

# Stone Garden of Sirjan, a tale of resilience and artistry



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## Iranica Desk

The Stone Garden of Sirjan, also known as the Darvish Khan Garden, draws many tourists every year. This remarkable garden is one of the lasting creations located in the remote village of Miandoab in the Sirjan plain of Kerman Province.

### Creator

The mastermind behind this enduring masterpiece is a deaf man named Darvish Khan Esfandiarpour. Born in 1924, he was the son of a local chieftain, Habib Khan. According to local lore, Darvish Khan was a landowner in Sirjan who earned his livelihood through shepherding and gardening, cultivating primarily almond and walnut trees. However, in 1961, the land reform program implemented during the reign of Reza Shah Pahlavi affected his garden, which gradually dried up, leaving Darvish Khan powerless to stop its decline. In a nearby desert, he set up a tent beside one of his gardens and embarked on an extraordinary project, replanting the with-

ered trees and adorning them with unusual stones.

The Stone Garden spans an area of 1,000 square meters and features 180 trees bearing fruit that resembles stones. This garden is a testament to the passion and artistry of an elderly man who devoted his entire life to its creation. Each tree in the garden holds a story, shrouded in mystery to this day, IRNA wrote.

### Location

To reach this remarkable garden, travel to Kerman Province and head towards the Sirjan-Baft road. After 30 kilometers, you will see a sign for the tourism area. Take the exit and drive about four kilometers on a dirt road until you arrive at the Stone Garden. The journey from Kerman to the garden takes approximately two hours.

### Inspiration

The Stone Garden is an idea that has captivated both Iranian and international tourists over the years, raising the question of how such a concept originated in the mind of a deaf man from a remote village.

Darvish Khan's family recounts that after the land reform, he mourned for a long time before deciding to create the garden. Some suggest that he had a dream about the garden one night, prompting him to bring that vision to life.

Numerous stories surround this garden, including the belief that the stones are fragments of meteorites that fell nearby, or that the concept emerged from the difficulties faced by Iran during World Wars I and II. These anecdotes, while often far-fetched, contribute to the allure and mystique of the garden.

This garden is situated in an area where such large stones do not naturally occur, with the nearest stones found in mountains five to six kilometers away. Transporting these sizable stones from such a distance would have been a formidable task for an elderly man. The stones attached to the trees are meticulously drilled, yet Darvish Khan never possessed any tools for drilling and was never observed engaging in such work. Some of these stones are so immense that

it would take several strong men to lift them.

Each tree carries its own story, and Darvish Khan's deafness has left many of these tales shrouded in mystery. For instance, one stone resembles the bald head of a man, which Darvish Khan placed after his grandson went to military service. This elderly man planted a tree for every birth or death of a loved one, and he visited these trees in memory of the deceased instead of a gravestone.

In addition to the stones, various other items are hung from some trees, including exhaust pipes, worn-out gears, punctured tires, tin cans, oil lamps, broken mirrors, cooler floats, telegraph poles, and broken hookahs, among others. It's evident that this elderly man could never have envisioned that this garden would eventually become one of Iran's most unique tourist attractions. The garden is open to the public 24 hours a day and is free of charge, but it is advisable to visit during the day to fully appreciate its charm, as it can be quite eerie at night.



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## Evolution of macaroni in Iranian cuisine

Macaroni, a staple in many Iranian households, is one of the most popular dishes in Iran. Due to its convenience, macaroni is often cooked quickly and is a common choice for family gatherings. Traditionally, Iranian macaroni is made with tomato sauce and ground meat and is known locally as "Iranian macaroni."

The history of macaroni consumption in Iran dates back to the early 20th century. The first macaroni production work-

shop in Iran, named Lobel, started in 1934, producing 20 to 30 kilograms daily, primarily for foreign embassies and consulates. This exclusivity led to the term "foreign noodles." At that time, macaroni was considered a fancy food item, as noted by surfiran.com.

### Popularity of macaroni

Macaroni has become a top choice for many Iranian families due to its ease of preparation, variety of flavors, and

adaptability to different tastes. Children and teenagers particularly enjoy macaroni, making it a staple in school and university cafeterias. Recently, with the growth of modern restaurants and fast-food outlets in Iran, various Italian macaroni dishes have gained popularity, reflecting the Iranian love for this pasta type and their desire to try new flavors. Overall, macaroni is not only a favorite dish but also a significant part of Iranian food culture.

### Different types of macaroni

In the 1990s, the need for local macaroni production in Iran became evident. Before the end of the Iran-Iraq war, the country relied heavily on macaroni imports. The early 1990s saw the establishment of pasta brands. The delay in Iran's macaroni production was due to a lack of advanced technology, imported machinery, and high-quality durum wheat. However, with the Ministry of Industry and Mines' support,



local macaroni production improved, leading to the creation of various shapes made from enriched semolina flour.

Iranians, like many Eastern cultures, have long been familiar with wheat-based foods. Traditional dishes resembling modern macaroni existed in the Safavid court's cuisine. However, macaroni as an independent dish was not common in Iranian cuisine until recently. Over time,

Iranians adapted macaroni to their tastes, creating a unique style of cooking and serving that differs significantly from the Italian method.

### Iranian-style macaroni preparation

In Iran, macaroni is typically cooked like rice and steamed, with a crispy layer known as *tahdig*, which is the golden crust that forms at the bottom. Ingredients such as fried

onions, ground meat, chicken, sausages, mushrooms, and various vegetables are commonly used. Iranians have developed numerous macaroni dishes, including macaroni with soy, simple macaroni, and macaroni with chicken.

Through these adaptations, macaroni has not only become a favorite dish in Iranian households but also a vibrant reflection of the country's evolving culinary landscape.