

Hospitality in Iran



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Iran has many stunning natural landscapes and many cultural and historical sites, and yet despite all these wonders, hospitality may be the number one reason you may want to visit the country. From little acts of kindness that warm up your heart to unforgettable shared moments, a trip to Iran is also the discovery of the true meaning of "hospitality". In this article, find out why Iranians may be the most hospitable people in the world, surfiran.com wrote.

Iranian hospitality is usually the first thing travelers remember from their trip to Iran. Maybe because of how deep this hospitality is, but also because it contrasts so much with what they may have heard about Iran and Iranians before. And even when you're prepared, and you've visited other welcoming countries, the experience usually goes beyond what you would have expected. Simply

have a look at the visitors' comments on forums and review websites and you'll soon realize that Iranians are what make Iran so special.

And that's nothing new. Already in ancient Persia, Western travelers recalled with awe the extent of the generosity of Iranians. The French traveler Jean-Baptiste Chardin, for instance, who visited Iran in the 17th century, wrote Iranians are "the most wheedling people in the world, with the most engaging manners".

For many travelers three centuries later, Iranian hospitality remains the reason why they fall in love with the country. Because they often have a unique experience as they can connect and bond so easily with the people they meet on their way.

What does Iranian hospitality look like?

Iranian hospitality is also what makes Iran such a perfect destination for



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solo travel: In Iran, you will never feel lonely. Most Iranians are by nature very warm; at least much more than European standards. They easily talk to strangers, especially

if you're alone, and overall, they enjoy interacting with each other. So, it's a culture where it's easy to interact with people. But more importantly as soon as they understand

you are a visitor (meaning a guest in their country), they will invite you for a cup of tea, they'll want to offer to pay for it, and before you've even realized it they have settled every-

thing to invite you over for dinner. Iranian hospitality often looks like this: Countless invitations to people's homes. Even when they don't speak one word of English, many will be honored to be your host.

To understand (or believe) the extent of Iranian hospitality, you should experience it yourself. But we could describe a typical manifestation of it like this: Let's say you are walking on the street, searching for a specific place. You stop, looking confused. If you're spotted as a foreigner, or if you ask for help, in a second a stranger will stop to help you. They will greet you and welcome you in the country, and most probably accompany you to your destination just to be sure you arrive safe and sound. After that, they won't leave without inviting you home and exchanging numbers.

Guests are friends of God

In the Persian culture as well as in Islam, hospitality is something simply fundamental. That explains why Iranians take it so seriously. It is part of their culture to treat their guests in the best manner. It is rooted in the belief that guests are "Friends of God".

relative or a stranger: You should make them feel at home and treat them the best you can.

Hospitality in the Persian culture

Many Iranians nowadays have this principle of hospitality rooted in their culture. Like in many parts of the world, the less people have, the more they give. It's in the most rural areas, where people usually have little means, that you can experience the most generous hospitality. Just take weddings as an example. In rural areas, weddings gather hundreds of guests, and most of the time you don't even need to be formally invited.

Hospitality in Iran is also linked to the fact that Iranians are quite sociable. Most people like to gather, spend time with others, share generous meals, etc. In the end, invitations are great occasions to cook delicious Persian food and have some "mehmooni" ("party") which most Iranians love.

What to do if you're someone's guest in Iran

So you've understood it by now: When you travel to Iran, there is no way you won't be someone's guest, at least for a cup of tea. Yet, there are a few things to keep in mind in order to avoid cultural faux pas.

First and most important, learn about *ta'rof*!

Ta'rof could be summarized as extreme politeness, but it's much more than that. *Ta'rof* is also when your taxi driver or your grocer refuses to take your money. It is just an act of courtesy, and you should insist on paying! It means that you are worth more than the price you wish to pay. If you're at a restaurant with Iranian friends, be 100% sure that they will offer to pay for the bill. This is *ta'rof*: They don't necessarily want to pay, but they have to offer out of decorum.

So, as a rule, always remember that you should also insist on refusing to be a guest! Do it politely, though... If someone invites you over for dinner, refuse at least twice, by explaining that you don't want to bother them. Just ensure that that person truly wants to invite you. Avoid taking a taxi right away to their house; give them enough time to prepare everything. Likewise, don't accept invitations you can't attend as it would be rude to cancel.

And eventually, just remember you are a guest in someone else's home. Being respectful of their culture and being polite is the least you can do. If you're invited to their home, give them bread and don't ask about their belief". Sanai, another Sufi poet from the 12th century, wrote: "When a guest suddenly shows up at your door, know him as a gift from the Lord". In the Persian culture, it doesn't make any difference whether your guest is rich or poor, a close