

SAS CITY PORTRAITS

# Teheran

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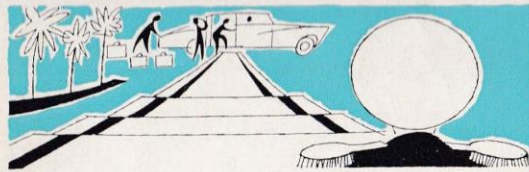
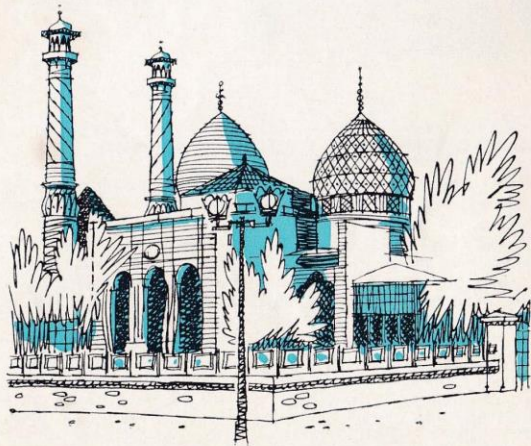


# TEHERAN

Teheran is the capital of Iran, or Persia, a country which has been civilized since 4000 B.C. The city spreads over an area of 210 square miles and has a population of approximately 1,840,000. For the capital of so old a country, Teheran is a comparatively young city. Until around 1220 A.D. it was small and insignificant; at that time the important town of Rey, five miles south of the present capital, was destroyed and Teheran consequently grew in importance. In 1787, Shah Agha Mohammed-Khan Qajar made Teheran the capital of Persia and from then on its development was rapid. Today, it is a cross-road of traffic between Europe and Asia. The rich oil fields on the Persian Gulf are its economic backbone and are the main reason for the country's intimate relations with Europe and the U. S. It is a two-way relationship, Iran being the supplier of oil to countries which in turn have sent their best engineers and technicians to Iran.

One by-product of this interchange is a wide knowledge of English and French among many Teheran's inhabitants. This is true not only of Iranians who have studied abroad, but also of shopkeepers and hotel personnel.

Teheran has many interesting sights and it is an excellent base for tours to the historical spots whose names are familiar from the legends of Ancient Persia. Before you visit Teheran brush up your knowledge of Persia's great past — you will enjoy your stay all the more!



## Hotels

A number of good hotels are available in Teheran at prices roughly comparable to other Western capitals. Besides the hotels there are many excellent boarding houses offering less expensive accommodation. Reserve hotel rooms well in advance, either directly or through your own local travel agency or SAS Office. If you arrive in Teheran without a room reservation, the SAS Office will be pleased to assist you. See the SAS ground hostess at the airport.

The hotel list is far from complete, but outlines some good houses. Ranking at the top are two de luxe hotels, the Darband and the Park. Hotel Darband is situated 14 kms. (9 miles) north of Teheran at an altitude of 1700 meters (5525 ft.). It is particularly nice in summer when you will enjoy its tennis courts and swimming pool. During the winter you might prefer the Park Hotel, Avenue Hafez, right downtown. These hotels charge about Rials 650—1200 for a single room with private bath, and Rials 1200—1600 for a double room with bath, with additional charges at the Park of Rials 50 for breakfast, Rials 100 for air-conditioning and, in winter, Rials 50 for heating.

Among first class hotels are the Caravan, Avenue Kouchk, Mohana Square, and the Jam, Avenue Takhte Jamshid, both newly opened. Expect to pay Rials 500—600 for a single room and Rials 1000 for a double room. The Tourist Iran, Avenue Pahlavi, is also very good. Here you may have a single room from Rials 450 and a double room would cost from Rials 600—800. Another good first class hotel is the Plaza where the prices range from 650—1200 Rials.

If you are going to stay in Teheran a week or so, perhaps you would prefer a good pension. Rates include room and breakfast. Among the best pensions are the Villa Delfi, Avenue Paris, the Pension Paprika (same address) and the German Hotel-Pension, Koutcheh Arbab Jamshid. Pension prices vary from 300—800 Rials per day. Note: The voltage in Teheran is 220 volts, 50 cycles.

