

EBook



Artin Travel

Why Iran



Why do I need to travel to Iran?

In a world saturated with so much negative propaganda against Iran, why should Iran make it to your travel list? We say why not?!

Let's look at the matter through Artin Travel Group's perspectives:



- With a history of 4700 years, the journey of Iran has gone through marvelous chapters of bravery, friendship, betrayal, war, destruction, revolution and resurrection.
- This deep history has won Iran a rich and multidimensional culture. Arts, architecture, music and literature perfectly reflect the identity and history of the people living on this piece of land.
- Geographical diversity is only one of the gains of 1,648,195 square kilometers of land. Even though the country enjoys four seasons across the year, thanks to Iran's location, sometimes you can enjoy three seasons at once. That is to say, in the winter, while people spend the weekend skiing in the north of Iran, in the center people enjoy hiking and camping in the desert, while some others go swimming in the Persian Gulf in the south of Iran.
- Iran is one of the most affordable destinations for travelers.
- Iranian cuisine speaks to different tastes and captures many hearts. Iranian dishes are a mix of rich nutrients, spices and colors that are impossible to resist.
- Still wondering? Go through our Iran travel guide and collect all reasons you may need to see Iran.



What should I know about Iran?



Area and provinces:

Iran spans over an area of 1,648,195 square kilometers in western Asia. As the second largest country in the Middle East, Iran has 31 provinces. The provinces of Kerman and Qom constitute the largest and smallest provinces respectively, while the province of Tehran houses the highest population in the country.



Population and ethnicities:

Iran's population is estimated at 83,228,193 million as of 2019, with an impressive ethnic diversity. The ethnic Iranian groups constitute Persians, Kurds, Turkmen, Azerbaijanis, Gilaks, Mazandarani, Lurs, Baloch, Talysh, Tats, Arabs, Armenians, Assyrians and Jews.



Geography:

Nature of Iran has all that a nature lover could ask for. The Caspian Sea in the north, the Persian Gulf and Oman Sea in the south engulf the country, while Alborz mountain ranges stretch in its north and Zagros mountain ranges extend all the way from the north west to the south east of the country.

While the northern stretch of Iran is covered by the UNESCO World Heritage Hyrcanian forests, the center of the country is occupied by large deserts where the highest surface temperatures of the earth have been recorded (in Kalut Shahdad, Lut desert). But that's not all! Few steps further down, the southern islands of the Persian Gulf contain the Unesco Geo-parks of Qeshm Island.

Additionally, pristine valleys, lakes, and small jungles can be found scattered everywhere in the country.

The winters tend to get really cold especially in the northern provinces and the summers are hot and dry especially in the southern and eastern provinces.



Religion:

The official religion of Iran is Islam, but Iran is also home to a large population of Christian and Jewish believers who live in peace and harmony as one nation next to each other.





Language:

Farsi is the official language of the country; but as different ethnic groups also live in Iran, dialects of Farsi and different languages such as Kurdish, Turkish, Azeri, Arabic, Baluchi, Armenian etc. can also be heard in the country. Also, most people know English and welcome the experience of practicing their English with travelers.



When is the best time to see Iran?

The high season for travelers to Iran are in the Spring and Fall. In the Spring, the season starts in March, reaches its peak in May and slows down by the end of June. Even though tourists keep visiting the country during the summer, the next high season starts in September and continues to late November. Just the same, Iran does not cease to be the travelers' destination during the winter either.



Iran Safety



Is It Safe to Travel to Iran?

The question of safety in Iran has been raised more than once by people wishing to see the country, and the answer is a confident "Yes". Iran has been considered as safe as many other countries in Europe and North America by Forbes Magazine. In fact, Iran is one of the safest countries in the region. Crime rates in Iran are not zero, but specially the major cities are very safe day and night.

Even so, just as in any other place in the world, it is better to avoid touring alone outside your accommodation during late hours, and be careful about your personal belongings in crowded places.



Is it safe to travel alone in Iran?

