

Magic of Varzaneh; from historic sites to desert wonders



The city of Varzaneh
iribnews.ir

Varzaneh is a town in Isfahan Province, central Iran, located near the Gavkhuni Wetland. With a population of approximately 13,000, Varzaneh is renowned for its historical monuments and has earned the nickname "The Whitest City in Iran."

Notable sites include the Jaame Mosque of Varzaneh, the last bridge on the Zayandeh Rud River, Qurtan Citadel — one of the largest adobe fortresses in Iran — the Pigeon Tower, and the picturesque Salt Lake of Varzaneh. Visitors can enjoy various desert activities such as hiking, driving, camel riding, and ziplining.

The Varzaneh Desert, situated on the western edge of the Gavkhuni Wetland, spans over 17,000 hectares of sandy terrain. The hills reach heights of about 100 meters and extend approximately 30 kilometers in width, stretching 60 kilometers south of Gavkhuni Wetland to the village of Khara. This area has become popular among desert enthusiasts, offering unique natural phenomena, including forests, rivers, and salt flats, inboundpersia.com wrote.

Gavkhuni Wetland features increased vegetation due to higher humidity levels. While some areas near the wetland have lush forests, the southern sections near Khara village and the Salt

Lake are predominantly barren due to salt winds. Varzaneh Desert is conveniently located just 110 kilometers from Isfahan, making it accessible for travelers, with a journey taking about an hour and a half.

The nearest town to the desert is Varzaneh, located less than 10 kilometers from the sand dunes. Visitors may encounter wildlife such as jackals, foxes, and kangaroo rats, as well as scorpions and rattlesnakes, particularly in areas with dense vegetation.

Despite the presence of these animals, there have been no reported bites among tourists. The main access road is the Varzaneh-Hassan Abad Road, leading to recreational sites like oasis. Along this route, you'll find traditional Camel Mill (Asiyab Shotor) and Cow-Well (Gav Chah). Services in Varzaneh Desert include camel rides, off-road driving, quad biking, kite flying, and ziplining. Deserts are captivating destinations for backpackers and nature lovers. Varzaneh Desert allows you to walk on soft golden sands and immerse yourself in its serene atmosphere. If you visit in April or May, you can participate in camel riding competitions. The ziplining experience here is unique, and motorbiking and off-roading offer exhilarating adventures. However, en-

vironmentalists caution that these activities may harm the landscape, so to preserve the desert's beauty for future generations, it's advisable to limit such recreational pursuits.

One interesting spot to visit is Gav Chah, which reflects traditional local life. Historically, cows were used to draw water from wells, a practice that has evolved with technology and is now symbolically demonstrated for tourists.

Another attraction is Qurtan Citadel, which is claimed to be the second largest adobe structure in Iran after Arg-e Bam. This 15-meter tower is located at the eastern end of the Zayandeh Rud River in Qurtan village and is known as Kabootar Khaneh (House of Birds) due to the nesting birds.

Khara Salt Cave, filled with salt crystals and red algae, is another notable site where salt is excavated for industrial use, offering a stunning view of the landscape.

Winter and autumn are the best seasons to visit the desert, particularly autumn when temperatures are milder.

The entire route to Varzaneh is paved, making it easy to access by hired car. Visitors can stay overnight in traditional lodges or camp under the stars.



Varzaneh Desert
safarzon.com



Gavkhuni Wetland
IRNA



Qurtan Citadel
maghamimedia.com



Gav Chah
varzaneh.org



Asiyab Shotor
IRNA



Pigeon Tower
varzaneh.org



Threads of tradition in kamand-duzi

One of the most beautiful and delicate embroideries of Iran is called *kamand-duzi* (*kamand-weaving*). The word *kamand* means a long rope that is used to trap animals or to climb up the walls. It is also called *khamand*. But in terms of embroidery, it is a kind of sewing that is done by threads such as silk *gheytan*, silk, wool, glass beads, *sormeh* and filigree.

After sewing kinds of margins, *kamand* is applied as the inner and outer margins and surrounds the inside and outside of the margins, just like margins of the books, visitiran.ir wrote.

Kamand-duzi is never used alone but it is applied as a complementary element of a sewing piece. This embroidery is very close to the art of

kamand-andazi in book layout and traditional book designing. From ancient times until today, *kamand-andazi* has been done by wide or simple grids around the texts and then the decorative motifs of *sharafeh* were added. But in *kamand-duzi*, decorations such as *tagarg*, *zarak* or blanket stitches and *sharafeh* are sewed.

The art of *kamand-duzi* traces back to thousands of years ago in Iran. There are many carving and reliefs from Achaemenid dynasty and other artifacts that prove it was common at the time. During the Parthian empire, since gold-brocade fabrics were popular and exported, decorative crafts such as *kamand-duzi*, silk *qeytan* and *golabatoon* were sewed on the margins and *kamand-*

duzi was used to decorate clothing, bundles and drapery margins. *Kamand-duzi* is also used in other kinds of embroidery such as *crochet*, *tekeh*, *pateh*, *Bokhara*, *ajideh*, *katibeh*, *Baluch*, glass beads, *sormeh*, filigree and silk.

Since these crafts are popular in different parts of Iran, it can be said that *kamand-duzi* is common as complementary sewing in most parts of Iran. Alongside other embroideries, *kamand-duzi* is used to decorate kinds of prayer rugs, bundles, decorative tableaux, hats, clothes, cushion covers, tablecloths, fabric covers, box covers, teapot covers and etc. These embroideries can be found in museums all over the world and especially museums of decorative arts.