

Seven lesser-known attractions in Yazd Province

If you appreciate the elegance of traditional Iranian architecture and find solace in historic homes, Yazd is a must-visit. Known as the city of pomegranates, qottab sweets, and a starry desert sky, Yazd preserves an eternal flame and celebrates the ancient Mehregan festival. The traditional houses and ecolodges in Yazd, adorned with colorful orsi windows, cisterns, and wind towers, exemplify the splendor of desert city architecture in Iran.

The best time to visit Yazd Province is during autumn or spring when the intense desert sun softens, and the cool desert nights become more pleasant. It's perfect for a leisurely stroll through the city's mudbrick alleys, where a gentle breeze refreshes the air, surfiran.com wrote

This ancient desert city is brimming with hidden gems that many travelers overlook. From quaint historic neighborhoods to captivating traditional crafts, Yazd offers countless opportunities for cultural exploration. Here, we highlight seven lesser-known attractions that showcase the city's unique character, inviting you to experience Yazd from a fresh perspective.

Timeless majesty of the Harzavil Cypress



● Visitiran.ir

Iranica Desk

The Harzavil Cypress is a giant and ancient tree, estimated to be between 1,000 and 3,000 years old. This unique natural monument stands approximately 30 meters tall and boasts a diameter of nearly four meters.

The name Harzavil refers to a village of the same name, located within the city boundaries of Manjil in Gilan Province. The cypress was registered on Iran's National Heritage List in 1987 and is currently protected by environmental regulations. Villagers consider this cypress sacred, viewing it as a symbol of good fortune. Deeply rooted in their land, it has become a permanent natural landmark for the residents of Harzavil village.

The Harzavil Cypress is also mentioned in the travelogue of Nasereddin Shah Qajar, dating back to the 1870s CE. During his visit, Nasereddin Shah wrote, "We had our afternoon meal in the shade of this colossal tree, and the musicians, hidden among the branches and foliage, played delightful tunes, leaving us in awe."

The Harzavil village, like many others in Rudbar and Manjil, was completely destroyed in the earthquake of 1990. Today, all the buildings in the village date back to the post-reconstruction period and are situated near the ancient cypress tree. This proximity has raised serious concerns, as wastewater and other daily pollutants from the village may threaten the life of this venerable tree. Visiting the Harzavil Cypress is free and open to all, allowing you to explore the village at any hour of the day or night. The cypress trees remain vibrant and green throughout the year, making any season a suitable time for a visit to this natural attraction. However, it's worth noting that the full beauty of the Harzavil Cypress and the wind turbines in Manjil can only be appreciated during daylight hours. Moreover, the wind turbines on the hills of Manjil look especially enchanting at sunrise and sunset.

Abolma'ali Bathhouse



● baland.ir

The Abolma'ali Bathhouse is a historic bathhouse that has been transformed into a traditional restaurant in the old Fahadan neighborhood of Yazd. Constructed with brick, river pebbles, plaster, and *sarooj*, it's a stunning example of Qajar-era bathhouses. The structure features an octagonal antechamber, entrance staircases, hot and cold plunge pools, restrooms, *shahneshin* seating areas, and a *garmkhaneh* (hot room).

Mirror Palace Museum

The Mirror Palace Museum is an exquisite mansion set within a spacious garden, blending traditional and modern architecture. Adorned with intricate plasterwork, mirror mosaics, and colorful orsi windows, this mansion was originally built during the Pahlavi era for the benevolent businessman Sarrafzadeh. Today, it serves as a museum showcasing historic items, including antique lamps and chandeliers. It is located on Kashani Street in Yazd.



● safarmarket.com

Zeinoddin Caravanserai



● wikipedia.org

The Zeinoddin Caravanserai in Mehriz is one of the lesser-known gems of the province, a stunning architectural feat from the Safavid era, built by prominent architect Mohammad Sultan Yazdi over 400 years ago. This caravanserai stands out due to its circular design, offering a unique perspective from above. The brick structure is now used as an ecolodge. On its northern side, a *shahneshin* has been transformed into a dining area, and two sets of staircases lead to the rooftop, providing breathtaking views of the desert landscape. This caravanserai is located 60 kilometers along the road from Yazd to Kerman, about 500 meters from the highway.

Tower of Silence



● balad.ir

To visit a unique cemetery, head to the Tower of Silence, located 15 kilometers from the city of Yazd. Zoroastrians traditionally brought bodies to a high elevation called *dakhmeh*, where they were left exposed to the wind and sun, providing sustenance for scavenger birds. Zoroastrians believed that Earth and fire were sacred and must not be polluted by corpses; hence, they opted for this method rather than burial or cremation. The *dakhmeh* is constructed from raw bricks and plaster to prevent contaminants from seeping into the soil. The circular structure is divided into three concentric areas for men, women, and children, with a central pit called *astodan* where bones were eventually placed. The Tower of Silence is located in the *dakhmeh* mountain range, 15 kilometers southeast of Yazd, near the Safaiyeh area.

Zarch Qanat

Zarch Qanat is the longest qanat in the world, spanning 100 kilometers with over 2,000 wells dug along its route. The qanat begins in Fahraj, passing through the villages of Dehnow and Akramieh before entering Yazd and eventually reaching the town of Zarch. Near the Jaame Mosque of Yazd, there is a branch of the qanat accessible via 60 steps, leading to an area used for ablution by the mosque's worshippers.



● lastsecond.ir

Naji Garden



● top-travel.ir

Naji Garden is a beautiful park featuring a mansion from the Qajar era, which was owned by a man named Naji. It is a stunning example of a garden set along the Najafabad qanat route, emphasizing the importance of qanat systems in desert cities. Located on Dasti Boulevard in the city of Yazd, it lies on the exit route towards Kerman.

Six Windcatchers Cistern

The Six Windcatchers Cistern in Yazd is a remarkable structure built during the Qajar era by Haj Mohammad Hossein Yazdi. As the name suggests, this reservoir features six windcatchers, each designed to keep the water cool by catching and channeling air. The cistern showcases the architectural ingenuity of ancient Persia in managing water resources in arid climates. Visitors can admire the elegant intricacies of its construction, with arched ceilings and beauti-

fully crafted brickwork that highlight the craftsmanship of the time. Together, these attractions offer a glimpse into Yazd's rich cultural heritage and the innovative solutions devised by its inhabitants to thrive in a challenging environment. Exploring these sites provides unparalleled insight into the historical practices and philosophies of Zoroastrian culture and the broader Persian civilization.



● eneshat.com