Absolutely YES! But of course, consulting common sense and caution is required at all times. Iran has become one of the popular destinations for solo travelers in the recent years; this fact alone testifies to the safety and security of the country for traveling alone. Moreover, the hospitality of Iranians makes a natural resourceful support system for travelers.



Is Iran safe for women?

Safety in Iran belongs to all, this means women live safely in the country. Again, this is not to say that no crimes occur against women in Iran, but the rates are low.

Female travelers only need to follow the dress codes explained later in this travel guide. They can go sightseeing or shopping alone, order food alone, get a taxi alone, you name it! It's only better to avoid strolling outside alone during late hours and after midnight, or go accompanied.

How safe is Iranian transportation?

While we cannot brag about driving standards in Iran, safety in Iranian public transportation is a fact. Many Iranians prefer using the public transportation because of its safety. Just be more careful with your belongings when the vehicles are packed with people during the rush hours.

Note:

Sometimes regular cars also serve as taxis, remember to only get on taxis that are marked by a taxi sign or painted in yellow. When using online taxis, the information for your online taxi matches the one on the car plate that stops by your location.



Note:

Traffic in Iran and especially the capital Tehran can be quite upsetting, but the public transportation system is accessible throughout the day and night.



How safe are the streets of Iran?

Other than Iranians' driving habits, street safety in Iranian cities makes traveling and exploring more enjoyable.

How safe are accommodation in Iran?

Safe accommodation in Iran should be the last of a traveler's concerns, as licensed hotels, hostels, traditional houses and ecolodges in Iran cannot be anything but safe. Artin Travel Agents always have the best recommendations for travelers.



Note:

Since you can find hotels for really affordable prices easily, it's better to avoid staying at locals' houses to the best of your ability. In addition to this, please remember that Couchsurfing and Airbnb services are considered illegal in Iran, and there is no way for a recompensation in case anything happens.



How can I get an Iran visa?

Iran visa policy may sound too complicated for first-time travelers; you may wonder if it's easy to get an Iran visa and the answer is a confident YES. In fact, it's so easy we can sum it up in 5 general steps:

Prepare your documents.

Apply for an authorization code.

Pick up your visa (for those applying through embassies or those making a land entry).

Travel to Iran.

Have your visa issued at the airport (for those applying for a visa on arrival).

But to make sure you know which is which and what happens in each step, let's go a little further into details.

How it works

Prior to getting your visa issued, you need to submit the required documents. They will be checked, and in case they are correct and authentic, you will be issued an authorization code. Once you get this code, it means, you will get a visa and can enter Iran. In case of any problems, you will not receive this code and you will be informed accordingly.

As the government of Iran does not issue a visa sticker on your passport, you will receive your visa on a separate sheet of paper. If you apply through an embassy, they will send you the document. In case you apply online, you will receive this document at the airport.



Done!

What are my options for applying for a visa?

There are generally speaking three ways through which you can apply for a visa:

1. Travel agencies based in Iran

2. The e-visa website for the Foreign Affairs Ministry of Iran and visa on arrival (evisa.mfa.ir)

3. Embassies and consulates of Iran in different countries

1. Travel agencies based in Iran

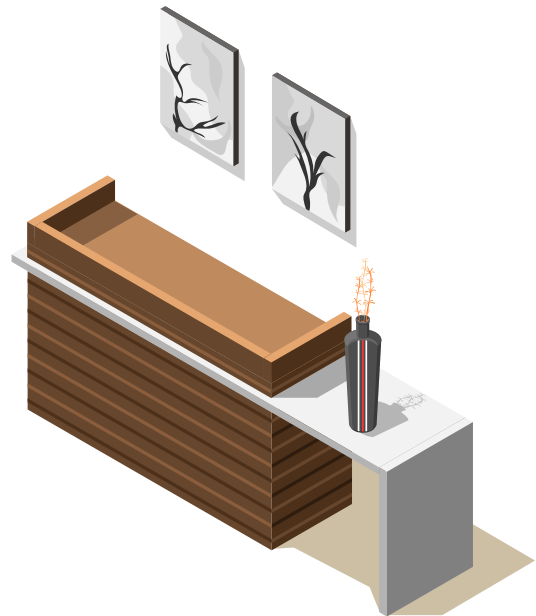
Traveling to a new destination is very exciting, but let's face it, paperwork for the visa can be confusing. That's only normal, as we hardly know the country and its rules and regulations. And Iran is no exception. So, the best way to acquire a visa to Iran is via a trusted and professional travel agency in Iran which can provide the best travel advisory and recommendations for the entire trip.

