

Darak village reveals rare meeting of sea, desert in southern Iran



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Darak village, one of the lesser-known destinations in southern Iran, is located in the Zarabad district of Konarak County in Sistan and Baluchestan Province. With its rare combination of sea, desert, sand dunes, and palm groves, the village offers an unspoiled and striking natural setting for travelers seeking an alternative tourism experience.

Darak's coastline marks the meeting point of the turquoise waters of the Oman Sea and golden sands framed by rolling dunes, forming a landscape that is both unique and visually arresting. This distinctive natural contrast has made the village increasingly appealing to tourists drawn to pristine environments, tranquility, and destinations far

removed from crowded urban centers, according to IRNA. Situated along the shores of the Oman Sea, Darak lies approximately 170 kilometers west of Chabahar and about 120 kilometers from the town of Konarak. The village has a small and peaceful population of around 450 residents living in just over 100 households, a characteristic that further enhances its appeal for visitors seeking solitude, calm, and untouched nature.

Darak's geographic position — at the junction of sea and desert — creates specific climatic conditions. During autumn and winter, mild sea breezes moderate the climate, making the weather pleasant and ideal for travel. In contrast, summer brings high temperatures and humidity, which can make visits

more challenging and require careful planning. Sunrise and sunset in Darak are particularly memorable, as golden light reflects off the sand and sea, creating a poetic atmosphere well suited to photography. Throughout the day, shifting sunlight continuously changes the colors of the dunes and shoreline, offering visitors a dynamic and ever-evolving landscape.

At night, Darak's clear, star-filled sky combined with the silence of the beach provides a calming and immersive experience. Many visitors spend evenings along the shore, listening to the sound of the waves and enjoying the untouched natural surroundings — an experience markedly different from crowded and brightly lit coastal resorts.

Tourists visiting Darak can en-

joy a range of activities that highlight the area's natural appeal. Long stretches of unspoiled coastline allow for leisurely beach walks accompanied by soft sand, rolling waves, and cool sea breezes. Nature observation and photography are particularly popular, as the combination of sand dunes, palm groves, turquoise waters, and wide-open skies — especially during sunrise and sunset — offers exceptional visual opportunities.

Some sections of the coast are suitable for swimming and beach recreation, although visitors are advised to bring personal supplies such as towels, swimwear, and drinking water due to limited facilities. The sandy terrain and surrounding dunes also provide ideal conditions for off-road driving, add-

ing an element of adventure to the travel experience.

Eco-lodges and local homes enable visitors to experience village life firsthand, sample traditional foods, and become familiar with local customs and traditions. In the evenings, the absence of urban light pollution allows for sunset viewing, star-gazing, and quiet nights by the shore, fostering a deep sense of connection with nature.

Darak's main attractions include its rare natural setting, long and tranquil beaches, opportunities for cultural interaction with local residents, and distinctive photographic landscapes. The ability to experience both desert and sea in a single location remains an uncommon feature in Iran and sets Darak apart from many other coastal destinations.

Despite its advantages, the area also faces limitations. Modern tourism infrastructure and extensive amenities are limited. Visitors planning overnight stays or camping must bring essential supplies such as water, food, and necessary equipment. Summer heat and humidity can be intense, and access routes may lack clear signage, making advance planning and, in some cases, the assistance of local guides advisable.

The ideal time to visit Darak is from mid-autumn to early spring, when temperatures are moderate and sea breezes create comfortable conditions for travel. This period is well suited for beach walks, swimming, eco-tourism stays, and enjoying the region's celebrated sunrises and sunsets, while avoiding the harsher conditions of summer.

Isfahan demonstrating living legacy of Iranian architecture

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The head of the Research Institute of Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts has highlighted the unparalleled role of Isfahan in the history of Iranian architecture and civilization, describing the city as a living testament to Iran's architectural and cultural legacy.

Mohammad Ebrahim Zar'e emphasized that Isfahan holds a distinguished position both nationally and internationally, spanning urban architecture, individual monuments, and traditional handicrafts, Mehr News Agency reported.

Pointing to Isfahan's historical role in shaping Iranian architectural identity, Zar'e said, "Few countries in the world can claim such a profound architectural heritage. When Isfahan became the Safavid capital, its architectural style and planning system were established, and its influence extended not only across Iran but even into Anatolia."

