

Akbarieh Garden in South Khorasan Province leaves a lasting impression on visitors



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The unique architectural style of Iranian gardens is well-known both in Iran and around the world. The first Iranian gardens were established alongside the qanats, a system of underground aqueducts. This concept of forming gardens originated from Iranian ingenuity, as the digging of qanats was pioneered by Iranian engineers. These gardens are characterized by three distinctive structures and designs: firstly, they are situated along the path of water flow; secondly, they are enclosed by high walls; and thirdly, within the gardens, there is a summer mansion and a pool. European travelers referred to them as “Persian Garden” or “Persian Paradise”. This unique and innovative design has left a lasting impression on visitors and continues to be celebrated for its beauty and functionality. The name and fame of Iranian gardens are not only renowned within Iran, but also globally. The unique Iranian architectural style employed in the construction of these gardens is the most significant aspect that sets them apart from any other. There are exceptional and valuable Persian gardens, some of which are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List due to their historical significance and antiquity. One of these globally acclaimed gardens is the Akbarieh Garden, in Birjand, South Khorasan Province. Like other Persian gardens, it is a testament to the beauty and incorporation of natural elements in its architecture. The creator of the garden, drawing on empirical knowledge, has crafted a space that has preserved and rejuvenated the natural environment within the garden. Akbarieh Garden, covering an area of approximately 45,069 square meters, is renowned as one of the most prominent Iranian gardens in Birjand and is included in Iran’s National Heritage List. Situated in a mountainous region, the garden comprises two main buildings, with one attributed to Heshmat al-Doleh, the father of Ibrahim Shokat al-Molk, and predating the other. This particular building dates back to the late Zand and early Qajar periods. The second building within the complex is a ceremonial structure commissioned by Shokat al-Molk.

Historical background

The construction of Akbarieh Garden occurred in multiple phases from the early to late Qajar period. The garden served as a residence, reception venue, and governmental affairs center. Following the passing of Ibrahim Shokat al-Molk, his son, Assadollah Alam, who served as a court minister, utilized the garden as his residence on various occasions throughout the year. Subsequently, Assadollah Alam dedicated the garden to the Astan Quds Razavi. In 1992, the property was handed over to the Cultural Heritage Organization. Akin to other Iranian gardens, Akbarieh Garden features a pavilion positioned at the central intersection of horizontal and vertical axes. This architectural layout is inspired by the pattern of the four gardens from the Achaemenid period. Akbarieh Garden was built using Iranian architectural style, with the architect of its main building being Allah Dad Ja’fari, who began its construction in the early Qajar period. The architects of this mansion were also influenced by Russian architecture to create a design that goes beyond traditional Iranian architecture.

Heshmat al-Doleh Mansion

Akbarieh Garden consists of several mansions, the oldest of which is the Heshmat al-Doleh Mansion in the eastern end of the complex, built on two floors. The ground floor has two halls and a relatively long corridor, connecting the three main parts of the complex: the main garden, southern garden, and the stable.

Central mansion

The central mansion of Akbarieh Garden is located on the western front and was used for hosting and entertaining guests. This mansion, considered the central core of the garden, features fine decorations and views. The central pavilion is built on two floors and has carvings, lattice work, stained glass windows, and gypsum decorations with Islamic and geometric patterns.

Northern garden

The northern garden is another part of the complex, located on the northern front of Akbarieh Garden and larger than the southern garden.

Southern garden

The southern garden is surrounded by service spaces, the central mansion, and the western wall of the stables. One of the important elements of this section is a relatively large square pool that occupies a significant portion of the garden space.

Akbarieh Garden’s library and museum

Various sections of Akbarieh Garden are

currently utilized by the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Organization of South Khorasan Province. The section constructed in the early Qajar Period serves as both a library and the College of Art of the University of Birjand.

Museum of South Khorasan’s National Celebrities

Recognizing the need to introduce and preserve the memory of notable figures and dignitaries from South Khorasan Province and Birjand, the Museum of South Khorasan National Celebrities was established in Akbarieh Garden. This museum quickly gained public attention and houses artifacts and belongings related to prominent figures and personalities of the province.

Birjand Museum of Anthropology

In 1993 the Birjand Museum of Anthropology was inaugurated in Akbarieh Garden with the aim of providing a better understanding of the people of this region. The museum showcases the traditional lifestyle and belongings of the ancient inhabitants for the public to explore.

Birjand Archaeological Museum

Situated on the first floor of the central mansion in Akbarieh Garden, the Birjand Archaeological Museum is renowned for its collection of antiquities, ancient pottery, old weapons, and more. It is considered the most famous museum within the complex.

Best time to visit

South Khorasan Province is located in a warm and dry region. If you are not fond of hot and dry weather, it is better to visit Akbarieh Garden during the spring or autumn seasons, so you can enjoy the pleasant weather and the seasonal views of the garden. The winters in this region, despite all the beauty it holds, will be cold and dry. Therefore, if you do not like extreme cold, this time of the year is not the ideal time to visit.

Attractions around Akbarieh Garden

Located on top of one of the highest hills in the city, Birjand Castle is considered the largest historical building in Birjand. Constructed during the Safavid era, it has been reconstructed several times and stands today as a lasting monument in the heart of the historical fabric of Birjand. The Kolah Farangi Citadel is another notable attraction in Birjand, known for its unique architecture. Dating back to the Qajar period, this monument is famous for its amazing ziggurat-like architecture and is listed as a national heritage of Iran.



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