

Olasbelangah, where clouds embrace highlands



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Iranica Desk

Olasbelangah village is one of the lush and picturesque highlands in northern Iran and a notable site in Masal, located 80 kilometers west of Rasht and 30 kilometers southwest of Masal. With its unique beauty and ocean of clouds, Olasbelangah is considered one of the best destinations for nature tourism. Spring and summer are the ideal times to visit, offering the chance to enjoy the pristine nature of the region.

Situated at an altitude of 1,489 meters above sea level, Olasbelangah boasts enchanting landscapes. The highland is under the supervision of Natural Resources Organization, and construction with materials other than wood is prohibited, which helps preserve the area's natural beauty. Additionally, Olasbelangah is not connected to an electricity grid; the electricity needed in the village is

supplied by generators and solar panels. The village also lacks piped water, relying instead on fresh, flowing springs. Interestingly, Olasbelangah plunges into silence and tranquility after midnight, so if you plan to wander around at this hour, it's advisable to bring a flashlight, kojaro.com wrote.

The captivating nature of Olasbelangah invites visitors to spend the night under its starry sky. Camping in this highland is a delightful experience, promising a unique night in its embrace.

For those who prefer accommodations, Olasbelangah offers several hotels and lodges for a memorable stay. You can also rent a cabin, allowing you to connect with the warm-hearted locals of the region.

The residents of Olasbelangah lead a simple lifestyle, reflected in their modest homes. While exploring the lush surroundings, you may see horses

grazing freely and cows feeding on the fresh grass, which provides delicious milk, yogurt, butter, buttermilk, and cheese. During your trip to Olasbelangah, you can purchase fresh, natural products from the village, such as honey and dairy items, to take home as souvenirs for friends and family. The entire highland is teeming with greenery and freshness, featuring wooden cottages, herds of wild and domestic horses, and the village's cows, creating a stunning picturesque scene. One of Olasbelangah's attractions is its pristine, untouched rural atmosphere, characterized by simple wooden houses. The wooden cottages built on the slopes, with their sloping roofs, offer beautiful views alongside mountains filled with beech trees.

The beauty of Olasbelangah is significantly enhanced when enveloped in soft, velvety white clouds. The ocean of clouds is

most prominent from mid-May until the end of summer, with May and June being the best months to witness this dreamy landscape.

Activities

Photography: There are numerous subjects to capture, including herds of wild horses, wooden houses and cottages, the ocean of clouds, mist-covered mountains, and the warm-hearted locals.

Horse riding: You can often ride the domestic horses of the region. Be cautious, as some areas have steep slopes.

Nature walks: Exploring the natural surroundings is another enjoyable activity in Olasbelangah. Stroll through different parts of this beautiful highland and breathe in the fresh air.

Picnicking: Don't miss the opportunity to relax in the beautiful nature of Masal. Just lay out a mat and enjoy traditional bread and tea with your loved ones.

Olasbelangah, regarded as one of the scenic spots around Rasht, showcases its enchanting beauty in every season. The best time to travel to this dreamy highland is during spring and summer, particularly from mid-May after the spring rains have concluded.

In autumn, the natural beauty of this highland transforms into a colorful and picturesque landscape, making it a delightful sight. However, during winter and autumn, Olasbelangah experiences very cold weather, so if you plan to visit during this time, be sure to bring warm clothing and necessary equipment.

Whether you choose to camp under the stars or stay in local accommodations, Olasbelangah promises a unique and memorable experience, allowing you to connect with the stunning nature and kind-hearted people of the region.



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MEHR

Shokatieh School; a pillar of knowledge in South Khorasan Province

Iranica Desk

The Shokatieh School is one of the historical buildings in the city of Birjand, South Khorasan Province. Recognized as the third Iranian school established in the modern style, it follows the traditional *maktab khaneh* (educational institutions). Currently, the building is 124 years old. Construction of the Shokatieh School began in 1890, funded by the endowments of Amir Esmail Khan, known as Shokat al-Mulk I, and was completed in 1894. After the Dar ul-Funun Higher School and shortly after the Roshdiyeh Primary School in Tabriz, the Shokatieh School in Birjand is acknowledged as

the third school of this new type in Iran. Initially functioning as an elementary school, a high school was later added, and in 1922, the Emarat Qaleh Girls School was opened, ISNA wrote.

The historic Shokatieh School is located adjacent to Montazeri (Khaki) Street within the historical fabric of Birjand. The building is situated in an alley with a relatively steep incline, positioned lower than the street level, with entrances found at its lowest point.

Constructed in the Iranian desert architectural style, the Shokatieh School is designed for four seasons, featuring a central

courtyard surrounded by connected spaces. The courtyard occupies a significant portion of the building, paved with bricks, and in the center lies a pond with a platform approximately 30 centimeters high. The entrance boasts a vaulted arch decorated with intricate stucco work.

This school is a single-ivan structure with a tall and magnificent ivan. Its architecture includes elements typical of Iranian design, such as the entrance, vestibule, corridors, ivan, rooms surrounding the courtyard, *shahneshin*, and a bath. The building has two entrances: one on the southern side and the other on the western side.

The design of the Shokatieh School, utilizing the central courtyard, achieves optimal functionality and creates balanced environmental conditions. Inside, a beautiful *kolah firangi* (a hexagon shaped building) can be found in the hall, adorned with exquisite decorative patterns. Additionally, the building features stunning stucco work, decorative brackets, and intricate brickwork.

The Shokatieh School has played a significant role in enriching the science and culture of Birjand, Greater Khorasan, the East, and other regions of the country. Many of its graduates have excelled on national and international stages, contributing valuable services to the academic community.



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