



Iran

Iran, also known as **Persia**, is a country in Western Asia. Iran is home to one of the world's oldest civilizations. The first dynasty in Iran formed during the Elamite Kingdom in 2,800 B.C. Cyrus the Great founded the Achaemenid Empire (550-330 B.C.), which ruled over significant portions of the ancient world, making it the largest empire the world has ever seen.

Iran on UNESCO's World Heritage List

16 sites listed on UNESCO's World Heritage list are located inside Iran:

- 1- Tchogha Zanbil, Khuzestan
- 2- Meidan Imam (Imam Square), Isfahan
- 3- Persepolis, Fars
- 4- Takht-e-Soleyman, West Azarbaijan
- 5- Bam and its cultural landscape, Kerman
- 6- Pasargad, Fars
- 7- Soltaniyeh, Zanjan
- 8- Bisotun, Kermanshah
- 9- The Armenian Monastic Ensembles
- 10- Shushtar, Historical Hydraulic System, Khuzestan
- 11- Tabriz Historic Bazar Complex, East Azarbaijan
- 12- Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble, Ardabil
- 13- The Persian gardens
- 14- Gonbad-e Qabus, Golestan
- 15- Masjed-e Jame, Isfahan
- 16- Golestan Palace, Tehran



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Persian Art and Handicrafts

Iranian Architecture

Persians are famous for being artists. Art, in its broadest sense, has always been part of Iranian culture and civilization. Iranian architecture has always been known to be unique. As Arthur Pope (1881-1969) put it, "the meaningful impact of Persian architecture is versatile. Not overwhelming but dignified, magnificent, and impressive."

What has been the main motif of Iranian architecture during time is the cosmic symbolism through which a connection has been shaped between man and the powers of heaven. The numerous Persian gardens with magnificent edifices in the center are good manifestation of this.

The supreme Iranian art, in the proper meaning of the word, has always been its architecture. The supremacy of architecture applies to both pre- and post-Islamic periods. (Arthur Pope)



Narenjestan Garden & Museum

Photo by Masoud Azizi

Persian Pottery

The potteries excavated date back to centuries B.C. Prominent archeologist Roman Ghirshman believes that "the taste and talent of this people [Iranians] can be seen through the designs of their earthen wares."



Pottery Vessel, 4th Millennium B.C.
The Sialk collection of Tehran's National Museum

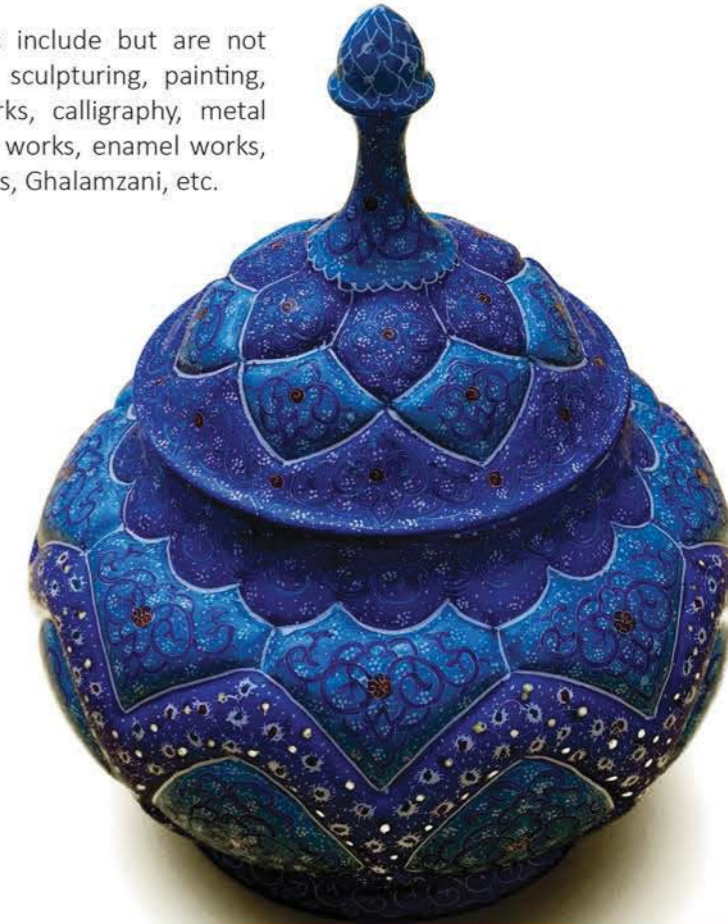
Persian Carpet

Persian carpet is also another landmark distinguishing Persian artists from others. Persian carpet with its fast colors, fine designs, and unique texture has always been the most tangible manifestation of Persian art for other nations. Carpet weaving is a well-established traditional form of art in most parts of Iran. The best Persian carpets are usually produced in Tabriz, Kashan, Qom, Isfahan, Mashhad, Nain, Kerman, and Hamedan. Carpets in each region have designs and colors specific to that region only.





