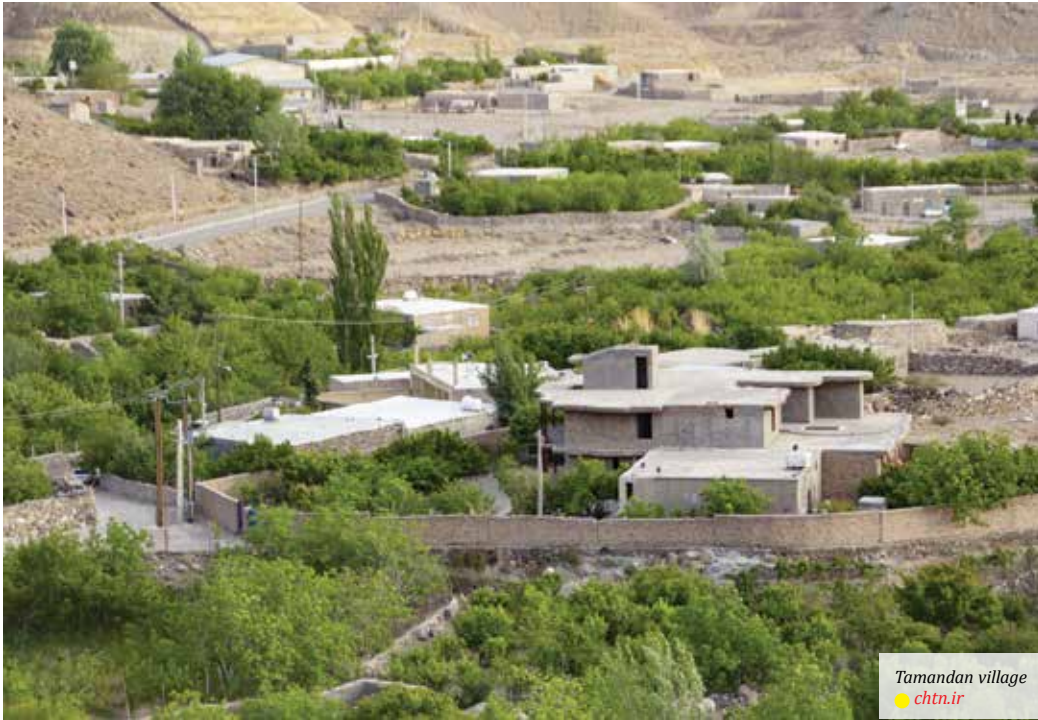


# Road project to boost tourism in Sistan and Baluchestan



Tamandan village  
● chtn.ir



Tamin village  
● IRNA

## Iranica Desk

Tourism, one of the world's key employment-generating industries, has become a cornerstone of economic growth and regional development in recent decades.

Sistan and Baluchestan Province, with its diverse climate, rich cultural and historical heritage, and pristine natural landscapes, holds significant potential to become a leading tourism destination in Iran. In this context, connecting two tourism villages — Tamandan on the southern slopes of Taftan Mountain in Taftan, and Tamin on the northern slopes in Mir-

javeh — could mark a turning point in regional development. Currently, these villages are accessible only via a difficult and unsafe 10-kilometer mountain route, chtn.ir wrote.

The existing dirt track, lacking safety measures, severely limits access for both ordinary tourists and local residents, and is navigable only by locals with specialized vehicles.

Officials say upgrading, securing, and asphaltting this route would create a direct physical link between these two key tourism centers of Taftan Mountain and establish a strategic connection between Taftan, Khash, and the border town of

Mirjaveh. Acting as a secondary tourism corridor, the road would ease access to natural and cultural attractions, reduce traffic on main routes, and help distribute visitors more evenly across the province.

The project is expected to bring substantial economic and social benefits, including increased tourist arrivals, longer stays, development of local businesses, improved livelihoods, and lower transportation costs. Morteza Tamandani, a local cultural activist, emphasized that the tourism potential of Taftan Mountain and the opportunity to connect these villages have long been overlooked. He said,

"This 10-kilometer route is a hidden treasure. With modest investment and a strategic vision, it can become an economic lifeline for the region. Neglecting this infrastructure has deprived the province of countless opportunities."

The Head of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department of Taftan highlighted the technical aspects of the project, noting that upgrading the route requires detailed geological, hydrological, and road engineering studies. Proper implementation, respecting both technical and environmental standards, would not only improve access to Taftan Mountain

and surrounding pristine areas but also open a new gateway to cross-border and international tourism through Mirjaveh.

