



# Esfahak village attracting desert lovers

When it comes to visiting the deserts of Iran, what first comes to mind is their hot weather; however, the special geographical features of Esfahak village, located 38 kilometers from Tabas in South Khorasan Province, have caused this amazing place to have cooler weather compared with other cities and villages surrounding it.

Situated in an abandoned and historical district, the village is one of the most exotic desert attractions in Iran, packtoiran.com reported.

Esfahak village is a popular destination for tourists and desert lovers.

## History

Esfahak, a 400-year-old village, is located in the heart of palm trees. A big part of the beautiful village was destroyed by an earthquake in Tabas in September 1978. The surviving locals and residents abandoned their villages after the disaster and migrated to neighboring cities. But in recent years, some locals decided to revive their old home village. They have managed to turn the village into a tourist destination, with amazing attractions.

The rural houses which were destroyed and abandoned 45 years ago are renovated and labeled as

eco-lodges to be used for tourists and visitors travelling to this amazing spot. In this village, no one smokes hookah or cigarettes, no food is served in plastic dishes, and there are separate trash bins for sorting waste. Visitors must take off their shoes when entering rooms. The village shines by the light of lanterns in the night, and walking through its cobblestone alleys is a wonderful experience that feels like traveling back in time.

## Architecture

Made of mud and brick, houses were built based

on the desert architectural pattern. Buildings are located close to each other in order to provide their residents with more safety against robbery, give them shadow during hot summer days, and keep houses warmer during the winter.

## Locals

In recent years, tourism-based activities like running small eco-lodges and providing transfer services have become a main source of income for the residents of Esfahak village. Apart from that, having access to rich water resources such as wells and qanats for centuries, and a climate

cooler than that of the neighboring villages and towns have helped improve agriculture and animal husbandry in the village. The most important agricultural products of Esfahak village are saffron and dates, which are harvested in very large amounts.

## Things to do

One of the most significant attractions of Iran's deserts is the surreally beautiful and starry night sky: Esfahak village is no exception and offers the most wonderful night sky. One of the best things that you can do in Esfahak village is to explore the night sky and en-

joy astronomy at the observatory of the village, which is a circular brick building and is open every day from sunset to midnight.

Since Esfahak village is characterized by its old districts, walking through their historical alleys and exploring the architecture of the desert is an activity that shouldn't be missed. The Jaame (Grand) Mosque of Esfahak is a small yet atmospheric building with a simple mud brick dome, and the historical bathhouse is an amazing building where you can experience a bath the way Iranians did many years ago.



● karnaval.ir

## Arms and armour of the Safavids



The sixteenth century heralded military innovations and the introduction of new types and styles of Safavid armament.

This evolution largely began after the battle at Chalدران in northwestern Iran in 1514, a conflict likely caused by growing political and religious tensions between the Ottomans and the recently established Safavid Dynasty in Azerbaijan. Up to this point, the Turkmen tradition could be felt strongly in Ottoman and Safavid societies.

Both had been built upon a strong semi-nomadic Turkmen tradition, and their military elite had been established by Turkmen atabegs. The Iranian army in general consisted of cavalry, infantry and supply troops.

The armament of a warrior comprised a helmet, a coat of mail and armour plates as well as arm, knee and leg guards. Other defensive

arms included the shield. Iranian troops did not always wear full armament, instead choosing various combinations.

The helmet was known across the Islamic world under the general terms *mighfar* and *khud*. During the Ottoman and Safavid dynasties, the Arabic term *mighfar* was in use in Ottoman, Turkmen and Persian languages, whereby *khud* was more common in Persian. In the fourteenth century, a particular type of helmet emerged in Iran and in neighbouring territories, including Anatolia, home of the Ottomans, and Syria and Egypt, home of the Mamluks.

Featuring a prominent, richly decorated and voluminous body and blunt, faceted finial with additional parts for further protection, this helmet remained fashionable throughout the sixteenth century, when it also became popular with

the Mughals in northern India. It is known today as a Turkmen helmet or turban helmet.

This exquisite Turkmen helmet (*mighfar*) in the collection of the Museum of Islamic Art in Berlin is in remarkable condition and was originally part of the collection of Friedrich Sarre. Most of the silver inlays are preserved, and silver overlay is visible around the eye cut-outs and along the lower edge, where a narrow iron band, decorated with pseudo-calligraphic inscriptions, is attached with rivets.

As with most surviving helmets of this type, its protective aventail is now lost. However, along the helmet's lower edge, many of the vervelles (*eyelets*) that once secured the aventail to the helmet can be seen.

Evidence of a bracket riveted between the eye cut-outs suggests that this helmet was also fitted with a sliding

adjustable nasal guard. A small hook is attached with a rivet above the right eye cut-out in order to lock the moveable nose guard when hoisted. Such hooks were formerly thought to lift an aventail (as suggested by Sarre and Martin in 1912), but surviving helmets and miniature paintings clarify their function. The lower part of this helmet is nearly perpendicular, but slants in slightly, possibly revealing a Central Asian influence. The helmet's striking appearance owes much to the raised ribs and whirling S-shaped canelures defining parts of its ornamentation. The conical bowl, forged from one single plate of steel, is divided into four separate ornamental registers. Around the base runs an inscribed band with characters spanning the full width of the register. The silver inlaid inscription, decorated with arabesque leaf tendrils, reads: 'Glory to our

Lord the greatest Sultan, the mighty Khagan, master of the necks [of the peoples]', along with other laudatory phrases and pious wishes for the wearer.

The absence of padding suggests that the user would have worn a quilted cap or small turban under the helmet. The helmet's site of production is unknown, but cities such as Tabriz and Erzurum, military bases where armourers are known to have worked, are possible centres. In spite of its provincial character, Erzurum was an important trade centre on the Silk Road between Iran and the Black Sea until the fifteenth century. In 1502, with the defeat of the Aqqoyunlu, the city came under Safavid rule for a short period of time. In turn, the Ottomans defeated the Safavids in 1514, forcing them to hand over the city of Erzurum, the bastion of Shi'ism in Anatolia.