

Byroads
Inspiring Escorted Journeys

PERSIA UNVEILED

Discover the highlights and hidden treasures of this ancient land

15 DAYS - STARTING TEHRAN 30 SEPTEMBER 2019





PERSIA UNVEILED

Trip Outline

There are few places in the world where international opinion and local realities are polar opposites. If you can put the barrage of negative publicity to one side, you'll discover a wonderful, historic country whose people are well educated, courteous and incredibly welcoming.

We begin our journey in Tehran, where we visit three of its finest museums before flying south to Shiraz, a lovely city known for its gardens and romantic poets. Two days allows ample time to see the major sights, explore the atmospheric Vakil Bazaar and make a side-trip to the great city of Persepolis, with its magnificent Apadana staircases.

Driving east, we see the tomb of Cyrus the Great and then make our way via Abarqu to Yazd Province, a highlight of our tour. The next three days are spent exploring our surroundings, heading off the beaten track to see little-visited mudbrick citadels, tranquil gardens, old merchant homes and ancient villages. An evening is spent in an authentic caravanserai – and we have a full day to discover Yazd, full of traditional homes with their signature wind-towers, or *badgirs*.

North of Yazd we visit Kharanaq and Meybod, where we explore Narin fortress and see the amazing Safavid icehouse. We stop to visit the exquisite mosque at Nain before arriving in Isfahan, the 'jewel in the crown'. Here we have two and a half days to see the many wonderful sights including the magnificent Naksh-e Jahan Square, Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque, Imam Mosque, Chehel Sotun Palace, Vank Cathedral and the bazaars.

Driving out of Isfahan we visit the historic 14th century mosque at Natanz and spend a night in the picturesque hillside village of Abyaneh, which we explore in the afternoon. Further north is Kashan, celebrated for its fine ceramic production dating back to the 12th century. Here we see two magnificent 19th century Qajar houses as well as the Bagh-e Tarikhi-ye Fin Garden, considered one of the best in Iran.

Back in Tehran, we spend a final day exploring the Jewellery Museum and the fabulous Golestan Palace. Our tour concludes the following day.

Tour Host – Steve Mortimer



Steve Mortimer heads up Byroads Travel and will be your host on this tour. Steve has nearly 30 years in the travel industry and has travelled to well over 100 countries. He has worked with a number of well-known Australian adventure travel companies including 13 years as a Product Manager and Operations Director for Peregrine Adventures.

Most recently he has been involved in researching and developing holidays in several different regions of the world, including Latin America and the Middle East where he has lived.

Steve likes nothing better than getting out and about with like-minded travellers, sharing his knowledge and introducing them to some of the world's most interesting places. A particular feature of his tours is the chance to see places that others often miss (or simply don't know about!), such as the pueblos blancos or 'white villages' of Andalusia, Sri Lanka's stunning south coast or the wonderful vernacular architecture of Iran's Yazd Province.

With our itinerary you can be confident you'll visit all the 'must see' attractions – and much more, however there are some days when you'll have time to wander and make some of your own discoveries. Throughout the tour local guides are employed to provide a wealth of background information and share their extensive local knowledge.



ITINERARY STARTS IN TEHRAN

MON 30 SEP: TEHRAN – Upon arrival you are met and transferred to your hotel. Today is simply an arrival day and we will plan to meet up in the evening. Pre-tour accommodation is available if you wish to arrive a day earlier (see back page for details).

TUE 1 OCT: TEHRAN – There is much to see in Iran's busy capital and today we visit the Archaeological Museum, the fabulous Reza Abbasi Museum and the Glass and Ceramics Museum. (B)

WED 2 OCT: TEHRAN-SHIRAZ – In the morning we fly south to Shiraz. In the afternoon we visit the stunning Mosque of Nasir ol-Mulk, the Narenjestan, the atmospheric Vakil Bazaar and the Tomb of Hafez. (B)

THU 3 OCT: SHIRAZ, PERSEPOLIS – We drive east to Persepolis, the glorious ancient city of Darius the Great, with its Hall of 100 Columns and the celebrated Apadana staircases. Nearby are the splendid rock-cut tombs at Naksh-e Rostam. On our return to Shiraz we stop to visit the lovely Eram Gardens. (B)

FRI 4 OCT: SHIRAZ-PASARGADAE-ZEINODIN – Driving east, we visit the tomb of Cyrus the Great and then leave the green hills behind as we descend into the arid plains of central Iran. We stop at Abarqu for lunch and continue to Zeinodin where we spend the night in an original and authentic caravanserai. (BD)

