

Iran Saffron & Barberry Tour

8 Nights- 9 Days

The best time for this tour is from 27 Oct. to 21 Nov.



Introduction: Iran is the first and largest producer and exporter of saffron and barberry in the world.

Southern Khorasan and its Ghaenat district produce about 90% of Iran's saffron and barberries. We shall spend 2 days here and learn about every thing to do with saffron and barberries, from planting, to harvesting, to production and packaging.

Ghaenat is a unique area of Iran and its attractions are not limited to saffron and barberries. It has an ancient history, desert architecture and functioning ancient irrigations systems. Its proximity to Afghanistan and India give it a unique geographical location.

The Shokatol Molk family of Gaenat were once the most powerful family in Khorasan and were responsible for building some of the great monuments of the region, which you will be visiting.



Highlights:

- The accommodations will be in 5* hotels in Tehran & Mashhad, a 4* hotel in Birjand, and a traditional guest house in Ghaenat.
- You will visit saffron fields during the harvest season and join the locals in the process of picking the flowers and separating the stigmas, and learn about the traditional grinding process.
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- You will attend a local Khorasani musical folk performance.
- You will meet the main Iranian Saffron producer and visit their modern saffron production facilities that are the largest in Iran and the world.
- Take part in a private cooking class with special focus on using saffron and barberries in Iranian cooking.
- You will visit a barberry field and join the locals in the process of picking and processing barberry.
- You will discover the longest Qanat chain of the world and one of the most ancient irrigation system in Iran.
- You will have a traditional breakfast, lunch and dinner in saffron fields by .
- You will enjoy the renowned Shishlik Kabab in the village of Shandiz.
- You will visit one of the most beautiful and religiously sacred sites in Iran (The Imam Reza Shrine).
- You will have the opportunity to see some of the world's most exquisite jewelry, as well as the finest carpet museum.



Itinerary

1st Day: Tehran

Arrival in Tehran, meet and greet with Avid representative and transfer to hotel. Time to rest. Page | 3

2nd Day: Tehran



A full day city tour to visit: Tehran's Grand Bazaar, still the most economically vibrant business centre of Tehran. Its 400 year history and 10 kilometer length has made it one of the most famous and biggest traditional Bazaars in the Middle East. We start our visit with the Nut, Date and Sweet section and then walk through the carpet, gold and silver districts. We will have lunch in the famous Sharaf-ol-Eslam restaurant, which has a 120 year history as one of the best Chelo-Kabab (rice and kabob) restaurants in Tehran. After lunch we will continue our tour by visiting the Golestan museum-palace complex.



The National Jewels Museum is our next destination. It houses one of the largest jewelry collections in the world. You can see these incredible and unique pieces that have been bought, gifted or given to Iran under one roof. The biggest pink colored diamond and the crowns of last king and queen are found here.

On a Wednesday, Thursday or Friday, you will visit the National Carpet Museum, which is a real treasury of Iranian carpets. We will continue our tour by going to north Tehran to visit the Tajrish fruit and vegetable bazaar and some modern shopping centers. And we will have dinner at a riverside restaurant on the slopes of the Tochal Mountain with a magnificent view of Tehran at night.

3rd Day: Birjand

Flight to Birjand and transfer to Hotel. Full day city tour of Birjand to visit: Shokatieh School (the 3rd European School in Iran, built in 1905, Birjand Castle, a 16th Century building. The Shokatieh Gardens, announced as a World Heritage site by UNESCO in 2011. Page | 4

4th Day: Ghaenat



We will serve breakfast at the Birjand hotel and then drive to Ghaenat (1.5 hours). You will stay at an old local house, which has been turned into a guesthouse. You will be welcomed by saffron tea, fresh squeezed barberry juice and some local pastries and sweets. After a short rest and refreshment, we will drive to a barberry orchard to participate in barberry picking. Our next destination will be the largest barberry production facility in the world.

After lunch you have an opportunity to visit the many cultural features of a desert city.

