

# Rich history of Yaghmaei House in Shahroud

The Yaghmaei House is one of the notable attractions in Shahroud, Semnan Province, with a history that spans over a century. Constructed in 1926, this historic residence was built during the early Pahlavi era under the guidance of Master Mahdi Heydarian, the architect who designed the house in a style typical of Yazd. The architectural principles employed in the Yaghmaei House are particularly suited for Iran's desert climate, making it a priority for tourists who enjoy exploring historical residences during their visit to Shahroud.

Key features of the Yaghmaei House include its impressive windcatcher (*badgir*) and the pool room

(*howzkhaneh*). The structure is organized around a central courtyard, with the entrance leading into it via a hallway. The windcatcher is not only a decorative element but also serves a functional purpose, standing taller and sturdier than those found in other local buildings. Another notable feature is the pool room, which is strategically placed beneath the windcatcher. A small pool sits at the center of this room, allowing incoming air from the windcatcher to cool as it passes over the water, effectively filtering out dust before entering the house. The windcatcher is prominently positioned above the main entrance, making it visible from the end of the alley.



## History

The history of the Yaghmaei House is deeply intertwined with the legacy of its original owner, Yaghmaei, a prominent merchant of Shahroud. His affection for the city of Yazd inspired him to commission the construction of the house in the architectural style characteristic of Yazd's historical residences. Following his passing, the heirs of this esteemed merchant entrusted the house to the cultural heritage department of the city, choosing to focus on their trade instead. Although the Yaghmaei House was constructed during the Pahlavi era, its design is predominantly influenced by the architectural characteristics of the Qajar era, making it a quintessential example of Qajar architecture.

## Architecture

The Yaghmaei House exemplifies architectural styles that are well-suited for desert climates. The presence of windcatchers, which serve to cool the air, is a defining feature that distinguishes this building from others in Shahroud. The architecture is organized around a central courtyard, with rooms arranged around it. At the heart of the courtyard lies a water pool adorned with turquoise tiles,

surrounded by small gardens that infuse life and vitality into the space. In the western section of the courtyard, visitors will find guest rooms, a water reservoir, a veranda, and the only windcatcher in the city. The building also features light wells, a pool house, brick decorations around the courtyard, and a symmetrical layout that enhances the aesthetic appeal of the house. Upon entering through the front door, one is greeted by a small hallway that leads to the central courtyard, where stairs once provided access to the rooftop, although this access is no longer available. To the left of the entrance, on the western side of the building, lies the pool house, along with guest rooms and the water reservoir. The winter rooms are located on the northern side of the courtyard, providing a cozy retreat during the colder months. In spring, the lush gardens of the Yaghmaei House, with the central pool, significantly enhance the beauty and charm of the space.

## Nearby attractions

The Yaghmaei House is not the only captivating attraction in Shahroud; there are several other interesting places nearby that are well worth a visit.

## Archaeology and Anthropology Museum

The Archaeology and Anthropology Museum of Shahroud is located on Ferdowsi Street and was established in 1927, originally serving as the municipality of the city. This

historical museum houses over 800 artifacts and approximately 1,222 manuscripts and old books. Among its oldest items are bone and stone tools that date back more than 1,000 years, collected from the Sang-e Chakhmaq Hill of Bastam. The museum covers an area of 468 square meters and consists of two floors, designed in the architectural styles of late Qajar and early Pahlavi periods. The exterior is adorned with decorative bricks, while the surrounding area is paved with stone. The ceiling of the first floor features archways and domes, constructed with bricks, providing an elegant touch to the interior.

## Historical bazaar of Shahroud

The historical bazaar of Shahroud is an enclosed market that dates back to the Qajar period. This vibrant bazaar comprises several caravanserais, a mosque, a bathhouse, and a loading dock. Upon entering the bazaar, visitors will encounter two main aisles (*rastehs*), where specific products and goods are sold. Accessing the historical bazaar is convenient; simply head to the Republic Square, and the route from there is straightforward and easily navigable.

## Aqa Mosque

The Aqa Mosque, built during the Qajar period, is another significant historical site located near the bazaar. This mosque is adjacent to the old *tekiyehs*, which served as gathering places for Shia Muslims during religious ceremonies. The Aqa Mosque features an entrance porch, a shabestan (prayer hall), a cistern, a courtyard, a veranda, and various rooms. It includes two prayer halls designed for winter and summer use, each with symmetrical alcoves and mihrabs flanking the entrance porch. The proximity of the Aqa Mosque to the historical bazaar allows visitors to easily explore both sites during their visit.

## Best time to visit

If you are planning to travel to Shahroud, the best time to visit is in the spring. The city also enjoys pleasant weather in late summer, making it suitable for exploring its attractions. Therefore, the ideal months to visit the Yaghmaei House are May and June. During these months, the weather in Shahroud is delightful, and the surroundings of the Yaghmaei House are beautifully green, enhancing the overall experience of this historical gem.



## Explore mysteries of Hemmatabad Desert

The deserts of Iran are renowned worldwide and have long been a key destination for tourism in the country. The serene landscapes and endless vistas captivate visitors, while unexpected wonders like diverse vegetation and wildlife continually attract adventurers. One of the stunning destinations in eastern Iran is the Hemmatabad Desert, a vast and breathtaking area in South Khorasan Province, celebrated for its rich ecosystem. Until recently, it was known primarily to locals, but it has now gained attention as a potential tourist site. The desert takes its name from the nearby Hemmatabad village, located 150 kilometers from Qaen and 65 kilometers from Rizkuh, close to the Afghanistan border



and the famous Petregan Playa. This region has been referenced in ancient travel writings and was part of the historic land of Ghahestan, adding to its significance as a historical site.

Hemmatabad is home to Pleske's ground jay, an endemic bird species found nowhere else in the world. Other avian residents include bustards, partridges, and see-see partridges,



while mammals such as sand cats, Rüppell's foxes, hyenas, wolves, and rabbits can also be spotted. The best time to visit Hemmatabad Desert is from late autumn

to early spring, with March and April being the ideal months when spring begins and lasts until May. Autumn is preferable for those who enjoy cooler weather.



One of the highlights of Hemmatabad is the grand Hajiabad Dam, which features a large sluice and offers recreational opportunities along its shores. The lake behind the dam attracts migratory birds, providing excellent opportunities for ornithologists during the autumn and winter months. Visitors can also enjoy safari and desert tours, camel riding, and local products like saffron and barberry. A trip to Hemmatabad Desert can be completed with a visit to Tajnud village, known for its waterfall and river, as well as the tomb of Bozorgmehr, the ancient castle of Qaen, and Qaem Jaame Mosque, all contributing to a memorable travel experience.