Why do I need to apply for an Iran tourist visa via a travel agency?

The number one obvious reason is that it saves you from the need to go through all the rules, keeping in mind all details, the trouble of applying and having to wait until someone at the embassy calls you, or the website confirms or rejects your application just because a single document was missing. In order to get a visa to Iran, you need to have a host; otherwise, the chances of getting a visa are very low. Artin Travel Agency is an official and reliable host and will be in charge of your trip during your stay in Iran.

The agents at Artin Travel Agency are always on call, take care of the smallest details, and get your visa at the shortest period of time possible.

In case you like to apply for a visa on arrival and you just need an authorization code, then Artin Travel Agency can get it for you in only 5 Iranian working days depending on your nationality (this process can be much longer for Canadians, Americans and British people).



Steps

a. Contact Artin Travel Agency

If you are an individual or a group of travelers, contact Artin Travel Agency to communicate your preferred travel schedule. They will reply immediately and set an appointment with you, if necessary.

Visa experts at Artin Travel Agency apply for the visa authorization code which is the most important document for this process. The document is required if you are applying for a visa at an embassy or an airport

b. Submit the required documents

The visa expert will ask for the required documents, they will check if any documents are missing and start the process once they have all the necessary information.

c. Receive your visa

Your visa authorization code will be emailed to you. You can present it at the embassy or airport.

2. The e-visa website for the Foreign Affairs Ministry of Iran and visa on arrival (evisa.mfa.ir)

Iran visa on arrival is issued at its international airports. The process is quite easy, you just need to make sure to carry along the required documents and allow a couple of extra hours at the airport. However, as airports tend to get busy, and long waiting lines are the last thing a passenger wants, we strongly recommend that travelers start the process prior to their trip by visiting evisa.mfa.ir and get their authorization codes in advance. This will also eliminate the chance of traveling all the way to Iran and being rejected at the airport.

Note:

Visa on arrival is not available for citizens of some countries. Here is the list of countries not eligible for Iran's visa on arrival at the moment:



Afghanistan



Colombia



Bangladesh



Iraq



Jordan



Nepal



Somali



Sri Lanka



The United Kingdom



Canada



Yemen



Pakistan



The United States of America



Citizens of the above mentioned countries must apply via the embassy, consulate or official representative of Iran in their countries.

In addition, as Iran visa on arrival is only issued at the international airports, travelers entering the country through Iran's land borders have to apply for an Iran visa via embassies.

How can I get my Iran visa on arrival?

Once landed in the airport, you need to go to the visa on arrival counter, fill in the application form and present your documents. If you wish to start the process for a visa on arrival before traveling to Iran, follow these steps.

Steps

a. Apply

Head to <https://evisatraveller.mfa.ir/en/request/> and start your application. Here you need to determine your visa type, follow the instructions and fill out the visa application form. Please make sure to choose English as your keyboard language.



What documents do I need for Iran visa on arrival?

- A completed application form
- Original passport (valid for at least 6 months)
- Digital passport image
- Passport size digital photo
- Travel itinerary
- Resume
- Some other information

b. Email verification

After completing the first step, you will be asked to verify your email address. This is because your evisa application submission verification notice and all the communication for your visa will be delivered to you in your email. Changes in application status will also be reported to you through your email address.

After the approval for your application, a visa authorization code will be emailed to you. You need to present this document in the airport along with your passport and travel insurance. At this stage you need to complete only one more step before entering Iran.

C. Purchase a travel insurance

Please check a few pages down this guide for more information on travel insurance.

d. Pay Iran visa fee

Your visa fee depends on your country of origin. Make sure to have enough cash to cover the expenses.

e. Welcome to Iran!

