

Charm and uniqueness of Esfidan village attract tourists

Iranica Desk

Esfidan village, located in Bojnurd in North Khorasan Province, is a renowned tourist destination that was recognized as the most beautiful in the country in 2006. The village features stepped architecture resembling Masouleh in Gian Province, adding to its charm and uniqueness. Apart from its historical structures, Esfidan boasts a variety of attractions including valleys, waterfalls, a castle, gushing springs, caves, and more. The Sandalwood tree symbolizes the village, with only two remaining specimens.

Nestled amidst valleys and towering mountains, Esfidan captivates visitors with its natural beauty and intriguing landmarks. The village's landscape, characterized by beautiful waterfalls, gushing springs, captivating caves and towers, historic shrines, diverse fruit trees, a flowing river, and forested mountains, attracts tourists from near and far. In the past, initiatives such as constructing a cable car and a large restaurant aimed at developing

Esfidan into a prominent tourist destination were being considered but were eventually abandoned. Despite this, Esfidan remains a popular spot for travelers seeking a unique and memorable experience.

The villagers in Esfidan speak in the Khorasani Turkic language and are primarily engaged in agriculture, horticulture, and livestock farming. Esfidan village is known for producing key agricultural products such as walnuts, apples, grapes, cherries, potatoes, and more.

The walnuts from Esfidan are of export quality and considered the finest available in the province's market. In addition to agriculture, beekeeping and fish farming are also important economic activities in Esfidan. The Esfidan trout is highly regarded as one of the most delicious cold-water fish in North Khorasan Province. Hand-woven silk carpets with intricate patterns, along with walnuts and raisins, are popular souvenirs purchased by travelers. By supporting the local economy through buying these goods, visitors

not only contribute to the village's prosperity but also get to appreciate top-quality handicrafts.

This mountainous village has a moderate climate, and as the region enjoys pleasant and cool weather in the summer, many tourists travel to Esfidan during this time. The beauty of the village shines even more in the spring, with its clear and flowing springs and captivating nature. In the early summer, you can taste the delicious fruits and smell their aroma in the village atmosphere. These two seasons are considered the best time to visit Esfidan.

Autumn brings a myriad of colors, while winter arrives with heavy snowfall and extreme cold. As a result, fewer tourists visit Esfidan during these two seasons.

Bahargah Valley

Located in the southwest of Esfidan village, Bahargah Valley boasts numerous springs, a picturesque waterfall, and lush greenery that captivates every tourist. At the valley's entrance on the left side, sits a moon-shaped hill known as Mousou, span-

ning about 40 hectares, which tragically collapsed a few years back due to severe landslides, burying all its orchards, houses, and ancient trees.

Esfidan Castle

To the west of Esfidan village stands a rocky structure known as Tash Qaleh, or Stone Castle. This castle features stone walls, simple beige and red bricks, and mosaic tiles in various colors adorning its walls.

Stone towers

Perched atop the surrounding mountains of Esfidan village are ancient stone tower structures constructed with stone and sarooj materials.

Ancient cemetery

Another captivating historical site in the village is the ancient cemetery. The graves in this cemetery face east, with some of the deceased buried vertically.

Sandalwood tree

The sandalwood tree stands as a

symbol of Esfidan village. According to the village elders, there used to be around 17 sandalwood trees in the village. However, due to their placement in the alleys and a lack of awareness regarding their significance, most were cut down, leaving only two trees. These remaining trees have a trunk diameter of 2.65 meters and an estimated age of around 1200 years.

Mineral spring and waterfall

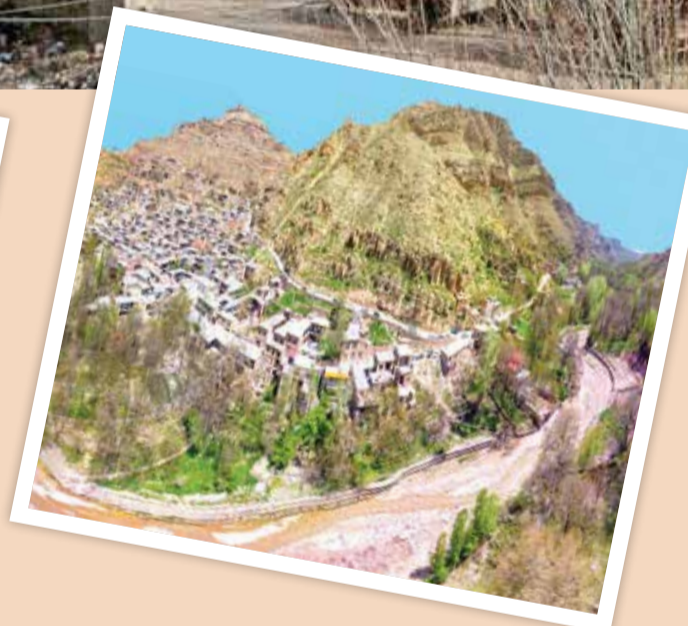
Located three kilometers from Esfidan village, a mineral spring and a waterfall are popular destinations for tourists to visit.

Gardens

The gardens of Esfidan are remarkably beautiful, reminiscent of the forests in the northern regions of the country. Unlike the humid summers in the northern forests, the gardens in this area offer a cool and refreshing atmosphere that rejuvenates the soul. While enjoying their splendor, please remember to respect the gardens' privacy and keep them clean.



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Mirza Qasemi, a flavorful tale of Persian culinary mastery



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Mirza Qasemi, a delectable Iranian culinary delight, stands as a proud emblem of the gastronomic heritage of Gilan

Province in the north of Iran. Its name alone beckons intrigue, hinting at a culinary tradition likely rooted in the eras of, where dishes with specific monikers often emerged.

Despite its historical origins, Mirza Qasemi has transcended time, captivating the palates of Iranians across the nation. The tale of Mirza Qasemi traces back to the Qajar era of 1861,

when Mirza Qasem Khan, a distinguished figure who had just returned from a sojourn in Russia, ascended to the position of ruler in Gilan Province and Rasht under the patronage of

Naser al-Din Shah. Renowned for his political acumen and culinary prowess, Mirza Qasem Khan's penchant for culinary experimentation led to the creation of a remarkable dish. Combining roasted eggplant with tomatoes, garlic, and eggs, he birthed the flavorful masterpiece known as Mirza Qasemi. Charmed by the outcome, he zealously propagated the recipe throughout the province, eventually introducing it to the denizens of Fars Province during his tenure as governor. The preparation of Mirza Qasemi is a testament to culinary finesse, notably distinguished by the method of charring eggplants over an open flame, a departure from conventional frying or boiling techniques. The charred eggplant is then peeled, mashed with garlic, and simmered with tomatoes, spices, and the essential addition of eggs, culminating in a harmonious blend of flavors. Mirza Qasem Khan's legacy

endures, with his final resting place near the mausoleum of Hafez in Shiraz, immortalizing the culinary innovation he bestowed upon Iran. This savory dish is traditionally served with local breads, such as *sangak* and *barbari* bread, accompanied by side dishes like *sabzi khordan* and refreshing *doogh*. Beyond household kitchens, Mirza Qasemi graces the menus of traditional Iranian eateries, lauded not only for its tantalizing taste and vibrant presentation but also for its nutritional value. The fiber-rich eggplant aids in digestion, while garlic, revered for its medicinal properties, is believed by Iranians to possess healing virtues against a myriad of ailments. Eggs, a protein powerhouse, provide sustenance akin to meat, enriching the dish. Mirza Qasemi stands as a testament to the rich culinary tapestry of Iran, a dish that embodies history, tradition, and the artistry of Persian cuisine.