

Iranica Desk

For many travelers, visiting Khuzestan Province during the hot months is synonymous with extreme heat. But in Andimeshk, the Dez River and its surrounding cliffs have given rise to a destination that offers a distinctly different vision of summer tourism in the province.

Known locally as Cham Sabz, or Cham Sooz in the local dialect, the natural area lies downstream from the Dez Dam and offers visitors a combination of boating, nature tourism, water-based activities and the chance to float in the cool waters of the river, according to chtn.ir.

Iman Molaeinejad, a tourism expert, described the area's potential, saying Cham Sabz could be considered one of Khuzestan's distinctive nature-tourism destinations. The location of the Dez River between high, rocky walls creates a landscape quite different from the image of Khuzestan's natural environment that people commonly have in mind.

He added that the area is located downstream from the Dez Dam in Andimeshk, one of Iran's major hydroelectric structures. After leaving the dam, the river flows through sections that become narrow, winding and rocky, creating suitable conditions for a range of tourism experiences.

Referring to the area's geological features, Molaeinejad said the rocky walls and conglomerate

Cham Sabz offers different face of summer tourism in Khuzestan



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erate formations on both sides of the river form an important part of Cham Sabz's natural landscape. Cave-like and man-made spaces can also be found among the rocks.

According to him, these spaces were used in the past and are still sometimes used during the hot months for resting and occasionally staying overnight. In addition to their natural value, they reflect some of the area's local characteristics and traditions. Molaeinejad said one of the main routes into Cham Sabz is through the boating dock at the Qaleh Mokhtar Tourism Complex. After reaching the complex, visitors continue their journey by boat and enter the

rocky and aquatic sections of Cham Sabz.

The Qaleh Mokhtar Complex also provides a range of facilities, including parking, round-the-clock security, suites and accommodation, platforms for camping and setting up tents, a shop, a waterfront platform and sanitary facilities. The complex can accommodate individual visitors as well as groups, tours and travel agencies.

He said the experience becomes particularly appealing once the boat moves away from the coastal area and enters the narrower, rocky sections of the river. The combination of summer heat and the cool waters of the Dez creates a distinctive

experience that could change travelers' perceptions of visiting Khuzestan during the summer.

The tourism guide identified river trekking as one of Cham Sabz's more exciting activities. Participants wear life jackets and use safety equipment while traveling through part of the river, accompanied by local guides and people familiar with the route. An escort boat also accompanies the group to enhance safety.

Floating in the cool, clear waters of the Dez, with high rocky walls rising on both sides, is particularly exciting during the hot months, he said. After completing the activity, visitors return to the Qaleh Mokhtar

coastal area, where they can stop to rest, eat and enjoy the natural surroundings.

Molaeinejad also pointed to the variety of recreational activities available in the area, saying Cham Sabz's tourism potential is not limited to river trekking and boating. Activities such as jet skiing, paddleboarding, ziplining and water slides are also available or being developed at the complex and in the surrounding tourism area.

He said some of the area's potential is linked to programs designed and operated by local tourism guides. The introduction of new experiences and activities could pave the way for tourism events and festivals

focused on water-based recreation at Cham Sabz.

Regarding the best time to visit, Molaeinejad said travelers whose primary goal is to enjoy water activities and float in the river can generally include the destination in their itineraries from late spring through early autumn.

However, he stressed that the area's tourism potential is not limited to summer. As temperatures fall during the second half of the year, the surrounding landscape changes. Under suitable weather conditions, the slopes and cliffs around Tang-e Van Mountain become greener, while nature excursions, camping and boating can also be arranged depending on local conditions.

"For this reason, Cham Sabz cannot be considered solely a summer destination," he said. "The area's natural conditions change throughout the seasons, and each season can offer visitors a different experience."

He also highlighted Andimeshk's historical and industrial attractions, saying visitors traveling to the area during Nowruz or other times of the year can include a visit to the Dez Dam in their itinerary.

The Dez Dam, considered one of Iran's earliest major dams, was added to Iran's National Heritage List in December 2019. As an example of Iran's industrial heritage, the dam can complement the area's natural attractions and form part of visitors' itineraries in Andimeshk.

Reading Room

Book on Esmail Yaghmaei's life, legacy unveiled

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A ceremony marking the unveiling of the book entitled "Guardian of Iran's National Identity (3): In Memory of Professor Esmail Yaghmaei" was held in tribute to the renowned archaeologist and cultural heritage researcher. The event brought together veteran scholars and prominent experts in cultural heritage, archaeology, and museology, who spoke about Yaghmaei's scientific, professional, and personal contributions, as well as his role in documenting and preserving aspects of Iran's archaeological heritage.

