

# Edible delights and handcrafted treasures of Isfahan



Gaz  
sitotravel.com



Poolaki  
blog.okcs.com



Korki  
meysam.ir



Bereshtook  
kashaninuts.com

Discovering the souvenirs of a city often forms the most memorable part of any trip, and Isfahan, the vibrant heart of Iran, is no exception. The city's offerings can be divided into two main categories: edible delights and intricate handicrafts. While many may know Isfahan for its traditional sweets like *gaz* and *poolaki*, a wealth of other delectable treats awaits those who seek unique souvenirs.

## Gaz

*Gaz* is a delightful and well-known confection with roots tracing back 450 years to the Safavid era. Traditionally made from the sap of the angebin plant, modern *gaz* is crafted from rose water, sugar, egg whites, nuts, and slivers of pistachio. Unique to Isfahan, *gaz* comes in various forms, with bite-sized pieces being the most common. Another popular variety, *gaz-e ardi*, is coated in flour to extend its shelf life and reduce sweetness, earning it the playful nickname "troublesome *gaz*" due to its messy nature.

## Poolaki

*Poolaki*, another cherished sweet from Isfahan, resembles thin, coin-sized candies and is available in multiple flavors, including saffron, lemon, pistachio, coconut, sesame, honey, cocoa, and mint. This treat is easy to make, which makes it particularly popular among locals, in contrast to the more complex preparation of *gaz*.

## Korki

Once you experience *korki*, you'll

likely become enamored with this soft, delectable treat made from animal fat and a blend of flours. Available in vanilla, saffron, and chocolate flavors, *korki*'s unique texture and taste make it a favorite among both visitors and locals.

## Bereshtook

Though *bereshtook* is found in various Iranian cities, Isfahan's version is particularly renowned for its exceptional flavor. Made from chickpea or wheat flour combined with oil, sugar, cardamom, and powdered sugar, Isfahan's *bereshtook* stands out for its exquisite taste and craftsmanship.

## Doogh and gooshfil

Combining *doogh* (a savory yogurt drink) with *gooshfil* (a sweet pastry) might seem unusual, but many find this pairing surprisingly enjoyable. The salty *doogh* beautifully offsets the sweetness of the *gooshfil*, creating a unique flavor experience. For those wanting to bring home these treats, sealed 1.5-liter containers of *doogh* and boxed *gooshfil* are available.

## Sohan asali

Often linked to Qom, Isfahan's *sohan asali* is a thin, delicious confection primarily made from almonds and pistachios. Ingredients such as honey, butter, sugar, rose water, and saffron enhance its rich flavor and make it a nourishing treat. Typically, *sohan asali* is sold in sheets, custom-cut to desired sizes.



Firoozeh-koobi  
aradbranding.com



Sohan asali  
mozaffarigaz.com



Khatam-kari  
honarisfahan.com



Doogh and gooshfil  
parsine.com

## Firoozeh-koobi

Isfahan is not only renowned for its edible souvenirs but also for its exquisite Iranian handicrafts. The city's artisan products are popular among tourists, with notable crafts including: *Firoozeh-koobi* is a craft that involves inlaying small pieces of turquoise into brass, copper, or silver dishes, resulting in stunning decorative items. This luxurious handicraft evokes a profound sense of tranquility. Known as turquoise inlay in English, *Firoozeh-koobi* is one of Iran's prestigious arts, attracting numerous enthusiasts both domestically and internationally. The captivating hues of turquoise stones entice art lovers to acquire this beautiful craftsmanship reminiscent of the sky.

## Khatam-kari

*Khatam-kari*, also known as marquetry, is a captivating art form that decorates wooden objects with intricately cut pieces of wood, bone, and metal. These materials are meticulously shaped into delicate triangles, often measuring just three millimeters. The result is a stunning surface adorned with a variety of geometric shapes in diverse colors. This visually striking technique never fails to captivate visitors with its harmonious blend of rhythmic colors and forms.

If you're planning a trip to Isfahan, often referred to as "Half the World," enhance your journey by exploring its incredible attractions and bringing home some of these exceptional souvenirs.

## Haj Aqa Torab Bathhouse, a cultural heritage site in Nahavand

The Haj Aqa Torab Bathhouse, a notable structure from the Qajar era in Nahavand, Hamedan Province, was built by Haj Mirza Mohammad Taqi, a prominent benefactor of the city. It is commonly referred to by his son's name, Haj Aqa Torab, and is also known as the Twin Bathhouses.

This bathhouse features an almost rectangular layout with separate sections for men and women. Above the entrance to the men's section, an inscription details the building's history. The entrance is situated about five steps below street level and is flanked by two elegant half-columns.

Inside, a wall divides the space into two distinct areas. The first section, known as the *sard-khaneh*, serves as a changing room and is characterized by



four stone columns, a dome, and a central aperture for lighting and ventilation. A beautiful lavabo is positioned at the center of the room, surrounded by alcoves and chambers on three sides. Notably, an alcove

and two columns are adorned with painted scenes from the *Shahnameh*, a long epic poem written by the Persian poet Ferdowsi, while the interior of the dome showcases various plant motifs and vases featuring



birds, along with an inscription. The second section, the *garm-khaneh*, is designed for hot water and mirrors the layout of the changing room, featuring four central columns and a smaller dome overhead.

Constructed from brick, mortar, and stone, the bathhouse boasts decorative plasterwork, tiling, and painting throughout. Today, the Haj Aqa Torab Bathhouse has been transformed into an ethnography museum,

where visitors can experience traditional washing ceremonies in the men's section and the *hanabandan*, a traditional wedding ceremony, in the women's section.

Nahavand is one of the southern townships of Hamadan Province. It features a temperate mountainous climate, characterized by heavy rainfall in the spring. The city is located 152km south of Hamadan and approximately 460km from Tehran.

Studies and archaeological research conducted by Prof. Grishman at Geyan Hill reveal that the inhabitants of this region had a civilization similar to that of Mesopotamia around 3,700 BCE. However, this civilization eventually declined due to the influence of Asian and European populations.