



Yazd

Iran - Historical and Contemporary

2 – 15 October 2017



Jon Baines
tours



Golestan Palace, Tehran

Discover historical and contemporary Iran with John Tidmarsh, a renowned archeologist who has been visiting Iran for decades. Known since ancient times for its roses, nightingales and poetry, Iran is the birthplace of one of the greatest civilisations of the world and home to breathtaking landscapes. Travel from the cultural centre of Tehran to Shiraz with its exquisite gardens and teahouses, visit Persepolis, the vast ruined city that was the pride of Ancient Persia, stop in ancient Yazd with its Zoroastrian heritage and wander around the magnificent mosques and bazaars of Isfahan. There is an optional extension to spend more time in Tehran at the end of the tour. Dr Tidmarsh will give a number of entertaining and illuminating talks as you travel through the vibrant cities and magnificent historical sites of Iran.

Arrive in Tehran in the morning and settle into your hotel. Your first visit is to lavish Golestan Palace, a masterpiece of the Qajar era, built around a garden featuring pools and planted areas. Afterwards be dazzled by the extravagant crown jewels on display in the National Jewels Museum, including the world's largest pink diamond, the Darya-i-Nur, sister of the famous Kuh-i-Nur. Enjoy a welcome dinner in the evening.

Next morning visit the excellent Reza Abbasi Museum, an art gallery named after one of the great artists of the Safavid period and featuring magnificent Iranian art from various ages. The afternoon is dedicated to the superb Archaeological Museum that preserves ancient Persian artefacts including pottery, coins and bas-reliefs.

Fly to Shiraz, traditionally known as the city of nightingales, poetry and roses (and, at one time, wine made from its world- famous grapes), which retains a relaxed provincial feel in spite of its size and vivacity. There is never enough time to see all of Shiraz's attractions, but you make an excellent start with a visit to the beautiful



The Gate of All Nations, Persepolis



Naranjestan Palace, Shiraz (top); Wander through Vakil Bazaar in Shiraz (above)

Bagh-i-Eram gardens and the garden and tomb of the mystic poet Hafiz, before taking tea at a traditional teahouse above Koran Gate for superb city views.

Next morning visit the exquisite Nasir-al-Molk Mosque with its painted tiles, stone cable spiral columns and vivid stained glass windows, as well as the gloriously opulent house of Nasir-al-Molk next door, before wandering through the atmospheric vaulted avenues of the domed Vakil Bazaar. In the afternoon drive to Persepolis, the vast ruined city that was the pride of ancient Persia. Destroyed by Alexander the Great in 332BC, the city retains glimpses of its former grandeur in its intricate stonework, sculpture and bas-reliefs. Drive on to visit the royal tombs of Nagshe-e-Rostam and Nagshe-e-Rajab, and return to Shiraz for dinner at a Sufi restaurant.

Spend the next day exploring Shiraz, starting with a visit to the Arg-e-Karim Khan Citadel. Visits include the magnificent Naranjestan Palace located in a beautiful citrus grove, and

the Khan Madrassa. Walk past the Armenian Church, a Zoroastrian fire temple, a synagogue in the Jewish quarter and the Anglican Church and school complex of Simon the Zealot. Enjoy dinner at Haft Khan in the evening.

Head to Yazd the next morning, stopping at Pasargadae en route to view the elegant blue tiled ruins of the first Persian capital, built by Cyrus the Great. Stop for a picnic lunch under the trees by his tomb, before continuing to Yazd and checking into your hotel.

The following day visit the Towers of Silence and an ancient Zoroastrian burial ground as well as a modern fire temple and the Yazd Mosque. Yazd is also renowned for its wonderful vernacular buildings including water cisterns, icehouses and spectacular wind towers, including the tallest wind tower (badgir) in the world, which at 33m was built to cool the former governor's pavilion in the Bagh-i Dawlatabad. After lunch walk to the delectable shop of Haj Khalife Ali Rabar, Yazd's famous sweetmeat and biscuit shop, and the fascinating Water Museum.

Drive to Isfahan, visiting the old Zoroastrian centre of Meybod on the way. It is famous today for its domestic pottery using beautiful traditional colours and styles. In the afternoon, visit the camel hair weaving workshops of Mohammediyeh, a textile town punctuated by the constant clacking of looms. In nearby Na'in, visit the superb Ethnographic Museum, housed in a wonderful Safavid house from 1560, before continuing onto Isfahan.



