

# Visit the magnificent scenery of Arasbaran in northern Iran



Arasbaran Mountain  
● [whc.unesco.org](http://whc.unesco.org)

On top of the enchanting mountains in Arasbaran at dawn, through the radiant beams of sunshine, one could observe how mist spreads out from the jungle. This magnificent scenery recalls other-worldly postcards.

Arasbaran is a high mountainous region with an elevation ranging from 256 meters to 2,896 meters. It is located in northern Iran, at the border with Armenia and Azerbaijan, visitiran.ir wrote.

The nomads aren't obliged

to travel far for their sheep and goats to graze, since the area is utterly green. Arasbaran, or Qareh Daq, is a vast mountainous area, south of Aras River, in East Azarbaijan Province. It is bordered by the Aras River from the north, Moghan in the east, Sarab in the south, and Marand in the west.

The region owes its significance partly to being home to an extremely diverse range of vegetation and animal species, and in part to the occurrence of a number



Kaleybar  
● [itto.org](http://itto.org)

of momentous historical events.

Due to the importance of the area in having a rich flora and fauna, and the presence of quite rare species, in 1976, UNESCO registered Arasbaran Protected Area, spreading in an area of 75,000 hectares, as the

9th biosphere reserve in Iran and listed it as a wildlife refuge.

A unique feature of Arasbaran Forest is the ubiquity of edible wild trees. Hornbeam, sumac, a wide range of berries, walnuts, hazelnuts, redcurrants and a variety of herbs with

application in traditional medicine are some of the local flora.

Moreover, the region is a natural habitat to various species of birds, reptiles, fish and mammals, namely, wild boar, brown bear, wolf, leopard and Caspian red deer, which, apparently,



Babak Castle  
● [IRNA](http://IRNA)

was in danger of extinction but has recently been revitalized.

While traveling in the area, visiting the road from Kaleybar to Asheqlu is recommended. A large number of magnificent attractions of the region are located in this vicinity, for instance, Mikandi valley, Aynali Forest, and Babak Castle. Nevertheless, there are also some other attractions less frequently visited by tourists, including the traditional lifestyle of the summer camps of the tribes

local to the area.

Hot springs, some of which are equipped with therapeutic facilities, are plentiful in the area and ready to help visitors relax.

Due to the high altitude difference, Arasbaran enjoys a variety of climates. Kaleybar is the closest residential area. The average annual precipitation at the Kaleybar weather station during a period of 20 years was 461mm. Precipitation in this area is relatively high and it snows most of the time.

## Roman-Sassanid cultural and trade interaction

A number of processes facilitated or compelled cross-cultural interaction between Rome and Sassanid empires, including forced migrations as a result of war, skilled workers or intellectuals seeking opportunity, mercantile activity, and direct diplomatic contact.

While much of the ideological maneuvering took place at the courtly apex, many interregional — even global — channels and processes outside the emperors' control also facilitated cultural contact and interchange.

This larger world of human and mercantile commerce brought the powers into contact, allowing for the movement of ideas between realms and sometimes providing a venue for competition or (more rarely) cooperation.

When considering these wider processes it is important to keep in mind that the courts expended a considerable amount of energy attempting to conform them to their worldview.

From the perspective of two universal empires, the economic, demographic, and political forces that facilitated Roman-Sassanid interaction also provided the stage and actors for

their dramatic expressions of power. Thus, the courts often portrayed routine embassies as unequivocal expressions of submission, and trade could be tribute and payments of indemnities gifts.

### Trade

Several systems of intercontinental trade through Central Asia, the Mesopotamian marchlands, and the Indian Ocean bound the two realms together and facilitated communication with the larger late antique world. These channels of cross-continental movement facilitated the fluid passage of technology, ideas, visual motifs, and practices and were indirect modes of communication and competition between the Romans and Sassanids. Over the period in which the majority of Roman-Sassanid interactions occurred these trade routes were divided into three branches. The most traveled land route ran from Han, Sui, or Tang territory across the northern rim of the Tarim Basin in the direction of the Ferghana Valley, then westward to the Sogdian cities of Transoxiana, and Panjikent and the oasis outpost of Bukhara. This

route then proceeded into Sassanid territory through the frontier city of Marv into Iran, and, by way of several designated exchange points, into the Roman Empire. Through a series of peace treaties in the late third and fourth centuries, the two courts established a system of trade regulations that mandated that goods be exchanged only under the control of the two states, at designated trading stations. This policy soon came to be the norm and was accepted in later fifth- and sixth-century treaties. According to an imperial edict dating to 408-409 the designated exchange points were Nisibis and Kallinikos in Mesopotamia, and Artasat in Armenia.

After the Sassanids created a Marzpanate out of eastern Armenia in the fifth century, its capital Duin then took on this role. Apart from this central route, a northern route, which the Romans exploited particularly in the sixth and seventh centuries, led from the Tarim Basin to Lake Issyk-kul largely bypassing Sassanid control before descending to the shores of the Caspian Sea and entering the Roman sphere of influence through the Caucasus and the Black

Sea, where it joined with the northern "fur route" that communicated with northern Europe.

A southern route ran from the Lop Nor to Khotan into Bactria before descending through the Hindukush to the Gandhara region and the Indian Ocean. There it joined trade routes that crisscrossed the Indian Ocean from China to the Persian Gulf and Iran or connected the Arabian Peninsula with Ethiopia and Roman Alexandria.

In the early third century, trade still flourished in semiautonomous mercantile cities such as Hatra and Palmyra that served as middlemen between the two realms. However, as the Roman and Sassanid empires destroyed or incorporated these cities, with Hatra demolished by Shapur in 240 and Palmyra by Aurelian in 272/3, subsequent treaties and regulations confined trade between the two empires to such depots as Nisibis and later Dara.

While the cities of Nisibis and Dara formed the point of direct, official mercantile contact, many offshoots of the silk and spice routes connected the two realms to each other as well as to

the late antique world at large. In an attempt to bypass the Sassanid monopoly of the silk trade, in the sixth century Rome exploited both the northern land routes and the southern sea routes by making treaties with the Turk empire and the Ethiopians, respectively.

These trade routes continued to develop even as the Roman economy declined and collapsed in the sixth and seventh centuries, possibly because they fed the court's still unabating hunger for luxury goods.

To judge from archaeological and numismatic evidence, during the first centuries of Roman-Sassanid interaction, the sea route to India and China still carried much of the trade between Rome and China; however, beginning with Ardashir I's conquests on both sides of the Persian Gulf and peaking with Kosrow I's control of all coastal areas from the Red Sea to the Indus, the Sassanids soon dominated the Indian Ocean sea trade. Under Kosrow I, the Sassanids began to expand into Sri Lanka and even markets in Southeast Asia, a process that greatly facilitated Muslim expansion into this area a century or two later.



A Roman coin



A Sassanid coin