

# Visit Shiraz to take a journey through poetry, fragrance and timelessness



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## Iranica Desk

Shiraz, the capital of Fars Province, is known for its various elements, with poetry being one of the most important. Hearing the name Shiraz alone can lift one's spirits, let alone visiting this city. The city is the resting place of Hafez and Sa'di - two great Persian poets whose poetry books can be found in almost every Iranian household. Perhaps the reason for this city's deep association with "love" can be traced to the fact that it has been the wellspring of romantic poetry, a continuing influence that even today's poets and lyricists draw upon.

Shiraz is renowned for its spring, which is why a day is specifically designated as "Shiraz Day" right in the middle of this verdant season. Although finding tickets to travel to Shiraz during this period by any means other than a personal vehicle may be a challenge, a trip to this city is record-breaking for a simple reason: the pleasant weather, ISNA wrote.

As soon as you exit the airport, train station, or terminal, one of the first things that will catch your eye within a short distance are the trees, whose fresh and green foliage invites your eyes to rest. In this situation, just taking a few deep breaths will help you better understand why the "spring of Shiraz" is so widely spoken of. The combination of the fragrance of fresh plants and orange blossoms is intoxicating to everyone.

Shiraz is renowned for its orange blossoms. Even as you search for souvenirs in the Vakil Bazaar, walking past a dried fruit or perfume shop will lift



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your spirits with the scent of dried orange blossoms. Although your experience of this fragrance may be limited to just a few orange blossom petals, you can steep in your teapot at home to ease the fatigue of a hectic day.

Shiraz is a lively city where people know how to enjoy the present moment. Instead of worrying about the future, they embrace the joy of the present. It's common to see Shirazi locals singing traditional songs passionately in front of *falood-eh* (a traditional Iranian dessert) shops on spring

nights. This lively atmosphere encourages even busy travelers to pause and immerse themselves in the vibrant energy of the city.

If you are a traveler with a short time to spend in Shiraz, you will need to move quickly! In addition to everything that has been mentioned about Shiraz, the city is also famous for its special sights and attractions; seeing all of them may not be possible in a short trip, which is why travelers often decide to visit Shiraz with a detailed plan.

However, the pleasant weather sometimes dis-

rupts your calculations in a way that you may fall behind your previous schedule! Is it possible on an afternoon in late spring while strolling in the Afif-Abad Garden, to not be captivated by the drizzle of rain and easily leave this space? In such a situation, it doesn't matter what time the next destination is open until - it is you who has decided to live each moment that may never be repeated for the rest of your life.

Shiraz is a big city, so if you venture away from the main historic sites like the Vakil complex, Narejestan-e Qavam Garden, Delgosha Garden, and others, you'll find modern streets and highways like those in the capital city of Tehran. But Shiraz has more to offer than just historical and modern landmarks.

Exploring the city's alleys can transport you back to the Safavid era of Shiraz, with no tall buildings or large malls in sight. Here, you'll find elderly locals sitting under trees, eager to welcome and engage with travelers. If you show interest in their homes and stories, they may invite you in for a cup of tea and share their memories with you.

While life in this part of Shiraz may not be as lively as the memories shared by locals, the authenticity of the place and the architecture of houses that have stood the test of time, despite weathered walls, missing door frames, and chipped tiles, is still apparent. This local fabric offers a glimpse into the social life of the people, even though the last person who truly knew them may have passed away.

