

THE SPIRIT OF PERSIA

A Sufi-flavour tour of Iran: October 13-28, 2015

OVERVIEW

Iran has a very rich culture and history, including many nomadic groups and Sufi connections. Esfahan is famed for its exquisite architecture and mosques, and Yazd is an atmospheric desert town. Shiraz has the tombs of Hafiz and Saadi, along with gardens and tea houses. Iran's political isolation from the west has meant that numbers of tourists are low, but recent visitors report a really warm welcome. This tour is with a long-established tour operator in Shiraz, Pars Tourist Agency, see more at www.key2persia.com

This trip is a private guided tour for 8-12 people with a deep interest in the Sufi and nomadic culture of Iran. We will have plenty of time for the classic sights, along with experiencing Sufi teahouses and gardens, visits with desert nomads, and quiet time with mosques and Sufi Shrines.

ITINERARY & TIMING

Oct 13:	Arrive in Tehran.	Oct 20:	In Yazd
Oct 14:	Visit Tehran. Catch overnight sleeper train to Shiraz.	Oct 21:	To Esfahan
Oct 15,16	In Shiraz	Oct 22-24:	In/around Esfahan
Oct 17:	Persepolis, then overnight with desert nomads	Oct 25:	Abyaneh (mountain village) and Kashan, oasis town
Oct 18:	Pasargadae, and visit/overnight at Zeinoddin desert caravanserai	Oct 26:	Kashan and desert visit
Oct 19:	Saryazd (caravanserai) and Fahraj	Oct 27:	Drive to Tehran, Overnight hotel in Tehran
		Oct 28:	Depart

Late October is a good time to visit these parts of Iran: the weather is pleasantly warm, and the peak tourist season tapers off by mid-October.

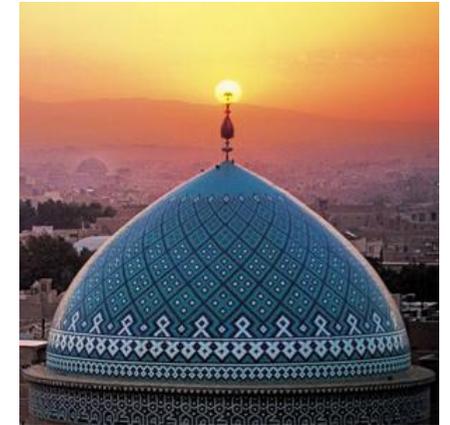


INDICATIVE COST

Tour Cost: UK £1,260, which includes all travel and accommodation within Iran, local guide, entry fees, breakfasts and lunch.

Additional local costs: allow around £400 for dinners, tips and visa fee.

Flights: the only direct flights from London to Iran are with Iran Air, three times per week. Indicative price £366 return, incl. taxes. Transport will be by private car, hotels 3-4 star. Single supplement £280.



TEHRAN TO KONYA BY TRAIN?

This is a potential extension to the Iran tour which will be doing anyway. There is a once-weekly train from Tehran to Turkey, with sleeper berths, which leaves Tehran on Wednesday evenings, includes a boat crossing of Lake Van, and reaches Ankara early on Saturday morning. From Ankara, there is now a high speed train to Konya in less than 2 hours. We would spend one night in Konya, (weekly sema whirling is on Saturday nights!) and then a couple of days in Cappadocia, catching a flight to London from Ankara on Wednesday, November 4. You can get details of the train/ferry trip and trains within Turkey at www.seat61.com. We can make a group booking if others wish to join us: indicative cost around £700 incl. Travel, hotels, food and guide in Cappadocia.

ORGANISERS

Alan Heeks is a longstanding member of the Ruhaniat, a liberal western Sufi order. Alan organised 10 group trips with Bedouin guides in the Tunisian Sahara: see more about these at www.living-organically.com. He has not visited Iran before, but has been researching this trip for some time.

WHAT NEXT?

If you are potentially or seriously interested, let me know. Feel free to email with any queries. You will need to make a definite commitment by June 2015, and in July you pay a 15% deposit for the Iran Tour, and some payment for the flights as well. **Contact me [here](#).**

