

Five Days in Tehran

By: Brian H. Appleton July 2008

Tehran is a very large and beautifully picturesque city with many hidden worlds within worlds to discover, which runs downhill from the foothills of the Alborz Mountains in the north all the way down to the edges of the Dasht Kavir desert in the south. Never far from the skyline is the immense Mount Damavand whose snow capped peak can often be seen rising above the clouds like the Mount Fuji of Iran. Since the revolution, 30,000 trees have been planted in Tehran and it is one of the greenest cities you will ever see anywhere on the planet. The traffic is jammed like L.A. or NYC but there is a subway system which is clean and efficient and like NYC or Paris, the city never sleeps and one can always find a place to eat 24 hours a day, including ice cream and sweet shops and tea houses and water pipe cafes. To plan one's visit most effectively one should stick to one neighborhood of town per day since it can take 1 1/2 to 2 hours to get from the top of town to the bottom or across town in traffic.

Day 1

Your guide will get a permit to drive in the downtown bazaar area. The first stop is the National Archeological Museum or the Iran Bastan Museum as it is known. This museum has a great collection of Achaemenian bronzes, statues, capitals and friezes from Persepolis as well as Lurestan bronzes and pottery, Sassanian and Parthian. The naturalism of the animal depictions is amazing. There is even the mummified head of a Parthian Lord preserved in salt with a gold ear ring in his ear along with his felt boots. There are mosaics which once lined the floors of palaces installed by Roman war slaves. For lunch you will go to the Omar Khayyam Restaurant in



the bazaar neighborhood at Khayam Street, where the proprietor will proudly show you their mention in the Lonely Planet series on Iran and you will sit cross legged on a carpeted low platform and eat deezee, which you will mash with a mortar and pestle and you will drink dukh (carbonated yoghurt) to go with it. The restaurant itself is quite architecturally picturesque as it is converted from a former mosque. In the afternoon you will spend at least an hour and a half wandering the grand bazaar visiting carpet shops and seeing private collections of antique carpets with animal motifs from Nayeen and Qom. Then you will go to Ghavam Soltaneh in Jomhoori neighborhood just a little north of the bazaar area. Ghavam Soltaneh was the first Tehran residence of the famous late Prime Minister Ebrahim Ghavam of Shiraz, which houses the national glass and ceramic museum. There you will see many fine ceramics from Kashan 11th, 12th and 13th centuries among other things as well as glass vases beautifully displayed by contemporary cases and lighting designed by Italians. That night you will dine on Azerbaijani style food like Benobi Kebabs at Shiraz Benobi Kebab Restaurant on Shiraz Street around Shiraz Circle.

Day 2

Again you will descend into the downtown bazaar area and visit Golestan Palace complex, originally the palaces of the Zand Kings, a dynasty of Kurdish origin from Esfahan and in fact the tomb of Karim Khan-e-Zand is to be found there. The Qajar then took over the palaces and the loggia with the throne and tomb of Mozzafaredin Shah Qajar can be seen there. There is also a fine collection of oil paintings of various royalties of Europe and Russia and the first high



rise in front of which is a palace with two ventilation towers which sucked the wind down them to blow over an indoor pool of water which cooled the rest of the rooms. The grounds and reflecting pools of the Golestan complex are beautiful and you will see horse and carriages which belonged to the Qajar. You will have lunch in the Ferdowsi Grand Hotel Restaurant and smoke gheylion and drink tea in their tea room afterwards. Then you will proceed to the National Jewels Museum in the Jomhoori neighborhood at Istanbul intersection to see its collection of Qajar and Pahlavi Dynasty pieces such as the Darya-e-Noor diamond, the Peacock Throne and the Kiani Crown. That night you will dine at the "Entrecote Restaurant" for fine French cuisine. Mr. Salehzadeh, the manager, says that it is a branch of the famous Paris restaurant. It is located at No. 1 South Shiraz Street, Khordestan Expressway.

