

Enchanting Hindu Temple of Bandar Abbas



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The Hindu Temple in Bandar Abbas, Hormozgan Province, stands as a poignant reminder of the Hindu community that once resided in this city between 1921 and 1965. Its distinctive architecture sets it apart as a truly unique structure, unparalleled elsewhere in the country. Designated as a national heritage site in Iran, this temple has evolved into one of the most renowned tourist destinations in Bandar Abbas.

Situated on the northern shores of the Persian Gulf, amidst the historic and bustling streets of Bandar Abbas, the Hindu Temple captivates the attention of all who encounter it. The architectural design of this edifice echoes the grandeur of Hindu temples found in India, adding to its allure and mystique.

Constructed under the patronage of Mohammad Hassan Khan Sardar Saad al-Mulk, the Hindu Temple of Bandar Abbas served a community of around a hundred individuals primarily involved in commerce during that era. Originating from the merchant town of Shikarpur in western India, these traders left

a lasting legacy with the creation of this temple, adorned with intricate sculptures and a mihrab.

Over time, the temple fell into disrepair until the intervention of the province's Cultural Heritage Organization, which oversaw significant renovations to restore its former glory. Today, this architectural gem stands as a testament to the rich cultural tapestry that once thrived in Bandar Abbas, inviting visitors to explore its history and marvel at its enduring beauty.

The Hindu Temple of Bandar Abbas stands as a living testament to the once vibrant trade ties between Indians and Iranians, a historical connection that has sadly faded from the collective consciousness today. Regrettably, the local inhabitants of Bandar Abbas remain largely unaware of the rich historical significance and architectural marvel that this temple embodies.

Constructed using a blend of limestone, clay mortar, coral stones, soil, and thick gypsum, the Hindu Temple of Bandar Abbas showcases a unique exterior design characterized by a cone-shaped structure adorned with white hues, lon-

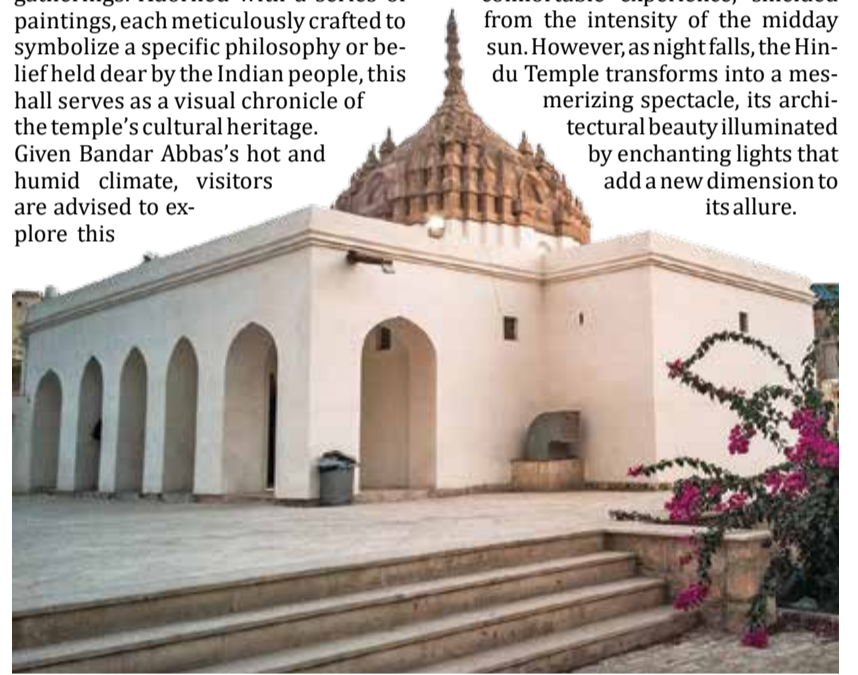
gitudinal grooves, and ridges.

The foundation of this temple comprises a central square chamber crowned by a dome. Within this chamber, the striking features of the mihrab and intricately designed blind frames catch the eye, while encircling corridors once frequented by pilgrims offer a glimpse into the temple's past. These corridors also house small rooms that once served as spaces for Brahmin school students. Adorning the walls of some rooms are religious paintings, among which a notable depiction of the Krishna, a major deity in Hinduism, playing the flute holds particular significance.

