

Transforming tourism into family experiences

Iranica Desk

In recent years, the tourism industry in Iran has experienced significant growth, and the country's cities and natural regions have been attracting more attention from tourists than ever before. However, despite this growth, one of the major gaps in the country's tourism sector is the lack of attention to family-oriented groups, according to Ali Akbar Bani-Asadi, a tourism expert.

Tourism for families is more than just a simple recreational experience; it provides an opportunity to strengthen family bonds, create lasting shared memories, teach cultural and historical values to younger generations, and promote the mental and physical health of families. Unfortunately, many tours and tourism programs in Iran are still not designed to meet the needs and preferences of families, and this important segment of society faces numerous limitations and challenges on many trips, according to chtn.ir.

When families visit historical, cultural, and natural sites, children and adolescents become familiar with the history, art, architecture, and environment of their country. These tangible experiences reinforce theoretical learning and help cultural and historical values take root in the minds of younger generations. Through these trips, families have the opportunity not only to enjoy themselves but also to engage in conversations about their national heritage



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and cultural identity, contributing to the preservation and transmission of culture to the next generation.

Family-oriented tourism also has significant economic effects. Families generally spend more than solo travelers or small groups because they require accommodation, food, recreational activities, and local products. The development of tours and programs specifically designed for families can create a new market for hotels, restaurants, eco-lodges, recreational centers, and handicraft industries while directly increasing local employment and boosting the economies of host communities. For this reason, investing in this sector not only promotes tourism growth but also provides an opportunity for sustainable economic development.

Another key benefit of family-oriented tourism is the improvement of the mental and physical health of family

members. In today's fast-paced world, families often have little time to spend together, and daily stresses can affect their quality of life. Joint trips provide an opportunity for parents and children to step away from daily concerns and enjoy quality, memorable moments in a safe and peaceful environment. Family-friendly recreational activities such as walking, nature games, light sports, and spending time in green spaces not only bring joy and vitality but also support the physical and mental well-being of both children and adults.

However, to fully capitalize on family-oriented tourism, carefully designed routes and programs are needed to cater to different age groups. Many families either face long or high-risk trips due to the lack of proper infrastructure or are forced to forgo traveling altogether. Safe walking trails, family-friendly recreational centers, educa-

tional and entertainment facilities for children, rest stations, and adequate health services are all essential components of successful family tourism. In this context, training tour guides to manage family-oriented trips and interact effectively with children and the elderly is particularly important, as it can make the travel experience more enjoyable and memorable for families. Modern technologies also play an important role in enhancing family-oriented tourism. Mobile applications for introducing sites and tourist routes, multilingual audio guides, augmented reality (AR) for digitally reconstructing historical buildings, and online booking facilities for tours and workshops can make travel experiences easier, more enjoyable, and more educational for families. These tools allow first-time visitors to a city or tourist region to follow a complete, well-coor-

dinated itinerary, ensuring that all family members benefit from the travel experience.

An important aspect of developing family-oriented tourism is paying attention to urban and natural spaces. Creating parks and educational green spaces alongside historical attractions, designing walking and cycling paths, revitalizing urban streams and rivers, and establishing children's playgrounds and family activity centers can encourage residents to use these spaces throughout the year while also attracting tourists. These initiatives allow cities to gain recognition as tourist destinations while enhancing urban life quality and creating a healthy, family-friendly environment.

Finally, investing in family-oriented tourism not only supports the tourism industry but also positions families as a cornerstone of the country's cultural, economic, and social

development. Families play a fundamental role in passing on values and culture to future generations, and creating opportunities for safe, engaging, and educational travel for families will have a lasting impact on society.

Family-oriented tourism offers an opportunity to introduce Iran to new generations, strengthen cultural and historical identity, boost the local economy, and provide unforgettable experiences for families. If Iran's tourism sector aims to achieve sustainable growth and compete on the global stage, special attention to families and their travel needs must be at the forefront of planning. This focus is no longer a luxury or an optional feature; it is a necessity that can shape the future of the country's tourism industry, transforming it from seasonal and scattered tourism into sustainable, purposeful and family-oriented tourism.