Other Iranian handicrafts include but are not limited to silver making, sculpturing, painting, ceramic and mosaic works, calligraphy, metal works, wood works, glass works, enamel works, Khatam works, stone works, Ghalamzani, etc.





Weather in Iran
Iran is a four-season country.

Photo by Mohammadreza Kharazi



Photo by Mohammadreza Kharazi

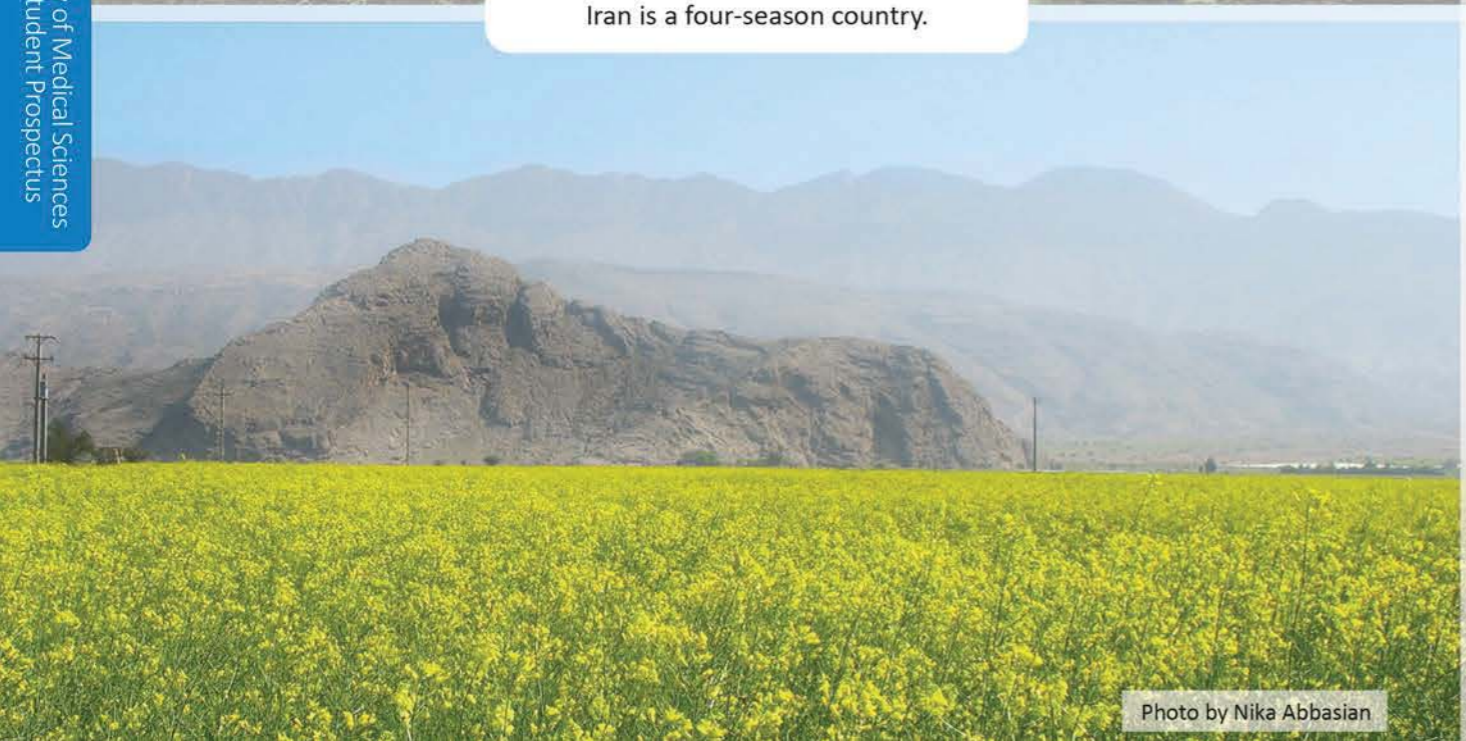


Photo by Nika Abbasian



The Cyrus Cylinder

First Declaration of Human Rights by Cyrus the Great, inscribed in cuneiform on a clay cylinder discovered in 1879, now on display in the British Museum



