

Timeless elegance of historical houses in Shiraz

Iranica Desk

The historical houses of Shiraz, the capital city of Fars Province, constitute an integral part of the city's rich identity. These houses are some of the most well-known tourist attractions, attracting numerous visitors throughout the year. As one of the oldest cities in Iran, Shiraz has served as a seat of power for various Iranian governments across different eras. Over the years, the city has been home to many significant historical artifacts and structures, among which the historical houses hold a special place. To delve deeper into some of the ancient houses of Shiraz, join us in this article.

Saber House

Saber House is one of the historical houses in Shiraz, dating back to the late Zand era and the early Qajar period. This old residence was constructed by one of the most renowned Iranian merchants, Hasan Ali Saber Sangari. Due to its symmetrical and modern design, Saber House was considered one of the preeminent aristocratic houses of its time, IRNA wrote. The house features two floors, with the main building situated in the northern and eastern sections of the courtyard. Inside Saber House, exquisite decorations are evident, including delicate stuccowork and intricate wood carvings. Antique objects and dishes are displayed on the walls and tables, adding to the house's historical charm. The porch, with its tall and luxurious columns, provides a stunning view of the courtyard. The courtyard walls of Saber House are beautifully adorned with brick and tile work, which features intricate designs of flowers, birds, and Qajar kings. This historical house is located directly across from the holy shrine of Shahecheragh. Other significant historical attractions nearby include the Tomb of Sibawayh, the Manteqi Nejad House, the Atiq Mosque, and the New Mosque. Saber House was registered on Iran's National Heritage List in 2003. Following extensive renovations in 2005, the Cultural Heritage Organization transformed this historical house into a museum, showcasing its architectural beauty and historical significance.

Sa'adat House

Sa'adat House, situated in the historical Sang Siah neighborhood, is located adjacent to the tomb of Sibawayh, a prominent Persian grammarian from Basra. This historical house dates back to the Qajar era. In recent years, structural repairs and treatments for termite damage have been undertaken to reinforce the integrity of the roof, walls, and other parts of the house. The layout of Sa'adat House features a central courtyard that includes both three-door and five-door rooms. A stunning turquoise pool is placed in the center of this courtyard, enhancing its aesthetic appeal. The architecture of the house is characterized by decorative tile work, brickwork, geometric patterns, stone carvings, and intricate woodwork. The stuccowork on the ceiling of the main building is particularly noteworthy, drawing interest from artists and visitors alike. After a complete restoration by the Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization, Sa'adat House was transformed into the Khatam House of Shiraz.

This venue currently hosts a permanent exhibition aimed at preserving and promoting the authentic art of *khatam* (inlaid work) in Shiraz. Outstanding works from renowned *khatam* artists in Iran, such as Kash-tiara, are showcased in the Khatam House. Additionally, participants interested in this artistic craft can engage in workshops alongside the exhibition. Sa'adat House was also registered in the Iran's National Heritage List in 2003, further solidifying its importance in the cultural landscape of Shiraz.

House of Forough Al-Molk

The House of Forough Al-Molk is one of the historical houses located in the Sang Siah neighborhood of Shiraz. Its origins trace back to the late Qajar era and the early Pahlavi period, constructed by Forough Al-Molk Ghavami, the wife of Ismail Khan Forough al-Molk. The historical residence is situated adjacent to the shrine of Bibi Dokhtaran and spans an impressive area of over 1,000 square meters, once standing as one of the most luxurious houses in Shiraz.

The House of Forough Al-Molk comprises various sections, including a kitchen, stable, guardhouse, bath, inner courtyard, and outer courtyard. Within this property, two buildings can be found, with the main building consisting of three floors. The primary structure features two separate courtyards, with the *shahneeshin* (the king's quarters) and the *hosseiniyeh* (a building designed specifically for gatherings of Shia Muslims) being among its most aesthetically pleasing areas. The second building has since been transformed into the Fadak Guesthouse.

Within the *shahneeshin* hall, exquisite decorations featuring inlay work and geometric patterns can be observed. The second building connects to the main structure through corridors, with a reception hall for guests located at the entrance in front of the house. The Forough Al-Molk building's northern and southern sections include two five-door rooms, while the *shahneeshin* in the northwest corner of the main hall leads to the inner courtyard through an octagonal pool area. Other wall and ceiling decorations throughout this complex include tile work adorned with floral designs and intricate ceiling carvings. The furnishings within this historical house exhibit detailed wood carvings and traditional mirror works. Between 1948 and the mid-1970s, the House of Forough Al-Molk was overseen by the Ministry of Education and served as Forough Al-Molk Primary School during that period. The house was officially registered on Iran's National Heritage List in 1998, and restoration efforts for this historic site commenced

two years later.