Rooftops in Yazd



Isfahan is a stunning city full of fabulous Islamic architecture and Persian art. The magnificent Royal Square is one of the largest in the world and is surrounded by spectacular sights, including the wonder of Islamic architecture that is the Imam, or Shah, Mosque. Visit the exquisite Sheik Lotfollah Mosque and the grand Ali-Qapu Palace before visiting the famous bridges of Khaju and Sio-se-Pol, stopping for tea at one of the lovely teahouses in the arches underneath. In the evening, visit the Zoor-Khaneh, or House of Strength, where the physical exercises have a spiritual dimension and are accompanied by music and poetry.

The next day visit the Eighth Heaven Palace and the “Forty Columns Palace”, where 20 columns are reflected in a pool. Watch the famous “Shaking Minarets” and explore the Armenian quarter, including the richly decorated Vank Cathedral. Experience this wonderful city by night on a guided tour and visit a miniaturist gallery.

Your final morning in Isfahan is yours to wander around the enormous domed Grand Bazaar at your leisure to pit your bargaining skills against the world’s finest. In the afternoon visit the superb Isfahan Music Museum, which opened in 2015 and has already garnered awards for its expert and fascinating displays of traditional Iranian instruments and music.

Next day drive to Natanz, which has the remains of a pre-Islamic fire temple set alongside a dervish monastery and 10th century mosque. Also visit the Tomb of Sheikh Abd al-Samad al-Isfahani with its wonderful entrance decorated with turquoise and cobalt tiles. Continue to Kashan via one of Iran’s most fascinating Zoroastrian villages, Abyaneh, recognised by UNESCO for its antiquity and quality, and visit the Fin Garden. Stay overnight in Kashan.

Rise early to visit Ghamsar village to watch the ancient ritual of the rose water distillation process. Return to Kashan and visit the velvet workshop and the old merchants’ houses before driving to Tehran via the Mausoleum of Ayatollah Khomeini and the Martyr’s Cemetery in the afternoon. Check into your hotel in Tehran and enjoy a farewell dinner in the evening.

Next morning depart for the airport or extend in Tehran.



Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque, Isfahan (top); Fin Garden, Kashan (above)

Itinerary 2 – 15 October 2017

B = Breakfast **L** = Lunch **D** = Dinner

2 Oct (Mon) Tehran **D**
Am Arrive and transfer to your hotel
Pm Visit Golestan Palace and the Jewels Museum (Treasures of the Peacock Throne)
Eve Welcome dinner

3 Oct (Tues) Tehran **B D**
Am Visit the Reza Abbasi Museum
Pm Visit the Archaeological Museum

4 Oct (Wed) Tehran / Shiraz **B D**
Am Morning flight to Shiraz and transfer to the hotel
Pm Visit the Bagh-i-Eram Garden, including their Rose and Botanical Gardens and the garden and tomb of the poet and mystic, Hafiz. Visit a teahouse on a hillside above Koran Gate for city views

5 Oct (Thur) Shiraz / Persepolis / Shiraz **B D**
Am Explore the Nasir Al-Molk and Vakil Bazaar
Pm Visit Persepolis and the Royal Tombs of Nagshe-e-Rostam
Eve Dinner at a Sufi restaurant

6 Oct (Fri) Shiraz **B D**
Am Visit the Arg-e-Karim Khan Citadel, Naranjestan Palace and the Khan Madrassa
Pm Walk past the Armenian Church, a fire temple, the synagogue, Anglican Church and Simon the Zealot School Complex
Eve Dinner at Haft Khan

7 Oct (Sat) Shiraz / Yazd **B L D**
Am Visit the ancient capital of Pasargadae
Pm Picnic lunch under trees by tomb of Cyrus the Great. Drive to Yazd

8 Oct (Sun) Yazd **B D**
Am Visit the Towers of Silence, the modern Fire Temple, the old city and the Yazd Mosque
Pm Walk to the famous sweetmeat shop of Haj Khalife Ali Rabar and the Water Museum

9 Oct (Mon) Yazd / Isfahan **B D**
Am Drive to Isfahan, visiting Meybod and its ceramics workshops and Zilu Museum en route
Pm Visit the camel wool workshops of Mohammadiyah. Stop in the town of Na'in and visit the Jameh Mosque and the Museum of the Persian House

10 Oct (Tues) Isfahan **B D**
Am Visit the Royal Square and Sheik Lotfollah Mosque
Pm Visit the Ali-Qapu Palace and Khaju and Sio-se-Pol Bridges. Enjoy tea and sweets in a teahouse in the Maidan
Eve Visit the House of Strength