3. Embassies and consulates of Iran in different countries

You can apply for a visa through Iran's embassies and consulates in different countries. This method is advised for entries through both the airports and the land borders.

How can I apply for an Iran tourist visa via an embassy or consulate?

Steps

- a.** Find the list of Iranian embassies and consulates to different countries and choose the embassy closest to where you live.
- b.** Contact them, learn how visa procurement process works with them and set yourself an appointment.
- c.** Submit a scanned copy of your passport and a digital photo (passport size) and download the application form.
- d.** Get an authorization number

Note:

It is better to apply for an authorization number via a host; it can be a relative, a trusted friend, a business partner, or a travel agency. While you can get the code on your own, it is better to have a host inside Iran apply for the detailed guidance and ease of the process. Artin Travel Group saves you time and spares you the trouble of paperwork, and gets an authorization code in 5 Iranian working days

e. Prepare the required documents to submit at the embassy

Passport (your original passport with 6 months validity)

Two copies of your passport

Two passport size photos

Completed Iran visa application form

Complete travel itinerary

Resume (for citizens of the UK, US and Canada)

Authorization number issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran

Hotel reservation with a complete information about the hotel

Iran visa fee

f. Pay your visa fee

g. Collect your visa

Note:

Based on the case load at the embassy and the state of your documents, you may either receive your visa on the same day, or in a few days. The embassy will let you know.

h. Purchase a travel insurance

Note:

While this step may not be required for your visa procurement at the embassy, you may need to provide one before entering Iran. Make sure to get a travel insurance with Artin Travel Agency or from a company in your country of origin (read more on our Travel Insurance section).

Where should the citizens of the United States and Canada apply?

With the absence of diplomatic relations between Iran and United States and Canada, Citizens of these countries can apply to the Interest Section of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Washington DC. We encourage American and Canadian citizens to apply via Artin Travel as an official travel agency, so as to avoid visa rejection.



Travel Insurance

Do I need travel insurance for Iran?

Absolutely YES! Having travel insurance is one of the indispensable necessities for travelers.

What travel insurance should I use in Iran?

Travelers can purchase a travel insurance at their home country and carry the document with themselves in Iran. As it's important to make sure the company covers Iran, the name of "Iran" or "Islamic Republic of Iran" should be mentioned in the document.

Travelers can also purchase a travel insurance at Imam international airport (IKA) on arrival. At the airport, the insurance desk is located opposite the visa desk (you should visit the insurance desk first).

How can I purchase an Iranian travel insurance?

As mentioned, you can purchase an insurance at your home country. Additionally, Artin Travel Agency purchases travel insurance for the duration of travelers' stay in the country and helps them avoid paperwork or waiting in the airport.

Also, for travelers who enter Iran via land borders, the best decision would be to trust Artin Travel Agency, as there are no travel insurance counters in any of the land borders of Iran. How it works is easy and sweet. You will send us your information and we will deliver you insurance document in only 2 working days in your inbox.

However, travelers who arrive at Imam international airport can purchase an Iranian travel insurance there. The insurance counter is located opposite the visa counter. Upon landing, first purchase your insurance and then proceed with your visa.



How can I travel across Iran?

Travel in Iran has become one of the most interesting activities for world-travelers during the recent years. There is so much to see and experience and the country has so much to offer that there really is not one way for traveling across Iran. But as nothing compares to time well spent at a new destination, you need to make informed decisions and make the most of your time with an optimized and well scheduled itinerary.

Artin Travel group offers Iran travel packages and tailors tours of Iran according to travelers' interests and time. Tourism experts at Artin Travel spend 30-40 minutes meeting individual travelers online to learn about their interests and offer the best customized tours of Iran. Artin Travel group also operates memorable group tours for travelers from around the world. Traveling across Iran is the best chance to create a wonderful experience with your group of friends

While classic tours of Iran are always available, travelers can choose from the best Iran tours organized by our group, based on their interests, preferences, budget, preferred travel duration and traveling season. Pick any of our tours, customize them and have an experience of a lifetime:

Classic and Cultural Tours

- ▣ **Iran North West Tour** includes exploration in the north-western region of Iran in 8 days.
- ▣ **8 Days 8 Unesco World Heritage Tour** focuses on visiting Unesco World Heritage Sites in classic tourist destinations in 8 days.
- ▣ **Iran Discovery Tour in a Glimpse** travels through the classic tourist destinations of Iran for 8 days.

