



Iran Treasures Cultural Discovery

15 Days



The Adventure Company | EST. 1969

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MOUNTAIN TRAVEL SOBEK

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AS THE PIONEER OF ADVENTURE TRAVEL

Iran Treasures Cultural Discovery

Home to some of the world's most renowned and best-preserved archaeological sites, Iran is a mecca for art, history, and culture. This 15-day itinerary explores the fascinating cities of Tehran, Shiraz, Yazd, and Isfahan, and showcases Iran's rich, textured past while visiting ancient ruins, palaces, and world-class museums. Wander vibrant bazaars, behold Iran's crown jewels, and visit dazzling mosques adorned with blue and aqua tile mosaics. With your local guide who has led trips here for over 23 years, be one of the few lucky travelers to discover this unique destination!

Details

Arrive:	Tehran, Iran
Depart:	Tehran, Iran
Duration:	15 Days
Group Size:	4-14 Guests
Minimum Age:	16 Years Old

Activity Level:



Testimonials


"Our trip to Iran was an outstanding success! Both of our guides were knowledgeable and well prepared, and played off of each other, incorporating lectures, poetry, literature, music, and historical sights. They were generous with their time and answered questions non-stop. Iran is an important country, strategically situated, with 3,000+ years of culture and history."

Joseph V.

"I traveled first with MT Sobek (Mountain Travel) over 40 years ago. It has always been a thoughtful, meaningful experience."

Judy S.

GOT QUESTIONS? SPEAK WITH AN EXPERT.

 1-800-974-0300

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Why Take This Trip With Us?

REASON #01

MT Sobek is an expert in Iran travel, with over five years' experience taking small groups into the country.

REASON #02

Our team of local guides are true experts, including Saeid Haji-Hadi (aka Hadi), who has been leading tours in Iran for 23 years.

REASON #03

This journey exposes travelers to the hospitality of Iranian people, while offering insight into the country's modern-day complexities.

What to Expect



ACTIVITIES

Cultural touring of historical and archaeological sites, including UNESCO-listed Persepolis and Pasargadae, plus visits to museums, mosques and bazaars.



LODGING

Comfortable accommodations blend modern and traditional flair, including 3 nights at a hotel steeped in 300 years of history with beautiful gardens.



CLIMATE

April and September temperatures will range from the high-50's F to the mid-90's F. Weather will typically be sunny with rain unlikely.

Meet Our Guides

Our expert guides and trip leaders are truly the key to our trips' success. Many are locals who live in-country year-round; others have made it their second home—all are passionate, enthusiastic and endlessly knowledgeable. Meet two of the guides that might be on your trip.


Hadi, a native of Iran, always dreamed of traveling and interacting with other cultures. After 23 years in tourism, Hadi has led over 285 tours for Western groups, and has held the position of Chairman of the Iranian Tour Guide Association (ITGA) for six years. Aside from leading tours, he spends considerable time exploring the nooks and crannies of Iran and other parts of the world. A diligent student of cultures and of life, Hadi is a warm and incredibly knowledgeable resource, the perfect person to impart understanding of Iranian culture on this cultural odyssey.

Saeid Haji-Hadi

Cyrus is a native of Iran and over his long career in the tourism industry, he has accompanied over 230 groups and has served on the board of directors for the Iranian Tour Guide Association (ITGA). Before making his way into tourism, Cyrus was a freelance merchant, book translator, and journalist, and earned an MA in History and a BA in Sociology and English. He has traveled to many countries throughout the world and loves nature, traveling and cultural studies.

Cyrus Rasouli

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Itinerary

DAY 1

ARRIVE IN IRAN

Welcome to Tehran, the capital city and modern heart of Iran! Meet an MT Sobek representative outside customs and transfer to the hotel. Around 10 am gather for a group meeting with your trip leader. Today we drive to the roof of Tehran for an easy hike of about a mile to reach a cable car, which will then take us to an elevation of 11,500'. Afterwards, we continue to Tajrish, for a stroll around the northernmost local bazaar. Return to the hotel. Tonight we'll enjoy dinner at Zeytun restaurant.

Meals: L, D

DAY 2

DISCOVER THE JEWELS OF TEHRAN

Start the day with a buffet breakfast before heading to the city center to visit one of the gates of old Tehran. Spend the rest of the morning visiting the National Museum of Iran, which features some of the world's most valuable Persian antiquities right up to the modern Islamic era. After lunch, prepare to be dazzled by the largest collection of jewels in the world at the Crown Jewels Museum, located in the National Treasury. Enjoy dinner with the group this evening.

