

# Deh Salm village in South Khorasan Province attractive for tourists and desert lovers



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With lush date-palm groves, domed mud-brick houses, rug-saddled camels and a distant backdrop of arid mountain ridges, it's hard to imagine a more archetypal oasis village than tiny Deh Salm, in the eastern province of South Khorasan, at least once you get past the tatty houses at its entrance.

A desert camp is being built as a base for jeep safaris to the Rigi Yalan, 35 kilometers to the south, for which Deh Salm is an access point. Rigi Yalan is a collection of very high sand dunes.

Those dunes offer exciting opportunities for four-wheel-drive or quad-bike rides, but military sensitivities mean that you'll need to get a fair bit of paperwork arranged before being allowed to visit: Tour agencies can arrange this for you, lonelyplanet.com reported.



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With an elevation of 815 meters above sea level, Deh Salm village is one of the regions having numerous beautiful and tall palm trees, which add to its beauty. Most rural people are

engaged in farming and animal husbandry. In fact, this village is known as the gateway to the Lut Desert. Deh Salm was the most important settlement on the ancient



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Shahdad-Nehbandan Road. This road has been of great commercial importance from the pre-Islamic era until 70 years ago. The road has been known as a commercial route linking Kerman to

Khorasan. Some ancient geographers, as well as several travelers of recent centuries, have mentioned this route. Some stories have been told about the naming of this village.

Some believe that it got its name from one of the generals of Abu Muslim Khorasani, a Persian general in service of the Abbasid Dynasty.

Others say that two brothers, named Salm and Tor, settled in this village, which later became known as Deh Salm.

According to another tradition, the first person who settled in the village was probably named Salm or Salim, and for this reason the village became known as Deh Salm.

Carpet-weaving, mat-weaving and needlework are among the popular handicrafts produced by the artisans of the village.

Deh Salm village is known as one of the important attractions of South Khorasan Province, which hosts a large number of tourists from various parts of the country every year.

## Flowers and plants in Persian miniatures

A limited range of recognizable flowers, plants and trees occurs in Persian miniatures but stylised plants also abound.

Sir John Chardin, a French jeweller and traveller, was entranced by flowers he saw in Iran during his 17th century travels: "The flowers of Persia by the vivacity of their colours are generally handsomer than those of Europe, and those of India. Several of the flowers he mentions can be identified in miniatures or on book covers but oddly enough crown imperials are very rarely included in Persian miniatures although the day lily often is. Irises, usually long stemmed purple varieties, occur over and over again.

Some like those in vases in Khamseh of Nizami are carefully drawn but the quality of plant drawing varies considerably and at its worst the plant is only just recognisable as in the late 16th century Shahnameh.

This also applies to the hollyhock which is probably seen at its best in 15th-century miniatures. Rose bushes are a feature of miniatures from the 14th century onwards, the roses almost invariably being pink although some of the lovely miniatures in the Shah Shahnameh of Tahmasp (now in the United States) do include white and yellow roses. This manuscript has a delightful miniature of Rod-

abeh's women attendants picking roses while they are waiting to meet Zal's pages. The British Library's manuscript dated 1396 of which the landscape of trees is reproduced also has a scene of festivity in a garden where women are picking red roses from a bush in the background.

Indeterminate and almost unidentifiable plants fill out the background in many miniatures even in those which have a few carefully drawn specimens and this is particularly so of plants growing on the banks of the stream which is so often put in the foreground of a composition. Peony plants with large flowers, narcissus, occasionally the vine and the

violet can be identified particularly in manuscripts of very fine quality such as the superb copies of the Shahnameh mentioned above and the other exquisite paintings done for Baysunghur in Herat.

These include two copies of the fables of Kalila and Demna in the Topkapi Saray Museum in Istanbul (which are usually on exhibition there) and another in the Golestan Palace Library in Tehran.

Flowers used as decoration or for gifts sometimes figure in miniatures such as the irises in vases or the narcissus in a vase presented to Fereydoun, an Iranian mythical king, or even in bouquets. An amusing and unusual

instance of the latter occurs in one of the 15th-century manuscripts of the Khamseh of Nizami in the Topkapi Saray Museum Library in Istanbul. Shirin is standing on her balcony watching Khosrow and his courtiers riding towards her castle each holding a large bunch of daisies in his hand.

Trees, in addition to the ubiquitous cypress, most often seen in Persian miniature paintings are the plane, the poplar and the willow. Flowering trees also occur widely and these vary, ranging from blossom which resembles variously, peach, apricot, pomegranate, prunus and Judas tree to those with very stylised flowers which cannot be identified.



Fereydoun presented with flowers in a vase

The above is a lightly edited version of part of a book entitled, *Plants and Gardens in Persian Mughal and Turkish Art*, written by Norah Tittley, published by British Library. The photo was taken from the book.