SAT 5 OCT: YAZD PROVINCE – Today is spent exploring two fabulous and little-known mud brick citadels at Saryazd and Mehrpadin. The former is over 2000 years old. We then head into Yazd where we check in to our traditional hotel, once the home of a wealthy merchant family. Later we drive out to visit Towers of Silence. (B)

SUN 6 OCT: YAZD – The morning is free to explore your surroundings. In the afternoon we take a walk through the old city, visiting the stunning Jama Masjid, Alexander's Prison and Khaneh Lariha (an impressive 19th century merchant's home). (B)

MON 7 OCT: YAZD PROVINCE – The countryside around Yazd conceals plenty of hidden gems. Driving north we stop to see the ancient fortress and amazing Safavid icehouse at Meybod. We then head east to Kharanaq, a lovely, crumbling old village full of interesting nooks and crannies. Today we'll have a typical Iranian 'picnic lunch' before returning to Yazd for our final night. (B)

TUE 8 OCT: YAZD-ARDAKAN-NA'IN-ISFAHAN – Driving north we stop at Ardakan to visit the Taghdiri Mansion. At Na'in, we visit the splendid Masjid-e Jami (Great Mosque) and the Ethnographic Museum, housed in a wonderful 16th century Safavid home. Arriving in Isfahan, our base for the next three nights, we enjoy a late afternoon stroll into the great square. (B)

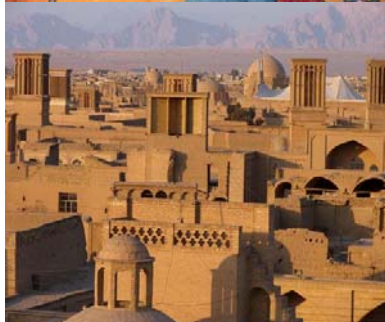
WED 9 OCT/THU 10 OCT: ISFAHAN – Leaving the best till last, we have two full days to explore this magical city of mosques, museums, bridges and bazaars. We see all the highlights, including the immense Naksh-e Jahan Square, Imam Mosque, Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque, Masjid-e Jami, Ali Qapu pavilion, Chehel Sutun and Vank Cathedral. There will also be time to see the celebrated bridges and explore the bazaar on your own. (B)

FRI 11 OCT: ISFAHAN-NATANZ-ABYANEH – Today we drive out to Natanz to see the 13th century mosque, with its beautiful portal. We then continue up into the hills, to the picturesque village of Abyaneh. After checking in to our hotel we enjoy a stroll through the village, with time to explore on our own. (B)

SAT 12 OCT: ABYANEH-KASHAN-TEHRAN – We drive north to Kashan, known for its superb ceramic industry dating back to the 12th century. We visit two palatial 19th century residences and see the celebrated Bagh-I Fin gardens, before heading to Tehran for the night. (B)

SUN 13 OCT: TEHRAN – Our last day of sightseeing in Tehran includes the Carpet Museum, Golestan Palace (former royal residence of the Qajar family), and the fabulous Jewellery Museum. Later we drive into the city centre to see the Azadi Tower before returning to our hotel. Tonight we'll plan to go out for a final dinner together. (B)

MON 14 OCT: TEHRAN – Our journey ends today, after breakfast. Post-tour accommodation is available if you wish to stay on for a night or two (refer to the back page). Airport transfers can be easily arranged from your hotel. (B)



Prices & Inclusions

15 Day Persia Unveiled

Price in US Dollars: USD 3520 (p/p twin-share)

Single Supplement: USD 700

Price includes: Services of Steve Mortimer as Tour Escort, local tour leader/guide, arrival transfer, all local transportation and local flight, 14 nights accommodation in comfortable and/or character hotels, meals as indicated.

Not Included: Visa fees (see opposite), travel insurance (compulsory on all trips), additional meals, drinks, international flights, departure transfer, laundry and tips.

Accommodation: If you are familiar with the Byroads style of touring you will know there is often an emphasis on 'boutique' or character hotels. In Iran this isn't easy, but our preference is for small hotels, in good locations. In Shiraz and Isfahan we stay in comfortable 3-star hotels, which are much better than some of the 4-star properties! In Tehran it's a good 4-star property not far from the museums; in Abyaneh our family-run hotel is simple but the village is full of interest. The highlights are our authentic Caravanserai at Zeinodin, and also Yazd, where our traditional family home is particularly atmospheric.



Zeinodin Caravanserai



Yazd Hotel



Abyaneh Village



Abyaneh Hotel



Isfahan Hotel



Tehran Hotel

Food and drink: Breakfast is included every day, along with one dinner. At other times we are free to enjoy a variety of different dishes in local restaurants. Iran is a 'dry' country, so alcohol is not available, but there's a good range of soft drinks, fresh juices and – of course – plenty of tea...

