

Discover Iran – ancient Persia

4-19 April 2017 (15 NIGHTS / 16 DAYS)

COORDINATING GUIDE: Peter Roennfeldt has travelled extensively in the Middle East - and will lead and guide. For more details write to: peter@newchurchlife.com

FOR TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS - INCLUDING EARLY BIRD AIRFARES:

Contact Anita Fritz - Allround Travel Centre
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PRICE: AUD \$4,540 - with airport transfers in Iran, great hotels, local English speaking guide, all entrance tickets, tips covered, all meals (3 meals each day), water on the coach, air-conditioned coach with driver.

NOT INCLUDED: Return airfares, entry visas, travel insurance and personal spending.

- While assistance is given for getting your Iranian visa, the cost of the visa is not included.

ITINERARY - SUMMARY:

DAY 1 TUE 4 APRIL Arrive in Tehran - drive to Hamedan
Visit the rock reliefs of Ganj I Nameh.
Overnight: in HAMEDAN

DAY 2 WED 5 APRIL
Visit Ecbatana - ruins of the capital of the Medes, with its excellent museum; and also the Baba Taber Tomb to experience the playing of the Ney Iranian musical instrument, the Sang-I-Shir Hellenistic Lion, and the synagogue of Esther and Mordecai. Drive to Kermanshah and explore Bisotun - a living outdoor cliff museum of Iranian civilisation from ancient times to the present.
Overnight: in an ancient Camel caravan 'motel' - BISOTUN CARAVANSARAI HOTEL

DAY 3 THU 6 APRIL
Enjoy the Kurdish atmosphere of Kermanshah - the Taq-e Bostun rock sculptures showing Shapur's dominance of the Romans; visit the bazaar; then drive to Khoramabad - to visit the Falak-ol-Aflak Castle.
Overnight: in the Kaman Hotel.

DAY 4 FRI 7 APRIL
First enjoy a fascinating drive through farmland, rugged mountain ranges, and across deserts. Then explore ancient Susa - where Queen Esther lived, see the traditional tomb of Daniel, experience the Shustar Water Falls, and visit Choqa Zanbil Ziggurat - built in the 13th century BC.
Overnight: in Ahwaz, in the Oxin Hotel.

DAY 5 SAT 8 APRIL
This will be a relaxing day driving through the Fars Province to Shiraz - stopping at Bishapour and exploring stone reliefs on the rock face above the river.
Overnight: staying for two nights in the Shiraz Homa Hotel.

DAY 6 SUN 9 APRIL

This day we explore Shiraz - the capital of Iranian art, culture and literature. We will visit the Eram Gardens, the beautiful pink coloured Nasir-ol-Molk Mosque, the Narenjestan Gardens - as well as the Saadi Mausoleum (with the opportunity nearby to experience a carrot juice ice-cream) and the Hafez Mausoleum and gardens. Also visit the beautiful and well-ordered bazaar.

Overnight: staying again in the Shiraz Homa Hotel.

DAY 7 MON 10 APRIL

Today we explore Persepolis - capital of Darius, the Nash-e-Rostam rock reliefs - and amazing outdoor museum; and, after lunch visit Pasargadae - the capital of Cyrus the Great. We then drive to Yazd.

Overnight: in a great Yazd hotel - for two nights.

DAY 8 TUE 11 APRIL

Visit the ancient Zoroastrian fire temple and the Towers of Silence, the burial mountains. Walk the historic city that Marco Polo explored, see the highest minarets in Iran, visit a traditional Iranian gymnasium and the local bazaar - with its Persian handicrafts, silk weaving and confectionary.

Overnight: stay a second night in Yazd hotel.

DAY 9 WED 12 APRIL

Today we travel to Isfahan - stopping at the Caravansary in Maybod city and seeing the making of cloth from camel hair in Naiin. In Isfahan we visit the beautiful Vank Cathedral before booking in for three nights in Hotel Kowsar - close to the famous Si-o-Se Pol Bridge - one of the most beautiful bridges of the world.

Overnight: in Isfahan Kowsar Hotel.

DAY 10 THU 13 APRIL

Explore the beautiful city of Isfahan. Visit the Emam Khomeini Square - with its beautiful mosques, monuments and palaces - with the afternoon free to explore/shop in the Grand Bazaar.

Overnight: in Isfahan Kowsar Hotel.

DAY 11 FRI 14 APRIL

Another day to experience the beauty of Isfahan - to take a long morning walk along the river, to visit the Khaju bridge, to meet and socialise with Iranian families. Also visit the Chehelstun Palace and gardens.

Overnight: in Isfahan Kowsar Hotel.

DAY 12 SAT 15 APRIL

After a free morning we travel to the historic world-heritage Abyaneh Village - and then on the Kashan, where we will stay in a beautifully restored, delightful traditional house. In the evening, walk through the nearby bazaar.

Overnight: in the Mahinestan Raheb Hotel.

DAY 13 SUN 16 APRIL

Today we visit a fine complex of old houses - including Tabatabei House with its famous wind towers. Also explore the bazaar known for its carpets - and beautiful Fin Garden. On our journey to Tehran, the capital of Iran, we will explore Qom - a religious city, the largest centre of Shi'a Islam scholarship in the world.

Overnight: three nights in the Tehran Maleh Hotel.

DAY 14 MON 17 APRIL

View Tehran from the Millad Tower, visit the carpet museum and the dazzling jewellery museum, lunch at the beautiful Ferdosi buffet, and explore the bazaar and parks..

Overnight: in the Tehran Maleh Hotel.

DAY 15 TUE 18 APRIL

Cap off an amazing tour in the archaeological museum- and get an outstanding overview of Islamic history in the Islamic Museum. Enjoy a farewell dinner in Ferdosi Hotel.

Overnight: in the Tehran Maleh Hotel.

DAY 16 WED 19 APRIL Depart Tehran: transfer to the airport - for flights home.