A plaque is located in San Diego's Balboa Park in honor of Cyrus the Great. It reads:

Cyrus the Great (585-529 B.C.) the Iranian Emperor defined the First Declaration of Human Rights on this cylinder. Cyrus is admired more as a liberator than a conqueror of his vast empire because of his respect for human rights and the humane treatment of those he ruled. He is "anointed" in the Bible (Is. 45:4) as a liberator of God's people (Is. 45:15) and the chosen one (Is. 45:14-15). Professor Richard Frye of Harvard University said; "*Surely, the concept of One World, the fusion of Peoples and Cultures into oneness was one of his important legacies.*"

The following from this ancient cylinder are a rendition of the spirit of his message in modern English:

1. I declare that I will respect the traditions, customs and religions of the many nations of my empire and never let any of my governors to look down or insult the inhabitants of my nations.
2. I hereby abolish slavery; my governors are ordered to prohibit exchanging men and women as slaves within their ruling domains. Such a tradition should be exterminated the world over.
3. If anyone oppresses others, should it happen, I will take his/her right back and penalize the oppressors.
4. Today I declare the Freedom of Religion. All are free to choose any religion, live in all regions and take up any job provided that they never violate others' rights.

These proclamations ring true today in our times as they did in 535 B.C.

Tomb of Cyrus the Great, Pasargad, Shiraz

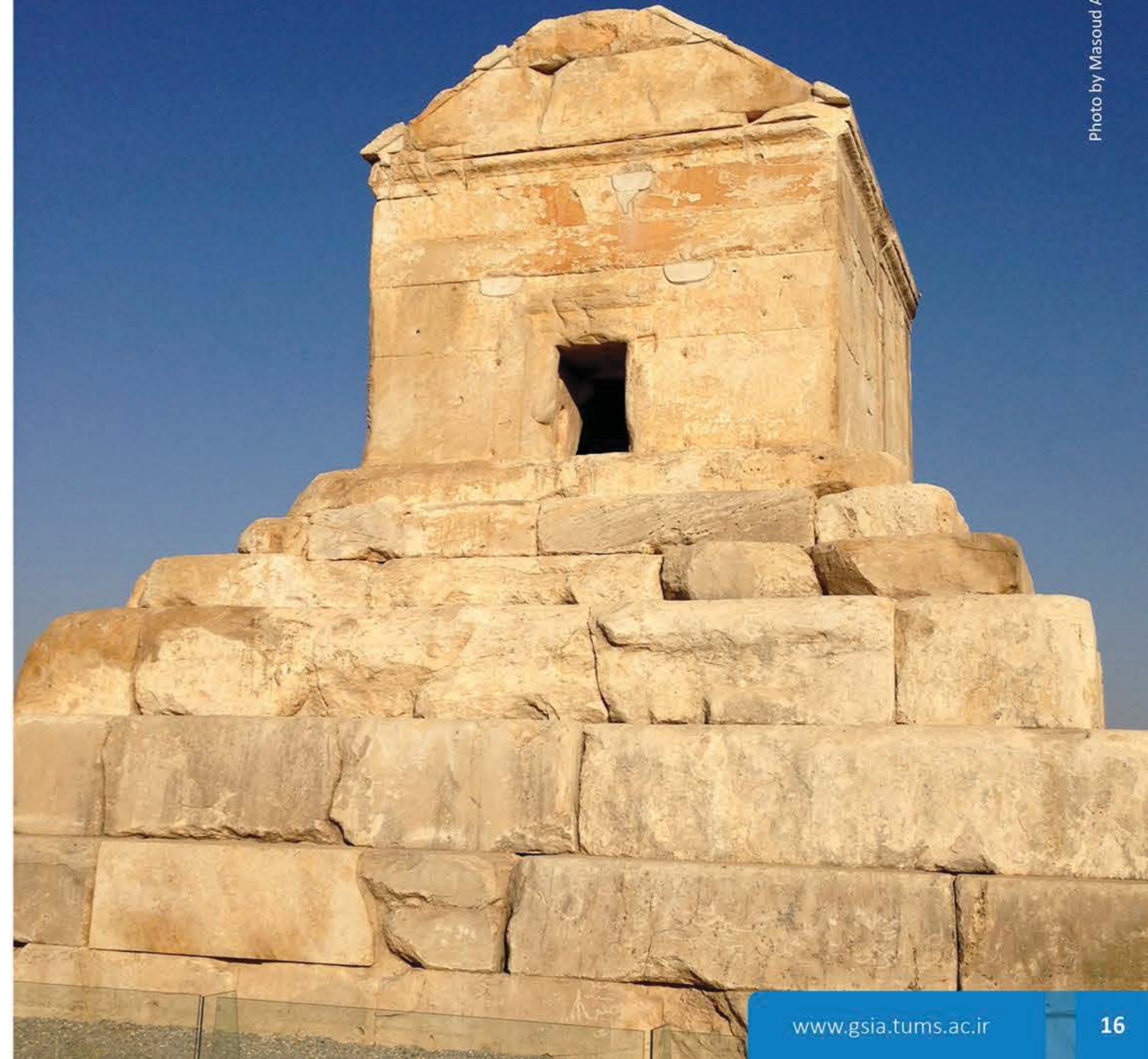


Photo by Masoud Azizi

Naqsh-e-Rustam, Shiraz

It is an ancient necropolis located about 12 km northwest of Persepolis. Four tombs belonging to Achaemenid kings including that of Darius the Great (c. 522-486 B.C.) are carved out of the rock face.



Iran is rich in culture and history, and the landscape is fascinating. Studying in Iran and specifically in Tehran will not only give you the opportunity to study medical sciences but will also introduce you to the culture and traditions of the Iranian people. Studying at the university, interacting with other students, meeting new professors, and conducting research never take place in vacuum. You will do all these in the context of the society in which you live. You will be exposed to the historic identity of people. Studying in a different country is a mosaic of all these fascinating experiences.



Gilan Jungles, Northern Iran

Iranians were among the first to use mathematics, geometry, and astronomy in architecture and also have extraordinary skills in making massive domes which can be seen frequently in the structure of bazaars and mosques. The main building types of classical Iranian architecture are mosques and palaces. Besides being home to a large number of art houses and galleries, Iran holds one of the largest and most valuable jewel collections in the world.