Day 3

You will go to the National Carpet Museum in Fatemi neighborhood and have breakfast in the chic café there and see the oldest perfectly preserved carpet in the world over 700 years old



which agents of Empress Farah bought at auction in London to return to Iran. You will see the finest carpets from every major carpet weaving center in Iran both past and present such as Tabriz, Mashad, Esfahan, Nayeen and Qom. Some are so large like the four in the main lobby that they cannot be fully unrolled although it is a very tall room. You will see many Amoghli family carpets. Amoghli is a famous carpet manufacturing family from Qom for over three hundred years.

tion—are being shown in theaters now as a group. This "film of films" is being screened across the United States, Mexico and Europe from February 6 through March 13. A list of cities, theaters and dates is posted at: http://www.shortsinternational.com/shorts_oscar/index.html. Since 1997, eight Iranians have been nominated for nine Oscars; Habib Zargarpour was nominated twice in the Special Effects category. Iranians have been nominated in eight of the 24 Oscar categories, showing the breadth of Iranian involvement in the film industry. All the nominees have been expatriate Iranians, except for Majid Majidi, whose film, "Children of Heaven," won Iran's sole Best Foreign Language Film nomination in 1999.

You will see styles no longer made such as Tehrani carpets. There are even carpets with portraits of famous statesmen of all nationalities woven into them as well as of Qajar royals. There is one with American Presidents featuring George Washington in the center. For lunch you will go to Lux Talaei in Semiran for Baghali Polo and Maeche, which is a boiled lamb shank under a pile of lima bean rice. In the afternoon you will proceed to the Reza Abbasi Museum in nearby Seyed Khandan (laughing descendant of the prophet) neighborhood, which has the finest collection of solid gold Achaemenian Rhytons as well as silver, bronze and ceramic ones, which you will find no where else in addition to 1 and 2nd century AD glassware and ceramics from Kashan, Kerman and other sites, Islamic armor and even glass water pipes. The museum is small with only three floors of exhibits however they are some of the finest collections of their kind in existence. For dinner you will go to Gilac Restaurant at Park O Prince Avenue where you will dine on Kebab Torsh in the style of Gilan on the Caspian and eat MirzaGhassemi mashed eggplant for an appetizer along with pickled garlic and also Grilled White Fish.

Day 4

You will go to the Niavaran Palaces and have breakfast at the café on the grounds. There you will see the palace which served as the administrative offices of the Shah on the ground floor and to entertain guests in the basement level. You will also visit the adjacent little palace once belonging to the last Qajar King Ahmed Shah, which was given to the Shahzadeh, the Shah's oldest son and is filled with his memorabilia and child-



hood books. For lunch you will go to SBU Restaurant in Evin and sit cross legged on carpeted platforms amidst the trees and running streams and dine on Shishlik Kebabs and fresh baked taftoon bread. In the afternoon you will go to the Sa'ad Abad Palaces in Semiran neighborhood, which were originally built by the Qajars and taken over by the Pahlavis until Empress Farah grew tired of her in laws and had Niavaran built instead. At Sa'ad Abad you will see a palace where Reza Shah The Great lived and you will see a unique style of stucco designs on top of mirrored glass walls. You will see many an-



tiques like a silver serving dish weighing several hundred pounds, a leather wall papered dining room with a table set with Limoge crystal glassware and also many memorabilia of Reza Shah including his Futan on the floor of his bedroom where he preferred to sleep. The grounds are incredibly verdant just as they were at Niavaran. That night you will dine at Darband, up in the

foothills at the top of the town at the Koohpaye Restaurant full of fountains and flora reminiscent of the hanging gardens of Babylon and there you will eat trout and or Bakhtiari Kebabs, which are chicken and steak on the same skewer with green bell pepper.

