

A total of 30 historical buildings and aging structures, which are located in South Khorasan province, have been restored since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21), the deputy provincial tourism chief has said. "Restoration projects completed on 30 historical monuments across South Khorasan during the first half of the current year," Ali Shariatimaneh announced. A budget of 40 billion rials (some \$952,000 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) was allocated to the renovation projects, he noted. South Khorasan is home to some 1,600 historical monuments such as Ab-Anbars (underground cisterns), mosques, madrasas, caravanserais, edifices, and Hammams (public bathhouses), the majority of which date from the Qajar era (1789–1925), the official explained.

Historical 30 Monuments Restored in Eastern Iran

Iconic Azadi Tower Welcomes Visitors after COVID Shut Adown

Borj-e Azadi (Azadi Tower), widely known as the most iconic landmark of the Iranian capital, reopened to visitors on Sunday after some five months of closure caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Completed in 1971, the structure has a very distinct style that merges traditional Persian architecture with modern influences one can see this quite clearly by its big iwan arch that is covered with 8,000 pieces of white marble.

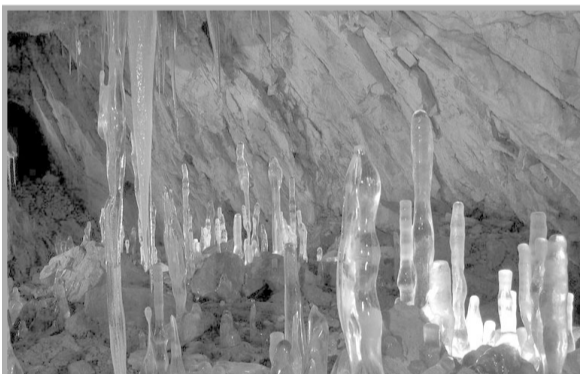
Azadi Square, where the tower sits, is very symbolic too: a lot of protests happened there during the 1979 Islamic Revolution, and it's still a popular site for demonstrations today. Visitors can climb Azadi Tower using the elevator or stairs to get a nice view of the city from the top.

The Islamic Republic is set to resume tourist visas by next month after months of suspension amid strict government measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus, tourism minister Ezzatollah Zarghami announced on September 27 concurrent with World Tourism Day.

