

# Winter adventures across Iran

## Iranica Desk

For many, winter is a time to stay indoors, curled up next to a heater or fireplace, sipping warm drinks. However, this season can also be a wonderful opportunity for memorable experiences, especially through travel. Winter travel offers a unique perspective, from engaging in winter sports like skiing and snowball fights at renowned resorts to wandering through traditional markets and enjoying hot tea in cozy cafés. Every part of Iran presents unique experiences for travelers during this season.

Iran boasts a wide array of winter travel destinations, catering to diverse tastes and interests. Some people revel in skiing, snow hiking, and other winter activities, while others prefer to stroll along sunny beaches and admire the tall, beautiful palm trees.



Frozen Shourabil Lake, Ardebil  
IRNA

## Tehran

Tehran, with a population of over 15 million, is located at the foothills of the Alborz Mountains and offers numerous attractions, even in winter. Be sure to include three winter resorts on your must-see list: Tochal, Shemshak, and Dizin. If you love skiing and winter sports, these locations and their ski slopes should definitely be on your radar. Activities like taking the gondola and ski lift, or hiking, can be enjoyed at the Tochal tourism complex, where a ski slope awaits at the last station of the gondola. Even if you don't venture to the ski stations, you can still enjoy breathtaking views of Tehran from the first station of the Tochal tourism center, known as the "roof of Tehran." Without a doubt, Tehran is a key destination for winter visits in Iran.

## Ardebil Province

Ardebil Province, a mountainous region in the northwestern corner of Iran, is recognized as one of the country's premier winter attractions. In addition to its various historical sites that can be enjoyed year-round, Ardebil's hot springs make it a top winter tourist destination. Sarein, a small city located 30 kilometers west of Ardebil, is home to several hot springs worth considering during your visit. Highlights include the hot springs of Sarein, the frozen Shourabil Lake, and the Alvares Ski Resort at the foothills of Mount Sabalan, which is the largest ski resort in Iran.

Other attractions include the frozen waterfall in Sardabeh village, Golestan Valleys — one of the most picturesque valleys in Sarein, Gurgur Waterfall — known as one of the region's most famous springs, and the Vargeh Saran Waterfall on the lush slopes of Sabalan. These spots are just a few of the winter attractions Ardebil has to offer.

## Kurdistan Province

Kurdistan Province is another mountainous region of Iran that becomes a major tourist hotspot in winter, thanks to its numerous historical attractions and the stunning Zarivar Lake. Reaching this lake by car is quite easy, but keep in mind that during winter, the lake's surface freezes. It's crucial not to walk on the ice, as it may not be stable and could break under your weight, leading to potential danger.

The Karaftu Cave, located 67 kilometers from the city of Divandarreh, dates back to the Mesozoic era. This cave maintains a warm climate in winter and a pleasantly

cool atmosphere in summer due to its airflow. Karaftu Cave consists of two sections: a natural part and a carved part. The natural section formed between 25 and 65 million years ago and is now accessible via metallic pathways. The carved section is famous worldwide for its meticulous craftsmanship.

The mountain range extending through Saqqez, Divandarreh, and Marivan is known as Mount Chlchama. Due to its elevation, this region is one of the coldest in Kurdistan Province, often blanketed in snow throughout the year. The area's diverse vegetation, including snowdrops, rhubarb, violets, ivy, and thousands of other plants, adds to its beauty. The highest peak of this mountain range, known as Shahneshin, is a coveted challenge for many climbers.

## Tabriz

Tabriz is a cold city that deserves a spot among the best destinations in Iran for winter travel. With its rich cultural heritage, beautiful nature, and stunning historical sites — including mosques, churches, castles, and other attractions — Tabriz offers an excellent tourist experience year-round, with a unique ambiance in winter.

Some of the top tourist attractions in Tabriz include: Tabriz Bazaar. Recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, this bustling bazaar stretches for one kilometer and is the largest covered bazaar in the world. It features beautiful arches and domes, striking brick structures, and shops selling a variety of products, making it one of Tabriz's main attractions.

In addition, other notable sites include the Blue Mosque, Alishah Citadel, Elgoli Park, Kandovan Village (located 60 kilometers from Tabriz), and Mount Eynali. These scenic spots allow visitors to enjoy unique natural landscapes during their winter travels.

With such diverse climates and attractions, Iran offers a wealth of winter travel options that are just as exciting as those found in other seasons. Whether you're seeking winter sports, cultural experiences, or a warm escape from the chill, there's something for everyone to enjoy. So pack your bags and embrace the adventure that winter travel in Iran has to offer!