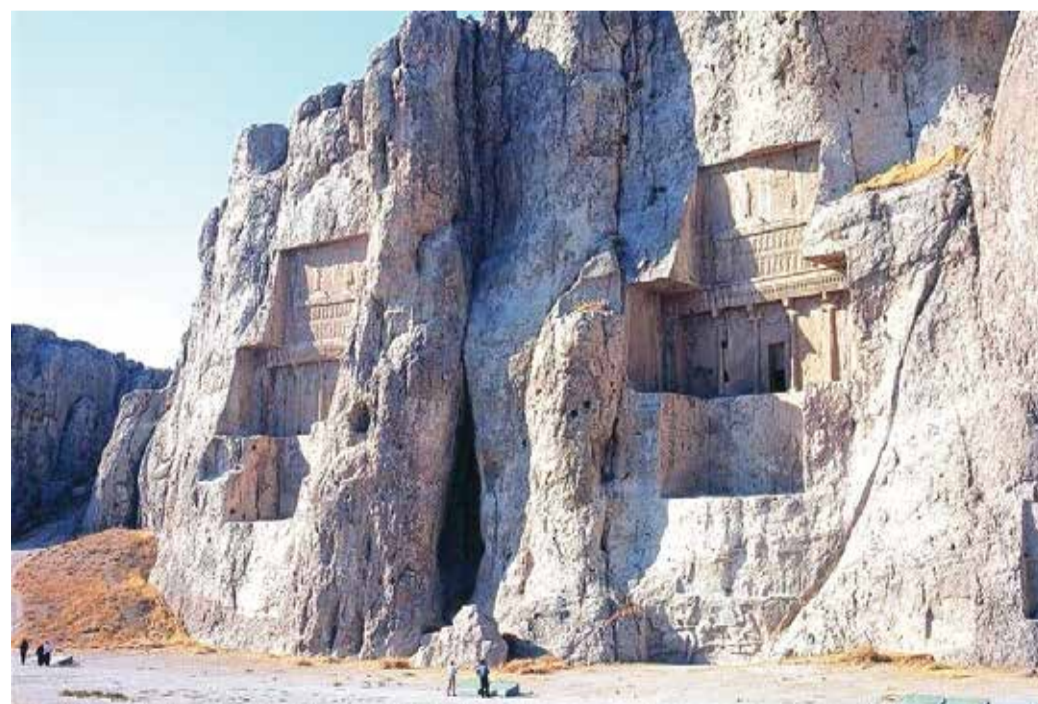
## Romans and Sassanids in cross-cultural dialogue

Considering the importance that fostering and shaping their cultures' experience of memory held for the Romans and pre-imperial Sassanids, it should come as no surprise that the past should be one of the first arenas in which they sought to come to terms with their new relationship. Although it took about a generation to enter into their visual cultures, the debate between the two empires took on an urgency in their diplomatic exchanges and internal discourse almost immediately. The extant textual evidence largely stems, on the one hand, from Roman historians who were contemporary with the events and, on the other, from medieval Arabic and Persian texts that were written well after the fall of the Sassanid dynasty but derive from Sassanid historical traditions, if not directly from their court records.

In addition, a handful of passages from the Sassanid inscriptions offer intriguing, yet inconclusive primary source parallels to the secondary and tertiary Islamic and Roman material. In broad terms, the two realms' use and understanding of the past changed as their relationship, power balance, and cultural understandings of history changed.

As they became familiar with each other and accepted each other's right to exist in the late third and early fourth centuries, their diplomatic discourse presented this status quo as the unquestioned state of affairs that had existed since the beginning of time.

The extant textual evidence for Rome and Sassanid Iran's first appraisals of each other indicates that the past provided an important field of debate. It is unclear which culture first deployed the past as



an interpretive or ideological tool after their initial clashes, though it is likely that it was the Romans who initially sought to understand the nature of Sassanid power and Rome's proper reaction to it in terms of the Achaemenid past. Although all scholars might not agree with this statement, the

recurrence of this Achaemenid interpretation in the later Islamic historical and poetic traditions suggests that it was completely integrated into the Sassanids' conception of their heritage, if not as an originally indigenous tradition, then as something appropriated from the Romans.

No matter who introduced it, once in the field of debate, it quickly became an important and recurrent theme in the two realms' polemical encounters.

It is important to underscore that the Romans and Sassanids understood the Achaemenid dynasty in very different ways. Roman knowledge of the Achaemenids' identity, ancestry, and deeds derived from the Greek, historical tradition. The Sassanids, in contrast, understood their "ancestors" through the logic of oral, epic discourse and local legend and heroic activity. The Sassanids knew those we call the Achaemenids to be a part of the mythical Kayanid dynasty and did not call the Achaemenids by that name.

Some scholars have questioned whether that the Sassanids had any knowledge of a previous Persian empire at all. Some even argued that the Sassanids' invocation of the Achaemenids in the Roman sources was entirely a Roman invention. They based their argument fundamentally on the fact that the Sassanids do not specifically or directly identify their ancestors as the Achaemenids. This assertion only holds, however, if one sets an anachronistic modern scholarly understanding of the Achaemenids as the ideal.

While this approach offered an important corrective to earlier notions that the Sassanids consciously sought to resurrect the Achaemenid empire, it ignores the power of the early Sassanids' less than-historical understanding of their place in Iranian and Persian history and does not offer a useful framework for understanding the past in the dynamic of cross-cultural interaction between Roman and Iran.