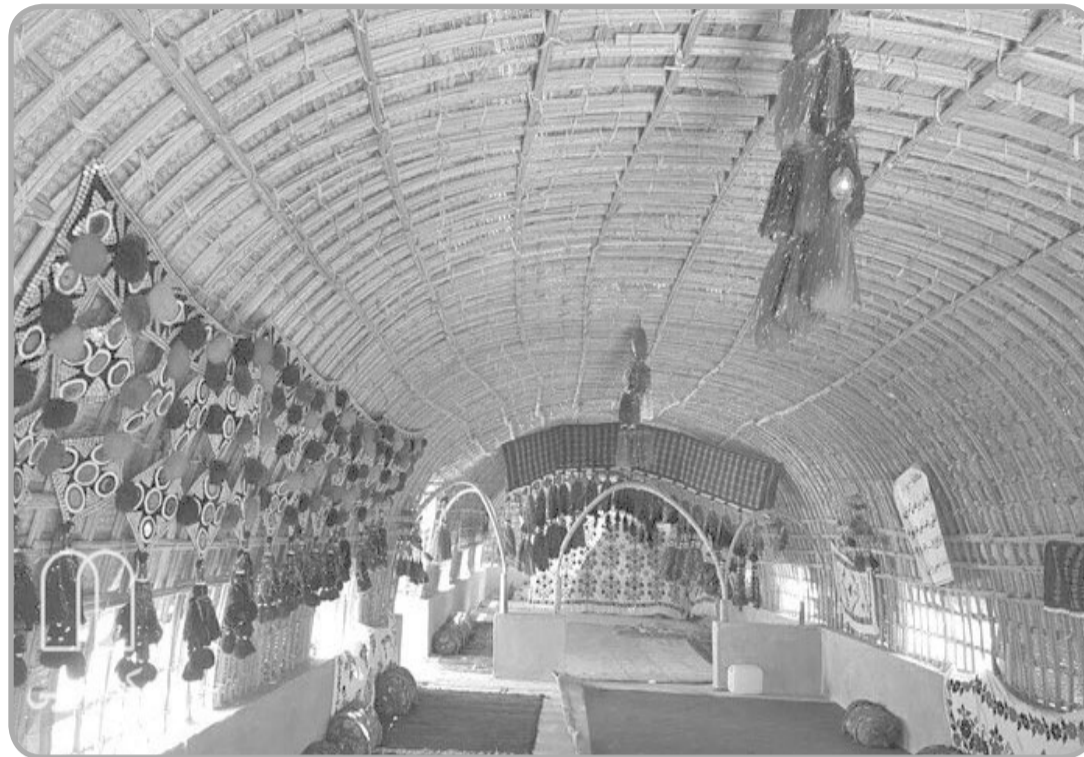


YakhMorad Cave: One of The Attractions of Iran's Chalous Road

The 'YakhMorad' cave is a lesser-known tourist attraction of Alborz province, located 65 kilometers away from Tehran, on the Tehran-Chalous road. The entrance to the cave is reachable from the higher alti-



tudes, but the path leading to the cave is downhill. Having reached the heart of the mountain, one will face the frozen springs and the porous, sponge like stalactites of the cave. YakhMorad is a multi-level cave, reaching a height of 30 meters at some points. The formation of the cave is estimated to have taken place 50 million years ago under the sea. Because of the cave's numerous caverns, no one has ever reached the end. In almost every cave in Iran, steam and vapor combined with a lack of air circulation have led to a 10-degree temperature difference during the cold months of the year, keeping them warmer than the outside. In YakhMorad cave, however, the story is quite different. If you plan to visit the cave do not forget to bring a hat and warm clothes since the temperature is mostly below zero. A unique characteristic of the cave is that its walls and caverns are always covered with ice in all seasons. In the past, the locals believed that the ice has a healing effect, curing infertility. The best times to visit the cave are March and April, when the region is covered in snow.



Eco-lodge Complexes Inaugurated in Sistan-Baluchestan

Three eco-lodge complexes have recently been inaugurated in southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan on the occasion of the National Day of Village and Nomads, observed annually on October 7, a local tourism official has announced. With a total budget of three billion rials (\$71,400 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar), two eco-lodges came on stream in Chabahar county in close collaboration with the private sector, Hossein-Ali Sarhadi said. An eco-lodge unit also opened in Taftan county with a budget of 17 billion rials (\$404,700), the official added.

A total of 50 people can be accommodated in these units, and 10 people are directly employed, he noted. The province currently has some 51 eco-lodge units active, and there should be a boom in ecotourism following the resumption of tourism, he mentioned. "The majority of my travels during my tenure has been to Sistan-Baluchestan, which I consider as a safe province with significant values in terms of culture, history, handicrafts, and tourism."

The collective province -- Sistan in the north and Baluchestan in the south -- accounts for one of the driest regions of Iran with a slight increase in rainfall from east to west, and an obvious rise in humidity in

the coastal regions. In ancient times, the region was a crossword of the Indus Valley and the Babylonian civilizations.

The province possesses special significance because of being located in a strategic and transit location, especially Chabahar which is the only ocean port in Iran and the best and easiest access route of the middle Asian countries to free waters.

The vast province is home to several distinctive archaeological sites and natural attractions, including two UNESCO World Heritage sites, namely Shahr-e-Soukhteh (Burnt City) and Lut desert.

The tourism ministry has set a target to help build 2,000 eco-lodges by 2021, believing such guest houses could cater to sustainable development and job creation in the countryside and rural areas. Experts say each eco-lodge unit generates jobs for seven to eight people on average so that the scheme could create 160,000 jobs.

