

# Discover the enchanting charms of Tafresh:

## A pristine summer paradise



Khanak village  
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### Iranica Desk

The city of Tafresh in Markazi Province is one of the pristine and picturesque destinations in Iran. The city, with a population of about 33,500, can be a great host for summer trips. You can enjoy attractive landscapes and pleasant weather there. Tafresh is situated at an elevation of approximately 2,000 meters above sea level and boasts of a total of seventy villages, some of which are Kabouran, Naqusan, Bazarjan, Farak and Joftan. When we look at a map, we will find that this city is located ap-

proximately in the southwest of Saveh, a city known for its warmth. However, this warmth doesn't affect the delightful coolness of Tafresh.

To get to this city, you need to pass through the scorched plains of Saveh. Keep going towards Arak, and after the Rahjerd, veer off the main road towards the north. Continue your journey by crossing through the rugged mountain passes to finally reach Tafresh. The maximum temperature reaches 32°C during the summer, while it drops to a minimum of 15°C during winters.

In the northern part of Tafresh, you can find Gandomkuh Mountain. This mountain has a conical

shape and stands at an elevation of 2,156 meters. It is visible from almost all parts of the city. In Persian, *gandom* means wheat, and *kuh* means mountain. If you look from the heights of Kharazan Pass towards this mountain and its neighboring hill, you will see that it looks like a pile of unharvested wheat. That is why it is called Gandomkuh (Wheat Mountain).

A circular-shaped mountain named Deymnar, having two caves, is known as the symbol of the city.

A river flows in the city. One of natural attractions of Tafresh is Garav Mineral Water Spring situated five kilometers from the city, be-

tween two villages. It is easily accessible.

In one of the alleys of the neighborhood, named Abdokan in Tafresh, you can find the remains of a fascinating historical house dating back to the Qajar period. This house, called Mirfakhrayi House, has stood for 200 years and holds the prestigious distinction of being a registered National Heritage Site.

The natural attractions of Tafresh are scattered throughout this area; in order to see them, you need to gradually distance yourself from the city.

The village of Tad is located near Tafresh and its prominent

feature is its abundance of fruit orchards. These orchards thrive and yield bountiful harvests thanks to a qanat (aquifer) flowing in the region.

The water of this qanat, situated in the heart of the village, after being stored in a massive reservoir, cascades through countless streams, nourishing the gardens. The existence of this qanat has brought about a harmonious climate, the growth of exquisite fruits, and the establishment of a spiritually uplifting atmosphere in the region.

The Khanak village is a remarkable natural tourist destination in the area. It is beautifully sit-

uated along the Tafresh-Saveh route, offering breathtaking sceneries and captivating experiences for visitors.

At the entrance of Khanak village, beyond its beautiful garden alleys, lies a renowned qanat loved by locals and visitors alike. Khanak waterfall adds to the charm of this village. It inspired the creation of a traditional mill next to the cascades.

The summer season, especially the month of September, is one of the most suitable seasons and months for traveling to Tafresh.



Nature of Tafresh  
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## Development of polymetallism

In the course of the 4th millennium BCE, new metals attracted interest: gold, silver and lead, a phenomenon visible at Susa and Tappeh Hesar. The gold most probably came from Muteh, near Kashan, one of the richest mines worldwide.

Its treatment is illustrated in the little dog with pendant loop, treatment of silver in the cruciform pendant and the triangular chased pendants with hematite inlays, all of them coming from two children's tombs.

Obviously, a play of colour effect between the silver and the new materials was sought. This phenomenon is not inherent to Susa. As Françoise Tallon emphasises, «this extremely refined jewellery, consisting of precious materials previously unknown at Susa, have to be compared to ob-

jects from a contemporary burial at Sialk, namely two circular silver medallions with lapis lazuli and bone inlays.

Actually, the burial where the triangular pendants had been found, also held an intricate piece of jewellery made of lapis lazuli, quartz, shell, carnelian and rock crystal beads.

Lead appears in Susa and Sialk in the Late Uruk period, but is rare elsewhere. It is used to fashion vessels like the beak-spouted jar, bowls and cups. At the end of the 4th millennium BCE, the material was mined in the same district of Anarak that already provided copper. The simultaneous appearance of lead and silver at Susa is certainly not accidental. In fact, no silver-bearing mineral deposit in the Middle East seems to exist; silver emerges as a by-product of copper and

lead following the cupellation process.

### The emergence of new techniques

Lost-wax casting – already known for several centuries in Palestine and magnificently showcased in the Nahal Mishmar Hoard – allows the production of metal sculptures at the same time as the stone sculpturing which develops rapidly. The objects are in the round, like the small golden dog mentioned earlier or its even smaller counterpart in silver, or adorn the heads of pins. The bird sitting on a closed fist nicely demonstrates the original and sometimes humorous approach to art in Susa. Soldering is used for the first time in the manufacture of the golden dog that, as small as it may be, definitely synthesizes the important innovations of the period. In the Proto-Elamite period,

soldering was used on several joints of the silver bull in the Metropolitan Museum.

In both cases, the solder is an alloy – gold and copper, silver and copper – to reduce the risk of overheating and thus deforming the objects.

The champlévé of silver pendants allowed inlays of the already mentioned rare materials and simplified their fixation. Metal hammered into sheets was used in the manufacture of statuettes, such as the bull from the Metropolitan Museum. Equipped with a beaked spout, they reproduce ceramic models and demonstrate the virtuosity of the metalworkers, since the entire vessel was made out of a single sheet by hammering and annealing. X-rays and microscopic studies indicate that the transition from the spout to the body of the vessel is continuous and not soldered.

The above is a lightly edited version of part of a chapter entitled, 'Susa', from a book entitled, 'Persian Antiques Splendor', edited by T. Stollner, R. Slotta, and A. Vatandoust, published by German Mining Museum. The photo was taken from the book.