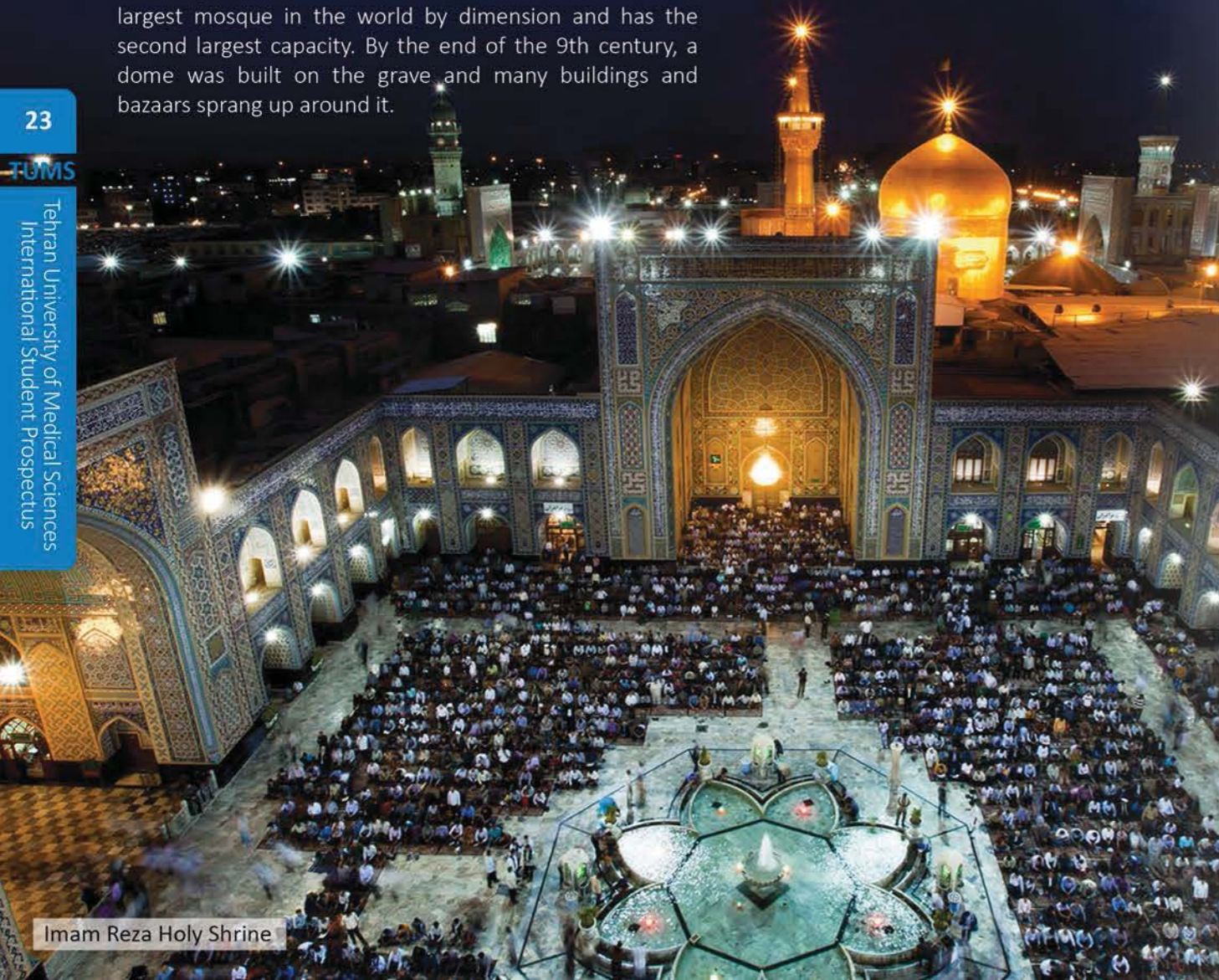
The Iranian people are an Indo-European ethnic-linguistic group. Currently more than 90 percent of the total population is Muslim. Iran has a population of around 77 million in an area of 1,648,195 sq km (636,372 sq mi) and is considered the 18th largest country in the world. Iran is divided into thirty-one provinces. Many ethnicities and races live in Iran. Iran has one of the highest urban growth rates in the world. Tehran is the capital of Iran with Mashhad, Isfahan, and Shiraz being some of its biggest cities.



Vakil Mosque, Shiraz

Mashhad is the second largest city in Iran and is one of the holiest cities in the Shia Muslim world. It is located 850 kilometers (530 miles) east of Tehran.

Imam Reza (789-816 A.D.) is the eighth Imam of Shia Muslims, and his shrine is located in Mashhad. It is the largest mosque in the world by dimension and has the second largest capacity. By the end of the 9th century, a dome was built on the grave and many buildings and bazaars sprang up around it.



Imam Reza Holy Shrine

Mashhad has many attractions amongst which we can name Shah Public Bath, built in 1648 during the Safavid era, tomb of Nadir Shah, and the tomb of some of the greatest Iranian Poets such as Ferdowsi and Khayyam.

