

Bushehr, land of sunlight, color, living beauty



Iranica Desk

Bushehr is a place where the sun rises each morning from the heart of the blue waters, breaking the spell of the night and beginning a daily celebration of light and color. For travelers seeking a destination where they can experience the rhythm of nature up close, Bushehr offers a landscape in which every corner tells a story of vivid colors and timeless beauty. This coastal province seems to take on a new appearance with every passing hour. From sunrise to sunset, the shoreline reveals a constantly changing scene. In the early morning, the sea takes on a soft turquoise shade, as if the sky has melted into the water. At midday, beneath the direct southern sun, the Persian Gulf turns deep blue and sapphire, while near sunset it glows with shades of copper and gold. The transformation of colors is not only a result of changing light.

The seabed along Bushehr's coast is itself a natural display of contrasts. In some areas, living corals add warm tones to the water; elsewhere, white sandy shores make the sea appear clearer and brighter. Where dark rocks and cliffs rise from the waves, the colors shift toward emerald green and deeper shades of blue.

In the heart of Bushehr's historic district, light does more than illuminate — it interacts with architecture. When sunlight passes through the colored glass of traditional Orsi windows and old wooden doors, the interiors of historic houses become stages of moving light and shadow. Ruby reds, turquoise blues and amber yellows dance across plaster walls and handmade carpets, creating an atmosphere of rare beauty. This is where the deep connection between Bushehr's traditional architecture and the generosity of the southern sun becomes most visible.

A short distance from the port city, the plains of Bushehr reveal another side of the province's natural charm. Its lush palm groves stretch across the landscape like a green belt. The strong trunks of the palms, standing among their long leaves, symbolize endurance against the region's heat and humidity. Yet the magic of Bushehr's colors extends far beyond its coastline and palm forests.

Jashak Salt Dome, one of Iran's remarkable geological attractions, is a landscape shaped by crystal and light. When the intense southern sunlight strikes its transparent formations and massive salt structures, the mountain becomes a natural gallery of shimmering white, pink and mineral hues, leaving visitors fascinated.

At Bushehr's fish market, colors reach another level. The astonishing variety of fish creates a scene that no painter could fully capture.



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These colors are also a reflection of the flavors that come alive in Bushehr's traditional cuisine.

During the colder months, Bushehr's farmlands become fields of color and taste. The

bright red of locally grown tomatoes, the rich red of sweet watermelons, the green of peppers and the cheerful shades of seasonal crops transform the province into a winter garden whose produce is valued throughout Iran.

And no account of Bushehr's summer would be complete without mentioning the traditional Sharbat Khanehs (traditional syrup houses) of the historic district. During the hot afternoons, when humidity fills the air, escaping to the cool interiors of old houses and enjoying a glass of fresh lemon syrup or a colorful herbal syrup offers a simple but memorable experience.

The clear colors of these syrups, shining in glass cups, reflect the same sunlight that brightens this ever-awake land throughout the day. Bushehr — a land of light, color and beauty — continues to welcome visitors to its endless celebration of nature, culture and tradition.

Se-Kuhe Castle stands tall in Sistan's historic landscape

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Sistan and Baluchestan Province is one of Iran's most valuable provinces, a region holding important historical treasures within its heart. Shahr-e Sukhteh (Burnt City), Dahaneh-ye Gholaman, Arg-e Jalaliabad, and many other sites form just a part of the province's remarkable attractions.

In the Sistan region, less than 50 kilometers from the city of Zabol, lies the historic Se-Kuhe Castle (Qaleh-e Seh Kuhe), a fortress with a long and storied past filled with local legends. This castle is considered the second tallest structure in the Sistan plain and has been registered on Iran's National Heritage List.

The castle is regarded as one of the must-see attractions of Zabol and after Khwajeh Mountain, stands as the second tallest structure across the vast Sistan plain. The castle was built on a rectangular and elevated plot of land covering approximately 3,700 square meters and features two entrance pathways, one on the eastern side and one on the western side. The western entrance has become impassable and has suffered extensive damage, while the eastern entrance has a steep downward slope.

