

Yazd demonstrates Iran's living heritage, desert culture

Iranica Desk

Sometimes, "understanding Iran does not require traveling all across the country. It is enough to walk through Yazd's mud-brick alleys, rest beneath the shade of a centuries-old Sabat, a covered passageway, feel the breeze from a traditional windcatcher and spend a night beneath the star-filled desert sky. Then it becomes clear that Yazd is more than a tourist destination: it is a living story of Iran, preserved in every brick, windcatcher, Sabat, Persian garden and in the hands of the region's artisans.

Seyyed Mohammad Rostami, director general of Yazd's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department, said the province represents Iranian ingenuity in adapting to the desert climate and is one of the world's most authentic cultural tourism destinations, according to chn.ir.

"Yazd is known not only for its historic sites and world heritage inscriptions, but also as a living expression of Iranian culture, civilization, architecture, handicrafts, rituals and way of life," he said. "From the World Heritage city of Yazd to Persian gardens, historic caravanserais, tourism villages, tranquil desert nights and the craftsmanship of local artisans, the province offers visitors an enduring experience."

Yazd, he said, is the product of centuries of intelligent coexistence between people and the desert en-



Dowlatabad Garden, Yazd
● wikipedia.org

vironment. Its residents have drawn on knowledge, creativity and a deep understanding of the local climate to turn wind into windcatchers, water into qanats, earth into enduring architecture and art into an inseparable part of the region's identity.

"Today, the province is not only a valuable legacy from the past, but also a living model of Iranian culture, sustainability and way of life," Rostami said. He noted that the inscription of the historic city of Yazd on UNESCO's World Heritage List represented more than the recognition of a city.

"It was also the recognition of a way of life, climate-adapted architecture, intelligent water management and a culture that has preserved its authenticity over centuries and continues to inspire people around the world," he said. Yazd, he added, should not simply be viewed but

experienced. From walking through mud-brick alleys and narrow passages known locally as Koocheh-ye Ashti-Konan to passing through cool Sabats, visitors can see windcatchers that still channel breezes into historic homes and explore markets and neighborhoods where everyday life continues.

Rostami pointed to the province's potential for summer tourism, saying that although the desert is associated with heat, Yazd's traditional architecture developed sophisticated ways of coping with the climate centuries ago.

At sunset, the city takes on a different character, Rostami said. The gentle desert breeze, illuminated historic buildings, quiet mud-brick alleys and star-filled sky create exceptional conditions for nighttime tourism, combining tranquility, authenticity and beauty.

He said Yazd offers a dif-

ferent face of Iran in every season, adding that the current period of desert travel and clear, starry nights provides an especially appealing opportunity to experience the province.

"As the heat of the day subsides, the historic district comes alive again," Rostami said. "The warm glow of its earthen walls, the quiet of the Sabats, life in the historic neighborhoods and the star-filled desert sky offer visitors a unique experience of tranquility and authenticity."

The official added that Yazd's architecture was not simply a legacy of the past but the product of centuries of knowledge, experience and adaptation to the desert climate.

"Windcatchers, Sabats, water reservoirs, qanats and mud-brick houses represent Iranian ingenuity in creating sustainable habitats," he said, adding that the heritage continues to fascinate and inspire both

domestic and international visitors.

Rostami also highlighted the province's Persian gardens, saying Dowlatabad Garden, known for having the world's tallest mud-brick windcatcher, and Pahlavanpur Garden in Mehriz are two outstanding examples of Persian garden design. Along with seven other Persian gardens in Iran, they are inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

"These gardens tell the story of the sophisticated relationship between water, architecture, nature and life in the heart of the desert," he said.

The historic caravanserais of Meybod, Ardakan and Mehriz also form part of the identity of Iran's historic trade routes. For centuries, the buildings served as stopping points for caravans, merchants and travelers and today reflect Yazd's historic role in connecting cultures and civilizations, Rostami said.



Shah Abbasi Caravanserai, Meybod
● visitiran.ir

He also pointed to the tourism potential of villages in Taft and Mehriz. With their green gardens, historic fabric, eco-lodges and traditional local culture, the villages offer visitors an opportunity to experience rural life and the distinctive tranquility of the region.

"What distinguishes Yazd from many historic cities around the world is the continuity of life in its historic district," Rostami said. "Cultural heritage here is not confined to mud-brick buildings. It lives on in the markets, neighborhoods, rituals, cuisine, handicrafts and hospitality of the people."

