

# Varmi Island shows dynamic nature of Persian Gulf



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## Iranica Desk

Varmi Island, located in the waters of the Persian Gulf, is one of the low-lying and distinctive islands of southern Iran. The island is fully visible only during low tide, while rising waters during high tide submerge it beneath the sea's surface. This unusual characteristic makes Varmi one of the region's rare transient islands, offering visitors a unique opportunity to experience natural tidal phenomena firsthand.

The island's smooth, golden sands, combined with the surrounding waters and gentle coastal breezes, create an ideal setting for walking, reading, and observing nature. In the island's quiet and open landscape, visitors can connect with their surroundings, witness the rhythmic ebb and flow of the tides, and enjoy the unspoiled natural environment. These qualities have made Varmi attractive not only to tourists, but also to environmental researchers and ge-

ology students seeking to study coastal and tidal processes, according to IRNA.

Varmi Island, Hormozgan Province, is situated in the Khoran Strait, between Qeshm Island to the east and the port city of Bandar Khamir to the west. The island is low in elevation and is largely covered with soft, flat sand. Unlike many islands in the Persian Gulf, whose seabeds are muddy and uneven, Varmi's sands are smooth and compact, making walking easier and allowing clearer observation of surface changes.

The island's local name, "Varmi," meaning whale, reflects its appearance during low tide, when the shape of the island resembles the body of a whale. Throughout the year, due to its geographical position and surrounding water currents, the island hosts a variety of marine species and coastal birds, contributing to its ecological importance.

Varmi Island possesses a natural environment and notable

biodiversity that significantly enrich visitors' experiences.

**Sandy bed and shores:** The island's soft, golden sands provide a suitable setting for walking and environmental observation. These sands also serve as an ideal surface for observing the footprints of coastal birds and some small aquatic creatures, allowing visitors to examine natural changes in the island's terrain.

**Tidal phenomenon:** The island's emergence during low tide and its submergence during high tide offer a valuable opportunity to observe and study this natural process. These environmental changes are not only visually striking for tourists, but are also of scientific importance to environmental researchers and geologists.

**Biodiversity:** The waters surrounding the island are home to migratory birds, dolphins, and other marine species. Coastal bird species periodically migrate from inland regions of the country and other areas,

making the island a suitable site for observing their natural behaviors and seasonal movement patterns.

**Natural scenery:** The reflection of sunlight on the calm waters and the island's sandy surface creates a clear and vivid portrayal of the natural environment. These landscapes provide valuable opportunities for studying marine life, photography, and recording observations of animal behavior.

Varmi Island has no accommodation facilities, and visits are typically conducted as half-day trips. The nearest lodging options are located in Bandar Khamir and on Qeshm Island. Essential items for visiting include drinking water, light snacks, suitable footwear for walking on sand, a hat and sunglasses, sunscreen, and a trash bag. Observing safety measures — such as using authorized boats and wearing life jackets — is mandatory.

Recommended activities include walking along the sandy

surface, photographing landscapes and wildlife, observing birds and other species, recording environmental observations, and examining changes caused by tidal movement. Visitors may also take notes on the surrounding environment and animal behavior or share their observations with local researchers to help contribute to scientific knowledge about the island.

Despite its appeal, Varmi Island requires careful protection. Unregulated tourist presence can lead to the degradation of the sandy bed and cause harm to wildlife. Changes in sea level and other environmental factors also have a direct impact on tidal patterns, as well as plant and animal life.

Protective measures include limiting the number of visitors, installing educational signage, collecting waste, and raising awareness about appropriate behavior on the island. Adhering to these principles helps preserve Varmi Island for future

generations while also improving the quality of the visitor experience.

## A pristine example of nature

With its smooth sands and surrounding waters, Varmi Island stands as a clear example of an untouched natural environment in southern Iran — one that lives in constant harmony with the tides. Visiting the island offers an opportunity to observe natural phenomena, study animal behavior, and learn about environmental change. The island can serve as an educational, natural, and scientific destination, highlighting the importance of environmental conservation and sustainable resource management.

With its unique characteristics, Varmi is not only a tourist destination but also a practical example of human interaction with nature, offering a comprehensive and scientifically valuable experience of the natural environment of southern Iran.

# Bozorgmehr Qaeni's tomb preserves centuries of culture

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Qaen, a historic city in South Khorasan Province, boasts a rich legacy, reflected in its many architectural and cultural landmarks. From elaborately decorated water reservoirs and mosques to museums and historic buildings, the city stands as a living testimony to the region's enduring heritage.

Southwest of Qaen, on the slopes of the Qohestan Mountains, rests a serene tomb that, with its pristine vistas and surrounding heights, stands out as a key cultural and tourist attraction of the province.

This tomb belongs to Bozorgmehr Qaeni, a poet, mystic, and statesman of the 4th and 5th centuries AH. It is not only a site of religious and historical significance, but also one of the most important cultural and recreational destinations in the region. Situated atop a mountain ridge that shares its name, the tomb offers sweeping views of the city and its surroundings, ISNA reported.

Historical evidence indicates that the tomb was built during the 6th and 7th centuries AH. It represents a unique example of Chahartaqi (four-arched) architecture, featuring multiple domes



and intricate plaster decorations that reflect the skill and artistic taste of South Khorasan's ancient architects.

The tomb's structure is designed in the Chahartaqi style, crowned with domes over the verandas. Its interior is adorned with delicate plasterwork, including vaulted entranceways, niches, and muqarnas beneath the domes.

Construction materials include stone, brick, and mud bricks sourced locally from Qaen, preserving the authenticity of the region's traditional architecture. Surrounding the tomb are small

and large chambers with individual domes, designed for rest and religious or cultural activities.

A notable feature of the tomb is the cisterns at the mountain base, installed to supply water to the building and said to be fed by nearby rock springs. Additionally, a nearby site known as Sofreh-ye Safa offers panoramic views of surrounding farmlands, the city of Qaen, and the natural landscapes beyond.

With ancient trees and scenic surroundings, Bozorgmehr Qaeni's tomb provides an ideal setting for both cultural and

eco-tourism. From every angle, the harmony between the tomb's architecture and its natural environment is evident, showcasing the mastery of ancient builders. The surrounding mountains, natural parks, and fertile lands offer tourists the opportunity to experience both the region's historic sites and its unspoiled natural beauty. This combination of architectural artistry and natural splendor greatly enhances the site's value for visitors and researchers alike.

The tomb's registration on the National Heritage List and the

support of the Provincail Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Organization have laid the groundwork for its preservation and revitalization. These efforts can significantly contribute to the development of cultural and eco-tourism in South Khorasan Province.

Beyond this monument, Qaen itself holds a distinguished place in Iran's historical geography. As one of the oldest settlements in the region, the city has played a significant role in political, cultural, and intellectual developments from pre-Islamic times through

the Islamic era.

Qaen was once an important center along regional trade and communication routes and later became known for its scholars, poets, and administrators. Its long-standing traditions, combined with its agricultural heritage — particularly saffron cultivation — have shaped the city's identity over centuries. Together, Qaen's historical depth and monuments such as the tomb of Bozorgmehr Qaeni present a vivid portrait of a city where culture, history, and landscape remain closely intertwined.

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