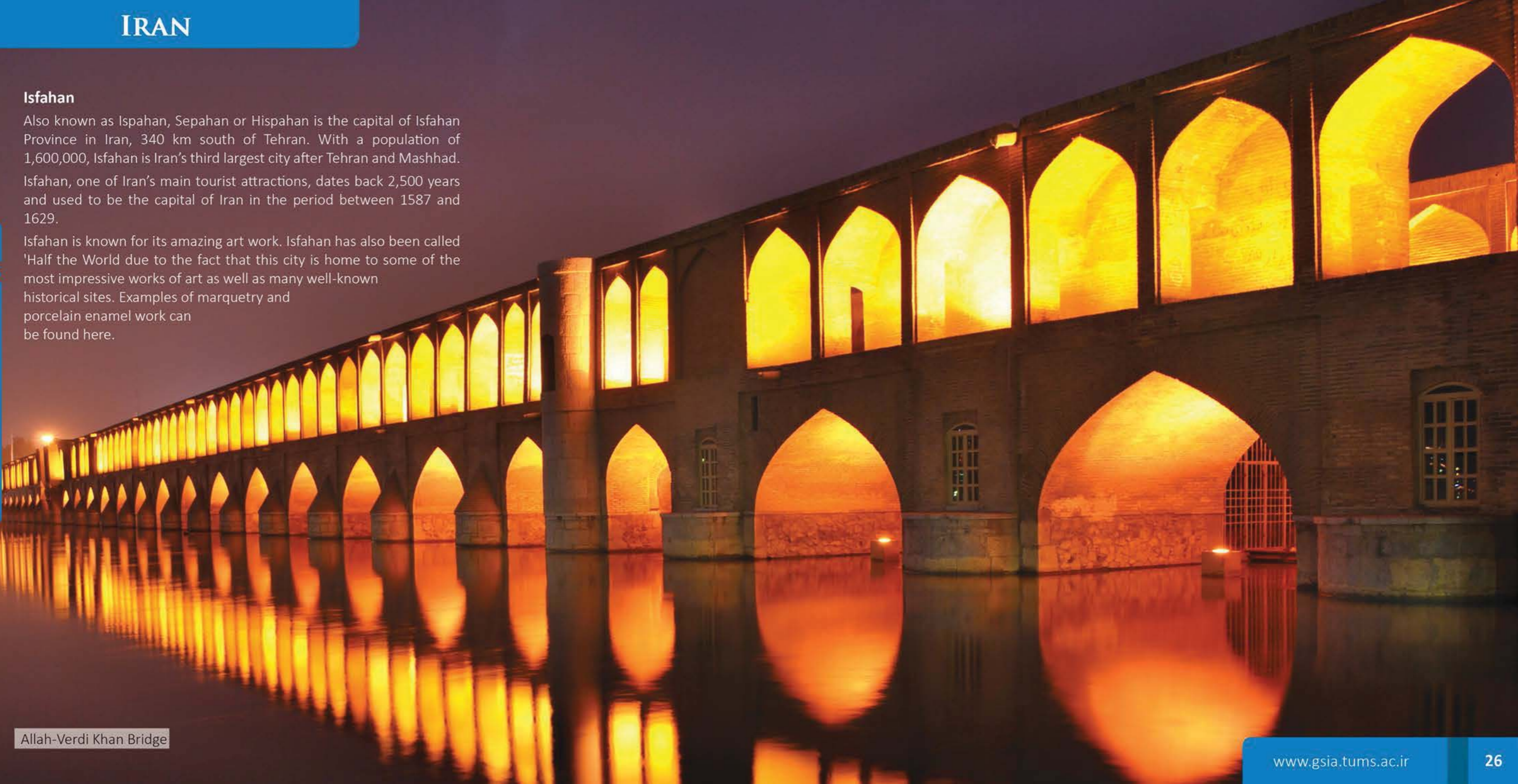


Khayyam Mausoleum

Isfahan

Also known as Ispahan, Sepahan or Hispahan is the capital of Isfahan Province in Iran, 340 km south of Tehran. With a population of 1,600,000, Isfahan is Iran's third largest city after Tehran and Mashhad. Isfahan, one of Iran's main tourist attractions, dates back 2,500 years and used to be the capital of Iran in the period between 1587 and 1629.

Isfahan is known for its amazing art work. Isfahan has also been called 'Half the World' due to the fact that this city is home to some of the most impressive works of art as well as many well-known historical sites. Examples of marquetry and porcelain enamel work can be found here.



Allah-Verdi Khan Bridge



Shiraz

Shiraz, the sixth most populated city in Iran, is located in the south of Iran and northwest of Fars Province. Shiraz is located 919 kilometers (571 mi) south of Tehran and is more than 4,000 years old.

The name Shiraz is mentioned in cuneiform inscriptions from around 2,000 B.C. found in south western corner of the city of Shiraz. Shiraz is known as the city of poets, literature, music, and gardens.

Hafiz (Khwaja Shams-o-Din Muhammad Hafez-e Shirazi, 14th century) is a well-known poet whose tomb is located in Shiraz. Many archeological locations such as Tomb of Cyrus the Great and Pasargad as well as Persepolis are also located in Shiraz. The tomb of Shah-e-Cheragh, Imam Reza's brother, is located in this city and has been a pilgrimage site since the 14th century.

Kish

Kish Island, often called the Pearl of the Persian Gulf, is a beautiful tourist resort located in the north east of the Persian Gulf about 17 km from the southern shore of mainland Iran. Kish is a free trade zone with an area of 90 square km and is known for being a beautiful resort in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf. The people of Kish are friendly and hospitable as the ones in mainland Iran.



Kish Island, Iran