



WORLD DISCOVERY
— HISTORY CULTURE WILDLIFE —

Persian Highlights



The Maidan-e-Naghsh-e-Jahan (the main square), Isfahan.

DAY 1 - Depart UK.

DAY 2 - Arrival in Tehran. National Museum.

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 sightseeing. Fly to Shiraz.

Further sightseeing in Tehran will include a visit to see the priceless **Crown Jewels of the Shahs of Persia**. Amongst the many eye-catching exhibits one of the most ornate is the Crown of Empress Farah Diba Pahlavi, wife of Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, the last Shah of Iran. This crown was made by the prestigious jewellers Van Clef and Arpels. Also to be seen is the largest pink diamond in the world - the *Darya-i-Nur* (Sea of Light), sister to the world-famous *Koh-i-Nur*. In the evening transfer to the airport for the flight to Shiraz, where you will be met and taken direct to your hotel.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.

DAY 4 - 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. In the afternoon drive a further 70 km to **Pasargadae**, pre-dating Persepolis, 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. Return to Shiraz in the late afternoon.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.

DAY 5 - Sightseeing in Shiraz. Fly to Isfahan.

Full day tour of Shiraz visiting some of the famous gardens of this city of "roses and nightingales", including the beautiful **Eram Garden** with its tomb of Iran's greatest lyric poet, Hafez. Created in the early 19th century by the chief of the Qashqai clan, it is now home to Tehran University's Law Faculty. Continue to the pink-tiled 19th century **Nasir-ol-Molk Mosque**, and the main bazaar. In the evening fly to Isfahan and transfer to your hotel.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.

DAY 6 - 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 the 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 7 - Isfahan.

'Isfahan is half the world' runs the proverb, and it's true that the city has an extraordinary number of beautiful historic buildings. Further sightseeing in Isfahan today includes the magnificent **Friday Mosque**, an architectural treasure from the 11th century, the **Harun-e-Velayat Shrine** (1513) and the 48-metre high **Ali Minaret**. Also visited today are the **Chehel-Sotun (Forty Columns) Palace**, which takes its name from the reflections of its 20 columns in the pond in front of the main terrace, and the **Hasht-Behesht (Eight Paradises)** pavilion, set in beautiful gardens.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.

DAY 8 - Fly to Tehran.

In the morning fly back to Tehran, where further visits will be made to museums, including the Carpet Museum, with its wonderful collection of old carpets and rugs, and the Reza Abbasi Calligraphy and Miniatures Museum.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.

DAY 9 - Tehran/London.

Transfer to the airport for departure flight to London.

Meals included: Full breakfast.