

Historical landmarks and architecture of Qasr-e Shirin



Khosrow Palace
● wikipedia.org

Iranica Desk

Qasr-e Shirin is a city in the western part of Kermanshah Province, near the border between Iran and Iraq. Notable for both historic landmarks and towering palm groves, this picturesque locale bears its name from the renowned historical palace commissioned by Khosrow Parviz — one of ancient Persia's monarchs — for his spouse, Shirin. Despite references to this city in diverse historical records as Dastjerd and Dastgerd, its prominence primarily stems from Khosrow Palace, famously referred to as Qasr-e Shirin and Khosrow Parviz's estate. The remnants of Khosrow Palace, visible today, constitute a notable attraction in Qasr-e Shirin and lie approximately 180 kilometers northeast of the provincial capital city of Kermanshah. The is among the structures erected in Kermanshah during the Sassanid period under the

directive of Khosrow Parviz. Also known as Khosrow II, he reigned from 590 to 628 CE, and is acknowledged as the 24th Sassanid monarch. Scholars suggest that the construction of numerous palaces in Kermanshah was influenced by his inclination to reside in this area rather than Ctesiphon. Interestingly, it appears that this palace was not utilized as a permanent residence. It seems that owing to hasty construction, essential structural reinforcement was overlooked, causing the palace to fall into disuse shortly thereafter. Within the complex, vestiges of prior edifices consist of a handful of stone walls and fractured pillars. Paleontological evidence derived from plant root and animal fossils implies that the pyramidal form of the described palace may have previously functioned as an early zoological garden, per historians. The remnants of Khosrow Palace reveal that this architectural

marvel measured 370 meters in length and 190 meters in width. Designed with a rectangular layout, the palace was constructed from east to west, adjacent to a terraced wall standing at a height of eight meters. The construction materials employed in this edifice comprised limestone, brick, and plaster. The layout of the palace appears to have been divided into internal and external sections to maintain a distinction between private and public areas. The exterior part, designated for formal events, featured a columned hall, vaulted chamber, reception room, and *ivan* (portico). Notably, the grandest dome of the Sassanid era stood here until the 18th century CE. Access to the palace's general vicinity was facilitated by dual staircases on the northern, southern, and eastern facades. The internal, private segment of the palace once comprised various residences, both small and large, all of which have since vanished.

Nearby attraction

Chahar Qapi Fire Temple is regarded as one of the most significant historical sites in Qasr-e Shirin. Initially, many archaeologists thought this structure belonged to the Islamic period due to its dome and vaulted façade, common features in post-Islamic architectural monuments. The history of this precious edifice, recognized as a national heritage of Iran, traces back to the late Sassanid era.

Abbasid Caravanserai: The Abbasid Caravanserai in Qasr-e Shirin, dating back to the Safavid era, is a registered tourist attraction on the National Heritage List. Throughout history, this caravanserai served as a crucial lodging for pilgrims journeying to the holy shrines of Iraq. Regrettably, the earthquake that struck Kermanshah Province in November 2017 caused substantial damage to this structure, resulting in a decline in its safety.



Chahar Qapi Fire Temple
● IRNA



Abbasid Caravanserai
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Reviving historical bathhouses in Rasht to help develop tourism

Iranica Desk

In the city of Rasht, the capital of Gilan Province, there are several historical bathhouses that have been abandoned. Repurposing these historical bathhouses and focusing on their anthropological approach can help develop tourism in the area. In the not-so-distant past, the most significant feature of each neighborhood was the presence of one or more public buildings, with mosques and bathhouses being the most important. They were usually constructed in close proximity to each other. According to the travelogue of Mirza Ibrahim, Rasht had 17 public baths around the year 1859. A map of Rasht drawn in 1877 indicates that there were 18 public baths in the city at that time. Upon examining the oldest map of Rasht, it becomes evident that there were several public bathhouses located in the city center. Two were situated at the beginning of Sa'adi and Shariati streets. Additionally, two bathhouses were found near the



Haj Agha Bozorg Bathhouse
● gilebraz.ir

Sabzeh Meydan Square, with one of them being demolished and replaced by a commercial store. The Kiab Bathhouse was later renamed Roshan Bathhouse, and continued its operations. The Golzar Bathhouse in the Pirsara neighborhood, the Sajadian Bathhouse in the Baqerabad neighborhood, the

Shahriar Bathhouse in Rasht Bazaar, and the remnants of a bathhouse in the Aliabad neighborhood are among the oldest in Rasht, ISNA wrote. Between 1911 and 1921, public bathhouses were closed due to being considered unhygienic, and some were transformed into private bathhouses. Historically, bathhouses were heated using firewood, but as oil, diesel, and gas became



Golzar Bathhouse
● IRNA

available, the fuel source for them evolved. In 1921, Rasht was home to 10 public bathhouses as per historical maps. Presently, several historic bathhouses in Rasht have garnered the attention of the Cultural Heritage Organization of Gilan Province due to their age, with some designated

as national treasures. Although the Haj Agha Bozorg Bathhouse in Afkharay neighborhood was initially recognized as a national heritage site, it was later delisted due to owner dissatisfaction and a legal complaint. The Haj Agha Bozorg Bathhouse remains the only one with an active men's section. Public bathhouses not only promoted physical cleanliness but also catered to the well-being of the mind.

Dr. Seyyed Hashem Moosavi, an anthropologist and faculty member at the University of Gilan, said, "The most overlooked function of public bathhouses was their role in bringing joy and promoting mental health." He added that studying the bathing customs of the past reveals that bathhouses were a central hub for people's recreation, leading to the organization of various ceremonies within their walls. Events such as bridal baths, baby showers, and even rituals to help bereaved families cope with grief were integral parts of the ancient bathing culture. The anthropologist referred to the medical uses of old bathhouses and said, "Part of our medical history is hidden in these very public baths. The practices of wet cupping therapy, relieving muscle stiffness, or therapeutic massages performed in baths have been neglected. In my opinion, reviving old bathhouses could reintroduce some of their joyous functions and their psychological effects to society."