

Abu Musa Island; a strategic paradise in southern Iran

Iranica Desk

Abu Musa Island is one of the most important and strategic islands in the Persian Gulf. Located in Hormozgan Province, it can be accessed by sea or air from Bandar Abbas. With its aquamarine beaches and pristine nature, Abu Musa is a captivating travel destination in southern Iran.

The best time to visit Abu Musa Island is in the second half of the year when most tours are organized. During this period, you can enjoy stunning views of the Persian Gulf in pleasant weather and partake in various water activities like kayaking and scuba diving. For accommodation, guesthouses and lodgings are available, according to IRNA.

Covering an area of about 12 square kilometers, Abu Musa Island is situated in the southernmost region of Iran. It is one of the 14 islands of Hormozgan and is approximately 220 kilometers from Bandar Abbas and about 75 kilometers from Bandar Lengeh, nestled in the waters of the Persian Gulf.

Throughout history, Abu Musa Island, along with its neighboring islands like Greater and Lesser Tunbs, has been under Iranian ownership. During the Qajar era, the British occupied the island for approximately 68 years. However, in 1971, an agreement was signed between the two parties, restoring ownership of Abu Musa Island to Iran. The island has very limited agricultural land, and most of the local population relies on fishing as their primary source of income. Since ancient times, Abu Musa has been noted for its significant capacity for crude oil exports, which has contributed to its unique and strategic position.

As the southernmost island



of Iran, Abu Musa Island features a warm and humid climate alongside unique natural beauty. Its pristine, untouched beaches make it a stunning destination.

Grand Mosque

One of the island's key attractions is the Grand (Jaame) Mosque. Renowned for its beautiful architecture and importance to the local community, it holds a special place in the hearts of residents. The mosque's dome and minarets sparkle

like turquoise gems in the heart of Abu Musa. Covering an area of over 11,000 square meters, the mosque was inaugurated around 1980. Its design emphasizes traditional and ancient architecture, which has significantly contributed to its popularity.

Farur Island

Farur Island is one of the significant islands in the Persian Gulf, rising from the waters like a beautiful dome. Uninhabited, it

serves as a suitable home for various bird species. Located 55 kilometers from Kish Island and about 20 kilometers from the Iranian mainland, Farur was once inhabited; however, today, only the remnants of ruined buildings, a lighthouse, and agricultural remains indicate any past settlement.

Beaches

The beaches of Abu Musa, with their clear waters and white sands, are among

the most beautiful in the Persian Gulf. The island offers a variety of beach experiences for visitors. Sandy shores are perfect for sunbathing and swimming, while rocky coastlines present appealing opportunities for underwater diving and exploring underwater life. The tranquility and silence of Abu Musa's beaches allow for an escape from the hustle and bustle of city life, providing a chance to enjoy unspoiled nature.

The waters surrounding Abu Musa resemble a natural aquarium, showcasing stunning underwater beauty in remarkable clarity.

Fishermen's village

The old Fishermen's village, with its traditional architecture and charming shops, showcases the daily life of the island's local residents. Located near the beach, the village serves as a convenient shopping area for locals,

with stores offering everyday necessities such as fruits, vegetables, baked goods, and supermarkets clustered around the main square. Strolling through the shops, meeting local vendors, and engaging in conversations with them provides a unique and enjoyable experience during your visit to Abu Musa.

Best time to visit

The ideal time to visit Abu Musa is during the cooler seasons of autumn and winter. During these months, temperatures range from 20 to 25 degrees Celsius, creating favorable conditions for outdoor activities. In contrast, summer temperatures can exceed 40 degrees Celsius, accompanied by high humidity, making travel more challenging for visitors.

How to travel

In the past, traveling to Abu Musa Island was quite challenging due to the need for numerous permits. However, travel to the island is now open to all Iranians. There are two main ways to reach Abu Musa:

Air travel: For several years, only a limited number of flights operated to Abu Musa Island. However, after travel to the island was facilitated, daily flights from Bandar Abbas to Abu Musa were established. This mode of travel provides a convenient access route to the island.

Sea travel: With the growth of tourism on the island, a passenger ferry has been arranged to facilitate access for travelers between Bandar Abbas and this beautiful island in the Persian Gulf. The ferry operates twice a week to Abu Musa, and the sea journey takes about five to seven hours.

Historical significance of Sardar cisterns in Qazvin

The Sardar Bozorg and Sardar Kochak cisterns in Qazvin were commissioned by two brothers, Mohammad Hassan Khan Sardar and Mohammad Hossain Khan Sardar, who ruled Qazvin during the reign of Fat'hali Shah Qajar. These Iranian commanders were also responsible for constructing several other notable monuments in the city, including the Sardar School.

Cisterns have historically served as vital structures for water storage and management. The Sardar cisterns are among the largest single-dome cisterns in Iran. They feature a high entrance with a pointed arch that leads down fifty stone stairs, known as *rah shir*, to a depth of 12 meters. Currently, three of



Sardar Bozorg Cistern

these stairs are in disrepair. At the end of *rah shir* lies a section called *pa shir*, where water is stored in

an area approximately 17 square meters. The walls here are made of durable lime, covered with *sarooj*,

a mixture of limestone. The large dome of the cistern is constructed of brick. Atop this brick dome is a wind

catcher that rises about 30 meters high. The cistern has a capacity of 3,600 square meters of water,

sourced from three Qanats. The cisterns were built in 1227 AH in Rah-e Rey, one of the city's oldest areas, lo-



Sardar Kochak Cistern

ated at the foothills of the Alborz Mountains.

Qazvin itself is a city rich in history and culture, once serving as the capital of Persia during the Safavid dynasty. It is home to several attractions that showcase its historical significance, such as the Qazvin Grand Mosque, the Chehel Sotun Palace, and the ancient Qazvin Citadel. The city's charming bazaars, with their vibrant atmosphere and traditional crafts, add to its allure. Visitors can also explore the nearby Alborz Mountains, which offer stunning landscapes and opportunities for outdoor activities.

Qazvin's blend of historical architecture and natural beauty makes it a captivating destination for those interested in Persian history and culture.