

Rasht Grand Bazaar, a world of colors

Are you a bazaar lover? Have you visited traditional Iranian bazaars with the ceilings, domes, and lightwells like the ones in Isfahan, Shiraz, Kerman, Tabriz, and so on? They are so unique and outstanding, and worth visiting as many times as possible.

But today we are getting to know more about Rasht Grand Bazaar, which is totally different from others. A 24-hectare market is the biggest roofless bazaar in Iran, tappersia.com reported.

Rasht Grand Bazaar is mesmerizing and when you get in, you will immerse in its beauty, a world of colors, flavors, and sounds. You can hear many sweet dialects there including Gilaki and Turki. You can find everything you can think of. From any kind of food and vegetables to clothes, kitchen utensils, and traditional handcrafts. On every corner in the bazaar you see the movements of colors. You can breathe in the fresh smell



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of fruits and vegetables, and sometimes the sharp smell of fresh fish. The vegetables are the crops of nearby farms, and the fish are recently caught in the Caspian Sea. You can find some aromatic vegetables, which are exclusively from the area,

which the locals use as ingredients in many of their delicious dishes.

Street food

Little by little, as you are spending your money on souvenirs and buying stuff for your home, you start feeling hungry; that's the

moment your eyes open to the other attractions which happen to be super delicious. And you can be sure about the fresh ingredients, as the best local suppliers are all around.

When to visit?

Rasht Bazaar is available

to visit every day, morning to late evening. The interesting thing is that on some days rural people join the shoppers and vendors. They come to sell their homegrown products, such as nuts, vegetables, and fruits, or home-baked goods like traditional bread

and cookies.

Why roofless?

You may ask, "This all sounds great, but why roofless?"

Rasht is known as the City of Rain. In Gilan Province, most of the time it rains, or it is cloudy. The no-roof

theory is a solution to absorb as much sunlight as available so that it doesn't cause vitamin D deficiency. Moreover, the beauty of the bazaar in the rain is undeniable.

The history of the bazaar dates back to the Safavid Dynasty (1501-1736 CE). The 24-hectare market consists of two squares, a large one and a small one, streets, and 14 caravanserais. Nowadays, some of the caravanserais are used as shops, but most have long been abandoned.

The bazaar is located next to the Shahrdari (Municipality) Square, which is also another top tourist attraction of Rasht. Variety, quality, and the freshness of the products is the reason many people visit the bazaar daily. Consequently, the location is one of a kind for photography, either on sunny days or rainy days. It feels really something to walk along the bazaar and see the liveliness of the bazaar despite the rain.



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Sofreh-bafi, a traditional handicraft of South Khorasan Province

Iranica Desk

Sofreh-bafi is an Iranian handicraft which is very prevalent in the eastern province of South Khorasan.

Sofreh is a self-dyed fabric woven from the spun fibers of camel or sheep's wool on a ground loom.

The fabric, with the size of 110 x 110 square centimeters, is decorated with various motifs such as mountains, goats, rams and plants, in geometric shapes on its middle and edges. The designs are inspired by nature.

The high significance of bread among the local people prompts

them to spread a piece of woven fabric, known as *sofreh*, under the container in which they make dough from wheat. They also use this fabric to keep the prepared yeast until the next bread baking session.

This beautiful hand-woven textile is also used as a cover for *korsi*,

which is a traditional Iranian low table with a heater underneath. It is a traditional craft which is passed on from one generation to the next, from mothers to daughters. Learning this art, known as an important part of their culture, is of great significance for girls who are willing to show their tal-

ent and artistry. Very simple and low-price tools, made from materials which are available in the region, are used for weaving this traditional fabric. Mahenj, a village located near the city of Qayenat, is among the most important centers of *sofreh-bafi*. The artisans involved in the *sof-*

reh-bafi craft of South Khorasan Province have received the National Seal of Quality.

The revival of the craft would help generate jobs in the villages of the province, boost morale among the craftspeople, and encourage reverse migration of people from the cities to rural areas.



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