The culturally diverse country never disappoints visitors when it comes to eco-tourism, sightseeing, and even tribal tourism as it is home to many regional people including ones with Turk and Arab elements in addition to the Kurds, Baloch, Bakhtyari, Lurs, and other smaller minorities such as Armenians, Assyrians, Jews, and others.

KaniGrawan Spring: Amazing Site for Relaxation West of Iran



KaniGrawan is a wonderful spring located in mountainous areas near Sardasht in Iran's West Azarbaijan Province. Thanks to the salt and minerals existing in its water, it has a colorful and beautiful bedding that is suitable for treatment of pains and relaxation.

It is located 12 kilometers northeast of Sardasht and is one of the important tourist attractions of the city. The spring is situated next to a village called KaniGuz in the southeast of the Zab basin, where water comes out of the mountains.

The amount of soluble salts in it is about 1 gram per liter. The colorful bedding of the spring distinguishes it from other springs.

The water is cold and not drinkable because of salinity. The limestone structure of the spring is about 20 meters high and has been deformed over time. If you reach the highest point of this spring, you will hear the sound of sprinkling water clearly. The small Zab River passes by the spring, which is one of the region's richest rivers in the springtime. The water of this spring floats to the Zab River.

The Vali Castle: A Monument of Qajar Period in Ilam City

The Vali Castle was built in the year 1326 (Lunar Hegira) on the order of Gholamreza Khan Fili in an area called Hossein Abad Fili which was known as the Upper Village, on the hill of ChegaMirak in the middle of a mountain of the Ilam region, west of Iran. The castle has a height of about 4 meters with the facade facing south and almost trapezoidal in shape with the foundations equal to 1466 / 01 square meters and 1363 / 4 square meters of internal courtyard area. On the north

side there is a main hall (shahneshin) whose dimensions and internal dimensions are larger than the other rooms. At the center of the living room there is a small fountain decorated around and inside with marble that during the reconstruction was embellished with colored tiles. This fountain was built near a spring which at that time was rich in water but with the passage of time it dried up. The presence of cross-linked parapets in turquoise bricks, covered terraces on the south side, along with

lattice windows with colored glass, the columns with circular section, the ones carved in the iwan, the vaulted arches, the decorations and the workings on of them with colored tiles, the tall and ancient pine trees and the rectangular fountain in the anterior space, all these elements gave the castle a scenic look. Most of the rooms had internal communication and were built one inside the other. The 50% of this castle was destroyed during the Iran-Iraq war and was rebuilt.



cooking



Eggplant rice or Bademjan Polo

Eggplant rice or Bademjan Polo (Bademjan: Eggplant, Polo: Rice) is a delicious and nutritional Iranian dish popular in northern provinces of Iran. Bademjan Polo or Eggplant Rice contains very high amounts of vitamin B6 and vitamin B12, as well as high amount of iron.

Ingredients:

- 1 Lb (453g) Rice
- 1.5 Lb (680g) Eggplants
- 8 oz (227g) Ground Beef
- 1 Onion
- 1 Tomato
- Vegetable Oil
- Curry Powder
- Turmeric, Salt, Black Pepper

Directions:

- 1- Fry the eggplant with vegetable oil on both sides. Adding salt on each side.
- 2- In a separate pot, fry the diced onions with vegetable oil until golden.
- 3- Stir in the beef and continue frying until the beef just turns brown.
- 4- Stir in curry powder, turmeric, and pepper.



- 5- Stir in the tomatoes and continue sizzling for couple of more minutes.
- 6- Boil the soaked rice for 10 to 15 minutes over medium heat.
- 7- Drain and rinse the rice with cold water few times.
- 8- Grease a large pot with vegetable oil (Approx. 2 tbsp).
- 9- Transfer half of the rice over onto the pot.
- 10- Top the rice with the layer of the beef mixture.
- 11- Top the beef with a layer of eggplants.
- 12- Cover with the remaining of the rice.
- 13- Sir 2 tbsp vegetable oil with salt and 2 tbsp water and pour over the rice.
- 14- Cover the pot with a napkin and a lid.
- 15- Cook for 30 minutes or until well cooked