11 Oct (Wed) Isfahan **B D**
Am Visit the Forty Columns Palace and Eighth Heaven Palace
Pm Visit the Shaking Minarets and the Armenian quarter, including visits to merchant houses, Vank Cathedral and graveyard
Eve Tour Isfahan by night and see miniaturist gallery

12 Oct (Thur) Isfahan **B D**
Am At leisure to explore the Grand Bazaar
Pm Visit the excellent Isfahan Music Museum

13 Oct (Fri) Isfahan / Kashan **B D**
Am Drive to Natanz, visit the wonderful tiled entrance to the Old Khaneghah and the Tomb of Sheikh Abd al-Samad al-Isfahani
Pm Continue via the village of Abyaneh to Kashan. Visit the Fin Garden

14 Oct (Sat) Kashan / Tehran **B D**
Am Visit the village of Ghamsar and see the rose distillation process. Return to Kashan and visit the velvet workshop and the old merchant houses
Pm Drive to Tehran via the Mausoleum of Ayatollah Khomeini and the Martyr's Cemetery. Overnight at the hotel
Eve Farewell dinner

15 Oct (Sun) Tehran **B**
Am Depart for the airport or extend in Tehran

Extension 15 – 17 October 2017

15 Oct (Sun) Tehran **B**
Am Visit the House of the Artists, North Tehran and Niavaram Palace. Visit the Carpet Museum and the Museum of Contemporary Art

16 Oct (Mon) Tehran **B**
Am Full day at leisure

17 Oct (Tues) Tehran **B**
Am Depart for the airport



Siy-se-Pol Bridge, Isfahan

Hotels

During the tour, we will stay in a mixture of modern and traditional hotels in the 4-to 5-star range in cities, and local boutique hotels in rural areas. While all the hotels have been carefully selected to meet the needs of our groups, please do bear in mind that Iranian hotels are not always of the same standard as their equivalent in the West.



Shiraz tiles

Tour Leader

Dr John Tidmarsh (MBBS FRACP; BA [Hons] MA (Hons) PhD) is a co-director of the University of Sydney's excavations at Pella in Jordan and is also co-director of the ANU/University of Melbourne excavations at Jebel Khalid in Syria. He has previously excavated in Greece and Cyprus. His main areas of interest are the archaeology of Alexander the Great's conquests, the Hellenistic Period in the Near East and Asia, and the Islamic world.

Between 1983 -1995 he was tutor and then part-time lecturer in the Department of Archaeology at the University of Sydney where he still lectures in select courses. He is currently Honorary Research Associate in the Department of Classics and Ancient History and President of the Near Eastern Archaeology Foundation of that University.

Dr John Tidmarsh is currently an endocrinologist in private practice and a visiting endocrinologist at Lidcombe-Bankstown Hospital. He trained at Royal North shore Hospital where he was Senior Medical Registrar in 1979. He has led tours for the University of Sydney, Art Gallery of NSW, and other institutions to Iran (some 20 tours), Oman, Syria, Jordan, Turkey, and Greece. He travels widely in the Middle East.



Nasir al-Molk Mosque, Shiraz



Kashan Bazaar

Extension

There is the option to extend in Tehran at the end of the tour. Please contact us for details and prices.

Cost of the tour US \$5,845 per person (ground only excluding international flights)

The cost includes:

- 13 nights accommodation in twin bedded rooms with private facilities in 4- and 5-star hotels

Single supplement: US \$1,260

- Tour leader (Dr John Tidmarsh)
- Meals as per the itinerary
- A full programme of cultural visits including admission fees where applicable
- Comprehensive briefing notes
- English speaking national guide
- All transport services within Iran, including the domestic flight from Tehran to Shiraz
- Tips

The cost excludes:

- International flights and transfers
- All personal extras such as portorage, laundry, inoculation fees and optional excursions
- Meals not mentioned
- Drinks with meals
- Travel insurance
- Visa

Flights

The tour cost does not include flights. If you would like help arranging flights, please contact the office.

About Us

To travel with us is to dig below the surface, revealing the deeper destination. Of course, you will visit the great historical sites; marvel at the wonders of architecture and engineering; be moved by the riches of culture and art; and experience the most spectacular landscapes in the world. What we also do is make sure that you see the country as it is today, giving you privileged access that independent travel and other tour companies rarely get close to. We give you a variety of experiences, from the sublime to the humble, in the company of intelligent, curious, like-minded people. And while we can be worthy, we also make sure that you have a lot of fun.



Tehran cityscape (top); Persepolis; The tomb of Hafiz in Shiraz;
Royal Square, Isfahan (above)

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