Referring specifically to the era of Shah Abbas I, he added, "This period was a golden age for Isfahan. Shah Abbas insisted that each master and school maintain its unique identity and structural integrity. This philosophy sparked



Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque
sheykhbahaiehotel.com

an unprecedented flourishing of architecture and handicrafts, turning Isfahan into a beacon of artistic excellence." Zar'e further emphasized the enduring influence of Isfahani architectural style throughout Iran, stating, "The methods and techniques developed in Isfahan spread to every corner of the country, establishing the city as a central hub and birthplace for numerous arts and handicrafts."

He also recounted the experiences of foreign envoys visiting Isfahan during the Safavid period. "Before entering the royal court, these envoys were accommodated in specially designated caravanserais. The grandeur

of Isfahan, its wide streets, public spaces, and particularly Chaharbagh Avenue, were widely praised in their travelogues and reports," he noted.

Expressing concern about the current state of some of Isfahan's historical monuments, Zar'e concluded, "It is our collective duty today to ensure that Isfahan is preserved and protected from threats that endanger its civilizational heritage. The city deserves far greater attention, meticulous care, and robust support. I hope that through joint efforts, we can take meaningful and effective steps to safeguard Isfahan's architectural and cultural legacy for future generations."

Restoration turns Qotb House into key cultural landmark in Dezful

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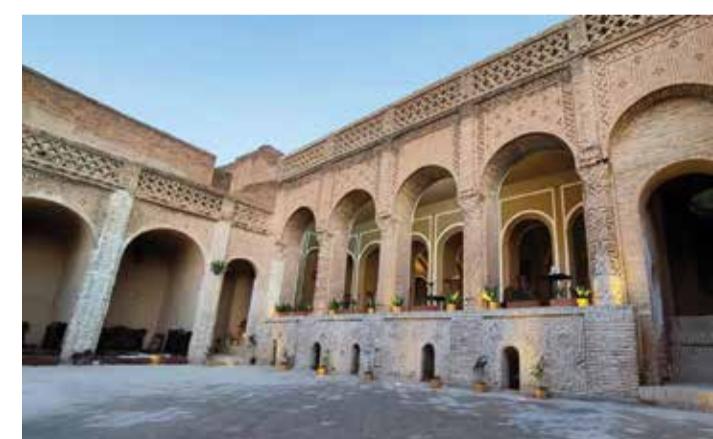
A 400-year-old historic building in Dezful, Khuzestan Province, known as Qotb House, has been transformed into one of the city's most important cultural centers. Mehdi Akbari, director of the house, referred to the restoration and reopening of Qotb House in January 2024 and added that the complex resumed its activities with a cultural and social approach following comprehensive restoration and large-scale rehabilitation works. Today, the complex is widely recognized as a key venue for cultural and artistic events in Dezful, according to chtn.ir.

Emphasizing the role of the site in reviving local traditions, he added that the primary objective behind reopening the house was to restore Dezful's old customs and rituals and to familiarize younger generations with the city's authentic cultural heritage. He noted that a wide range of cultural programs and artistic events has been warmly welcomed by citizens and artists alike, firmly securing the mansion's position within Dezful's cultural calendar.

According to the Akbari, numerous cultural, artistic, and social events have been hosted at the site since its reopening, turning the historic house into a dynamic gathering place for creative and cultural exchange.

He also highlighted the architectural significance of the building,

explaining that the Qotb House, which dates back to the late Safavid era and the early Qajar period, stands as one of the finest examples of Dezful's historic architecture. The building's distinctive brickwork, along with its traditional spatial layout, has transformed the house into a comprehensive showcase of the city's architectural identity and craftsmanship.



Pointing to Dezful's broader tourism potential, Akbari said the city, with 28 historic neighborhoods and approximately 240 hectares of historic urban fabric, contains one of the richest and most extensive historical areas in southern Iran. Following its restoration, the Qotb House has emerged as a key element of the city's cultural and tourism infrastructure and is regarded as a successful model for the cultural reuse and adaptive

revitalization of historic houses. He stressed that the Qotb House is no longer merely a preserved historical structure, but rather a vibrant and living center for Dezful's culture, rituals, and arts. By encouraging cultural interaction and providing an active platform for youth participation, the building plays a significant role in strengthening the city's cultural vitality and can serve as an effec-

tive model for the revitalization of other historic houses across Dezful.

Alongside its historic houses, ancient neighborhoods, the Dez River, and its rich and diverse cultural traditions, Dezful is steadily emerging as a notable cultural tourism destination in southern Iran, offering visitors an authentic and immersive experience of history, architecture, and living heritage.