## Restaurants and Food

The Iranian national dish is rice. It is served in many varieties in all the restaurants, but for a meal in genuine Iranian surroundings try the restaurant Fard serving Iranian specialties at lunch on Fridays or to Shamshir near the Bazaar (Sabse Maidan). The most popular Iranian dish is *Chelow Kabab* — grilled meat and rice.

Apart from the strong *Arak* (vodka) no drinks are typical of Iran. Restaurants will generally offer you any kind of international drinks, but imported liquor is expensive because of high custom duties. Among the local table wines we recommend the red Chahin No. 6, and the white Riessling No. 5. They are always good.

Most hotels serve international food in their dining rooms but beside these Teheran has other excellent restaurants among which the Coq d'Or at Avenue Shiraz, Leon's Grill Room at Avenue Shahreza, and La Residence, Avenue Villa, are good. Restaurants serve lunch from 12 Noon to 3 PM and dinner from 8 to 12 PM. Prices run from Rials 80—300.



## Entertainment and Night Life

The Darband, Park and Palace hotels have dancing and floor shows. The Colbeh in the Darband resembles international night clubs anywhere. Dancing and floor shows are also offered in the restaurants Cheherezad and Everest.

Other night clubs include the new Miami (with floor show) on the Pahlavi Road and the Beluguette (music dancing, good food).





Beluguette is located on Avenue Zahedi in winter and has summer quarters on Avenue Shimran.

A new attraction is the native Iranian night club and restaurant Shoukoufeh. The floor show includes Arabian belly-dancers, acrobats and magicians. The atmosphere here is really different.

During the summer most restaurants serve evening meals outdoors.

The theaters give performances in Iranian only, except when amateur groups produce plays in English or French.

Concerts are given occasionally. Teheran's cinemas include first class picture houses with cinemascope showing American, British, French, Italian, German, and, of course, Persian films. The silent film method of showing texts (in Persian) in between the scenes is still used here.



## Sights

*Tourist-Iran*, Avenue Ferdowcy, just opposite the SAS Office, arranges all kinds of sightseeing tours and trips. Usually these utilize taxis within Teheran and its environs, including Rey, although longer round trips are organized by plane or train.

Prices depend on the number of participants taking the tour.

Below are some of the principal sights of Teheran. The numbers refer to the map.

- (1) *The Sepahsalar Mosque*. This magnificent mosque was completed in 1831, and is the scene of official mourning and funeral ceremonies. One section of the mosque is used for religious teaching and another section houses an outstanding Moslem library.
- (2) *The Masjedeh Shah* is another very beautiful mosque. With its golden dome and minarets and lovely mosaic tile work it is a fine example of Iranian architecture.
- (3) *The Bazaar*. This is a very popular place with Teheran's visitors. Perhaps the most attractive part of the Bazaar is the

'carpet dealers' hall where piles of carpets of various kinds are spread about to tempt customers. The coppersmiths', silver and goldsmiths' halls are also interesting. Do not buy during your first visit there, unless you are accompanied by a local resident who can advise you. Bargaining with orientals is great fun, but you must know to do it, or you may be disappointed.

- (4) *Golestan Palace*, a handsome building about 100 years old standing in a lovely garden. See the imperial library, the fabulous peacock throne and royal regalia. Special permit is needed.
- (5) *The Ethnological Museum*. Interesting folklore collections with marvellous costumes and other items illustrating Persian life through the years.
- (6) *Iran Bastan Museum*. This Archaeological museum contains relics of Persia's glorious past, some of them dating back to 4000 B.C. Each exhibit is carefully described.
- (7) *The Melli Bank*. Visit the rich treasury which houses the Crown Jewels. Note: Special permit is needed.
- (8) *The Fine Arts Museum*, housing an interesting collection of Iranian handicrafts and Art School.
- (9) *The National Stadium, Amjadieh*. Important sporting events take place here.

## Excursions

Be sure to visit *Rey*, about 8 kms. (5 miles) south of Teheran. Here the tomb of Reza Shah the Great is the chief attraction. Other interesting places in Iran include:

*Shiraz*. This town (170,000 inhabitants) has an interesting bazaar where silversmiths create work very different from the ordinary type. Shiraz is located in beautiful surroundings characterized by terraces and colonnades. Fine mosques with lovely domes and minarets compare with the finest of Teheran.