Activity: Cultural touring

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 3

TEHRAN'S MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Start the day with a visit to the well-kept gardens of Laleh Park, and Tehran's Museum of Contemporary Art, home to an impressive collection of 19th and 20th century world-class European and American paintings, prints, drawings and sculptures. Then explore the stunning Carpet Museum, with more than 36,000 square feet of exhibition space containing the largest collection of Persian carpets in the world! Next, see the modern side of Iran with a visit to the Palladium shopping center. After lunch at a local restaurant, return to the hotel to rest and pack for tomorrow's drive to Yazd.

Activity: Cultural touring

Meals: B, L, D

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DAY 4

TAKE A SCENIC DRIVE TO YAZD

Depart Tehran and journey along the highway to Yazd, passing mountains, desert, and a salt lake. En route, visit the 12th-century Jameh mosque in Ardestan and enjoy lunch in a local restaurant. Next, head to Na'in to visit an early 11th-century Seljuq mosque and an 18th-century Safavid Persian traditional house before taking a walk around the town's ancient citadel and old neighborhoods. Arrive in Yazd this evening and check into the hotel.

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 5

EXPLORE ANCIENT YAZD

UNESCO regards Yazd, with its 5,000-year history, as one of the oldest towns on earth. Start your exploration at the 15th-century Mirchakhmaq Square, then visit the water museum, which showcases an impressive desert water-supply system, and the Zoroastrian Fire Temple, which holds a fire that has been continuously alight since 470. Then head to nearby Saryazd to visit an ancient rural citadel — used as a depository for personal belongings since the Sassanid period! Also visit the caravanserai here before heading back to Yazd and wandering through the old bazaar. At the end of the day, visit a Zurkhaneh (a traditional gymnasium, literally meaning "house of strength"), where athletes undergo rigorous training in ancient Iranian sports.

Activity: Cultural touring

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 6

STROLL THE SERPENTINE STREETS OF YAZD

Begin the day at 14th-century Jameh Mosque, known for its lofty minarets and exquisite blue tile work. From here, stroll through the serpentine alleys of the city's old quarters, visiting the prison of Alexander, the 12-Imam Mosque, and Lariha House, one of the most beautiful and splendid aristocratic houses of the 13th century. After tea and baklava, visit the 18th-century Dowlat Abad Garden and its 110-foot-tall wind tower. Then stop at the fire temple in Chak Chak — the most important Zoroastrian site in the world, located in the middle of nowhere!

Activity: Cultural touring

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 7

CROSS LION MOUNTAIN & VISIT PASARGADAE

Today you journey to Shiraz via Shirkuh ("Lion") Mountain. En route, visit Abarqu, which is home to an icehouse and a 4,000-year-old cypress tree! One of the oldest trees on earth, it's more than 80 feet tall and is protected as a national monument. After lunch, explore the archaeological site of Pasargadae, the first Achaemenid capital and now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Here you find the tomb of Cyrus the Great, the hillside fort of Tall-e Takht, and the remains of ancient palaces and gardens.

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Activity: Cultural touring

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 8

FULL-DAY TOUR OF SHIRAZ

This morning head out on a full-day tour of Shiraz, "the town of roses and nightingales." Begin with Bagh-e Eram (Eram Garden), with its collection of magnificent roses, followed by a visit to the tomb of Hafiz, the 13th-century mystic and the most celebrated Persian poet. Later, enter the old quarter of town, with its heavy traffic and noise, to pay a visit to the 9th-century old Jameh mosque, Khan theological school, and the colorful nomadic bazaar.

Activity: Cultural touring

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 9

DISCOVER ANCIENT PERSEPOLIS

Today may be the highlight of your trip: an excursion to Persepolis (the ancient ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid empire) and the royal necropolis in Naqsh-e Rostam. Alexander the Great burned Persepolis — a vast complex of ceremonial palaces, halls, and tombs — in 330 BC, but there are incredible remains of several monumental buildings. Tour these exquisite antiquities, have lunch, and then return to Shiraz. Explore the 18th-century Vakil Bazaar, a colorful, traditional marketplace packed with Persian rugs, spices, copper handicrafts, and antiques. End in Saray-e Moshir, an urban-caravanserai-turned-exhibition-space for Iranian handicrafts.

Activity: Cultural touring

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 10

JOURNEY THROUGH THE ZAGROS MOUNTAINS TO ISFAHAN

Today take a scenic drive through the Zagros mountain range, passing many villages along the way. Stop for lunch in Yasuj before arriving in Isfahan via Shahreza.

