemented in other phases, in which the design and operation of the hospital were delegated to one of the prestigious German companies.



WE CARE FOR  
YOUR HEALTH

# ISFAHAN HEALTHCARE CITY



# HOSPITAL

Eram Hospital Center is estimated to have 1000 beds, which is provided with 137 square meters of space per bed, is one of the four phases of Isfahan Health Care Center. This seven floors health center is under construction and designed by international designers with an area of 137,000 square meters in accordance with the standards of International Accreditation Organizations.

Two floors are specified for parking space, ground floor for medical clinics, imaging, laboratory, emergency, pharmacy, financial centers and office. Other floors are allocated to different wards and hospitalization, the last floor for the restaurant, and ten suites for rest and accommodation of foreign doctors and doctors' club.

A noteworthy point in this center is that outpatient clinics, paraclinical centers, IPD wards, medical equipment stores, tourism agencies, etc. are already active in this center.

According to the plan, the first phase of the hospital will be exploited in 1401.



# FADAK MALL

www.fadakmall.com

Commercial,  
**cultural**  
and Tourism Complex

Although Fadak Mall complex is considered a commercial project in terms of appearance, but the spaces have been designed in such a way that distinguishes it from similar counterparts by integrating important and effective tourism and cultural centers.

This large service, cultural, tourism and commercial complex has 250,000 square meter area. The design and architecture of this complex has tried to induce a new attitude to visitors by combining modern and traditional architecture of Isfahan. We have tried to create a lively and joyful environment by creating corridors, traffic routes and common areas with beautiful lighting in the reception and entrance.

Within this complex, Bagh Fadak, which is the annual accommodation of about 4 million travelers who travel to Isfahan from other cities and do not intend to stay in the hotels. In addition to providing services needed by these travelers, this complex have an important role to sell traditional handicrafts and food.

In this complex, four cinemas have been designed and equipped to provide a pleasant space for visitors using the latest technologies in sound, lighting, ventilation and chairs, One of the most important steps used in these cinemas is to explain the educational and intellectual points that are addressed by psychologists in fifteen minutes (five minutes before the start of the show and ten minutes after the show) which makes educational points for effective for spectators.

This huge complex has two modern libraries which is adjacent to the garden with 5600 square meter area. Visitors can study in the libraries, thus have positive impact on reading hours.

The largest private university in the country is located in this complex which is another significant and important point of this project. This university has 12,000 square meters of useful educational space, including classrooms, laboratories, etc.

## A City in North Side of The City



+98 31 34543102



fadakmall



www.fadakmall.com



Fadak Mall  
Commercial, cultural  
& tourism complex

# ISFAHAN NEW INTERNATIONAL EXPO CENTER



Isfahan Municipality



Isfahan East Ring Expressway, Isfahan, Iran



isfahanfair.ir