Rostami highlighted the province's prominent handicrafts sector, noting that Meybod has received global recognition for Zilu carpet weaving and Yazd for traditional jewelry. Bafq has been nationally registered for mat weaving, Ardakan

for traditional textiles. "These recognitions demonstrate the province's important role in preserving and continuing Iran's intangible cultural heritage," he said.

Yazd has 18 handicraft groups encompassing 156 crafts and 143 subcategories, making it one of the country's most diverse ecosystems of traditional arts, the official added.

He also highlighted Yazd's well-known culinary souvenirs, including Baghlava, Qottab, Pashmak, Loz and Haji-Badam. Traditional drinks and evenings spent in historic houses, he said, are also part of the lasting memories created by a trip to Yazd.

Rostami invited domestic and international tourists to visit the province.

"Today, more than ever, the world is looking for destinations that have preserved their authenticity," he said. "With its world heritage city, Persian gardens, historic caravanserais, exceptional handicrafts, tourism villages, tranquil desert nights and people who embody a culture of hospitality, Yazd is ready to present an authentic face of Iran to the world."

"Visitors who come to Yazd, return with more than photographs and souvenirs," he added. "They take with them a part of Iran's history, culture, art and tranquility. Yazd should be seen, experienced and told, because it is not merely a legacy of the past; it is a living story of Iran for today and tomorrow."

National Bonab Kebab Festival to be held in September

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The eighth National Bonab Kebab Festival will be held from September 8 to 11 at Fadak Park in Bonab, East Azarbaijan Province, the deputy governor for coordination and planning affairs of Bonab announced.

Firooz Mobin said preparations for this year's festival are underway to showcase Bonab's culinary, cultural, tourism and handicraft capacities more broadly. He said efforts had been made to design the festival's programs in line with the reputation of Bonab kebab and the city's cultural and tourism potential, chn.ir wrote. The festival will feature a range of cultural, artistic and exhibition programs for residents and tourists, he added.

Referring to Bonab's traditional kebab as an important part of the city's culinary identity, Mobin said the dish is one of Bonab's best-known culinary and tourism attractions. Its reputation has drawn large numbers of travelers to the



● yazeco.ir

city each year, he added. Alongside kebab stalls, booths will be set up to showcase and sell local products, goods produced in Bonab and handicrafts, giving visitors an opportunity to see some of the city's economic and cultural capabilities.

Mobin also said cultural and artistic programs, including performances of traditional music, would be held on the sidelines of the festival. He added that efforts would be made to

create a welcoming atmosphere for families, residents and tourists.

The deputy governor said the festival has a broader tourism role beyond showcasing a well-known local dish. It provides an opportunity to promote Bonab's culture, arts, handicrafts, local products and tourism attractions at the same time, he said, adding that the event could help attract more tourists and support local producers and businesses.

Gonbad-e Kavus home to over 7,000 handicraft artisans

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More than 7,000 artisans are active in 42 handicraft fields in Gonbad-e Kavus, highlighting the northern Golestan city's strong potential for preserving and developing traditional crafts, the head of its Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department said.

Maryam Aghatabay said the city's diverse ethnic communities have helped create a rich handicraft tradition and provide a valuable foundation for promoting traditional arts and developing new opportunities for skills training.

She added that the private sector is prepared to establish a handicrafts school specifically for girls in Gonbad-e Kavus. The necessary correspondence has been conducted with the city's Education Department to pursue the initiative and obtain the required permits. Establishing the school could play an important role in preserving traditional crafts, providing specialized training and passing skills on to younger generations, Aghatabay said. It could also help strengthen the position of traditional and indigenous arts in the local economy.

She noted that experienced artisans from various ethnic commu-



● IRNA

nities, including Qizilbash, Kurdish, Semnani, Sistani, Baluchi and Turkmen communities, are active in Gonbad-e Kavus. Their expertise, she added, could be used to train young people and help preserve traditional techniques.

Some of the city's handicrafts, including Turkmen kilim weaving and embroidery, have received international recognition, while others have received UNESCO's Seal of Excellence.

Aghatabay expressed hope that, once the necessary permits are issued, the handicrafts school will

begin educational activities in the coming academic year.

Gonbad-e Kavus is one of the main cultural and historical centers of Golestan Province and is known for its diverse ethnic and cultural heritage. The city is home to the Gonbad-e Qabus Tower, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the most prominent examples of medieval Iranian architecture. Its cultural diversity, traditional arts and proximity to natural attractions in Golestan also give the city considerable potential for cultural and heritage tourism.