

# Eyvanekey; historical gateway between ancient dynasties, modern Semnan

## Iranica Desk

Eyvanekey is a city in Semnan Province, located approximately 70 kilometers from Tehran. The word Eyvanekey is composed of two parts: "Eyvan" is a term derived from the Pahlavi language, meaning palace or castle, and "Key" signifies "king." It can be concluded that Eyvanekey was once the seat of government, a command center, and the residence of kings and commanders — similar to the Arch of Ctesiphon in Mesopotamia, Ivan-e Karkheh in Khuzestan, and Ivan-e Khosrow in Kermanshah, all attributed to the Kayanian or Pishdadian dynasties.

The prehistoric mounds and sites in Eyvanekey indicate that human habitation there dates back thousands of years, although this requires more detailed investigation, according to chtn.ir.

Based on the collection of evidence, clues, and ancient mounds around the area, it can be deduced that the ancient city of Eyvanekey was located in a different place than its current site. In this area, there are several forts, shrines (Imamzadehs), and a caravanserai, all of which likely formed parts of a relatively large city. Many of the city's elders and researchers emphasize that Chel Darreh was the ancient location of Eyvanekey, which was destroyed by an earthquake. It is probable that life continued there until the late Safavid period, when devastating earthquakes destroyed the city and the remaining population relocated to the new site. Consequently, the modern city of Eyvanekey likely



took shape from the late Safavid period onward, and its traditional architecture and old alleys date from after that period.

### Caravanserais

Located approximately 80 meters east of Haj Nabi Mosque, Haj Esmail Dadgar Caravanserai featured various chambers and camel stables and is registered on the National Heritage List. Amiri Caravanserai is another famous structure, built entirely of adobe (sun-dried mud brick) and cob. The caravanserai had two floors, with chambers facing the courtyard and stables located on its southern side. Travelers' chambers were situated on the second floor, while the first-floor chambers were likely designated for storing merchandise. This site is also registered on the National Heritage List.

### Sanaei Primary School

In the center of Eyvanekey stands the building of a school named Sanaei Primary School.

It was established in 1949 CE by Fathollah Sanaei and donated to the Ministry of Education. This school is the oldest center of formal education in Eyvanekey, where the city's earliest educated individuals completed their elementary education. This historical site is registered on the National Heritage List.

### Water mills

One of the rare and remarkable phenomena of Eyvanekey is the existence of dozens of water mills found in various parts of the area, especially around the city. This high number of mills was not intended to meet the flour needs of local residents alone; rather, the flour they produced was either transported to other regions or used to supply the numerous caravans and travelers along the historic route from Rey to Khorasan.

### Traditional brick kiln

This kiln was used to supply the bricks needed for the con-



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### Ice house

The structure of the ice house is circular, with a diameter of 11 meters, and features a single entrance approximately one meter wide on its northern side. The building dates back to the early Qajar period and was registered on the National Heritage List in 2008.

## Kafar Castle

Access to the Kafar Castle was possible via the eastern and western valleys, while its northern and southern sections are impassable. Pottery fragments recovered from the surface and surrounding areas of Kafar Castle indicate that it was constructed approximately in the 12th or 13th century CE and remained in use until the 16th century CE. It was likely a refuge-type fortress, serving as a stronghold for opponents of ruling powers. This site was registered on the National Heritage List in 2008.

## Chehel Dokhtaran Mountain

Located in the eastern part of Kark village, approximately two kilometers from the Imamzadeh Mir Mohammad shrine, stands Chehel Dokhtaran Mountain. Based on pottery samples found at the site, its history can be dated back to at least the early historical period. This site was registered on the National Heritage List in 2008.

## Discover living history of Kharg Island



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Kharg is a small island on the vast expanse of the Persian Gulf, yet it occupies a grand and enduring place in Iran's historical narrative. Long before evolving into the nation's pulsating heart of energy, this storied land has breathed within the political, economic, and cultural transformations that have shaped the region across centuries. "Kharg Cultural Week" and Kharg Day, observed annually on December 5, offer a meaningful opportunity to pause and reflect—to revisit and celebrate an identity forged over time, one that remains profoundly alive and dynamically vibrant. The history of Kharg Island begins long before the dawn of the oil era. Archaeological evidence,

including ancient cemeteries, remnants of stone churches, and traces of early settlements, attests that Kharg has served as a crossroads of cultures and a hub along vital trade routes since antiquity. Throughout successive epochs, the island functioned as an essential station for sailors, merchants, and even religious missionaries, its name faithfully recorded in numerous travelogues and historical documents, according to chtn.ir.

Indeed, Kharg was never merely a geographical point but rather a strategic and indispensable node within the Persian Gulf's extensive network of communication and exchange. From the era of colonial ambitions and foreign presence in the Persian Gulf to the turbulent years of the Iran-Iraq War,

Kharg Island has persistently stood on the front lines. The island was repeatedly subjected to threat and attack, yet each time it emerged more resilient and steadfast. During the war, Kharg was not only a critical oil terminal but also a powerful symbol of the nation's economic resistance — a place where Iran's vital oil exports defied relentless bombings and continued unabated.

With the arrival and expansion of the oil industry, Kharg entered a transformative new chapter in its historical journey. The development of modern infrastructure, the establishment of the Petroleum University of Technology, and the influx of skilled professionals and workers from across the nation diversified and energized Kharg's

social fabric. In this process, Kharg evolved into a grand school — a school of hard work, specialized expertise, unwavering discipline, and profound responsibility. Within this industrial landscape, an entire generation emerged which came to view Kharg Island not merely as a workplace but as a cherished second home — a generation that learned to harmonize knowledge, tireless effort, and deep-seated dedication. That Kharg stands proudly today is a testament to its people, who have patiently and nobly carried the weight of history on their shoulders. These are individuals who, despite harsh climatic conditions, limited natural resources, and considerable occupational pressures, have

tenaciously preserved a culture of empathy, solidarity, and communal living.

Today, Kharg Island stands at a pivotal intersection of a glorious past and a responsible future. Preserving its rich historical heritage, strengthening its distinct cultural identity, and prioritizing thoughtful, sustainable development are urgent necessities that must not be overshadowed by the island's paramount economic role. Kharg Day is far more than a mere date on the calendar — it is a poignant reminder of a collective responsibility to safeguard the history, the people, and the future of this remarkable island. Kharg is an island that deserves to be seen in its full depth and dimension — not only as an indispensable oil terminal but as

a living, breathing narrative of Iran's enduring history and resilient spirit.

To complete the picture of Kharg, one must not overlook its climate. The warm, turquoise waters of the Persian Gulf, paired with a clear blue sky and gentle island breezes, create tranquil moments for residents and visitors alike. Summers are hot and dry, with relatively cool coastal nights, while winters are humid and mild, with occasional winds and low rainfall. Kharg's geographical position, gently orbiting between deep waters and low-lying lands, offers a dynamic blue-and-earthly landscape. Alongside its industry, life here harmonizes with nature in a sustainable, enduring balance.