

## Iranica Desk

Hengam Island is one of the most beautiful and pristine islands in the Persian Gulf, located in southern Iran, near Qeshm Island. Covering an area of approximately 33.6 square kilometers, it is considered an attractive tourist destination due to its stunning natural scenery, unique beaches, and rich ecosystem.

The island lies two kilometers southeast of Qeshm Island and can be accessed by speedboats from Qeshm's piers. Historically, the local economy has been primarily based on fishing. Hengam Island is recognized as one of the most scenic islands in the Persian Gulf, having preserved its native character, which allows visitors to easily observe the traditions of the past, *chtn.ir* wrote. Attractions on this beautiful island include Silver Beach, Khomasi Beach, its traditional market, handicrafts, and wildlife, which features dolphins, hawksbill turtles, and gazelles. The best time to visit Hengam Island is from mid-autumn to mid-April.

## Khomasi Beach

Khomasi Beach is an ideal destination for swimming, diving, and observing marine life, thanks to its clear and calm waters. The pristine nature of the area allows tourists to easily appreciate the underwater beauty. This beach is especially suitable for nature enthusiasts, as various species of marine plants and animals can be found nearby, which can be observed during guided tours. A standout feature of Khomasi Beach is its tranquility. In contrast to the more crowded beaches on the island, this beach is less well-known, offering visitors the chance to relax in a serene environment away from the hustle and bustle. Its natural beauty also provides an excellent opportunity for photography enthusiasts to capture stunning landscapes and seascapes. Access to Khomasi Beach is possible via local boats. However, facilities at this beach are limited, so visitors planning to explore the area should bring their own necessary equipment.

## Silver Beach

Silver Beach on Hengam Island is

# Wonders of Hengam Island attract visitors



one of the island's most stunning natural attractions. Renowned for its bright, silver-hued sands that shimmer beautifully in the sunlight, the beach captivates visitors with its striking appearance.

The unique mineral composition of the sand contributes to its silvery quality, reflecting light in a distinctive manner. In addition to its natural beauty, Silver Beach provides a serene environment perfect for relaxation, allowing visitors to fully enjoy the delightful Persian Gulf climate.

## Traditional market

The handicrafts market on Hengam Island serves as a vibrant cultural and economic hub, offering visitors a unique opportunity to explore local art and craftsmanship. Especially appealing to tourists and those interested in authentic cultural experiences, this market features a diverse array of products, including decorative items made from shells, coral, and marine stones. Crafted primarily by local artisans, these items showcase the artistic talents and creativity of the island's

residents.

In addition to the marine-themed crafts, visitors can find wooden sculptures and decorative objects made from locally sourced wood. Vendors often share stories and traditions related to their products, providing captivating insights into the island's culture.

Designed in a traditional style, the handicrafts market invites visitors to shop and wander in a culturally rich atmosphere. Engaging with friendly local vendors and the opportunity to bargain for unique items create an immersive and enjoyable experience that beautifully represents the local culture.

## Dolphins

The dolphins of Hengam Island are among the popular and remarkable tourist attractions in the Persian Gulf. These dolphins attract many tourists due to their interesting and playful behaviors, providing a unique experience for observing marine life. Hengam Island's dolphins naturally inhabit the waters around the island and are most common-

ly seen in shallow areas close to the shore. These waters offer an ideal environment for dolphins to live and hunt for food.

The dolphins typically swim in groups and engage in play and interaction throughout the day, making them appealing and exciting for tourists to observe. The best time to see the dolphins around Hengam Island is during the cooler seasons of the year, particularly in autumn and winter. During these seasons, dolphins frequently surface to showcase their activities.

Regular boat tours are available for dolphin watching around Hengam Island. These tours typically provide visitors with the opportunity to approach suitable areas to observe the dolphins up close and enjoy their behaviors.

Tourists interested in photography and videography can take advantage of golden opportunities to capture beautiful moments with the dolphins. The dolphins' captivating behaviors and graceful movements create extraordinary scenes to be captured on camera.



## Enduring legacy of chigh in nomadic culture

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Chigh is the traditional wall covering used by the nomadic people of Ilam Province. This handicraft is skillfully woven by the women of these communities. According to the *Dehkhoda Dictionary*, *chigh* is 'a Turkish word for a shutter-like weave made from common reeds and thin wooden branches, typically hung in front of

entrance doors.' However, it is known by various names in different regions.

The primary materials for chigh are a type of reed and goat hair, sourced from the nomads' own herds. The reeds, which grow wild in the nomads' natural habitat, are hollow. Weavers collect the reeds from the banks of nearby rivers. Depending on their diameter, the reeds are divided into three or four pieces,

each approximately ten centimeters wide. These pieces are then woven together using colorful spun wool yarn. The women weavers visualize the design in their minds and weave each piece separately before arranging them to create the intended pattern. Since nomads have traditionally lived in tents, chigh has a deep historical connection to the use of tent walls. Chigh is not only a beautiful and

captivating product, but it also serves practical purposes by blocking heat, cold, wind, and dust from entering the living space. The hollow nature of the reeds allows them to function as a natural filter. During rain or cold weather, the humidity causes the reeds to swell and bond together, providing insulation against the cold. Conversely, in hot and dry conditions, the reeds shrink, creating spaces that al-

low air to circulate. Additionally, goat hair provides strong shade, making chigh an ideal awning. An interesting characteristic of goat hair is its natural ability to repel insects and snakes. Traditional chigh is adorned with symbolic and diverse motifs and gazelles, crabs, eagle feathers, stars, ducks, and geometric patterns, all inspired by nature and the weaver's memories. The tools used to create

chigh are simple and primitive, including sickles, knives, grinders, scissors, needles, and stitching awls. It is the creativity and skill of the women weavers that elevate these products to a level of artistry. Today, given the versatility of chigh's design and the adjustable spacing between the reeds, it can also be used as shutters, dividers, wall coverings, and decorative elements in urban homes.

