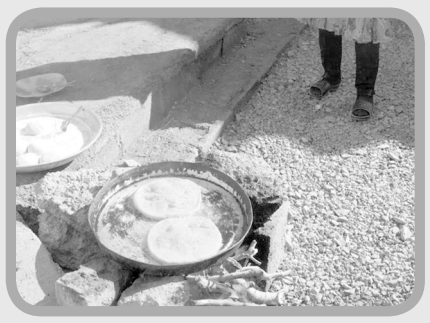
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## Oil-fried Bread Added to Intangible Heritage List

The traditional skill of making Nan-e Roghan-Jushi, an oil-fried bread deeply rooted in the cultural and religious traditions of South Khorasan province, has been inscribed on Iran's National Intangible Cultural Heritage List.

Fariba Kahani, an official responsible for intangible heritage registration at the provincial Department of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, said the bread is traditionally prepared on the 14th day of Sha'ban (the 8th lunar month) during the local religious observance known as Barat.

Kahani said the tradition reflects religious beliefs, charitable practices and family bonds. The skill has traditionally been passed down from mothers to daughters, with women playing a central role in preserving it.



# This Is the Most Expensive Vacation Destination in the World for 2026

A new study from Squaremouth reveals the world's costliest vacations, with Antarctica taking the top spot and African safari destinations dominating the ranking.

Lauren Dana Ellman is a New York-based writer and editor who specializes in travel, lifestyle, food, and shopping content.

While vacation costs can add up quickly, some trips come with a much bigger price tag than others—especially when they involve far-flung destinations, wildlife encounters, or once-in-a-lifetime experiences. Between airfare, accommodations, and excursions, a bucket-list getaway can get costly, with a new study showing costs approaching $30,000 for epic experiences. So, where are travelers spending the most? A new study from Squaremouth found that Antarctica is the most expensive destination to visit in 2026, with an average trip costing $27,195. The travel insurance marketplace based its findings on trip costs customers reported when purchasing coverage, along with the average length of their vacations. The data also broke down the cost per day.

According to the study, an Antarctic vacation averages 18 days among the company's customers, bringing the daily cost to about $1,511. However, much of the expense comes down to logistics, as most travelers reach Antarctica via an expedition ship departing from Ushuaia, Argentina, which typically means booking international flights before the voyage even begins. But some experiences are hard to put a price on. Antarctic cruises take travelers past towering icebergs, penguins, and seals, with opportunities to explore by small boat. Some also offer kayaking or camping, weather permitting. The specialized ships and crews needed to make these voyages possible are also a big part of the expense.

Across the globe, Botswana ranked second, offering a very different experience—though just as spectacular. For a 16-day trip, it costs an average of $24,411, or about $1,526 per day. The country is known for its safaris in places like the Okavango Delta and Chobe National Park, where visitors can see elephants, lions, and other wildlife. Logistics also contribute to the hefty price tag, as remote lodges, guided game drives, and flights between safari camps can quickly drive up costs.

Also in Africa, Rwanda came in third, with an average total trip cost of $24,138 for a 15-day stay. The country is especially known for mountain gorilla trekking in Volcanoes National Park, where permits and guided excursions can be expensive. At $1,609 per day, Rwanda had the highest average daily trip cost among the top 10 destinations.

Looking at the full top 10, safari destinations make up much of the list, with Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Namibia, Kenya, South Africa, and Zambia joining Botswana and Rwanda. Wildlife-focused trips weren't the only costly vacations, though. The study also highlighted luxury island destinations such as the Maldives, Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands, and Turks and Caicos, where high-end resorts can significantly increase a trip's cost.

# Restoration of Vank Cathedral underway ahead of UNESCO World Heritage bid

Restoration work on the southern and eastern sections of Vank Cathedral in Isfahan is underway as part of efforts to prepare the historic Armenian church for a potential nomination to UNESCO's World Heritage List, a provincial heritage official has said.

