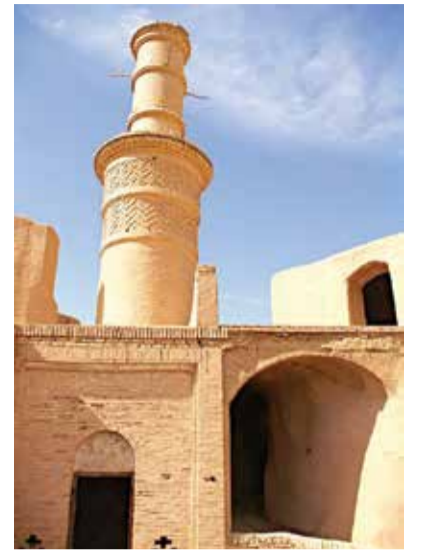
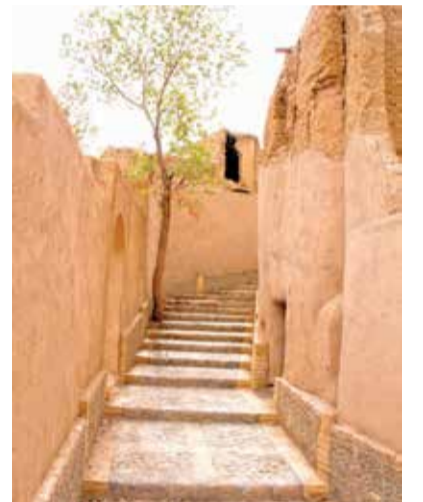


Kharanaq village, Iran's desert oasis



Minar Jonban
● [karnaval.ir](#)



Kharanaq Fortress
● [karnaval.ir](#)



Kharanaq village
● [fararu.com](#)



Kharanaq Bathhouse
● [karnaval.ir](#)

Iranica Desk

Iran is full of attractions and places that may be less familiar to Iranians but hold great significance for many residents of Western and Eastern countries. In fact, the first photos, films, maps, and travelogues related to the deserts of Iran were prepared and published by these individuals.

One such figure is Sven Hedin, a Swedish explorer and scientist who dedicated a significant portion of his life to traveling, including a journey to Iran and Central Asia. Although the original name of his book is "Overland to India," the translator chose the title "Deserts of Iran" due to the majority of the book focusing on the deserts of Iran, IRNA wrote.

In 59 chapters, the author paints a detailed picture of his journey through the desert areas of Iran, exploring the villages, cities, and various aspects of the region.

Kharanaq village in Yazd Province, nestled in the heart of the central desert of Iran, offers a beautiful setting with natural attractions, making it a suitable destination for winter tourists.

Previously known as Khoranaq or Khornaq, its name is believed to signify the place where the sun rises or the birthplace of the sun.

Upon entering this desert village, seemingly unremarkable at first glance, one

Kharanaq Fortress
● [karnaval.ir](#)

may be struck by the realization that this area has a history spanning over 4,500 years. Questions naturally arise about the reasons for such enduring settlement in this remote and arid region. What resources sustained life here? What historical significance does this place hold? These questions transform one's perception of Kharanaq, arousing the interest of those with a penchant for research and contemplation.

The village's houses, constructed from mud and clay, greet visitors alongside almond trees and small gardens, adding to the lushness resulting from the surrounding agricultural lands. Deserts in Iran are not just sand and gravel; they also feature mountains, valleys, seasonal rivers, aqueducts, springs, and numerous gardens with tropical trees (such as palm, tamarisk, barberry) and temperate trees like almond,

apple, and apricot. Kharanaq is no exception, encompassing all these elements due to its unique climatic conditions. For instance, at its heart lies a historical bridge dating back to the Sassanid or Parthian era, measuring forty meters in length and 7.5 meters in height. This bridge, one of the oldest in Iran, was used to transport water from one side of the river to the other, showcasing a combination of Sassanid and Roman architecture.

The Jaame (Grand) Mosque of Kharanaq, located in the village center, comprises a prayer hall and a small polygonal courtyard, with the exact date of its construction unknown. Inside the mosque, no remarkable architectural feature indicates its construction time.

The Jaame Mosque is a small structure featuring a square Shabestan (an underground space found in traditional Iranian buildings) and adjacent rooms. The mosque's courtyard is linked to a *hosseimieh* (a place where Shia Muslims gather for religious ceremonies) from the southeast. Behind the mosque's *minbar* (pulpit), there used to be a stone tombstone (30x50 cm), dating back to 1105 CE, which is now housed in the Cultural Heritage Organization of Yazd Province. The name of Ali ibn Muhammad Ishaq is inscribed on this stone.

