

Iranica Desk

Roodein, a terraced village in Esfarayen, North Khorasan Province, is considered one of Iran's most beautiful stepped villages and among the country's most popular rural tourism destinations.

With a history of more than 500 years, ancient hills, and a scenic settlement, the village is also known as the "Village of Apple Blossoms" due to its extensive apple orchards.

Located 26 kilometers north of Esfarayen and 52 kilometers southeast of Bojnurd, the capital of North Khorasan Province, Roodein lies seven kilometers from the Esfarayen-Bojnurd road, at an altitude of 1,670 meters above sea level, at the end of the Roodein River valley in the Aladagh Mountains, according to ISNA.

The village is one of the green and pleasant-weather areas of Esfarayen, situated on the southern slopes of the Aladagh Mountains and inside one of its picturesque valleys. Its winding alleys, traditional architecture, stepped houses, and beautiful apple orchards attract numerous visitors every year.

Upon entering Roodein, the beauty of its gardens blends with the soothing sound of the river flowing through the village, creating a unique harmony of nature's most pleasant melodies and offering visitors a refreshing experience for both body and soul.

The Roodein River divides the village into two parts. The main historic core of the village is located on the left side of the river, where its earthen and clay stepped architecture has created a distinctive landscape.

Built on a steep slope, Roodein features narrow and often steep alleys. However, the implementation of rural development projects has made movement easier for residents and visitors. The stepped design of the houses is arranged in such a way that the courtyard of one house serves as the rooftop of another. Because of this unique architec-

Roodein; scenic village of apple orchards, handwoven crafts



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ture, Roodein is often called the "Masouleh of North Khorasan Province."

At the center of the village stand the Jaame Mosque and the shrine of Imamzadeh Seyyed Eshaq, who is believed to be a descendant of Imam

Musa al-Kadhim (AS) and is highly respected by local residents. A small traditional market is also located near these two sites.

The people of Roodein speak Persian. The historic village has a history of more than five

centuries, while the presence of 600-year-old plane trees and the ancient Roodein hill indicate its long historical background.

The right side of the river is mostly covered with interconnected orchards and charming garden paths, with only a few buildings scattered among them. Visitors can reach these houses by crossing an iron bridge built over the river.

The gardens on the left side of the river are known as "Nasar." Local residents use this name because these gardens are located in an area that remains shaded for much of the day due to its geographical position.

Walking through the winding and enchanting garden paths of Nasar, the orchards gradually extend toward higher elevations



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and eventually reach the spring area, the largest public recreational spring in the village and a popular destination for visitors from across the province and the country.

The word Roodein is said to mean "growth" or "sprouting," and the village is believed to have received this name because of its abundant greenery. The combination of mountainous landscapes, plentiful water resources, lush vegetation, and

beautiful gardens has created a captivating environment in the area.

Beyond its natural attractions, Roodein's handicrafts have turned it into a unique destination. The village is nationally known as the "Textile Capital of Iran."

It is said to be Iran's first textile craft village, where almost every woman owns a traditional weaving loom at home. Samples of their handmade products, from floor coverings to traditional bundles, can be found throughout their houses and beside the shelves.

In the past, there were around 120 traditional Chador-Shab weaving looms in the village. After electric machines entered the market and replaced traditional looms, support from the Handicrafts Department of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization helped bring traditional weaving back into local homes.

"When one of the village girls got married, her dowry included 20 Chador-Shabs, 50 bath towels, and 30 traditional tablecloths. But young people today have become more fashion-oriented," says a handicraft entrepreneur from Roodein, a model tourism village in North Khorasan.

Entering the homes of Roodein, visitors can see traditional mud-brick houses decorated with rows of red Chador-Shabs, while women sit behind wooden looms weaving traditional textiles.

Women of all ages in the village, from young to elderly, are engaged in Chador-Shab and towel weaving. They pass the shuttles through the threads, filling the houses with the rhythmic sound of weaving.

All patterns and color combinations used in the villagers' textiles are created from their imagination, without the use of prepared designs. Each weaver produces around four to five meters of fabric per day, while completing a single Chador-Shab can take up to two months.

Khoy's traditional knifemaking seeks greater support

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Khoy, in West Azarbaijan Province, has long been recognized as one of northwestern Iran's major centers of traditional arts and crafts, thanks to its rich historical and cultural heritage. The city's historic covered bazaar, with a history spanning more than 500 years, is home to numerous specialized sections, including the blacksmiths' market, coppersmiths' bazaar, tinsmiths' alley, and carpet merchants' quarter, where generations of artisans have practiced their crafts.

Among the bazaar's traditional arts, knifemaking holds a distinguished place. Passed down through generations of master craftsmen, the centuries-old craft continues today despite numerous challenges, with only a handful of artisans still preserving the tradition.

Javad Abulhassan-Oghli, a recipient of Iran's National Skill Award and National Seal of Excellence for Handicrafts for traditional blacksmithing, horn-handle craftsmanship, and knifemaking, is one of the veteran artisans who has spent decades producing traditional knives in a rented workshop. Speaking to IRNA, he said he

learned the craft from his forefathers, adding that every knife reflects years of accumulated experience and traditional knowledge. According to him, the quality of each knife depends on the selection of steel, the blade-hardening process, blade finishing, and handle craftsmanship.



Abulhassan-Oghli explained that blades are made from steels with varying degrees of hardness, while the hardening process relies on a traditional formula combining dozens of medicinal plants, oils, and natural materials that has been passed down orally within his family for generations. His workshop produces a wide

range of knives, including kitchen, butcher, agricultural, and pocket knives. Most handles are crafted from wood, buffalo horn, or other durable materials, while silver is incorporated into some pieces to enhance their artistic and decorative value.

The artisan also expressed concern over limited institu-

the profession's greatest challenges, warning that without systematic knowledge transfer, an important part of Khoy's cultural heritage could gradually disappear.

Reza Bayramzadeh, head of Khoy's Department of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, emphasized the



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importance of safeguarding the region's intangible cultural heritage, describing Khoy's traditional knifemaking as a registered element of Iran's intangible cultural heritage and a symbol of the area's indigenous knowledge, technical expertise, and cultural identity. He said safeguarding the craft extends beyond its official reg-

istration and includes documenting traditional production techniques, supporting master artisans, training younger generations, and promoting the craft through exhibitions and cultural events.

Bayramzadeh noted that West Azarbaijan Province is home to 14 nationally registered el-

He added that providing low-interest loans to artisans, honoring master craftsmen, and creating better opportunities for marketing and selling handicrafts could play a significant role in ensuring the survival of traditional arts and preserving the region's intangible cultural heritage.

Traditional knifemaking is among Khoy's oldest crafts, with its origins believed to date back to the Safavid era or even earlier. The craft continues in a number of traditional workshops within the city's historic bazaar, but its long-term survival depends on greater support, effective training, and broader public awareness for future generations.

Situated in northwestern Iran near the border with Turkey, Khoy is characterized by a pleasant mountainous climate, fertile plains, and picturesque natural landscapes. The city has long served as a gateway between Iran and neighboring regions, benefiting from its strategic location on historic trade routes. Alongside its rich cultural heritage, Khoy is known for the hospitality of its people, whose traditions, handicrafts, and agricultural lifestyle have helped preserve the city's distinctive identity through generations.