5th Day: Ghaenat

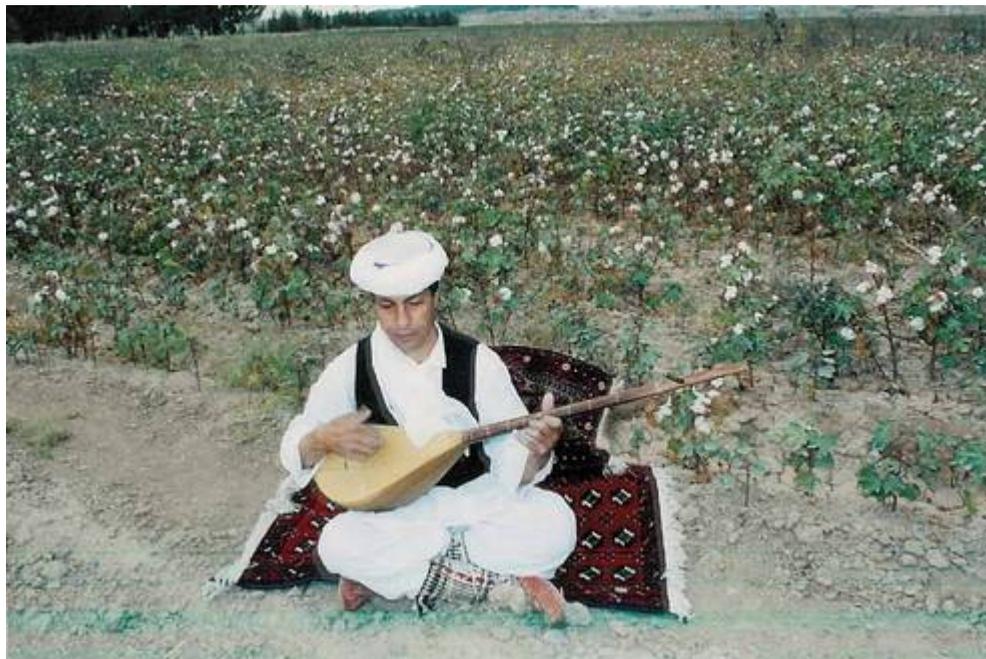


This is one of the most important days in your itinerary. We will wake up at 5 a.m to drive for a Saffron field. We will accompany the local women folk for a morning of saffron picking. You will have your breakfast in the field. It will be one of the most unforgettable breakfasts of your life: Iranian sweetened tea served with homemade cheese, fresh, hot milk, hot loaves of flat bread flavored with walnuts and garlic, mountain honey, fresh cream, butter, sesame Halva, rice halva, eggs and chamomile

and finally a cup of hot local Osh will turn this cold morning into a warm memory—Nush-e jan.



After breakfast, we will visit the women folk in their homes while they are separating the saffron stigma and we will see the traditional process of preparing the saffron. Then we will visit a modern, mechanized saffron processing facility. We will have lunch at a local family home. You will see the way of life, culture and hospitality of the people of this land. After a short rest, we will visit the nature of the desert and do some other sight-seeing around the city.



We will have dinner, music and dancing.

6th Day: Mashhad



Breakfast at the Inn, driving to Mashhad (about 400 KM), en-route we will visit the longest Iranian Qanat. These underground aquifer systems were developed by Iranians in the first millennium BCE to bring water from the mountains to the foothills. Ghaen's Qanat chain is composed of 800 wells.

Mashhad is the 3rd biggest city in Iran (after Tehran and Tabriz) and is the most important religious city in Iran. The 8th Shia Muslim Imam is buried there.

The Shrine of Imam Reza is one of the most beautiful pilgrimage sites in the world. The main dome and minarets are covered with gold bricks and 17 entrances open this site to the public in 17 directions. You can find some of the most exquisite and elaborate tile work at this monument. All the main doors and mausoleums (Zareeh) are made of pure gold and silver wrought by the great master metalworkers of Iran. More than 20,000,000 mirrors illuminate the entrance halls, salons and passages. The shrine also has a carpet museum, which displays about 200 beautiful and rare examples of some of the finest Iranian carpets donated by pilgrims over the years. This complex also includes an important stamp museum and also a coin museum.

7th Day: Tehran



Breakfast at the hotel. Half day city tour of Mashhad to visit: return visit to Imam Reza shrine complex, Nader shah mausoleum, Ferdowsi mausoleum, lunch at Shandiz village. Transfer to the airport, flight to Tehran. Transfer to hotel.

Important Note: if tourist is interested it is possible to fly to another city to visit some more historical and cultural sites in Iran. Our suggestion is an additional 7 nights/8 day's itinerary to visit Shiraz, Yazd and Isfahan. If you include this program in your itinerary then your tour will be 14 nights/15 days. Contact us for more details.

8th Day: Tehran



Breakfast at the hotel, visit some shopping centers and gift shops, lunch in a traditional restaurant. (Optional) a short cooking class of Iranian cooking for dishes that use saffron and barberries as important ingredients. Farewell dinner in a private home of the cook with her family with food that you have prepared.

9th Day: Transfer to the airport for your departure flight.

- **Price: 1490.00 US \$* per person for group of 4+**

This price is for a minimum group size of 4 people and a maximum of 15. If minimum size is not reached, a supplement will have to be paid to guarantee the departure. This would be announced within a 60 days' notice.

What's included?

- Airport // Hotel // Airport transfers
- Accompanying licensed English speaking tour guide, specialized in gastronomy.
- All land transportation in air conditioned vehicles.
- 2 domestic flights (Tehran-Birjand), (Mashhad-Tehran)
- 5 nights' accommodation in 5* hotels in Tehran and Mashhad, 1 night in 4* hotel in Birjand and 2 nights in a guesthouse in Ghaenat.
- All Breakfasts, lunches, dinners and refreshments (local beverage, local snack, coffee, tea) during days.
- All tips at restaurants and hotels ((Except the guide and driver tip)).
- Visa processing support.
- 1 Hands-on cooking class, in a private house, with your guide as interpreter and together with the cook's family.
- Dossier with the recipes in English, for you to practice at home!
- Culinary and cultural visits, including town tours, field visits for saffron and Barberry, a local music concert, Qanat Chain, ...
- Entry fees as per the itinerary
- Gourmet Gift

What is not included?

- Int'l air ticket,
- Late check out (after 14 pm on day 9)
- Unpredictable events which cause extra expenses during tour
- All expenses of a private nature, such as telephone calls, faxes, laundry, room service, etc.
- Expenses due to deviations from the scheduled program
- Iran visa embassy fee obtained from the client/s at the time of collecting visa in the embassy

Comments:

1. Tehran museums are closed on Mondays. 2. Granting visas is at the discretion, and subject to approval, by Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 3. The organizer is totally flexible to the needs of the tourists and could change the itinerary