

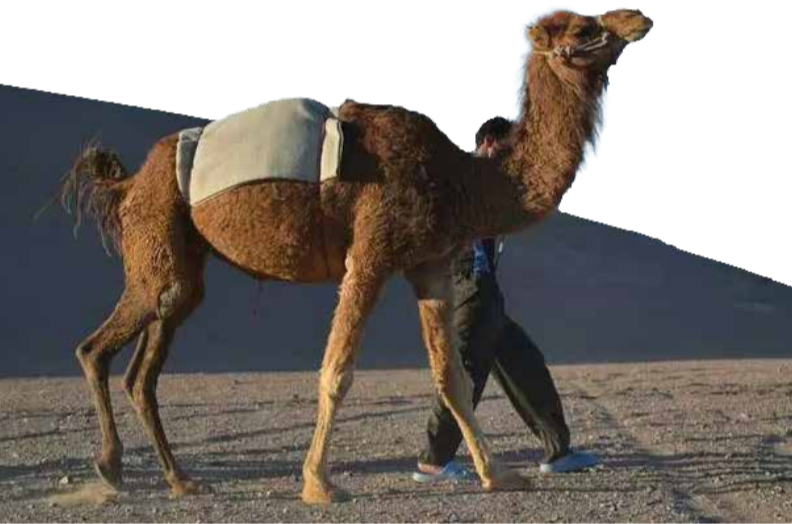
# Enchanting Polond Desert; nature's playground in Ferdows



## Iranica Desk

The Polond Desert, also known as the Mozaffari Protected Area, stands out as one of the prominent tourist attractions in South Khorasan Province, located in Ferdows. This region's unique desert and mountainous topography creates optimal conditions for various wildlife species, including the Iranian zebra.

Spanning an impressive 92,808 hectares, the Polond Desert is characterized by the convergence of desert and wasteland with highlands and mountains, resulting in a breathtaking landscape. Visitors can find sandy hills, salt flats, low-lying salt pans, and desert regions interspersed with mountainous terrains, including sandy hills that resemble a cheetah's tail and striking sand dunes.



One notable feature of the desert is the Dom Yuz Dune (literally meaning "cheetah's tail"), which resembles a cheetah resting in the heart of the desert, its head nestled among the mountains. To stabilize this dune, earthen barriers have been constructed at its eastern end. Nearby, areas with low and clayey surfaces are home to ancient water reservoirs that once served weary travelers and caravans in need of refreshment.

Another fascinating natural sight in the Polond Desert is Sang Sorakh (literally meaning Hollow Rock). This geological phenomenon features a 20-meter diameter hole created by water erosion in limestone, providing stunning views from above in the heart of the desert.

Sang Sorakh is located along the route to the Polond Desert and the Dom Yuz Dune, approximately 500 meters from the old Ibrahimabad road leading to Kajeh village and Chahe Now. Near Sang Sorakh, a water cave can also be found, offering a unique caving experience in the desert.

The desert marks the end of the earth, the boundary of life. In the Polond Desert, as in every

corner of the world, life thrives. The presence of various animal species, including the Arabian Oryx and the Iranian zebra, makes Polond a prime location for wildlife observation. The region's plant species include sand sagebrush, tamarisk, locust, thornbush, wild almond, and wild barberry. The diversity of animal species in the area is remarkable, featuring mouflon, ibex, wolves, gazelles, and over 33 species of reptiles.

Tourists who choose Polond as their travel destination can create unforgettable memories in this beautiful desert through a variety of activities, outlined below:

**Wildlife watching:** The unique connection between the desert and mountains in Polond, combined with the presence of a protected area home to rare wildlife species, makes Polond Desert an important site for wildlife observation and bird-watching enthusiasts.

**Camel riding:** With both wild and domestic camels bred in the region, camel riding is a popular activity that allows visitors to explore the desert in a traditional manner.

**Desert night sky:** The clear,



pristine night sky of the desert provides an ideal setting for stargazing. Spending the night in the desert allows you to fully appreciate its stunning celestial beauty.

**Hiking:** One of the most enjoyable activities in the desert is walking on the soft, warm sands and exploring the captivating sand dunes.

**Off-roading, quad biking, safari, and zip lining:** These exhilarating activities are also popular in the Polond Desert and attract many adventure enthusiasts.

**Best time to visit:** The ideal time for desert exploration and

adventures is during autumn, winter, and early spring. We recommend visiting the Polond Desert during these seasons, particularly in autumn and spring.

Near the Polond Desert lies a village of the same name, featuring eco-lodges designed with traditional desert architecture. After a day of remarkable desert exploration, you can spend the night in one of these lodges or set up camp under the stars. This experience allows you to enjoy the luminous skies of the desert while immersing yourself in its tranquility and silence.

## Historical significance of unique qanat of Dezful

### Iranica Desk

Did you know that our ancestors devised various solutions to secure water in Iran that has always faced scarcity? The construction of qanats was one such solution, enabling them to transport groundwater from kilometers away to their desired locations through precise engineering, maximizing the use of available resources.

Now, we are planning to visit Dezful, a city in Khuzestan Province, which is home to one of these qanats. However, it's important to note that in Dezful, qanats have a different name and somewhat different characteristics, IRNA wrote.

Dezful, known as the "Brick City" of Iran for its authentic architecture and layout, is renowned as the land of resistance. If you travel to Dezful, you won't regret your choice; you will create wonderful memories while exploring various attractions, such as the watermills and the Shevi Waterfall.

Another intriguing site to explore in Dezful is a historical qanat, also known as Qomesh Choqabafan. This unique tourist

attraction dates back approximately 400 years. In the local dialect of Dezful, the underground water tunnels



known as qanats and karizes are referred to as *qomesh*. Near this qanat, there is a mosque that was struck by missile fire during the Iran-Iraq War, resulting in the martyrdom of several individuals. The custodian of this mosque was a man named Sadeq-Qoli Choqabafan, whose name has now been given to this qanat.

To see this qanat, you must pass through the entrance known as sarbataq. After descending 74 steps, you arrive at the Choqa-

bafan Qomesh, where you are greeted by a stunning space that stands out amidst a rainbow of colors, enveloping you in a cool



and pleasant atmosphere. Throughout the qanat, you will find statues of men and women holding jars and water bags. If



you are a local of Dezful, these figures will evoke memories of the past. In various corners of qomesh, you can see old items

such as bowls, plates, lamps, and jars, lovingly contributed by the townsfolk to preserve their ancestral heritage.

You might be curious about how deep this qomesh is and how long it stretches. This historical qanat is one of the main qanat systems in the region, with a depth of over 50 meters below the surface. Its length, along with other qanats, extends to 8,100 meters, of which 300 meters have been excavated and are now accessible to tourists. This qanat

has provided drinking water and irrigation for 1,200 hectares of agricultural land in the area for the past 400 years.

In the city of Dezful, aside from the Choqabafan Qomesh, there are nearly 14 other qanats that have lost their vitality due to urban development and the modern water supply network. These qanats continued to function until the 1950s and 1960s. In Khuzestan Province, the presence of surface waters like the Dez River allows for the possibility of digging qanats to transfer water from the river to the city for utilization. Our ancestors took advantage of this opportunity by excavating underground channels, which were essentially river qanats, to extract the necessary water, showcasing the intelligence and precise engineering of the people of that time.

Although these qanats function similarly to plumbing systems in transferring water, they actually differ from one another. The distinction lies in that traditional qanats collect groundwater, while qomesh (as they are termed here) harvest surface waters from rivers.