

# Ommolkorm

## Island, a sanctuary for migratory birds and nature lovers



### Iranica Desk

Ommolkorm Island, also known as Ommolgorm Island, in Bushehr Province, has a shape similar to a boomerang. This uninhabited coral island is one of the attractions of Bushehr and the islands of Dayyer-Nakhilo National Park. With an area of 79 hectares, Om-

olkorm serves as a sanctuary for migratory birds, offering a safe haven for their survival. During spring, migrants from around the world arrive at this island to nest on its warm shores, where their chicks hatch amidst the sounds of the Persian Gulf waters. They learn to walk on the sandy beaches and eventually return to the same point they came from by

late September, according to IRNA. Ommolkorm Island not only provides a refuge for animals but also serves as a sanctuary for small vessels, particularly fishing boats. The birds show no aversion to boats and fishermen; it's almost as if they consider them part of this enigmatic island. However, this friendship is not entirely reciprocal; both the coast and the island suffer from the presence of boats, with plastic bottles and oil cans posing a threat to these.

It is astonishing that Ommolkorm Island, located just 80 kilometers from the rapidly industrializing city of Bushehr, serves as a paradise for migratory birds, providing a safe haven for around 10,000 birds that have sought refuge there after their long journeys. The air is filled with a symphony of birdsong, heightening the anticipation of witnessing these creatures up close. Among the bushes, saw-scaled vipers, some of the most poisonous snakes in Iran, also make their home.

The nesting sites of birds' eggs are scattered along the shores of Ommolkorm Island. Visitors must tread carefully, as a bird's egg could easily be crushed underfoot. The eggs and newly hatched chicks are the island's most vulnerable inhabitants. As the birds mature, they develop vibrant plumage. One must be a bird expert to identify the bridled tern, a strikingly colorful bird with a black head and dark back. Its slender wings enable it to perform beautiful aerial displays. These birds often hover in place before darting to catch fish, navigating with remarkable agility. Both male and female bridled terns share similar appearances and typically build their nests on sandy islands or seashores.

If you encounter western reef herons, you will notice that they come in two distinctive colors: black and white. In this area, the majority of these coastal birds are black. They typically inhabit muddy estuaries, marshes, and brackish wetlands along rocky shores and coral reefs. Flamingos, known for their calm nature, can be observed standing by the water and repeatedly dipping their bills into it. This behavior allows them to collect algae and small crustaceans on the filter inside their bills, serving as their daily food source. Interestingly, flamingos require a running start on the water to take off for flight, which may ex-

plain why they are seen flying less frequently.

The crab-plover is another species that hunts with a beak and long gray legs. This type of bird has males and females that resemble each other. In early spring, the island undergoes a transformation as thousands of crab-plovers gather by the shore to lay eggs. In the second half of the season, the hatchlings emerge from the eggs. Crab-plovers and other migratory birds that have come to this island for the winter begin their journey in early September.

Ommolkorm Island is characterized by a warm and humid climate during the hot seasons of the year due to its geographical location. Therefore, the best time to visit the island is from September to April, allowing visitors to enjoy the pristine nature of the area in peace.

Visiting Ommolkorm Island is not permitted without approval from the Department of Environment. Keep in mind that this small island has very limited capacity; therefore, try to limit the group size to no more than 10 people to preserve this natural heritage for the future.

The island does not offer any overnight accommodations; thus, you should look for eco-lodges in the surrounding villages and towns. The island has no facilities, so be sure to bring drinking water and dry food with you.



## Jaghoor baghoor, Zanjan Province's culinary delight

*Jaghoor baghoor* is a cherished culinary gem from the Zanjan Province of Iran, renowned for its rich flavors and cultural significance. This traditional dish has not only captured the hearts of locals but has also gained immense popularity among tourists seeking an authentic taste of Iranian cuisine. The preparation of jaghoor baghoor reflects the simplicity and resourcefulness of traditional cooking methods, making it a nourishing meal that resonates with the essence of the region.

At its core, jaghoor baghoor is a delightful combination of lamb offal and liver, harmoniously blended with a variety of ingredi-

ents that enhance its flavor profile. The dish typically includes onions, oil, and a selection of spices such as salt, pepper, and turmeric. Additionally, it may be enriched with tomato sauce, water, and either pomegranate sauce or lemon juice, allowing for a personalized touch based on individual preferences. For those who appreciate a richer taste, cooking the dish with clarified butter elevates its flavor, making it even more delectable.

A crucial aspect of preparing this Zanjani delicacy is the meticulous cleaning of the liver, which is essential to mitigate any undesirable flavors that could affect the overall taste of the dish.

While lamb offal is the traditional choice, some cooks opt for lung, adding a unique twist to the rec-

ipe. The cooking process begins with slicing onions thinly and frying them in oil until they achieve a

golden brown and crispy texture. Following this, the liver pieces are introduced, seasoned with salt, pepper, and tomato sauce, along with sour grape juice. For those who prefer a hint of sweetness, a half spoon of pomegranate sauce or lemon juice can be added.

In cases where lung is used, the preparation involves adding the lung pieces to the fried onions, covering them, and allowing them to cook until all moisture evaporates. Turmeric is then lightly fried before incorporating the necessary amount of water. Once the mixture reaches a boil, additional seasonings such as salt, pepper, tomato sauce, and sour grape juice are added, along

with the optional pomegranate sauce or lemon juice, tailored to the cook's taste.

While some may choose to serve jaghoor baghoor with French-fried potatoes for an added crunch, it is traditionally enjoyed without them, allowing the dish's authentic flavors to shine through. If you find yourself traveling to Zanjan, indulging in jaghoor baghoor at one of the local traditional restaurants is an experience not to be missed. This dish not only offers a taste of Zanjan's culinary heritage but also provides a glimpse into the region's rich cultural tapestry, making it a must-try for any food enthusiast.