Speaking to IRNA on Monday, Hadi Allahyari, technical committee chief at the Isfahan provincial department of cultural heritage, tourism and handicrafts, said the conservation projects were being carried out in cooperation with the Armenian Diocese Council and the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts to improve the monument's preservation standards.

The eastern section had experienced structural settlement and cracks in its walls, prompting the installation of monitoring indicators in 2025 to track changes over time, Allahyari said.

Technical assessments also found that the roof structure and covering were unsuitable in terms of weight and quality, with materials dating back approximately 30 to 40 years. Following the preparation and approval of a restoration plan by the ministry, work began under the supervision of heritage authorities.

More than 1,000 square meters of the cathedral's rooftop have been restored, while conservation work on the Bishop's Hall, the first floor and adjoining spaces is nearing completion, he added.

The project also includes the modernization of the cathedral's aging heating and cooling systems in accordance with technical plans and international standards.Restoration of the southern section began in 2025 after years of deterioration caused partly by its proximity to an urban passageway and insufficient maintenance. Damaged plaster and mud coatings, malfunctioning gutters and deteriorated facades were among the problems addressed. The work has included repairing windows, removing old paint, restoring damaged surfaces and conserving the valuable southern entrance using its original architectural patterns. Traditional methods and materials have been employed to preserve the building's historic character, Yari said.



He expressed hope that continued cooperation between the Armenian Diocese Council and the cultural heritage ministry would help advance the cathedral's potential World Heritage nomination.Vank Cathedral, also known as the All Saviour's Cathedral, is a landmark of Isfahan's New Jolfa Armenian quarter. Approximately 350 years old, the church was built during the Safavid era under Shah Abbas II over a nine-year period.

Renowned for its gilded ceilings, dome decorations and historic religious paintings, the cathedral is considered one of Iran's most significant examples of Armenian religious architecture. It has served as a major center of the Armenian community in Isfahan and its religious and cultural connections with the wider Armenian world.

Perspective

## Semnan's Oral Heritage: A Living Reflection of History and Cultural Identity

Semnan province, with its ancient history and remarkable cultural heritage, is home to a rich collection of Iran's oral traditions, customs, traditional arts and local narratives.

These intangible cultural treasures, passed down through generations, reflect the historical identity and way of life of its people. Documenting and preserving them is essential to ensuring that the province's cultural legacy remains alive for future generations.



In a note, Fatemeh-Zahra Haghighi, a tourism lecturer and PhD student at Semnan University, highlights the importance of oral heritage as a means of connecting younger generations with their ancestors and understanding the historical and cultural roots of their homeland, Miras Aria reported on Monday.

Semnan's historical significance is evident in its numerous archaeological and architectural landmarks, including Tarikhaneh Mosque in Damghan, the Mirak, and Hissar archaeological mounds, and the thousand-year-old Seljuk-era minaret in Semnan. These monuments demonstrate the province's longstanding role in Iran's history. However, Haghighi emphasizes that preserving historical structures alone is insufficient. Traditional lifestyles, clothing, crafts, customs and personal accounts of the past must also be documented.

Haghighi also stresses that preserving oral heritage is a collective responsibility. By documenting the memories and experiences of older generations, communities can strengthen their cultural identity and ensure that their traditions, knowledge and historical narratives continue to reach future generations.

# Lake Annecy , Pearl of the French Alps

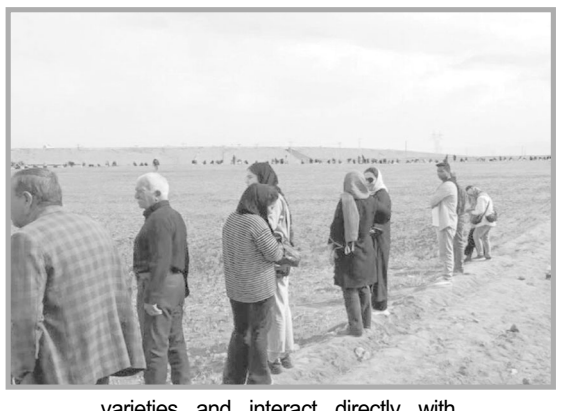


A serene lake view with a pier extending into the water, mountains and clouds in the background A pier stretching into Lake Annecy.