Active And Adventure Tours

- ▣ **Caspian Green Belt Tour** promises adventure along the million-years-old Hyrcanian forests in northern Iran, bringing together the best of nature and culture in Iran in 7 days.
- ▣ **Iran Desert Expedition** is the tour of a lifetime. Travelers from all over the world pick our Iran desert tours which follows Iran's desert map through its most fascinating landscapes for 8 days. Sightseeing in the central cities of Iran, hiking and camping in Iran's deserts, seeing Iran's desert animals, and listening to the story of life in the desert are the highlights of this tour.
- ▣ **Iran Dizin and Shemshak Ski Tour** offers 8 days of adventure over the highlands of Alborz mountain ranges in Iran.

Iranian Life Experience

- ▣ **Iran Nomad Tours** are among our most popular tours, as they bring travelers into the heart of local experience in Iran, and put them in the perspective of Iran's nomadic tribes' lifestyle.

Iran Culture And Venture Tour

If you're looking for an all inclusive and engaging experience of Iran's classic tourist destinations, then this 12 days-long tour is for you

What is the difficulty level of adventure tours?

Adventure tours are designed to be inclusive of the majority of our tourists. That is, they have a moderate level of difficulty, mostly because of occasional long hiking trails.

What do I need to carry along for adventure tours?

In addition to clothing and daily hygiene products, travelers are suggested to have backpacks which will accommodate all their belongings, comfortable shoes for walking and hiking, reusable water bottles, etc. For our ski tours, travelers should bring their own skiing instruments.

How many days are enough to see Iran?

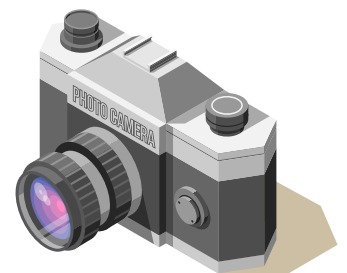
Estimating the number of days for visiting depends on the travelers' interests and travel duration.

Tours are usually of 10-15 days long and cover the classic traveling route across Iran (Tehran, Kashan, Isfahan, Yazd, Shiraz).

Is it better to travel alone or with a group?

Traveling in Iran is fun by all means. While solo travelers bring back the most precious memories of Iran and Iranians, group travelers also savour unforgettable moments with their travel-mates and friends from their interactions with Iran and its people.

Where can I take a photo?



While taking photos is the most admired tourist activity, you will frequently come across signs asking you to not take a photo, or do so with your camera's flash turned off. Please make sure to check the signs or get your travel guide's affirmation before taking a photo.

Also, taking photos in some natural attractions such as national parks or caves is either completely forbidden or require a special license. More significantly, using drones to make helishots is also either forbidden altogether in some areas or allowed with a special licesce. Please check with Artin Travel Agency whether you need to have the license in question in your desired location.



Accommodation



Where should I stay in Iran?

Different kinds of accommodation offer their services to travelers in Iran, such as hotels, boutique hotels, hostels, motels, guest houses, traditional houses and ecolodges.

Please remember that Airbnb and Couchsurfing services are considered illegal in Iran. You might still come across people who use Couchsurfing, but you chose to use the service solely at your own discretion.

This means no one will be held accountable in case any problems occur.

Additionally, as Iranians are really friendly and hospitable people. They might invite you to stay over. More often that not, it's okay to accept the invitation, but then again it's not recommended.



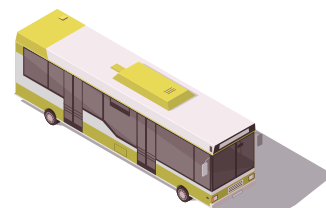
What are the most popular kinds of accommodation for tourists?

Even though there is no one size fit all rule, tourists usually look for a new experience that helps them capture the essence of Iran, its lifestyle and food while enjoying a comfortable rest defined by world class standards.