Se-Kuhe Castle was officially registered as a national heritage site of Iran on February 1, 2003.

The castle is located in the Shib Ab district, within Se-Kuhe village, in the city of Zabol. This historic fortress is bordered to the northeast by semicircular plains, to the south by Delasa village, to the west by the farmlands of Lutak village, and to the northwest by Sam Castle.

Se-Kuhe emerged as a result of water receding from the Zabol



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plain and is situated along the route from Zabol toward Zahedan, lying along a sloped path.

Due to its location along the course of the Helmand River, Se-Kuhe became completely submerged at one point. Later, as the river changed its course, the land gradually emerged from the water, appearing as three elevated mounds, or three mountains, rising from the dry Sistan plain. In this way, Se-Kuhe first

surfaced as three islands, and then, as the plain's floodwaters receded, its entire area eventually became dry land.

Many experts believe that the architectural characteristics of this region date back to the Afsharid period. The peak of political and military activity at Se-Kuhe Castle, however, occurred during the reign of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar. During that time, the castle played a significant deterrent role against the colonial ambitions of

the British government and their efforts to separate parts of Iran, and it also assumed an effective role in the campaigns against Herat. Sardar Ali Khan Sarbandi was the first person to pledge allegiance to Iran's central government and raised the Iranian flag atop Se-Kuhe Castle in 1852 CE. This historic castle, whose history reaches back to the Qajar era, was the last residential fortress where the region's ruling governor of the time took up residence.

Se-Kuhe Castle stands as a symbol of Sistan's architectural style and is considered one of the final buildings constructed in this particular manner.

The castle is among the sites in Sistan where, during the struggles between Iran and Britain, the Iranian flag was hoisted. For several years, the fortress witnessed the peak of military and political conflicts between Great Britain and Iran during the reign of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar, and it played a role in the recapture of parts of the country during that war.

Adjacent to the main Se-Kuhe Castle in Zabol, a small citadel sits atop the third mound, covering an area of 2,000 square meters. This small citadel is only 20 meters away from the main castle, a distance so short that many historians have proposed the theory that the citadel and the castle were originally one single structure. Traces of habitation at this citadel are clearly visible, though it remains unknown exactly who lived there and during what period.

According to local elders in the village, coins were once minted within this castle. Additionally, a well existed on the southern side of the fortress, into which bodies were thrown during times of war. The well was reportedly so deep that when villagers dropped a stone into it, no sound could be heard. Today, only a hollow remains at that spot. In any case, this castle represents a chapter of Sistan's history in which many political and social events unfolded, and it is tied to several centuries of the region's recent past.

The architecture of Se-Kuhe Castle follows the traditional style of Sistan. Two types of arched

vaults, known as Taq-e Ahang, are found in this castle.

The construction of houses in the Se-Kuhe district, like other settlements in Iran, initially involved laying the walls, then marking the porches and doors, and finally roofing the homes. The method for constructing roofs in the Sistan region involves starting from one side and building the roof up to less than halfway across, while simultaneously doing the same from the opposite side. When the roof bases meet above the room's walls, several more rows are added from each side to complete the roof. The roofs of houses in the Sistan plain are generally built in a domed shape, following the Yazdi style.

The castle consists of three sections:

Northern citadel: This section of the castle served as the resting place for the ruler and his companions. The northern citadel has a polygonal exterior with a domed surface and high vaults, and it occupies a significantly smaller area compared to the southern citadel. The northern citadel is also referred to as Malek Sar or Falak Sar.

Central courtyard citadel: This section of the castle is filled with both small and large rooms, which provided resting and sleeping quarters for the servants, the ruler's personal guard soldiers, and his companions. This area lies between the northern and southern citadels.

Southern citadel: This section of the castle belonged exclusively to the ruling governor of the time. Resembling a compact palace, it featured a narrow, tall porch, a small courtyard, and a number of rooms on the northern side of the courtyard.