Mohammad Ebrahim Zarei, head of the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, said Yaghmaei was among those who loved Iran, its archaeological remains and cultural heritage with sincerity and dedication, and who worked to introduce and protect this heritage, according to IBNA.

He said Iran's cultural and historical heritage reflects different aspects of Iranian identity through architecture, art, pottery, tilework and miniature painting. Preserving this cultural character and identity, he added, requires cooperation and solidarity.

Zarei also stressed the need to avoid confrontation among cultural heritage professionals. "If there is competition, it should be competition to do better, not hostility or attempts to eliminate one another," he said, emphasizing that at a time when cultural heritage is under threat, everyone should work together to protect it.



He further stressed the importance of safeguarding cultural heritage, saying that today, more than ever, there is a need for unity and solidarity to protect the heritage passed down from previous generations.

Zarei also announced the publication of a collection containing 32 articles in honor of Esmail Yaghmaei and thanked the authors and those involved in preparing and publishing the volume.

Seyyed Mohammad Beheshti, a distinguished figure in Iran's cultural heritage field, highlighted Yaghmaei's personal and professional qualities and described him as an example of an "archaeologist in love with his profession."

Beheshti said that love, unlike many human choices, is not an act of will and that one cannot simply decide to fall in love. He noted that among

archaeologists, there are individuals whose passion for the field runs throughout their professional lives, and said Yaghmaei was one of them.

Referring to the place of love in Persian literature and the concept of the "lover" in Iranian culture, Beheshti said the value and standing of such individuals should be assessed through the "measure of love," because devotion to a field can become the source of years of effort, perseverance and service.

Seyyed Ahmad Mohit-Tabatabaei, head of the Iranian Museums Association, stressed the importance of documenting the lives and activities of prominent figures in cultural heritage.

He said the stories and experiences of influential figures in the field should be preserved for future generations and

presented in various forms, including books and museums. Referring to the role of museums in introducing cultural works and achievements, he emphasized the importance of paying attention to the people behind those works and activities. The history of cultural heritage, he said, is not merely a collection of buildings, objects and artifacts; it also encompasses the experiences, knowledge and lives of the people who contributed to the creation and preservation of that heritage.

Nasser Norouz-Zadeh Chegini, an archaeologist and distinguished figure in Iran's cultural heritage field, also spoke about Yaghmaei's scientific and administrative career, describing him as a scholar, researcher and capable manager.

Reviewing part of Yaghmaei's professional career, he referred to his studies at the University of Tehran, his work as a specialist and his involvement in the country's archaeological and cultural heritage institutions. Yaghmaei, he said, played an effective role at different stages in fieldwork, professional and technical activities, management and research.

Norouz-Zadeh also identified one of Yaghmaei's most important legacies as the documentation and compilation of a vast body of information and experience relating to archaeology and cultural heritage. He referred to Yaghmaei's efforts to collect and prepare material for numerous books.



Esmail Yaghmaei

According to him, Yaghmaei's written works are not simply books about history and archaeology. In many cases, they can also be regarded as valuable documents for understanding the formation and development of Iran's archaeological and cultural heritage institutions. Alongside information about archaeological sites and finds, these works record the names of individuals and places, events, and some of the oral and professional experiences of people active in the field.

The event concluded with the unveiling of Guardian of Iran's National Identity (3): In Memory of Professor Esmail Yaghmaei.

Esmail Yaghmaei was born in Tehran on September 18, 1941. He devoted nearly six decades of his life to research, archaeological excavation and the preservation of Iran's cultural heritage. Yaghmaei was admitted to a hospital in Tehran on July 6, 2026, following a stroke and died on the morning of July 19 at the age of 85. He was among the last sur-

viving members of a generation of Iranian archaeologists who entered the field of archaeological excavation during the 1960s and 1970s and, through years of work, brought to light valuable aspects of Iran's ancient history and civilization.

Passionate about Iranian civilization and culture, Yaghmaei spent his life studying, protecting and introducing Iran's historical heritage.

Yaghmaei completed his higher education at the Faculty of Archaeology and Art of the University of Tehran. In May 1967, he joined the Archaeology Department, after which he served as a supervisor on numerous archaeological excavations across Iran.

Over the course of his career, he took part in archaeological survey and excavation teams at sites including Haft Tappeh in Khuzestan, Chogha Gavanah in Islamabad-e Gharb, Susa and Shahr-e Sukhteh, Marvdasht and Kermanshah, northwestern Iran, Gorgan, the Qazvin Plain, Kerman and Kangavar.