Within the confines of the western corridor of the Hindu Temple of Bandar Abbas, a fascinating journey awaits those who ascend the spiral staircases leading to the temple's roof. Here, the interplay of light and shadow is accentuated by the presence of four skylights strategically positioned on the polygonal space, casting a celestial glow upon the steps. Above, a grand dome adorned with intricate Hindu motifs and zigzag layers stands as a testament to the temple's architectural grandeur.

Beneath this resplendent dome, on the eastern side, lies a vast hall that once echoed with the voices of community gatherings. Adorned with a series of paintings, each meticulously crafted to symbolize a specific philosophy or belief held dear by the Indian people, this hall serves as a visual chronicle of the temple's cultural heritage. Given Bandar Abbas's hot and humid climate, visitors are advised to explore this

area during the cooler seasons to fully appreciate its splendor. Opting for early morning or sunset visits ensures a more comfortable experience, shielded from the intensity of the midday sun. However, as night falls, the Hindu Temple transforms into a mesmerizing spectacle, its architectural beauty illuminated by enchanting lights that add a new dimension to its allure.



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Susan Plain, a blend of nature and history in Khuzestan Province

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Izeh, a city in Khuzestan Province, stands out as one of the most unique southern cities in Iran, boasting a wealth of natural and historical attractions that have elevated it to a prominent position in Khuzestan's tourism sector. The city is home to ancient artifacts and inscriptions from the Elamite and Achaemenid civilizations, adding to its historical allure.

Known as the capital of nature in Khuzestan Province, Izeh is renowned for its pristine natural landscapes that captivate visitors. The Susan Plain, located 35 kilometers northwest of Izeh, is a key tourist destination in Khuzestan Province. The picturesque and captivating Susan

Plain stands out as one of the most stunning natural areas in Izeh. The presence of the Karun River, springs, lush hills and mountains, diverse plant species such as pomegranate trees, oak trees, fig-trees, chamomile, and narcissus, along with historical attractions and charming villages, have transformed the plain into a tourism gem in Izeh.

The mighty Karun River, as it flows through the plain, has brought lushness, abundance, and fertility to the area, dividing it into two parts: the Western and Eastern sections, each boasting its own unique beauty and pristine nature. Terraced villages with traditional architecture dot the landscape, accessible only by boat across the river. The local villagers, predominantly warm-hearted Bakhtiari people,

are involved in animal husbandry and agriculture, cultivating crops like rice.

Boating: Embarking on a boat ride along the Karun River promises an unforgettable and enjoyable experience. Crossing the river is necessary to access some of the villages in the plain.

Fishing: Indulging in fishing by the river can be a relaxing pastime during your visit to the Susan Plain. Remember to bring along your fishing gear for a leisurely time by the water.

Hiking: The lush and enchanting nature of the Susan Plain, adorned with beautiful flowers, striking elevations, and the serene sounds of the Karun River, offers an ideal setting for leisurely walks amidst the tranquility and natural beauty.

Exploration: The Susan Plain is dotted

with villages inhabited by hospitable and friendly locals. Exploring these villages and immersing yourself in their customs and traditions will leave you with cherished memories.

Photography: The scenic landscapes and vistas of the plain present abundant opportunities for photography, allowing you to capture moments of joy and beauty. Don't forget to bring your camera to preserve these delightful scenes.

Susan Plain, in addition to its enchanting and eye-catching nature, also boasts a rich cultural and historical heritage. The presence of the Karun River and abundant springs has made communication and access easy, making this region a hub for human settlement throughout history. Historical struc-

tures such as ancient mounds, bridges, and tombstones in the shape of stone lions symbolizing the bravery and valor of the deceased, are among the other historical and tourist attractions of Susan Plain.

After exploring the lush Susan Plain, if you decide to stay overnight, you can immerse yourself in the beauty of the plain by setting up a tent and camping. The designated camping areas are situated away from the villagers' agricultural lands, ensuring a peaceful stay. Please note that there are no shops or stores in the villages of Susan Plain. Alternatively, staying in eco-lodges is another option for accommodation. In Susan Plain, there is an eco-lodge available, offering you the chance to spend the night in authentic architecture.



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