

Valiasr Park

Located in the center of Qaemshahr, Valiasr Park has become a popular gathering place for families and visitors due to its pleasant environment and suitable facilities. The park is designed to provide a safe and enjoyable space where parents can allow their children to play and spend leisure time. Dedicated children's play areas, walking paths, and seating spaces have made the park a suitable destination for families throughout the day and evening.



● kojara.com

Karchang Wetland

Karchang Wetland, with an area of about 12 hectares, is one of Qaemshahr's lesser-known natural attractions. In recent years, the wetland has experienced a decline in water levels due to reduced rainfall; however, it remains a worthwhile destination for nature lovers. Because relatively few tourists are aware of this wetland, it has maintained a peaceful and pristine atmosphere. Visitors can enjoy the surrounding nature in a quiet environment away from crowded tourist areas. Karchang Wetland is also known as Karchang Pond. With its diverse natural landscapes, forests, wetlands, and cultural heritage sites, Qaemshahr offers visitors a unique opportunity to experience the beauty of Mazandaran and discover one of northern Iran's attractive yet less-explored destinations.



● kojara.com

Gerd Kuh

The Gerd Kuh Hill is an archeological site located in the Jamanan district of Qaemshahr. Jamanan was historically a center of local governance and today serves as the main entrance route to the villages of Bozorg Qadikola and Ahangar Kola.

Gerd Kuh consists of three large ancient mounds, the highest of which rises 26 meters above the surrounding area. The antiquity of these mounds is estimated to date back to the Iron Age. Archaeological excavations in the area have uncovered a cemetery dating back to approximately 2,500 BCE, along with artifacts such as pottery vessels from the Sassanid and Parthian periods.

Archaeological evidence suggests that the hills were used for military purposes during the Sassanid era and after the Arab conquest of Iran. The tallest mound, standing 26 meters high, is believed to have functioned as a military fortress.

Located southeast of Qaemshahr, the Gerd Kuh was registered on Iran's National Heritage List in 2003 as one of the country's historical monuments.



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Waking in traditional Iranian village home

Deep unscientific analysis of sleeping on floor in Iran

➤ Ali Torkzadeh & Saeideh Ajilchi
Travel bloggers

PERSPECTIVE

On our fifth day of unplanned, mostly aimless escape from Tehran, we woke up on the floor of a village home 30 minutes outside Sari, the capital of the coastal province of Mazandaran. There are no beds or dining tables in Iranian traditional homes. Everything — sleeping, eating, receiving of guests — happens on Persian rugs covering most of the floors wall to wall. In the evening, the bedding is rolled out on the floor.



➤ A traditional home in the village of Seyyed Mahaleh, near Sari, Mazandaran Province, Iran
● escapefromtehran.com

In the morning, the bedding is rolled back up and stored in a corner. This automatically takes care of making your own bed. The kitchen is basic, at best. Sometimes there's not even a stove inside in favor of something primitive outside to do away with the problem of the cooking fumes.

Health of sleeping on the floor in an Iranian village home

Like most Iranians, both Saeideh and I prefer to sleep on the floor, on the traditional bedroll — similar to Japanese

floor futons — rolled out on Persian rugs. Many Iranians believe sleeping on the floor is healthier because the body receives energy from the earth when it is in direct contact with the ground. Saeideh isn't totally convinced about this theory, "but then when I'm totally exhausted and my back hurts, I recover faster when I sleep on the ground." Some Iranians, like Saeideh's grandmother, eschew apartment living because it's "without spirit" because of the lack of direct contact with the earth. City dwellers in Iran tend to associate sleeping on the floor with backward-

ness. Other Iranians, like me, associate sleeping on the floor with humility. I think my belief is from my childhood, 50 years ago, when Iranians were, let's say, more earthy.

Iranians yearning for all things Western

Cultural amnesia is exactly the ailment of many modern Iranians, particularly the ones living in Tehran. This yearning for the West is so prominent that there's even a word for it: "Gharbzadegi". I know because I had to actually read a book by that title in graduate school. City slickers shun the old world and the old way of doing things in favor of the Western lifestyles depicted on satellite TV.

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When I wake on the floor of a village home, I don't mind the lack of comforts. Something in me is at peace. Probably has to do with my childhood memories of staying at the traditional homes of my grandparents in Mashhad and Tehran. Or maybe the peace just comes from the room being devoid of furniture! I deplore being chained to so many things at my own home.

Western tourists treated like rock stars by Iranians

They yearn for all things European and American, which is why Western tourists are treated like rock stars on the streets of Iran, leading to the bizarre episodes of Iranians asking to do selfies with total strangers because the strangers happen to be Western tourists walking down the street. It really is a little embarrassing to watch. Please note: Iranians are also stereotyped in the West as being anti-Western! Nothing could be further from the truth. They hate you? They'd lick you if they could.

At peace in an Iranian traditional home

When I wake on the floor of a village home, I don't mind the lack of comforts. Something in me is at peace. Probably has to do with my childhood memories of staying at the traditional homes of my grandparents in Mashhad and Tehran. Or maybe the peace just comes from the room being devoid of furniture! I deplore being chained to so many things at my own home. "Things always end up owning you, not the other way around," Saeideh often reminds me.

➤ The yard of a simple traditional home in the village of Seyyed Mahaleh, near Sari, Mazandaran Province, Iran
● escapefromtehran.com



Sounds of waking up in an Iranian village

Rising in an Iranian village home comes with a cacophony of sounds I wrote about on my first day of this escape from Tehran: the predawn morning azaan (call to prayer), the call of the rooster and the bells of goats leading sheep to the pastures. We had two of three this morning: the rooster and the azaan. Actually, this village is filled with mosques, the source of the azaan. We drove by at least three last night. It's 10 am and Saeideh is begging me to stop writing and get going. We have a busy schedule today. First stop is Badab Soort springs. I step outside. The sun is shining, and the tank and our shoes are waiting outside. But I leave with a heavy heart because of my love for this home. The interesting trip for me — and I know this would sound insane to family and friends in Tehran who prize the north for its shopping malls and beaches — would be to stay right here for a week and explore just this village and surrounding villages and maybe get lucky and get invited into some homes — although shomalis (northerners) are not famous for their hospitality. We headed to Sari, where a couple of shockers awaited us.

The full article first appeared on Escape from Tehran.