

Yazd Province, the green desert of Iran



Shirkouh Mountain
IRNA

Iranica Desk

The central province of Yazd is associated with a dry climate and burning heat, but this is not the whole story.

A land with various climates, Yazd Province draws a large number of visitors every year. This is because at a distance of less than 20 kilometers from the provincial capital city of Yazd, you will reach the green gardens of Taft, and by traveling a few kilometers towards Shirkouh Mountain, you will get into a completely different weather. It is a surprising phenomenon that cannot easily be ignored, according to IRNA. The difference in temperature of various cities in Yazd Province, which sometimes reaches 15°C, has led to the creation of amazing resorts in this

region.

Due to the drought that hit the region as well as the implementation of mining projects and the production of steel and iron, the resorts are no longer as green as in the past; nevertheless, they still serve as refreshing places for the locals to escape from the summer heat.

The most important geographical feature of the province is Shirkouh Mountain, with an elevation of 4,075 meters. At a very short distance, both hot and cold temperatures can be experienced there.

As one of the highest mountains of central Iran, Shirkouh lies in the southwest of Yazd Province.

Qanat, known also as *kariz*, is the main source of fresh water supply in the province. For instance,

Zarch Qanat, dating back 3,000 years, with the length of 100km, provides water to a large number of agricultural fields.

The starting point of this qanat is in Fahraj village, northeast of Yazd. The qanat runs at a depth of 30-40m beneath the city of Yazd. Then it reaches Zarch, where the water is used for irrigation in the lower lands of the city of Yazd. Moreover, sunlight is found in abundance across Yazd Province.

Taft

Taft, located among mountains, is a city with a pleasant climate. The abundance of pomegranate gardens has helped create beautiful landscapes in and around the city.

Sadri Garden

Sadri Garden, dating back 400 years, hosts the tall-

est wind catchers of Taft. The amazing architecture of the two monuments built in the middle of the garden dazzle the eyes. About 40 years ago, the garden was renovated.

A lovely pool, with an area of 500 square meters, renders it like a true Persian garden. But here is the best part, inside this pool there are more than 75 fountains that fill the space with the soothing sound of water purring. At the end of the garden, you can also find a watermill.

Cham village

Cham village, with pleasant weather and rural houses with simple and beautiful architecture, is known as a main settlement of the Zoroastrian people.

A 3,000-year old cypress tree and a Zoroastrian fire temple are among the

most visited sites of the village. The fire temple, in which various Zoroastrian rituals are held, is of historical significance.

Other attractions

Darreh Gahan Waterfall, which is 20 meters tall, is in the southwest of Taft, in a valley located at the foot of Shirkouh Mountain. The seasonal waterfall is supplied from gradual melting of snow from the top of the mountain. Pahlavan Baadi Castle, another tourist attraction of the region, is located on top of a big rock, which was the shelter of a person after whom it is named.

Dehbala village, with a roaring river and greenery, and Tezerjan village located next to Shirkouh Mountain are among the other tourist magnets of the area.



Cham village
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An overview of Taft
IRNA



Sadri Garden
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Khorasan in ancient Iran

The Greek historian, Herodotus includes the Parthians, Choresmians, Soghdians, and Arians (Aρείοι) in one satrapy; in all the cuneiform inscriptions, however, Parthia, ancient land corresponding roughly to the modern region of Khorasan in northeastern Iran, is listed separately from Choresmia, Soghdia, and Areia. The satrap of Parthia, at the beginning of Darius's reign, was his father Gushtasp, who in 518 BCE had to quell an uprising of the Parthians and Hyrcanians. In Achaemenid times the region did not have much importance; the Persian kings, during their tours of the country, strove to pass through Parthia (Khorasan) as quickly as possible, because the region was too poor to sustain their large retinues. As a result of this poverty and

the necessity of defending themselves against incursions by nomads, the Parthians remained faithful to the simple, soldierlike way of life of the eastern Iranians, and after the fall of the Achaemenids proved to be the solid element that succeeded in rebuilding a strong Iranian state and repelling even Roman expansion.

A natural border between Turkestan and the southern part of the Caspian basin is constituted by the mountains of the Greater and Lesser Balkhan, Kuren-Dagh, Kopet-Dagh, and those of Khorasan, which form today the border between Russia and Persia.

Nothing can match the gloomy spectacle of these sterile heights of gray limestone, watered only by few springs and deprived of any vegetation except



Plains and mountains of Parthia (Khorasan)
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sparse juniper. In antiquity and the Middle Ages, the oases along the northern slope of these mountains were inhabited by Iranians; their location left them exposed to especially frequent incursions by Turkish nomads, so that in

the end they came under the latter's domination. From that time onward the area received the Turkish name Atek, or more exactly Etek (Itak, "edge, hem, foot of a mountain"). Among the towns of this region, those most often

mentioned in the Middle Ages were Nisa and Ablward. The former is located not far from modern 'Ashqabad, whereas the latter still exists as a modest settlement 110 versts from 'Ashqabad. In the district of Nisa was

the ribat of Farawa (Afrawa), some four days' journey from Nisa; it was built in the ninth century by the Tahirid 'Abdullah, and consisted of three interconnected fortifications. From there a direct road led across the steppe to the town of Gurganj (near modern Kunya-Urgench, in the northern part of the khanate of Khiwa). Mentioned in the district of Ablward is the town of Mihna or Mayhana. A settlement of the same name still exists to the south of the railroad on the border between Russia and Persia; it is noteworthy as the birthplace as well as the place of last repose of the well-known Sufi Abu Sa'id Mayhani (eleventh century).

From Ablward, a direct road led to Marv. As has already been pointed out, Etek was on account of

its geographical position subjected to inroads by Central Asian nomads; moreover, the region was always the object of ambitions for conquest by the nearest Central Asian rulers, namely, the sovereigns of Khwarazm. Already in Herodotus' book, there is a report, so far not satisfactorily explained, about a valley surrounded by five mountains with mountain passes; a river that flowed through this valley had originally belonged to the Choresmians, and was located between the possessions of the Choresmians, Hyrcanians, Parthians, Sarangians, and Tamanians. This report shows that even in remote times, prior to the formation of the Achaemenid Empire, the rule of the Choresmians extended to the mountainous regions to the south of the steppe.