Walk along pristine shores of Dastir

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Dastir Beach stretches along the turquoise waters of the Persian Gulf and has earned a special place among Hormozgan Province's natural attractions due to its unique geological layers, diverse coastal landscapes, valuable wildlife habitats, and breathtaking scenery.



Among the beach's most distinctive features is the "Shell Gap," a natural formation created by the erosion of sedimentary layers and the accumulation of seashells, offering visitors a truly unique coastal spectacle. Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of Dastir Beach is its endless serenity. With its long shoreline, gentle waves, and

through sedimentation and erosion and now stand as a natural gallery for visitors to admire. Many visitors refer to these formations as the "footprints of time"—natural patterns that become more striking and visible with each wave. According to experts, the unique structure of these layers represents a valuable example of the tectonic and geological processes



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The nearby city of Dashti, part of Parsian and officially upgraded to city status in 2011, is recognized as the closest settlement to Dastir Beach. The beach itself stands out as one of the region's most beautiful natural sites, attracting both domestic and international tourists in recent years thanks to its pristine environment, cleanliness, and unparalleled tranquility, according to chtn.ir. Dastir Beach also serves as a vital nesting ground for the endangered hawksbill sea turtle, making it one of the most important coastal areas in southern Iran for biodiversity conservation.

near-constant quiet, the beach provides an ideal destination for travelers seeking peaceful retreats, families, and nature enthusiasts alike. This beach, with its combination of soft sands, layered rocks, coastal dunes, and sandy expanses, offers visitors a collection of unparalleled landscapes. Its coastal diversity has made the area a destination for a wide range of visitors, from families seeking leisure to professional photographers. The layered rocks of Dastir Beach are among the most significant geological features of the region. These strata were formed over millions of years

of southern Iran. The sunsets at Dastir Beach are among its most renowned attractions. In the late hours of the day, the warm sunlight reflects off the calm sea, creating a poetic and enchanting view. Many visitors plan their trips to coincide with sunset to ensure they do not miss this breathtaking scene. Overnight camping on the beach is also a popular experience for nature enthusiasts. The starry sky, the gentle sound of the waves, and the night breeze create a soothing atmosphere that tourists describe as "memorable and unique."

toward Parsian. The distance from Asaluyeh to Parsian's city center is approximately 83 kilometers, and from Parsian to Dashti city is about 5 kilometers. For visitors from Fars Province, the Shiraz-Parsian route is recommended, with a total distance of around 400 kilometers. For travelers from the eastern and northern parts of Hormozgan, the Bandar Abbas-Bandar Khamir-Bandar Lengeh-Parsian route is suitable. The distance from Bandar Abbas to Parsian is about 400 kilometers, while Bandar Lengeh to Parsian is roughly 220 kilometers.

Discover taste of traditional Sabzi Polo in Semnan

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Nourishing and spicy local foods of Semnan Province are shaped by the region's climate, culture, and the lifestyle of people living in this desert area of Iran.

The eating habits of the people in this province show that Sabzi Polo (herbed Persian rice dish) is a popular cuisine cooked in most families of Semnan, with a few regional variations.

Although Sabzi Polo (fragrant mixed-herb rice) is usually served with fish in most parts of Iran, its cooking method is different in Semnan. This local and traditional dish is prepared by mixing rice with a variety of vegetables (coriander, leek, dill, parsley, etc.), lentils, cowpeas, meat, garlic, saffron, onion, salt, and pepper, along with cucurbits such as eggplant, tomato, beet, and spinach, visitiran.ir wrote.

Pieces of meat, eggplant, tomato, and other ingredients are layered



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between the rice and served after adding animal oil. The pleasant taste and aroma of this food come primarily from its herbs. The Tah-dig (crispy rice crust) of this dish is particularly thick, and people in Semnan usually serve it with mixed pickles, yogurt, or green salad. In Semnan, dishes like Sabzi Polo are more than just daily meals—they are an important part of the region's cultural identity. Families often prepare this dish during gatherings, religious holidays, and seasonal celebrations, reinforcing social bonds across generations. The process of washing the herbs, layering the ingredients, and patiently waiting for the Tah-dig to form is considered a cherished family ritual. For many households, the aroma of Sabzi Polo simmering on the stove is a reminder of tradition, hospitality, and the deep-rooted connection between food and local heritage in Semnan Province.