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 11

TOUR THE COLORFUL CITY OF ISFAHAN

Isfahan, the four-time capital of Iran, is a wonderful, colorful city filled with Islamic art and architecture. Begin your tour with the Vank Cathedral, home to a museum, a historic printing press, and a library that includes the first book printed in Iran. Walk to Chehel-Sotoun Palace, with large frescoes depicting court life counterbalanced

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by miniature paintings of the 17th-century Safavid dynasty, and visit the Jameh Mosque to enjoy a thousand years of art and architecture of the Islamic world in Iran. End today with a beautiful Persian carpet show.

Activity: Cultural touring

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 12

EXPLORE GARDENS, MOSQUES & TEAHOUSES IN ISFAHAN

Stroll through the 17th-century Hasht Behesht (Eight Paradises) Palace harem garden. A short walk leads to the Royal Square (Naqsh-e Jahan), the main polo ground and entertainment center for Safavid kings — and the second-largest square in the world. Across the square, visit Sheikh Lotfollah, the first ladies' mosque in the Islamic world, and enjoy the peaceful ambience, and magnificent calligraphy and tiles. Window-shop through the covered bazaar to the ornate Imam Mosque, which contains an ocean of blue tile work along with a courtyard pool. Finally enjoy a cup of tea at a traditional Sufi teahouse.

Activity: Cultural touring

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 13

ENJOY A SCENIC MOUNTAIN DRIVE TO KASHAN

During today's scenic drive through the Karkas Mountains, take a look at the facade of a Khanegah (monastery or Dervish house), visit a Sufi tomb with magnificent stalactite decorations, and observe a skillful ceramic artist in Natanz. Then explore the remote, traditional village of Abyaneh, whose ancient traditions, costumes, and dialect have been intact for centuries. Arriving in Kashan, visit Bagh-e Fin, an exemplary 17th-century Persian-style garden, and a 19th-century mausoleum with exceptional tile and mirror work unique to Persian art. Tour the bazaar, then check into your hotel.

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 14

EXPLORE THE OLD QUARTER OF KASHAN & RETURN TO TEHRAN

Today take a morning drive to the old quarter of town, visiting Aqa Bozorg mosque, a traditional 19th-century Tabatabaiba house, and Tepe Sialk archaeological mounds — one of the first human settlements in the world dating back to the sixth millennium BC. Then hit the road toward Tehran, passing by Qom. Stop for lunch and ice cream in a Mahtab rest area, and check into our hotel in Tehran later in the day. Enjoy a farewell dinner this evening!

Activity: Cultural touring

Meals: B, L, D

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DAY 15

DEPART FROM TEHRAN

Bid the group and Iran farewell, and transfer to the international airport for your homeward-bound flight.

Meals: B

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Dates

Apr 24 - May 8, 2023

May 20 - Jun 3, 2023

Oct 4 - 18, 2023

Nov 1 - 15, 2023

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Inclusions & Exclusions

PRICE INCLUDES

- Expertise and services of our experienced adventure guides
- All accommodations as noted in the itinerary
- All breakfasts, almost all lunches and dinners as noted in the itinerary
- Snacks and water between meals
- Additional regional guides and experts on many trips
- Comprehensive Trip Planner with detailed pre-trip information
- Private guided tours at historic sites, museums, wineries and other select attractions as noted in the itinerary
- Special events and other select attractions as mentioned in the itinerary
- All gratuities at hotels and restaurants
- Equipment and experienced guides for activities as described in the itinerary
- Park and other entry fees (unless otherwise noted)
- Fares for trains, ferries and other modes of travel as listed in the itinerary
- Select transfers as mentioned in the itinerary
- Baggage transfers and portorage

PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE

- International airfare, airport taxes, and excess baggage fees
- Alcoholic beverages (MT Sobek provides wine at select events)
- Gratuities for MT Sobek guides and guide-drivers
- Travel Protection Program
- Personal expenses

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➤ **The World of MT Sobek**

At Mountain Travel Sobek, we believe life is an adventure and adventure is life.

As the originators, innovators and leaders in adventure travel for more than five decades, we passionately create, craft and share indelible, transformative journeys to the world's most memorable places. Our more than 200 unique and once-in-a-lifetime trips are designed to inspire and exhilarate, enliven and excite--opening eyes and minds through profoundly personal connections with nature and culture.

Our small group and custom adventures span the globe, and the spectrum—of interests, environments and activities—every one expertly planned and knowledgeably and passionately guided. And our commitment to making every experience a remarkable one has earned us preferred travel outfitter status for National Geographic Active Expeditions, Active New York Times Journeys, and Smithsonian Active Journeys.

We are *the* adventure company.

Awards



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