Throughout the restoration, numerous sections of the building, such as doors, windows, ceilings, and tiles, were meticulously replaced. The restoration of the House of Forough Al-Molk was completed in 2002, after which it was repurposed into the Contemporary Art Museum of Fars, also known as the Meshkinfam Museum.

The Meshkinfam Museum features two distinct sections that showcase artworks from the Meshkinfam family alongside works by contemporary artists from Fars. These exhibitions include carved panels, calligraphy, paintings, photography, and a variety of other visual art forms.

Manteghinejad Mansion

The Manteghinejad Mansion is another remarkable historical building from the late Qajar period. Notably, the mirror hall of this structure is celebrated as one of the most exquisite examples of mirror architecture across Iran. The Manteghinejad Mansion is conveniently located near a mosque and adjacent to the holy shrine of Shahcheragh. Within the *shahneeshin* section of the mansion, exquisite mirror work is complemented by beautiful decorations that include painting, plasterwork, and muqarnas. The paintings in this hall notably showcase designs featuring women's faces, European palaces, and traditional floral patterns. The mansion's interior rooms and the surrounding inner courtyard are situated on both the eastern and western sides, offering pleasant views of the outer courtyard through wooden windows adorned with colored glass.

At the heart of its courtyard lies a beautiful pond, surrounded by traditional seating areas. Additionally, geranium pots can be found scattered around the courtyard and on the verandas, adding to the aesthetic charm. The Manteghinejad Mansion underwent restoration in 2004, and just a year later, it was inaugurated as the "Museum of Music" or "Museum of Archives of Sounds and Melodies." This museum encompasses a range of sections, including auditory and visual rooms, audio and video archives, an instrument gallery, a gallery for manuscripts by renowned music masters, an instrument-making workshop, and a hall dedicated to world music. In 2021, initiatives were launched to create a special-ized museum for the Holy Qur'an and Islamic arts within the Manteghinejad Mansion. This museum aims to preserve manuscripts and historical documents related to the holy Qur'an in a culturally enriching environment. Given its proximity to the Shahcheragh Shrine, the Manteghinejad Mansion serves as an ideal venue for housing a museum dedicated to Qur'anic works. The Man-

teghinejad Mansion was listed on Iran's National Heritage List in 1973.

Ziaian's House

Ziaian's House is one of the historical residences in Shiraz, located within the renowned Sang Siah neighborhood. This house dates back more than 120 years to the late Qajar period and stands as the sole remaining property of the Ziai family. Like many other historical houses in Shiraz, it prominently features design elements and interior decorations characteristic of the Qajar style.

The area of Ziaian's House is approximately 300 square meters. It was home to a well-known merchant of the Qajar era, Ziai, who was regarded as one of the most influential figures in Shiraz. The Ziai family owned several shops in the Vakil Bazaar and held considerable sway during the Qajar government. Ziaian's House consists of two floors, with the central courtyard serving as its heart. Surrounding this courtyard are various rooms and verandas, enhanced by vibrant seven-colored tiles that showcase intricate decorations throughout different sections of the building. These tiles depict images of kings, legendary heroes from Iran's history, and representations of the Imams. In addition, some decorative designs incorporate floral motifs and arabesque patterns.

On the first floor of Ziaian's House, you will find the kitchen, stable, cellar, storage area, and bathroom. Notably, the building's cooling and heating system was among the most sophisticated and modern designs of its time. The second floor features the *shahneeshin* hall, along with five-door, three-door, and two-door rooms. Ventilation channels are integrated into the walls of these rooms, enabling effective air circulation throughout the building.

The interconnected three-door rooms on the eastern side of Ziaian's House are paired with a large adjacent veranda. Despite the wealth of the Ziai family, the house does not boast lavish decorations, other than the exquisite tile work; only a few simple plaster decorations can be seen in select areas of the building.

In 2004, the municipality of Shiraz acquired Ziaian's House, and subsequent restoration efforts began under the supervision of both the Municipality and the Cultural Heritage Department. Since 2007, traditional art workshops have been hosted within this historical residence. Due to the delicacy of its tile work and the artistic workshops conducted there, Ziaian's House has been designated as Honar Sarayi Shiraz (Art House of Shiraz). This historical house was officially registered in the Iran's National Heritage List in 1978.



Saber House
● kojara.com



Sa'adat House
● eneshat.com



House of Forough Al-Molk
● top tourist.ir



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