*Persepolis* — about 60 kms. (37 miles) from Shiraz. Magnificent ruins of ancient palaces are dominated by a



huge terrace with tall columns. Beside Persepolis there are also other interesting remnants of the antiquity in this part of the country.

*Isfahan*, the former capital, 420 kms. (260 miles) south of Teheran. This lovely city attracts many visitors because of its wonderful gardens and palaces and the outstanding mosques, including the Shaikh Lotfollah, which has perhaps the most beautiful tile work in Iran. The huge Ali Ghapou takes the form of a great archway surmounted by an immense open throne room or veranda, a true replica of the ancient palaces of Persepolis. The walls of the building are decorated with gold and have fine miniatures of different colors.

*The Caspian Sea Shore* enjoys a wonderful climate and beautiful landscape. The mountainsides are covered with flowers and evergreen forests which play a part in making this area a popular holiday resort. First class hotels are available here.



## Shopping

First on the list are, of course, Persian carpets. You will find carpets of many qualities and types in the Bazaar and in the large stores. Silver goods are fine souvenirs as are bronze and brass works. Ladies will be impressed by the linen and tablecloths with handmade design which are reasonably priced.

The main shopping district include the Avenues Ferdowcy, Naderi, Lalezar and Istanbul. For genuine Iranian art we can confidently recommend the Christmas Shop, Avenue Ferdowcy, and the Teheran Art Gallery, Avenue Naderi. It's better not to buy in the Bazaar unless you "know the ropes" or have a local resident with you.

Shops are open daily, except Friday, from 9 AM to 1 PM and from 4 PM to 8 PM.

Note: some shops are also closed on Saturdays.



## ports

During the summer season swimming is immensely popular. There is a public swimming pool at the National Stadium (No. 9 on the map), but the majority of visitors would prefer swimming pools at the Hotel Darband, or the Alborz swimming pool on Avenue Pahlavi. Ask the SAS Office about this. Tennis is played all the year round at the National Stadium and the Hotel Darband. Riding horses can be hired and there are pleasant bridle paths. If you wish to go hunting a special permit is required. In winter there are fine opportunities for skiing on the slopes of Abe-Ali, 50 kms. (31 miles) east of Teheran.



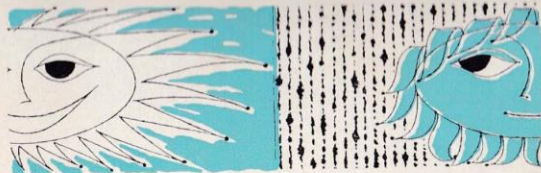
## Transportations

There are a number of regular bus lines. Teheran's taxis are very inexpensive; and the fare from one point to another within the city area is approximately Rials 10 for one or two persons and Rials 15 for three. There is no special night fare, and no charge is made for luggage. Taxis are not allowed to take the passenger further than 15 kms. (9 miles) beyond the city limit. The standard charge for this distance is Rials 50.

If you wish to go out of town use special taxis, painted half white. Local travel agencies, and *Tourist-Iran* can supply you with a good car and a reliable driver.

## Tipping

You tip as you would do in most European cities: 10—15% over and above the service charge which will be added to the bill. In hotels and restaurants, porters expect a tip of 20—30 Rials. No tips are expected by taxi drivers, in cinemas or theaters.



## Climate and Clothing

The climate of Iran is similar to that of the European continent. The winters are mild and sunny, with temperatures rarely falling below 41° F (5° C). Summer is hot and dry with day temperatures around 95° F (35° C) and a very low humidity.

In Teheran dress as you would in any American or European city. You need woolen clothes, including a warm overcoat, during the winter months, and light-weight clothes during the summer. Evening clothes cannot be rented, but they are seldom required.

## Public Holidays

Following the Persian calendar, shops and offices are closed on the holidays listed below:

March 21; New Year, April 2 (13th of "Farvardin"); October 26, Birthday of His Majesty Mohammad-Reza Shah Pahlavi; August 5, Constitution Day; August 28, National Revolution Day. In addition to these are other moveable holidays on which the shops and offices are also closed although you may find that some places remain open even on holidays.



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