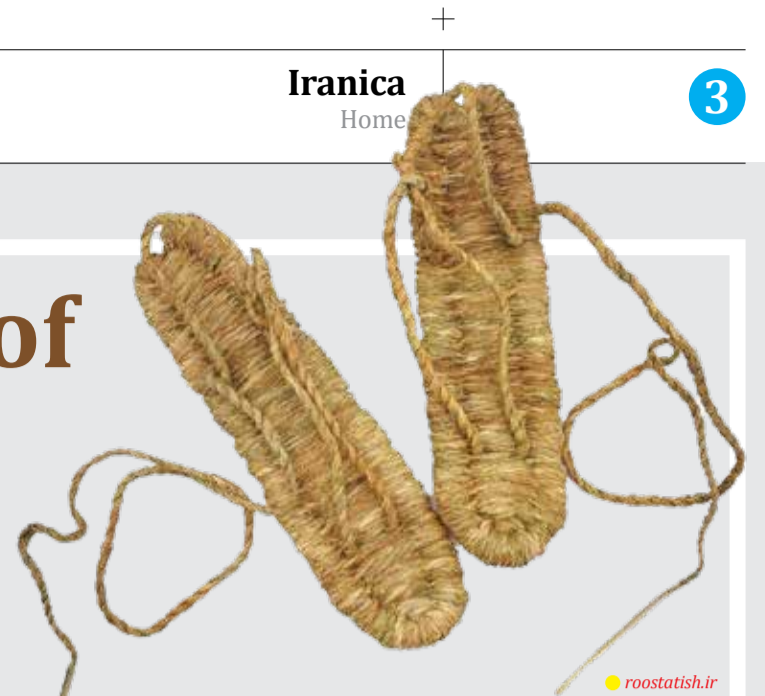


Sovas; traditional footwear of Hormozgan

Iranica Desk The traditional footwear of southern Iran, particularly in Hormozgan Province, is regarded as an integral part of the region's cultural and artistic heritage, rooted in the lives of the indigenous people of tropical and coastal areas. These shoes not only symbolize the handmade artistry and creativity of the people of Hormozgan but also represent an important aspect of their history and cultural identity. Among these types of footwear, sovas is recognized as one of the most significant examples, woven using specific techniques.



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Characteristics of sovas

Sovas is a type of traditional shoe made from natural fibers such as palm leaves, designed to protect the feet from heat and uneven surfaces. This footwear is especially well-suited for the warm and dry environments of Hormozgan Province, as it offers both lightweight comfort and adequate ventilation for the feet.

Weaving process

The process of weaving sovas, a traditional art, requires skill and precision. First, palm

leaves, which are abundantly found in the region, are collected and cleaned. The leaves are then dried to prepare them for weaving, as drying increases the flexibility and durability of the fibers. Local weavers cut the palm leaves into thin strands, getting them ready for the weaving process.

Handcrafted techniques

The weaving of sovas is performed by hand using simple tools. It typically begins with twisting and intertwining the fibers. The strands are sys-

tematically twisted together to form the sole of the sovas, starting from the bottom of the foot and gradually progressing upwards. Weavers continue the process using simple and sometimes repetitive patterns. Once the sole is complete, sections are added for the straps or lateral parts. These straps are usually made from the same palm fibers and are woven into both sides of the sole. Depending on the region or the weaver's preference, these straps may feature specific decorations or designs.

After the weaving is finished, the sovas must be placed in the sun for some time to dry and become sturdy. At this stage, the woven footwear is ready for use.

Strap attachment

To attach the straps to the sovas, two models are used: one for men and one for women. The straps are woven from a specific fabric and sewn onto the sole of the sovas with a needle. To sew the strap onto the sovas, the needle is inserted from underneath and brought up through the top,

then pushed into the desired point on the sovas. The length of the strap for the sovas is 28 meters, and its width is eight centimeters. For the men's version of the sovas, an additional strap at the back of the foot is also included.

Advantages of sovas

Due to the use of palm leaves, sovas are very lightweight and provide excellent airflow. Made from natural fibers, these footwear items are resistant to heat and harsh environmental conditions, making

them highly suitable for use in coastal and mountainous areas. Sovas also demonstrate strong resistance to thorns, allowing people in southern Iran to walk easily for kilometers during the hot season, as a single wetting of the shoes would keep their feet cool.

Heritage and preservation

The method of weaving sovas has been passed down through generations, remaining an integral part of the cultural identity of the people of Hormozgan. Sovas weaving is not only a handicraft but also a significant aspect of the cultural heritage and traditional life in this region. This craft has been preserved as an essential skill for rural and nomadic communities, adapting to the local environmental and climatic conditions.

Challenges and future

Despite modern changes and the introduction of industrial shoes, sovas weaving continues in some areas of Hormozgan Province. However, due to reduced demand and changes in lifestyle, this traditional craft faces the threat of extinction. Sovas weaving is specifically tailored to the region's environment and climate, symbolizing the creativity and skill of local weavers while representing a vital aspect of the culture and identity of the people of Hormozgan Province.

A blend of history, nature and tradition in Khorheh



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Khorheh is an ancient region located in the village of the same name, situated in the northeast of Mahalat in Markazi Province. This historical area encompasses 13 villages and lies within the valley of Haftad Qolleh, nestled between the Lorakh Gav and Khorzin mountains. The Qomrud River, originating from the Tayqan Mountain, flows through this valley near the village. The ancient land of Khorheh extends from the Haftad Qolleh Mountain in the north to the Yakhchal Mountain in the south. Within this area, one can

find the ruins of a fire temple, a summerhouse, a fort, and a cemetery, all spread over an approximate area of 3,500 square meters in a quadrilateral layout divided into three sections. These ruins date back to the Seleucid, Parthian, and Sassanid periods. The first reconstruction of this historical site occurred in 1916. Among the significant findings are two slender columns, each six meters tall, crafted from travertine stone and adorned with Greek-style Ionic capitals. These

columns are attributed to the Seleucid and Parthian periods. Each Seleucid column is made of six stone sections stacked on top of one another, featuring a square hole along the axis of each piece for a wooden bar to be inserted. The remains of several interconnected rooms, corridors, and staircases can still be observed from this ancient structure. A staircase on the west side leads to the roof, which was complemented by a columned porch supported by twelve columns — six on each

side. It is estimated that the roof was originally nine meters high, but only two columns remain standing today. Additionally, acid rain has eroded the ancient stones, highlighting the urgent need for protective measures to prevent further deterioration. Excavations have also uncovered a room with a furnace, along with various archaeological artifacts, including different types of pottery, clay burners, handled jars, cosmetic stones, and the remains of seven human skeletons.

Furthermore, a stone inscription dating back to the Seljuk period has been discovered; it is currently located in Nimvar, southwest of Khorheh village, beside the Qamrud River. Khorheh boasts a variety of remarkable sites that attract tourists, such as the Shah Bolbol Cave, the historic Lorakh Gav Cave, the Vazvan or Shureh Spring, and the Imamzadeh Haft Ivan. The region is also known for its handicrafts, including carpets, rugs, and woolen socks.