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# Engross yourself in rural life, natural splendors of Sar Aqa Seyyed village



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## Iranica Desk

*The picturesque village of Sar Aqa Seyyed in Kuhrang is one of the most captivating natural attractions in Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province, nestled amidst the verdant Zagros Mountains. The stepped architecture, authentic traditional clothing, and customs of the rural inhabitants, along with its unspoiled and awe-inspiring natural surroundings, are some of the village's outstanding features. In recent years, owing to the growing interest from nature enthusiasts, the village has gained recognition, with even foreign tourists making their way to this area.*

*With its limited amenities, this village is an ideal destination for those seeking tranquility in secluded rural areas. During the colder seasons, the village's population dwindles, while in warmer times, it sees an influx of tourists.*

*Despite the area's potential for tourism, the residents lead traditional lives due to the limited facilities. According to archaeologists, Sar Aqa Seyyed village, like many others nestled in the mountains, served as one of the earliest human settlements, dating back thousands of years. Presently, the only historical record available for the village is a genealogy of the Imamzadeh buried there, indicating that a person named Isa and his relatives lived in this village over 600 years ago.*

## Architecture

The indigenous architecture of Sar Aqa Seyyed village still stands, and its inhabitants make a living through agriculture, animal husbandry, and salt extraction. The region's economy has seen improvement in recent years due to the growing tourism sector. Presently, the villagers meet all their needs locally and have put in place relatively good facilities to accommodate tourists.

Rural houses are designed to effectively block the penetration of cold winds. Situated at an elevation of 2,500 meters above sea level, the village is renowned as one of the prime summer pastures for Bakhtiari nomads.

The houses are divided into residential and animal and poultry housing sections, with the former incorporating guesthouses and living rooms. Despite recent reconstruction efforts, the village still retains an overall historical and ancient structure. Regrettably, the village has suffered two fires in the past decade, resulting in the complete destruction of some houses.

## Imamzadeh Aqa Seyyed Shrine

Imamzadeh Aqa Seyyed Shrine, located at the base of the village, is a focal point, with the doors and windows of the rural houses opening toward it. This orientation offers picturesque views to the north and south, attracting photography enthusiasts. At sunset, the illuminated houses enhance the scenic beauty of the village.

In the past, nomads and villagers used to visit Imamzadeh Aqa Seyyed Shrine

for pilgrimage, leading some locals to believe that this was the reason behind the village being named Sar Aqa Seyyed. The shrine holds a special place among the villagers, who hold it in high esteem, believing that the arrival of Aqa Seyyed has brought blessings and prosperity to the area.

## Villagers

The villagers, who are from the Bakhtiari tribe, uphold their traditional and authentic culture, speaking the Lori dialect and adorning traditional attire. They are known for their warm hospitality towards tourists.

Traditional cooking methods persist among rural women, who prepare food over wood fires and bake bread in homemade ovens. Meanwhile, the men are occupied with agriculture, livestock breeding, and salt extraction from the nearby salt pans. The village's primary agricultural products include wheat, potatoes, and dairy items.

In Sar Aqa Seyyed village, rural women work alongside men, engaging in various activities such as weaving tents and rugs with woolen thread, which are common handicrafts in the area. Additionally, the residents of the village participate in playing the Sorna (a local instrument) and singing local songs during various ceremonies and celebrations.

The people of Sar Aqa Seyyed village hold strong adherence to religious ceremonies and beliefs. Magnificent religious events are held at the shrine

of Imamzadeh Aqa Seyyed, creating a unique atmosphere during the holy month of Ramadan and the mourning days of Muharram, the first month of the lunar calendar marking the anniversary of the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (PBUH), the third Imam of Shia Muslims, and his companions.

## Nature

The village boasts unspoiled natural surroundings, adorned with oak and plane trees that are utilized extensively by the residents. Additionally, walnut, pomegranate, and local mulberry trees are prevalent. The villagers believe that the walnut trees surrounding the village are over 300 years old. The foothill areas are adorned with mountain shrubs and fragrant, edible plants such as sumac, wild garlic, mushrooms, wild leeks, and mountain celery.

## Best time to visit

The best time to visit Sar Aqa Seyyed village is during the first six months of the Iranian year. In the spring, the weather is cool and pleasant, and as the season begins, the snow starts to melt, bringing the surrounding nature to life. Moving towards summer, the lushness of the village and its surrounding summer pastures becomes even more pronounced. Spring is also the best time to witness the migration of nomads to this village.

With the increasing influx of domestic and international tourists to the village, local rental homes and ecotourism accommodations have been es-

tablished in recent years. If you desire to stay close to nature, you can bring your own supplies and camp in the surrounding natural areas of the village. However, keep in mind that the nights in this area can be cold.

Sar Aqa Seyyed village has limited facilities, and the variety of shops is not extensive. In some parts of the village, mobile phones may not have reception; therefore, it's advisable to bring enough cash for renting houses. By staying in rental homes in Sar Aqa Seyyed village and shopping at the small stores, you can contribute to the improvement of the local economy and the flourishing of tourism in the village. The experience of staying in the rural homes of Sar Aqa Seyyed village is unique and enjoyable. However, it is also possible to visit this village in one day and allocate a day to explore the area while staying in other cities in Kuhrang County.

## Location

The road to the village starts from the west of Chelgard, about 50 kilometers away. At the beginning of the road, you'll come to the village of Sheikh Ali Khan. Once the paved road ends, you'll have to navigate a winding dirt road. Local vehicles travel from Chelgard to Sar Aqa Seyyed, so you can park in Chelgard and catch a local ride to the village. The dirt road to the village was built in 1984, and is the main connection for the villagers to other areas. It is closed in the cold seasons due to icy conditions and the risk of falling rocks.

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