Here at Artin Travel Agency, we make sure our travelers' convenient stay by recommending the best accommodation based on our travelers' preferences, closeness to tourist attractions and quality of service.

Transportation

Considering the time and safety, arranging transportation with the travel agency is the best option. But it's also good to know that traveling in Iranian cities is quite easy thanks to accessible public transportation systems.



Buses:

Several lines of buses travel across the cities. You just need to find a bus stop, learn which line passes by your destination and get on.

Locals use special public transportation cards for payment, which are charged electronically. It is also possible to pay for the ride in cash, but it will cost twice the price of the digital ticket.



Taxies:

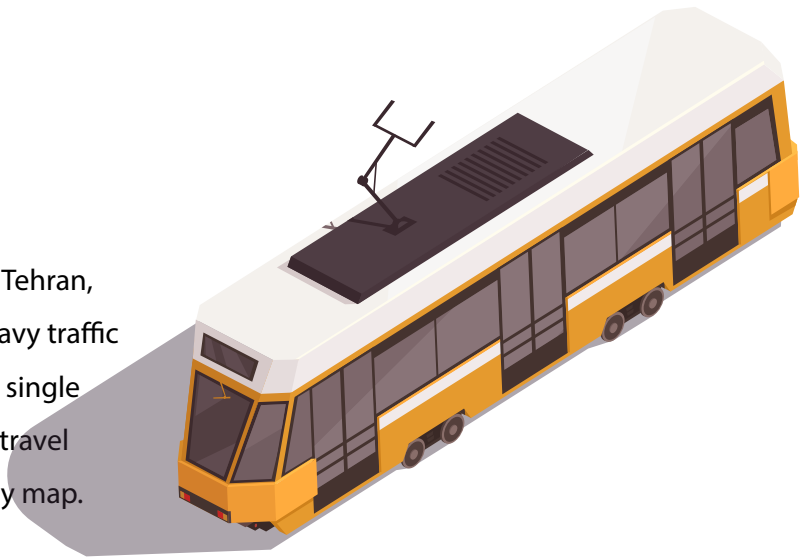
You can get a cab almost anywhere in the city, but remember that there are different kinds of taxis.

- **Taxi service agencies** provide cars for individual passengers. Their cars arrive at your door and remain at your service for as long as you wish. You can either call the nearest taxi service agency or get a car in the agency
- **Regular taxis** are available down the major streets and avenues. You just have to stand by the street and flag down a car that is either colored in yellow, or has a taxi service sign or logo attached to the top or side of the car.
- **Online Taxies** are commonly used inside major cities in Iran. **Snapp!** and **Tap30** are the most popular cell-phone applications you can use to commute to different destinations inside the city. Online taxis usually charge less than regular taxis and you can pay either in cash or online, using an Iranian debit card. You can order one whenever and wherever; they are pretty accessible and easy to use. The only problem is that IOS phone users might not have access to these applications on apple store, due to the sanctions imposed by the United States. If so, you should visit their websites and get the installation instructions there.



Subway:

Good news is that in major cities such as Tehran, Tabriz and Isfahan it's possible to skip heavy traffic jams by using the subway. You can get a single travel ticket at the subway entrance and travel wherever you want, following the subway map.



What kinds of transportation are available for traveling between cities?

Iran is a vast country, which means the cities are mostly located at long distances from each other. Traveling between cities of Iran has been made easy thanks to different kinds of transportation methods that offer frequent services.

- **Buses** are the most popular option for traveling between cities. Besides their frequent services, buses are quite safe, affordable and comfortable.

For the tickets, you can always trust your travel agent. You can also go to bus terminals in the cities and buy a ticket there without prior booking. We strongly recommend you to book your ticket few days before your departure date, as tickets get sold out very quickly especially during high seasons.



- **Trains** operate over different lines across the country. Even though they might access all of the cities of Iran, they cover major cities in north, south, east and west.



- **Planes** fly regularly to all of the provinces of Iran. Even though flights are not as regular as bus services, considering the number of hours they cut from traveling between the cities, traveling by plane is a wise decision.

