



WORLD DISCOVERY
— HISTORY CULTURE WILDLIFE —

Classic Persia



The glorious skyline of Yazd.

DAY 1 - Depart UK.

DAY 2 - Arrival in Tehran.

On arrival in Tehran you will be met by a representative of World Discovery outside immigration and customs. You will then be taken by private car direct to your hotel. Your rooms are guaranteed to be available for immediate occupancy. The rest of the morning has been left free for you to catch up on your sleep. In the afternoon there is a visit to Iran's **National Museum**, which contains an authenticated collection of pre-historic, ancient and Islamic artifacts, with pottery dating back to the 7th millennium B.C.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.

DAY 3 - Tehran.

Further sightseeing in Tehran will include a visit to see the priceless **Crown Jewels of the Shahs of Persia**, and the **Carpet Museum**, with its wonderful collection of old carpets and rugs (particularly impressive are the 16th and 17th century Safavid rugs). You will also visit the delightful **Reza Abbasi Calligraphy and Miniatures Museum**, which contains some masterpieces of classical Persian book painting from the 14th century.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.

DAY 4 - Fly to Shiraz.

In the morning transfer to the airport for the flight to Shiraz, where you will be met and taken direct to your hotel. Sightseeing in Shiraz today will include some of the famous gardens of this city of "roses and nightingales", including the **Eram Garden** with its tomb of Iran's greatest lyric poet, Hafez, the pink-tiled 19th century **Nasir-ol-Molk Mosque**, and the main bazaar.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.

DAY 5 - Persepolis, Naqsh-e-Rostam.

Today you will enjoy a comprehensive excursion to **Persepolis**, one of the most important sites of the Ancient World, the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid kings with remains of the palaces of Darius the Great, Xerxes and Artaxerxes, and its famous bas-reliefs, depicting kings and courtiers and gift-bearing representatives of tributary nations of the Persian Empire; also visit **Naqsh-e-Rostam** to see the fire temple, and the Royal Tombs; plus seven magnificent Sassanian rock-reliefs (including Shapur the First's famous victory over the Roman Emperor Valerian); and Naqsh-e-Rajab, a nearby grotto with more Sassanid reliefs. Return to Shiraz in the late afternoon.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.

DAY 6 - By road from Shiraz to Yazd.

Drive to **Yazd**. En route visit **Pasargadae**, site of the simple but imposing tomb of Cyrus the Great, founder of the Persian Empire, located in the beautiful plain of Dasht-e-Morghab. Continue to Abarkuh, a charming desert town, for a tea-break under the shade of a 4,000-year-old cypress tree, before the final stretch to Yazd.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.

DAY 7 - Yazd.

Full day sightseeing in Yazd, the centre for Iran's small Zoroastrian community who, seeking refuge from the invading Arabs, found a safe haven within its fortified walls. On this day you will visit one of the two abandoned **Zoroastrian Towers of Silence**, dating back to the 18th century, where until some 40-50 years ago the dead were carried and left to decompose and be devoured by birds; and the active **Zoroastrian Fire Temple**, the fire of which has been burning for about 1,500 years. Among Yazd's Islamic sites is the **Friday Mosque** (1324 A.D.), with the highest portal and minarets in Iran. Other notable Islamic monuments in Yazd are the Seljuk shrine dedicated to the Twelve Shi'ite Imams; and Ziaieyeh Theological School, known as Zendan-e-Eskander or Alexander's Prison. There are, also, many beautiful old houses in Yazd, among them the Dowlat-Abad Garden, with an 18th century feudal hexagonal house.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.

DAY 8 - By road from Yazd to Isfahan.

Drive to Isfahan, stopping en route at the village of **Mohamadiye** to see traditional workshops weaving the camel cloaks worn by the Moslem clergy in Iran. Continue to **Na'in**, another charming desert town half way between Yazd and Isfahan, to visit the 10th century Friday Mosque and the 17th century Pirnia House Ethnographic Museum, with a walk through the old part of town. Arrive in Isfahan in the late afternoon.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.

DAY 9 - Isfahan.

Morning sightseeing in the beautiful city of Isfahan, the 17th century capital of the Safavids, visiting the famous bridges of **Shahrestan** and **Sio-se-pol**, and the Armenian Quarter whose many churches include the important **Cathedral of Vank**. In the afternoon explore one of the world's grandest squares, the **Maidan-e-Naghsh-e-Jahan**, including the **Ali-Qapu Palace** with its enchanting music rooms and balcony overlooking the Maidan, from where the Safavid Kings watched polo games. Also visit two of Islamic world's greatest mosques – the **Sheikh Lotfollah** and the **Shah**, finishing with a visit to the Qeisarieh Bazaar with hundreds of shops displaying the arts and handicrafts for which Isfahan is world-famous.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.

DAY 10 - Fly to Tehran.

Further sightseeing in Isfahan includes the magnificent **Friday Mosque**, the **Harun-e-Velayat Shrine** and the **Ali Minaret**; also visit **Chehel-Sotun (Forty Columns) Palace** and **Hasht-Behesht (Eight Paradise) Palace**, both set in beautiful gardens. In the evening fly back to Tehran.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.

DAY 11 - Tehran/London.

Transfer to the airport for departure flight to London.

Meals included: Full breakfast.