## Persian Gulf islands

The islands of the Persian Gulf are among the best places to visit in Iran during winter, especially for those wishing to escape the snow and enjoy a mild and sunny climate. Kish, Qeshm, and Hormuz

can be extremely hot in the summer, but visiting them in the fall and winter can provide you with one of the best travel experiences of your life. The Star Valley in Qeshm, watching playful dolphins in Kish, the stunning natural landscapes of Hormuz Island, and the warm hospitality of the southern people, along with exploring the local markets of these islands, will make your winter sunny and delightful.

## Chabahar Free Zone

Taking a nighttime stroll along the beaches of Chabahar Free Zone, Sistan and Baluchestan Province, and witnessing the glowing phytoplankton in the darkness of winter and autumn nights is one of life's most astonishing sights.

These colorful bioluminescent organisms illuminate the waves during the colder months, creating incredibly memorable and captivating visuals. This natural phenomenon has made the beaches of Chabahar a remarkable winter destination in Iran.

The city's large rock formations, shaped by water erosion, are also notable attractions. The miniature mountains known as the Martian Mountains, located near Chabahar, have taken on shapes that resemble the surface of Mars due to erosion. Additionally, the coastal markets and fishmongers are worth a visit, offering a vibrant local experience. The pleasant winter weather in Chabahar adds to the charm, making the presence of spring in its name particularly meaningful.

## Khuzestan Province

Khuzestan Province showcases the first signs of Persian civilization through its ancient and historical monuments found in Shush, Dezful, and Shushtar. These sites are sure to attract history enthusiasts. The major rivers traversing the delta have created fertile lands for agriculture, while the pleasant autumn and winter climate enhances the appeal of the cities in Khuzestan Province.

## Kerman Province

If exploring historical and religious sites like the Ganjali Khan Complex (which includes a market, bathhouse, and caravanserai), the cave houses in Meymand village, the historic cities of Bam and Rayen, the tomb of Shah Nematollah Vali, and the Prince Garden in Mahan isn't enticing enough, it's time to rethink your perspective on tourism.

Despite its desert landscape, Kerman Province offers a unique winter experience. All four seasons

can be enjoyed here, but winter and autumn are characterized by clear, blue skies. To immerse yourself in the desert atmosphere, the vast starlit sky of Kerman Province is a sight to behold. So, don't hesitate to add it to your list of must-see places in Iran during winter.

## Yazd Province

Yazd Province is another enticing option. Situated 1,200 meters above sea level, The provincial capital city of Yazd enjoys pleasant weather throughout most of the year. Its windcatchers, among the most creative architectural structures globally, along with its diverse historical and religious sites, make this charming city a must-visit destination in winter. The Zoroastrian Fire Temple is another significant site worth exploring.

Surrounding cities should not be overlooked during your trip to Yazd. Be sure to visit Meybod, with its Abbasid Caravanserai, the Meybod Icehouse, and Narin Castle. The picturesque villages of Kharanaq and Saryazd are also worth a visit.

## Shiraz

Shiraz is renowned for its pleasant weather, particularly in spring. However, visiting in winter allows you to enjoy the city's favorable climate and stunning sights while avoiding the spring tourist crowds. It feels almost unfair to describe Shiraz in just one paragraph, as this beautiful city, known for its Persian poets and magnificent Persepolis, has so much to offer. Here are some noteworthy places to visit: Persepolis, Nasir al-Mulk Mosque, Vakil Bazaar (including the mosque and bathhouse), Tombs of famous figures like Hafez and Sa'di, Eram Garden, historic houses of Qavam and Zinat al-Muluk, Shah Cheragh Shrine, Naqsh-e Rostam, Pasargadae, historical city of Darabgerd, ancient city of Bishapur

## Iran's winter wonders

Tourism in Iran cannot be easily summarized. Each of these winter destinations is rich with stories and experiences waiting to be discovered. Let's not forget to explore the beauty of Iran! All you need is the enthusiasm and eagerness to travel. The excitement of visiting attractive places knows no season or reason. Iran's winters offer just as many captivating options as its other seasons, making it hard to choose among them since they are all worth seeing. With the travel options available today, there's no room for doubt.



Shemshak Ski Resort, Tehran  
visitiran.ir



Zarivar Lake, Kurdistan Province  
kojachetor.com



Chabahar Free Zone  
cfzo.ir



Alishah Citadel, Tabriz  
IRNA