Younes Mirbalochzahi added that realizing this project requires close cooperation among executive agencies and the allocation of national and provincial funding to fully harness the area's untapped potential.

He underlined that linking Tamandan and Tamin represents not only a critical step in developing the province's tourism industry but also a unique opportunity to create sustainable employment and improve local livelihoods. The project has been prioritized in the prov-

ince's infrastructure development plans, with full efforts underway to secure funding and accelerate implementation, aiming for transformative impact. Given the economic, social, and tourism potential of the region, upgrading and asphaltting the Tamandan-Tamin route is a strategic necessity. This initiative, envisioned as a "golden corridor," could ensure balanced and sustainable development in eastern Sistan and Baluchestan. Expediting feasibility studies and securing the necessary funding is considered vital, requiring strong support from provincial and national authorities.

# Men, women practice centuries-old oil-making in Saqi village

## Iranica Desk

Not so long ago, with the first cool waves of autumn sweeping down from the surrounding plains toward Saqi Village at the foot of the southern mountains of Gonabad, the unspoken calendar of village life quietly ushered in a new season. This was the season of preparation for the harsh winter ahead, and one of the most important symbols of this readiness was the "Autumn Oil-Making" ceremony.

Rooted in the subsistence economy and traditional family structures, this ritual was far more than a simple culinary activity — it was a full-fledged cultural manifesto.

The tradition was closely tied to the departure of the village men. The cold autumn and winter in Saqi compelled men to travel to the regional economic hub of Mashhad. These journeys were not merely for gathering the year's essential provisions; they also served as an opportunity for social exchange and news from the outside world. The primary commodity sought was the fresh, white tail fat of sheep.

These tail fats were regarded as the village's "autumn capital." When the men returned laden with this vital resource, it marked the official start of the household season. This stage also reflected the traditional gender division of labor in Iranian families: men were responsi-



ble for procuring essential goods from the outside world, while women processed and transformed them within the safety of the home.

Mohammad Dehqan, a researcher of folk culture, told ISNA that with the return of the men, the women's work began. The tail fats were spread out on a large table and carefully chopped into as small pieces as possible. These fatty pieces were then placed in a large stone cauldron. The folk culture researcher described how the melting process began over a gentle, controlled flame. The scent of the initial rendering would waft through the village like a verbal announcement, signaling to neighbors that someone's home was busy with oil-making.

As the heat continued, clear, honey-colored oil separated from the fat. What remained at the



end of the process was the delicious "Jezghaleh" — but it was not yet ready for consumption. Achieving the ideal crispness and aroma required a more precise process. Therefore, the hot Jezghaleh was gently transferred into clay containers (or Qadah) and moved to a special room.



● ISNA

— the pure oil — was carefully stored in sealed metal containers, often made of tin. These containers became the family's oil treasury, providing a distinct flavor and warmth to Saqi's winter tables.

After the melting and drying process, the final product was ready for storage. The oil was poured into metal vessels made from a tin and zinc alloy, sealed tightly with screw-on lids.

Dehqan explained that these containers were considered the best storage solution because they were impermeable and non-reactive with the oil. Each household had several containers, each dedicated to a different stored product. Sheep tail fat oil gave a distinctive flavor to Saqi dishes — a taste unlike any modern oils.

He emphasized that the process represented a complete social

cycle. The autumn oil-making ritual was not just about producing oil; it was a practical school of household economy. From a young age, children learned how to manage resources and appreciate the value of every morsel, lessons that remained part of daily life in the village.

He added that in folk culture, homemade oil was considered a symbol of blessing. Oil produced with effort and in the presence of the entire family was believed to bring positive energy to the household table. This was a metaphysical concept embedded in the local economy, still cherished in the memories of older generations.

With changes in lifestyle and the arrival of factory-produced oils, many of these labor-intensive steps have become obsolete. The researcher explained: "Today, Saqi, like many other villages, buys its oil from stores. But the absence of that process, the missing aroma, and the long conversations around the cauldron have created a gap in the village's collective memory."

He noted that although modern machinery has made the work faster, speed has not replaced the quality of lived experience. Back then, Jezghaleh was more than just a snack; it was a morsel whose saltiness you measured yourself and whose crispness you verified with your own hands. This authenticity is lost in industrial products.