

# Valiasr Street: Tehran's historic thoroughfare and cultural haven



Valiasr Street  
● REZA MOATARIAN/IRAN DAILY

Bagh Ferdows  
● kojaro.com

City Theater  
● fararu.com

Mausoleum of Imamzadeh Saleh  
● marcocial.com

Tajrish Bazaar  
● tehranpicture.ir



By Sadeq Dehqan  
Staff writer

Valiasr Street, without a doubt, is one of Tehran's most renowned and ancient thoroughfares. Its bustling pedestrian paths and towering trees reaching towards the sky create an enchanting atmosphere that has made it a cherished hub for strolling in the capital city. On various occasions, it draws a multitude of pedestrians and tourists to its vibrant surroundings. Valiasr Street can be likened to iconic streets like Paris' Champs-Élysées or Barcelona's La Rambla, as they never fail to captivate the crowd and each section holds its own particular charm.

With a length of nearly 18 kilometers, Valiasr is the longest street in the Middle East, and one of the longest streets in the world. It connects Rah Ahan (Railway) Square in the south of the capital to Tajrish Square in the north of the city.

This route is so long and extensive that you can easily sense the weather changes along it, from the smoky and polluted air of the downtown area to the cooler climate and bluer skies of the relatively elevated areas of Shemiranat neighborhood.

Valiasr Street plays a significant role in dividing Tehran into its eastern and western halves. It is a circuit showcasing the dynamic historical, socio-cultural, and architectural changes of the capital. Traveling along Valiasr

Street offers a vivid portrayal of Tehran's rich tapestry, where you can witness the fusion of past and present, encompassing the city's diverse heritage and evolving urban landscape.

But the story of the beauties of Valiasr Street doesn't end here because there is a hidden tale behind the formation of each section of this street. These tales depict the vibrant life that has flourished within each part of the street, leaving behind enduring memories and lasting impressions.

## Where history and charm collide

Located at the lowest point of Valiasr Street, Amirieh neighborhood is situated between Rah Ahan Square and Imam Khomeini Street in Tehran. This area, in fact, served as the initial core for the formation of Valiasr Street.

Amirieh neighborhood has a rich historical significance. In the past, it was renowned as one of the largest recreational hubs, with numerous aristocrats and elites choosing to reside there. This led to its elevated status and unique charm. It was in this very neighborhood that the people of Tehran first marveled at the sight of splendid and elegant horse carriages.

The reason behind the name of this neighborhood as Amirieh is due to the presence of Kamran Mirza's mansion. He was the third son of Nasseredin Shah (1831-1896 CE), a Qajar king. During that period, he also built a garden and a mansion in the western part of Tehran, which were named Amirieh. Later on,

this place expanded further with the residence of courtiers and government officials. The total area of the Amirieh gardens was estimated to be over 700,000 square meters.

The majestic Marmar Palace stood at the intersection of Imam Khomeini Street and Valiasr Street, occupying the highest spot in the Amirieh neighborhood.

A Zoroastrian Temple, Ansari Bathhouse dating back 150 years, along with the magnificent Amir Bahador Mansion belonging to the minister of Mohammad Ali Shah Qajar (1872-1925 CE), are among the remarkable historical monuments that have endured in this area.

## Valiasr cultural crossroad

The intersection of Valiasr and Enqelab streets is one of the most important and busiest parts of the capital, known as Valiasr Crossroads. It can be considered a hub of art and culture in Tehran, as on one side of it, along Valiasr-Enqelab pedestrian walkway, there are a wide range of bookstores, renowned publishing houses, and even street vendors engaged in the business of selling books.

On the south side of the intersection, a mesmerizing circular and cylindrical structure proudly stands, boasting its unique and captivating architecture. This enchanting masterpiece is the City Theater, a monument that has hosted the finest and most exquisite theatrical productions performed by renowned directors and talented actors of Iran

throughout the past few decades. This cherished venue has long served as a hub for gathering artists and theater lovers, nurturing their passion and creativity. Once upon a time, in the not-so-distant past, there existed a place called Shahrdari Café in the location now famously known as Tehran City Theater. It was one of the most beloved gathering spots for the capital's residents during its time. They say that during the evenings, performers, circus artists, and magicians would come together here, entertaining the people and passersby with their talents.

## Bagh Ferdows, a Qajar relic

On the northern stretch of Valiasr Street, where the intertwining plane trees reach the peak of their beauty and create a canopy over the street, lies Bagh Ferdows (Ferdows Garden), a relic from the Qajar era.

By the order of Mohammad Shah Qajar (1808-1848 CE), a palace was constructed for him near Tajrish. However, with his illness and death, the palace remained unfinished. Concurrently, with the construction of this palace, the courtiers also embarked on building gardens or summer residences in the vicinity. Among them was Hossein Ali Khan Moayer al-Mamalek, who established a garden that later became famous as Bagh Ferdows.

The magnificent Bagh Ferdows Mansion stands tall with its two-story structure, showcasing the exquisite Qajar architectural style. This architectural

gem captures attention with its distinctive design. The southern parts and terraces of the garden are adorned with seven precisely crafted, flat stone slabs. Each of these sections boasts a mesmerizing pool, adorned with multiple fountains.

Now the Iranian Cinema Museum is located in Bagh Ferdows. In this treasure trove, you will find photographs, documents and old cinema equipment belonging to the iconic figures of cinema, such as dubbing artists, filmmakers, as well as posters and other cinema-related items.

## A charming hub in northern Tehran

Tajrish Square is more than just the endpoint of the long Valiasr Street in Tehran. It's a captivating area nestled within Shemiranat, known for its moderate climate, picturesque gardens, and refreshing mountainous retreats. In the past, it served as a haven for kings and courtiers, who built splendid palaces and mansions in this enchanting locale. Today, it has transformed into a bustling hub of recreation and commerce, making it one of Tehran's prime destinations.

Many locals eagerly escape to its scenic mountains during their well-deserved weekend getaways.

In a not-so-distant past, the people of Tajrish used to speak in the Tati language, and even now, some locals are familiar with it. Currently, an old bazaar, a grand tekiyeh (a building where Shia Muslims gather to hold religious ceremonies), and the Mausoleum

of Imamzadeh Saleh are considered the sights to see in this area.

## Imamzadeh Saleh: A sanctuary of worship and reverence

The mausoleum of Imamzadeh Saleh is one of the most famous Imamzadehs in Tehran. It is located next to Tajrish Square and at the beginning of Tajrish Bazaar. Throughout the year, especially during religious occasions, it hosts a large number of visitors from various places, with an estimated daily attendance of around 30,000 people. The building of the mausoleum has been registered on Iran's National Heritage List.

## Vibrant heart of Tajrish

Tajrish Bazaar is one of the remaining historical bazaars in northern Tehran. Similar to other bazaars in Iran, it is built in a linear form, and its main axis extends from the Mausoleum of Imamzadeh Saleh to Tajrish Bridge. This covered market has been one of the oldest shopping centers in Shemiranat, and it still maintains its ancient structure. In the bustling bazaar, prepare to be amazed by the endless variety of traditional delights. From fragrant spice shops, enchanting herbalists, and tempting dried fruit stands to exquisite handicrafts, vibrant fabrics, fashionable rings, trendy clothing, stylish shoes, and so much more. And don't miss the captivating fruit and vegetable market nestled in the heart of Tajrish Bazaar, where visitors and shoppers are treated to a truly captivating experience.