Europe has no shortage of pristine lakes—you'll find them across Italy, Switzerland, Austria, and beyond—but one of the most beautiful is France's Lake Annecy. Fed by mountain streams, this remarkably clear body of water is also a popular swimming spot with sandy beaches. The Old Town of Annecy, known as the "Venice of the Alps," is equally charming; you'll want to spend at least a few days exploring its canals, bridges, and other landmarks.

Lake Annecy is about 15 km long and has a surface area of about 27 km2, which is more than enough space to practise all sorts of water sports. The temperature of the water varies between 18 and 26 degrees during the summer, which makes it a pleasant temperature for swimming or diving. Other sports that are commonly practised on the lake are sailing, windsurfing, wakeboarding, paddleboarding, water skiing, jet skiing, canoeing and kayaking.

# Domestic, Intl. Tours Visit Saffron Farms in Northeast Iran



Fifteen domestic and international tourism tours have visited saffron farms and specialized saffron facilities in Torbat-e Heydarieh and Zaveh in northeastern Iran as part of agricultural tourism programs during the harvest season, a local tourism official said.

Ali Mohammadi, head of the departments of cultural heritage, tourism and handicrafts in Torbat-e Heydarieh and Zaveh, said the tours included visits to saffron fields, a flower market and a saffron research institute, offering visitors an opportunity to experience different aspects of saffron production, Miras Aria reported.The official did not specify the number of foreign tourists participating in the tours, their countries of origin or the period during which the 15 tours took place.

Mohammadi said this year's programs were designed around the concept of a "complete product experience," allowing tourists to engage with the production process rather than simply observe the finished product.The itineraries also included visits to the regional flower market, where visitors could explore the diversity of flower varieties and interact directly with farmers and distributors.Tourists also visited the saffron research institute and specialized saffron laboratories, where they were introduced to scientific advances in improving saffron quality, modern propagation techniques and pest management.Mohammadi said familiarization with saffron-based beverages and herbal infusions was another component of the tours, combining agricultural, scientific, commercial and culinary experiences. He said the integrated approach could help strengthen the tourism profile of Torbat-e Heydarieh and Zaveh internationally while drawing greater attention to the region's rural tourism potential and tangible and intangible cultural heritage.Torbat-e Heydarieh and Zaveh are located in Khorasan Razavi province, one of Iran's major saffron-producing regions. Saffron, widely known as "red gold," is a valuable agricultural commodity used extensively in Persian cuisine and traditional cultural practices.Iran is among the world's leading saffron producers, with cultivation concentrated largely in its eastern and northeastern regions. The annual harvest generally begins in early November, when the spice's purple flowers emerge across the fields.Agricultural tourism during the harvest season provides opportunities for visitors to experience saffron picking and learn about its cultivation and processing, linking the region's agricultural economy with its tourism industry.Last month, National Saffron Day, an annual festival held in various parts of Khorasan Razavi province, was officially registered as an international event on Iran's tourism calendar. A permanent secretariat was also established at the province's Chamber of Commerce to promote Iranian saffron and strengthen its value chain from production to export.



## Dafineh Museum Group to Offer Free Admission to Students

Students at all educational levels across Iran were admitted free of charge to museums affiliated with the Dafineh museum group on Nov. 4, marking Student Day.

Hamidreza Soleimani, managing director of the museum group, announced the initiative, saying the program would provide students nationwide with an opportunity to explore the museum collections free of charge.

The museums was opened to visitors from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., allowing students to become more familiar with Iran's historical, cultural and artistic heritage.

The museums participating in the program included the Museum of Iranian Art, Dafineh Museum Campus, Time Museum, Ramsar Museum Campus, Noor and Light Museum in Yazd, Tar-o-Pood Museum in Yazd, National Museum of Art of Isfahan, Millennia of Art Museum in Kish Island, and the Iran Historical Cars Museum Cultural Center.