On Day 5

You will have continental breakfast in the lobby of the Esteglal Hotel in Elahiyeh neighborhood and then proceed to Darabad to the Museum of Natural History of Iran with a great collection both of live and stuffed fauna including birds and ibex on display along with fossils and minerals and a nice garden for strolling in. For lunch you will go to Chiminey Restaurant for its quiet elegant atmosphere up in a hillside forest overlooking Tehran for fine continental and Iranian dining including duck with wild mushrooms. Alternately you can go to the restaurant in Jamshidieh Park shaped like Turkmen Yerts in Niavaran neighborhood at the foot of Tochal Mountain and dine on giant meatballs, Kuft-e-Tabrizi or Kooko Sabzi, six inch high spinach soufflé. The park is full of beautiful wild tulips in the spring. In the afternoon you will go to the family owned private cemetery Zahir Ol Dowleh to see where many of the most famous contemporary Iranian national poets, writers, musicians and sufi philanthropists are buried such as Forough Farrokhzad, Iradj Mirza, Bahar, Rohani, Rahi Mo'ayeri, Darvish Khan and others. Then you will proceed to the teahouse and gardens of the late General Amirahmadi and his wife in Elahiyeh neighborhood and take tea and pastries while enjoying the scale models of some of the most famous architecture in Iran such as the Ali Gapu of Esfahan, Soltanieh Mosque, which was the tallest dome in the world in the 14th century, the mausoleum of Ibn Sina, the Golestan Palace and many others. For dinner you will go to "Touch Restaurant" on the corner of Kamranieh and Farmanieh Streets on the first floor of Kooh-e-noor Shopping Center where you will find charm and exquisite décor and comfort along with an attentive, polite and friendly staff and great world class nouvelle cuisine such as tomato and basil soup, rice paper wrapped vegetables, fish grilled in tamarind and ginger or marinated steak and for desert baby water melon cuts, cherries and apricots with chocolate sauce. That concludes your five days in Tehran tour. There are many other restaurants and cafes and museums such as the "Time Museum," which has a collection of clocks, the "Contemporary Art museum," the "Ancient Coin Museum" and there is even a museum about SAVAK as well as a small museum in Elahiyeh neighborhood with a collection of photos from the revolution. While you are there, you may want to go to "Classic Café" which is a very trendy and chic place to grab a cappuccino or a latte and to see and be seen among Tehran's younger jet set or if you happen to have a local friend with "parti bazi" (influence) you could get in to the Bashga-he-Engelob or "Revolution Club" which was the former Imperial Country Club then known as Bashga-he-Shahanshahi and play a round of golf. You might catch a show of folkloric dance at Rudaki Hall or depending on the time of year, a film festival such as the "Tehran International Short Film Festival" or the "Tehran International Animation Festival" and there is also contemporary theatre around town which you can learn about on www.TehranAvenue.com. It is important to understand that Tehran is a world class city with no lack of things to do for a tourist and in fact three weeks would better serve a visitor than one week in order to see it all. There are many beautiful parks with water features and some of the most beautiful public sculpture worldwide and many side trips worth considering like one to the national cemetery Behesht e Zahra to see Imam Khomeini's mausoleum and the acres of graves of the young martyrs of the Iran Iraq war, which is on the way to or from the luxurious and convenient new Imam Khomeini International Airport.

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Always bridesmaid...

cess—which involved three days of tests and an interview—the school accepted him. Three months later, he and his wife moved to Paris. Mokhberi, whose parents are both Iranian, was born in the United States. But when his father completed his studies just a few months after Mokhberi was born, they moved back to Iran. Several months later Iran was transformed by the 1979 revolution, and six years later, the family moved to Stockholm, Sweden. Then, in 1993, when Mokhberi was a sophomore in high school, Mokhberi's family settled in southern California. All 10 short films nominated for Oscars—five in the animated category and five live-ac-

برای درج آگهی در

ماهنامه پژواک

با ما تماس بگیرید و از مزایای استثنایی بهره ببرید.

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"First thing to do is let everyone know you are in the game. It's like when you get into a kid's swimming pool. You have to make a splash. The bigger the splash, the more people will want to know about what you are doing and the more successful you will be." Max Markson