Group size: Maximum 16

Additional Expenses: Food is not at all expensive in Iran, but the servings are substantial! You should allow around US\$10 for lunch and around US\$10-\$20 for dinner. In addition you should budget for any personal shopping you may wish to do. Please also allow extra funds to tip your local tour leader/guide, drivers, porters etc (full details will be provided in the pre-departure information).

Bookings: Travel on Q (Sydney) is the sole booking agent for this tour. Please register your interest ASAP in order to secure your place and note there are a limited number of single rooms available. A non-refundable deposit of AUD 750 per person is required, to secure your place, with final payment due 60 days prior to tour commencement.

Travel on Q (Carole Grassby and Tina Briggs)

Tel: (02) 9357 6800

Email: travel@travelonq.com.au

Currency: Due to the volatility of global currencies the tour price has been quoted in United States Dollars (USD) however you will pay for your tour in Australian dollars based on the buying rate set by Westpac Banking Corporation on the due date of your final balance.

Flights and Transfers: Emirates, Qatar and Etihad Airlines have the best schedules to and from Iran. An arrival transfer is included; however the departure transfer is not and can be arranged on request.

Extra nights in Tehran: Extra nights can be booked pre and post tour but you must advise Travel on Q well in advance to ensure availability.

Visa for Iran: The visa process for Iran is not complicated, just bureaucratic. About 8 weeks before departure we will apply to our agent in Tehran for a visa code. Once this has been issued you can then apply for the visa at your nearest Embassy. If you would like us to process your visa, you **MUST be residing in Australia six weeks** prior to the departure of this tour. The cost of the visa, plus any processing fees, will be added to your final account. Alternatively, it is currently possible to obtain a 15-day Tourist Visa on arrival in Tehran.

Documentation: Upon receipt of your final payment, a comprehensive field guide will be mailed to you and you will be sent the relevant tour and accommodation vouchers prior to departure.

What next? Contact Travel on Q to discuss your travel plans and to make your booking. Further information is also available at www.byroads.com.au.

Byroads



www.byroads.com.au

Byroads Pty Ltd, Trading as Byroads Travel (ABN 88615738746)

BOOKING FORM

Byroads Travel is the operator of your tour. Byroads Travel (henceforth referred to as Byroads) is a registered trading name of Byroads Pty Ltd (ABN 88 615 738 746).

Travel on Q (Bonard Pty Ltd, ABN 40 059 566 184) acts as the sole booking agent for Byroads.

RESERVATION AND DEPOSIT

A deposit is payable on all tours. The amount payable is stated in the Byroads brochure. This deposit must be paid to Travel on Q and accompanied by a signed booking form. When paying a deposit for your tour and signing the Booking Form you accept these conditions.

Your Byroads tour will only be confirmed once the deposit and signed booking form have been received. This Booking Form forms the basis of your contract between you and Byroads.

Travel on Q is an agent of Byroads.

PAYMENT

Payments may be made to Travel on Q by direct deposit or by credit card. If paying by credit card the following surcharges will be applied to the cost of your tour arrangements: 1.65% for Visa and MasterCard, 2.26% for American Express, and 3.85 % for Diners Club.

FINAL BALANCE

The balance of your tour payment is due 60 days prior to the start of your tour. If, for any reason, the balance payment is not received by the due date, Byroads reserves the right to treat such failure to pay the balance as a cancellation and to apply the appropriate cancellation charges.

CANCELLATION BY YOU

If, for any reason, you cancel your tour booking, Byroads shall apply the following cancellation penalties. Charges are per person:

- *Cancellation up to 60 days prior to departure, forfeiture of the total deposit
- *from 59 to 45 days prior to departure, 30% of the tour price shall be retained
- * from 44 to 15 days prior to departure, 50% of the tour price shall be retained
- *within 14 days prior to departure, no refund will be made.

In addition to the above charges, cancellation fees may also apply to any domestic airfare component of your tour. No refund will be made after your tour has commenced or in respect of lost or unused tickets, hotel coupons, meals or any other services not utilised.

AMENDMENTS

Up to 60 days prior to the departure of your tour, any amendment to a confirmed reservation will incur a fee of \$50 per change per file, in addition to any change fees levied by Travel on Q, airlines, or any other service provider. From 59 to 30 days prior to departure, any amendment to confirmed travel arrangements will incur a fee, of \$100 per change per file. Once documents have been dispatched,

any amendment will incur a fee of \$150 per change per file.