Outside the mosque stands a relatively

tall and slender minaret, notable for its architecture and construction style, with a history even older than the mosque itself. If this immense minaret were located in a major city of Iran, it would rival the Minar Jonban (Shaking Minaret) of Isfahan. Its visible shaking is a source of wonder, and it also served a defensive purpose. This tallest structure in the region, visible from several kilometers away, was used as a lighthouse or observation tower in the past.

Kharanaq boasts an 1800-year-old fortress, which served as a residential area until three decades ago. Other notable attractions in Kharanaq include a bathhouse, a cistern, and a caravanserai, all of which are worth visiting during a pleasant winter trip.

For those seeking a tranquil escape from urban congestion and pollution, a trip to

Kharanaq can be an ideal choice. Accommodations in the caravanserai and the eco lodge of the village offer an opportunity to experience rural life and are accessible to tourists, evoking the historical era when merchants spent time at these lodgings.

The sight of the starry desert sky at night, unobscured by city lights, is truly breathtaking. Additionally, the sunrise and sunset behind the mountains of Kharanaq possess a unique beauty of their own.

The inhabitants of Kharanaq are primarily engaged in agriculture and producing crops such as wheat and alfalfa, much like their predecessors.

Situated 10 hours away from Tehran and centrally located in Iran, Kharanaq is an attractive destination for residents of cities in Isfahan, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, Fars, and even Yazd provinces.

Marmishu Lake, a pristine retreat in West Azarbaijan Province

Iranica Desk

Situated 45 kilometers west of the city of Urmia in West Azarbaijan Province, Marmishu Lake is nestled in a valley near the Iran-Turkey border. It stands out as one of Urmia's most enchanting destinations, offering a perfect retreat for a weekend getaway and leisure time with friends and family. Set in a mountainous region, the lake is best experienced during the spring and summer months.

Renowned for its pristine beauty, Marmishu Lake captivates every traveler with its breathtaking scenery and tranquil ambiance. Spanning five hectares, the lake reaches depths of 50 to 60 meters and is celebrated for its trout among the local community. Sourced from the Nazlu River, which originates from a mountain and flows through a lush and picturesque gorge, the lake holds a special allure.

An intriguing aspect of this picturesque lake is its origin. A natural dam formed as a result of a seismic event, where a portion of the mountain collapsed, giving rise to the present-day lake. Reflecting its historical roots, the lake derives its name from the leader of the previous Christian inhabitants of Marmishu, Mar Shimun Benyamin.



● [destinationiran.com](#)



● [wikimedia.org](#)

En route to the lake, a variety of forest trees, including poplar trees, create a natural protective barrier around the area. The vicinity features an array of flora, such as poplar, walnut, oak, willow, jujube, barberry, almond, hazelnut, pine, and other trees and shrubs, making it an ideal location for beekeeping.

The fauna surrounding Marmishu Lake is characterized by two distinct periods. Presently, the area is inhabited by animals such as bears, foxes,

wolves, and rabbits, while historical records indicate the presence of mountain goats, deer, and leopards. The avian population includes partridges, falcons, quails, and various other species.

The lake was once abundant with trout and whitefish. However, due to uncontrolled fishing and the influx of tourists, these species have faced a significant decline. Regrettably, smelt is no longer found in the area. Efforts to preserve and protect the diverse wild-

life and aquatic species are crucial for the conservation of Marmishu Lake's ecological balance.

Nomadic encampments

One of the most captivating sights during this journey is the encampments of the tribes and nomads who have settled in this area. Exploring the nomadic way of life is truly fascinating and can create lasting memories alongside the experience of visiting the lake and witnessing the surround-

ing landscapes.

Beekeeping

If you're fortunate, you might encounter beekeepers in this region, presenting an opportunity to savor genuine, natural honey and bring it as a delightful gift to your table.

Marmishu waterfall

In addition to exploring Marmishu Lake, you have the chance to witness a stunning waterfall situated near the lake and along the Nazlu Chay River. This waterfall is seasonal, with water levels increasing during rainy seasons, and its sound can be heard from several hundred meters away. Seize the opportunity to visit the Marmishu waterfall and revel in its unique natural beauty.

Best time to visit

Given Marmishu Lake's location in the mountainous region of West Azarbaijan Province, it is ideal to visit the lake on sunny days in the spring and summer to fully appreciate the scenery and nature. In winter, the area experiences cold weather and snowfall, with the likelihood of the lake freezing, potentially limiting your enjoyment of the experience.