

From Azar to Shahrashb; evolution of a historic village



Iranica Desk

The Arg of Shahrashb in Abarkuh, Yazd Province, spans 17,000 square meters and exemplifies ancient residential complexes in Iran, where noblemen and common people coexisted, with class distinctions primarily reflected in the decorations of their homes. Shahrashb is a historic and scenic village holding significant cultural and tourism value due to its long history and notable historical sites, ISNA wrote. Historically, the village was known as Azar, a name that evolved over time to Shahrashb. This name is believed to originate from a period when a thousand horses (ash in Persian) were kept in the village, owned by local khans (nobles). Additionally, Shahrashb may derive from one of the Iranian notables from the Hazaraspid tribe (Thousand Horses), mentioned in connection with the historical site Gonbad Ali. Furthermore, Shahrashb is the name of a character in the Shahnameh (Book of Kings), who served as a confidant and guide to Tahmuras. Throughout various periods, Shahrashb has been inhabited by different civilizations, preserving elements of earthen and desert architecture that make it particularly appealing to tourists and historical researchers. As a prominent tourist destination in the country, the village presents significant opportunities for investment in

the tourism sector and cultural research, serving as a gateway to discovering Iran's ancient heritage. Among the most important attractions of Shahrashb are its adobe castles, old houses, and narrow, winding streets, all of which reflect the traditional desert architecture of Iran and its adaptation to climatic conditions. These adobe structures have withstood the desert's climatic changes and now symbolize the intelligent architectural methods of past generations. One significant historical edifice in the village is Shahrashb Castle, which, according to existing evidence, was one of the residential complexes of ancient Iran. This massive castle is constructed in the form of two concentric squares, making it one of the largest historical citadels in Iran after the Bam Citadel. The central castle dates back to the Safavid era, while the surrounding structures span from the Safavid to the Qajar period. Interestingly, within the castle are graves that, contrary to Islamic tradition, are not oriented towards the qibla, suggesting that the castle may have been built on the remains of an earlier structure from the pre-Islamic era. Built from materials such as raw clay, mud, stone, wood, and baked brick, this castle is one of the few historical buildings in Yazd province where a significant portion of the structure

remains intact. The walls and towers are also made of adobe and mud, common in many historical buildings across Iran's central desert. The houses in Shahrashb were constructed from mud brick and featured domed roofs, as the use of adobe not only provided accessibility but also facilitated air ventilation and kept the buildings cool. The domed roofs allowed sunlight to consistently strike one side, reducing heat absorption. In the Shahrashb citadel, local lords and peasants lived side by side, with class differences clearly visible in the intricate plasterwork and arches adorned with floral arabesques and muqarnas. Registered as a national monument in 2005, the Shahrashb castle holds both historical and cultural significance, representing construction methods and lifestyles from past eras, making it especially appealing to those interested in Iranian history and architecture. With its hospitable people and rich local culture, Shahrashb offers visitors a unique blend of historical, natural, and cultural attractions. Its ancient relics, desert landscapes, and high-quality agricultural and handicraft products have transformed this area into an attractive destination for culture and history enthusiasts, playing an important role in the sustainable development of tourism in Yazd Province.



A fusion of history, creativity in Honarmandan Park of Tehran

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In the midst of Tehran's bustling streets lies Honarmandan Park (Artists' Park) — a unique fusion of nature, culture, and creativity. Located on Iranshahr Street, it offers much more than just a green retreat. With its shaded pathways, impressive sculptures, and vibrant artistic atmosphere, Honarmandan Park is a beloved destination for both locals and tourists seeking

a moment of peace or a burst of inspiration. The park presents a variety of experiences, whether you are interested in enjoying the tranquility of nature, engaging with local artists, or participating in community events that showcase the diverse culture of Tehran. It creates a sanctuary amid the city's hustle and bustle, allowing visitors to step away from the noise and immerse themselves in an environment that fosters

creativity and relaxation. Honarmandan Park's story is deeply rooted in Tehran's history. The land it occupies once belonged to Fisherabad Garden during the Qajar era, owned by Prince Kamran Mirza, the son of Nasereddin Shah. During World War II, it served as a military depot for Allied forces. Years later, the Tehran municipality transformed this historical site into the cultural hub we see today, blending its rich

past with a contemporary artistic spirit. This transformation involved not only landscaping but also a commitment to preserving the cultural identity of the area while providing an accessible space for art and creativity to flourish. In 1998, the House of Artists (Khaneh Honarmandan) was established near the park, adding further cultural depth. Designed by architect Bijan Shafiee, it serves as a hub for art exhibitions,

theater, and intellectual gatherings, making it a core component of Tehran's creative landscape. Today, the Khaneh Honarmandan remains a vibrant center where both emerging and established artists can present their works and exchange ideas, fostering an ever-growing community of creative individuals.

Sculptures and installations

Art forms the soul of Honar-

mandan Park. Scattered throughout the space are sculptures and installations by some of Iran's most celebrated artists. Notable pieces include works by Parviz Tanavoli and Morteza Ne'matollahi's which provide an interactive element to the park, allowing visitors to not only view art but also experience it within the context of the natural surroundings. Each piece tells its own story, contributing to the larger narrative of

Iranian artistic expression.

Recreational spaces

Beyond the art, Honarmandan Park offers areas for relaxation and leisure. These include sports facilities like a basketball court and fitness equipment, encouraging physical activity amidst the creative environment. The blend of sports and culture makes the park an inclusive space that caters to a wide range of interests while fostering a rich historical legacy.