TOUR PRICES

Byroads tour prices and provisional tour prices are based on tariffs and prevailing rates of exchange when tours were costed. Prices are subject to change without prior notice. In the event of fluctuations in currency exchange rates, service providers' tariffs, fuel prices or any other cost that affects the price of your tour, Byroads reserves the right to adjust tour prices at any time up to the day of departure.

TOUR OPERATION

Although Byroads will endeavour to ensure that tours are operated as advertised, an express condition of making a reservation is the acceptance by you that the tour itineraries, schedules, advertised accommodation, sightseeing and mode of transportation as outlined in the Byroads brochure and/or supplied in the pre-departure information are subject to change without prior notice. If for any reason Byroads is forced to cancel a tour before it commences, all monies paid in respect of the tour will be refunded in full less any credit card fees collected.

Unforeseeable circumstances such as force majeure, adverse weather conditions such as floods or earthquakes, airline flight rescheduling, technical faults with transportation and road conditions may also have a consequential effect on the content of your tour after it has commenced. Any decision made in respect of tour services provided by Byroads to reroute or amend the itinerary due to the above or similar circumstances shall be at the sole discretion of Byroads. Byroads and Travel on Q shall not be liable for any claim whatsoever arising from such events that affect the schedule and content of your tour

HEALTH AND FITNESS

Byroads operates soft adventure tours. All participants are required to be fit and healthy. Some of the hotels used by Byroads may not have lifts or porters so you must be prepared at times to carry your own suitcase. Before travelling with Byroads, it is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with any health requirements applicable to areas through which you will be travelling.

ACCEPTANCE OF RISK

You acknowledge that the nature of the trip is adventurous and participation involves a degree of personal risk. You will be visiting places where the political, cultural and geographical attributes present dangers and physical challenges greater than those present in our daily lives. We use information from government foreign departments and reports from our own contacts in assessing whether the itinerary should operate. However it is also your own responsibility to acquaint yourself with all relevant travel information and the nature of your itinerary. You acknowledge that your decision to travel is made in light of consideration of this information and you accept that you are aware of the personal risks attendant upon such travel.

PASSPORTS AND VISAS

Australian passport holders must have at least 6 months validity on their passport after the date of return to Australia. Visas are

required for a number of our tours and it is your responsibility to obtain them. Travel on Q can assist with this process. Non Australian passport holders are asked to check passport and visa requirements at the time of booking.

ITEMS NOT INCLUDED IN TOUR COST

The cost of your Byroads tour includes hotel accommodation, transportation, transfers as specified, sightseeing and meals as indicated in the tour brochure. It does not include international airfares, airport departure taxes, unspecified meals, optional sightseeing, additional transfers, gratuities for hotel staff, guides and tour leaders, items of a personal nature such as laundry, phone calls etc. or any other incidental expenses.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

It is an express condition of travelling with Byroads that you have comprehensive travel insurance including full cover for repatriation. It is highly recommended that you take out travel insurance at the time you pay the deposit to guard against any unforeseen circumstances. If on the first day of your tour you cannot provide evidence that you have purchased comprehensive travel insurance you will be required to purchase a policy before proceeding with your tour.

LIMITATION OF LIABILITY

We contract with a network of companies, government agencies and individuals to assist in the running of our trips as agent for these third parties. We are not responsible for the acts and omissions of these third parties. To the fullest extent permitted by law:

- (i) any liability for any loss, death, injury or damage which you may suffer (directly or indirectly) in connection with or arising out of your participation in a trip, or any breach of the Booking Conditions, is excluded;
- (ii) Travel on Q acts only as agent for Byroads and accepts no responsibility for the acts and omissions of Byroads or any of its associated service providers for any inaccuracies in information provided, negligence, loss, damage, omission, accident, detention, diversion or theft in regard to luggage or any personal belongings whatsoever.
- (iii) you release Byroads and its officers, employees, agents and representatives from any liability and expressly waive any claims you may have against us arising out of or in connection with your participation in a trip; and
- (iv) any condition or warranty which would otherwise be implied by law into these Booking Conditions (Implied Warranty), is excluded

To the extent an Implied Warranty cannot be excluded, our liability in respect of the Implied Warranty is limited to (in our absolute discretion): (a) the provision of a similar trip to an equivalent value; or (b) a refund of the total amount received by us from you in connection with your booking.

Any claim by you is excluded to the extent that it is for indirect or consequential loss, loss of profits or economic loss, however it arises, or for indirect, special, punitive or exemplary damages.

APPLICABLE LAW

The laws of Victoria, Australia govern these Booking Conditions to the fullest extent allowable. Any disputes in connection with a trip or these Booking Conditions must be initiated in the courts Victoria, Australia.