

Amir Chakhmaq Complex, a tapestry of time in Yazd



In the heart of Yazd lies the captivating Amir Chakhmaq Complex, a unique blend of ancient architecture and vibrant activity that vividly narrates the city's rich history. Stepping into this complex feels like embarking on a journey through time, surrounded by its historic edifices and bustling energy. This extraordinary complex holds significance as a custodian of national heritage, housing integral structures such as a mosque, water storage facilities, and a mausoleum. Beyond being a major tourist attraction in Yazd, the Amir Chakhmaq Complex serves as a focal point for communal gatherings, events, and festivities, solidifying its role as the beating heart of Yazd's social fabric.

The history of Amir Chakhmaq Complex unveils a narrative of collaboration and foresight. Constructed during the Timurid era under the patronage of Amir Jalal Addin Chakhmaq and his wife Seti Fatemeh Khatoon, the complex initially named Amir Chakhmaq Square and Mosque swiftly garnered admiration as a cherished landmark. Throughout the ages, the complex underwent transformations and enhancements, each chapter leaving an indelible mark on its storied past. From serving as a burial ground to its restoration during the Pahlavi Dynasty, the complex's evolution reflects a tapestry of resilience and revival, attracting visitors with its enduring legacy.

The architecture of Amir Chakhmaq Complex is a testament to the skill and artistry of Persian craftsmen. The grand three-story facade at the entrance to the bazaar sets a majestic tone, while the intricate arched alcoves showcase a fusion of elegance and craftsmanship. Whether bathed in daylight's warmth or illuminated under evening lights, the timeless allure of these architectural marvels never fails to mesmerize. The addition of fountains enhances the enchanting ambiance, adding a touch of magic to the surroundings. The Amir Chakhmaq Mosque, also known as the Duhok Mosque, stands as a venerable beauty within the complex. Dating back to ancient times, this

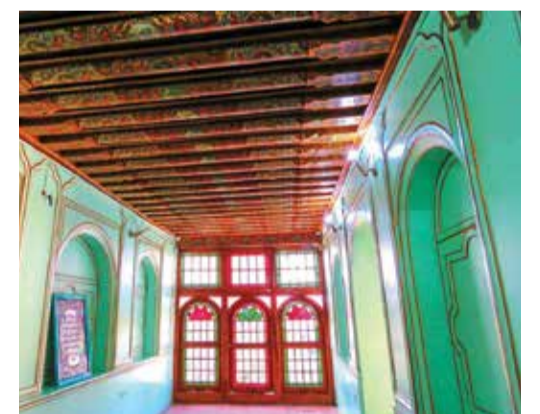


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mosque boasts exquisite mosaics, intricate moqarnas structures, and innovative architectural features such as dual prayer halls for varied climates, exuding both practicality and charm. The vibrant windows and colorful tiles further infuse the mosque with a welcoming aura, inviting visitors to admire its splendor. Within the Amir Chakhmaq Complex, the historic Haji Ghanbar Bazaar beckons with its timeless allure and cultural significance. Named after Haji Ghanbar Jahanshahi, this bustling market offers a sensory journey through Yazd's traditions, featuring a rich array of goods and artifacts that encapsulate the region's heritage. Beyond a marketplace,

it stands as a living museum, preserving and showcasing the essence of Yazd's cultural tapestry. Completing the ensemble of treasures in Amir Chakhmaq Square are hidden gems like the Amir Chakhmaq Tekyeh, a striking structure steeped in mystery and architectural elegance. The Tekyeh's intricate mudbrick construction, adorned with elaborate plasterwork and ornate alcoves, stands as a testament to an era of opulence and grandeur. Paired with the historical palm and the Seti Fatemeh Khatoon Mausoleum, these elements enrich the tapestry of Amir Chakhmaq's narrative, offering glimpses into a bygone era of artistry and legacy.

Visit the enchanting Narenjestan Garden in Shiraz



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Iranica Desk

Persian garden is one of the defining features of the architecture in Iran, visible throughout various regions of the country. The Narenjestan Garden in Shiraz, Fars Province, also known as the Qavam Garden among locals, stands out as one of the must-visit attractions in Shiraz. Dating back to the Qajar period, this building is named after the abundance of orange trees.

Constructed between 1878 and 1888 by the directive of Ali Mohammad Khan Qavam during the reign of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar, the Qavam complex comprises two distinct parts: the outer (Narenjestan Museum) and the inner (the Zinat al-Molk House), connected by a tunnel. Over the years, this building has served as a government office, a venue for political and

military affairs, and a space for engaging with foreign government delegates. The Narenjestan building was generously donated to the University of Shiraz in 1966 and subsequently supervised by an Asian institute, led by the renowned Iranologist Professor Arthur Upham Pope, between 1967 and 1978.

The complex spans a total area of 3,500 square meters, with the main buildings on the north and south sides covering a combined area of 940 square meters. Shirazi architects and artists have adorned these structures using a variety of artistic techniques such as mirror work, wood carving, painting, brickwork, marquetry, stone carving, plasterwork, and mosaic work. Stepping through the southern building and past the traditional and decorative supplies shop, visitors are welcomed by a beau-

tifully symmetrical courtyard featuring orange and palm trees, facing the vibrant and mirror-adorned main building. Passing through this courtyard leads to the main building and its magnificent ivan, located on the left side of the coffee house. To enter the building and its ivan, several stairs are embedded on both sides of the ivan, designed beautifully and artistically.

Around and behind the ivan, there are small rooms where entering them will immerse you in a sea of marquetry and mirror work art. These rooms display historical artifacts and furniture from that era, captivating your gaze. The ceilings of the adjacent rooms are mostly made of wood with beautiful patterns and carvings, but upon entering the main room next to the ivan, the reflected colors from the mirror work on the ceiling will

mesmerize you. The entire main room and veranda are covered in exquisite mirror works, requiring days and even weeks to fully appreciate all the details of this masterpiece. The main hall, known as the Mirror Hall or the Shahneshin, is connected to the central ivan through a crescent-shaped wooden window with lattice windows. The walls of this hall are entirely covered in mirrorwork. On the upper section of the marble stone fireplace, you can see two finely carved mirror images of Qavam al-Molk. The central ivan showcases two large stone columns that are used for various ceremonies, with a high, seamless ceiling adorned with beautiful mirrorwork and paintings. The presence of large mirrors on the walls of the hall and ivan reflects captivating views of the garden courtyard, pool, and fountain.

In front of the ivan, there is a beautiful pool with a single fountain that transports us back to the splendor of the peak period of this artwork. Below the building lies the Narenjestan Museum of Antiques, which houses a beautiful and valuable collection of utensils, coins, paintings, tiles, and more from different historical periods in Iran. The ideal time to visit the Narenjestan Garden is during the spring season when the beauty of the garden is at its peak, and the scent of the orange blossoms provides an indescribable pleasure to enthusiasts. While the Narenjestan Garden remains enchanting in the summer, the high temperatures may be a bit challenging. In autumn, the garden offers a distinctive backdrop for photography enthusiasts who have an appreciation for traditional spaces and Iranian architecture.