



Salt wonders of Garmsar



Iranica Desk

Garmsar is a city in Semnan Province, bordered by Damavand to the north, Varamin to the west, Aradan to the east, and the central desert of Iran to the south. The region boasts a diverse array of natural attractions and sightseeing spots that are captivating. From the unique Martian hills to the salt tunnel, Garmsar attracts many tourists each year. With the largest mines

and salt tunnels in the Middle East, Garmsar currently houses 40 salt tunnels, playing a crucial role in salt extraction in Iran. Various countries worldwide, such as Italy, Germany, and Poland, harness the positive effects of salt by establishing specialized facilities for energy or salt therapy to promote medical tourism. Iran, blessed with plentiful salt mines, can leverage this natural wonder to boost tourism, especially during the winter

season. Geological studies have examined the quality of water resources in the Hablehrud region of Garmsar. Padeh, a village in the Aradan district of Garmsar in Semnan Province, stands out from other tourist attractions in the region due to its large salt tunnels. The Kouhdasht Mine is situated in the southeast of Garmsar and to the east of Tehran. It is where salt domes covered with gypsum and salt emerge. Within these

salt domes, oil traps are found. One of these mines resembles a mountain, with the salt extraction process leading to the formation of a hand-dug cave. In general, a specific pattern is employed for tunnel construction on roads to guarantee the strength, durability, and safety of the tunnel. However, for the excavation of the entrance and formation of this salt cave, only the height and width from the surface are taken into account,

with the height roughly double the width and in a rectangular shape. At the entrance of the cave, the walls are dark, but as you approach its depth, they gradually brighten. The proximity to these illuminated surfaces suggests that the excavation at that point in the cave is recent. Walking through these tunnels, visitors encounter walls constructed of salt, adorned with hanging stalactites of salt ice that enhance

the beauty of the tunnels. Martian hills, domes, and salt tunnels are scattered across a vast area. Approximately 27 salt mines surround Garmsar, with these attractions specifically situated about 15 kilometers west of Garmsar and 90 kilometers from Tehran along the Eyvanekey and Garmsar road. To visit the salt tunnels, you must obtain permission from the Traffic Police to access the salt mine roads with a bus.

Enchanting Pahlevanpour Garden in Mehriz

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Pahlevanpour Garden is one of the most remarkable historical monuments of Mehriz, a city in Yazd Province. Dating back to the Qajar Era, the garden, registered on Iran's National Heritage List in 2002, is one of nine Persian gardens recognized on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

The Pahlevanpour Garden was originally owned by an individual named Hassan Molareza. It was then passed down to his son-in-law, Ali Pahlevanpour, a Yazdi merchant, from whom the garden acquired its name. Upon entering the garden, the first thing that catches the eye of every visitor is the soothing sound of water flowing in its mainstream. Sourced from the Hassanabad Qanat, this water does not pass through any other garden on its path. Additionally, the garden is also irrigated by the Shahhosseini and Mazvirabad qanats.

The garden is adorned with ancient and sturdy trees that line the stream, as well as an abundance of fruit trees such as almond, pomegranate, and persimmon. The presence of these trees in the garden is a testament to the fact that despite the dry and warm climate of the province, the area enjoys relatively cool weather. The architecture of the garden signifies the

shift that has occurred in the style of Persian garden construction. In other words, while the garden is not very old, modern architectural elements can be observed in its structures. However, the inclusion of certain features such as the koushk (a pavilion surrounded by a garden) harkens back to ancient Iranian culture and art. At the garden entrance stands a tower and a stable all dating back to the Qajar era. The most impressive feature of the garden is its *koushk*, a structure with intricate decorations and multiple levels built during the same era. Inside, visitors can explore the main hall, a *kolah farangi* mansion, and a pool house, all adorned with stunning architecture. The *koushk* is situated along



the main path with a water stream flowing through it from the Hassanabad Qanat. Another delightful feature of the garden is its winter house, a relatively newer structure built during the Pahlavi Era. This one-story building comprises several living rooms, a kitchen, and various other spaces designed to be functional during the winter months. Additionally, the garden includes carpet-weaving and spinning workshops, a warehouse, and a building designated for the residence of servants. Moreover, the Pahlevanpour Garden is home to the Anthropology Museum of Mehriz, showcasing over 400 ancient artifacts such as tools from different occupations, old manuscripts, and traditional garments.

