Iran: The Ancient Land of Persia

May 5 -18, 2015

Benjamin R. Foster ‘75 PhD, Professor of Assyriology
Karen Polinger Foster ‘76 PhD, Lecturer of Aegean and Near Eastern Art
Dear Yale traveler

Resting between the steppes of Asia and the fertile crescent of the Mediterranean, Iran is a stepping stone between East and West. Discover this country whose vast empire once stretched from the Indus River in the east to Egypt in the west. It is a land dotted with carved reminders of the Parthians, the Sassanids, the Seljuks and the Mongols - their monuments serving as vivid testaments to the extraordinary cultural heritage of this vast country. With its ancient ruins, glittering mosques and spectacular landscapes, Iran is home to some of the world's cultural treasures, but ever since the 1979 revolution, these have largely remained unseen by international tourists.

Under the Presidency of Rouhani, the country is welcoming visitors. Yale Educational Travel is excited to offer its first journey to Iran. Our program includes time in Tehran before flying to Kerman to explore the city's historic core. Drive to Yazd where the high-walled mud architecture of the old city shelters inhabitants and makes the city feel almost deserted. From here drive to Shiraz and marvel at the site of Persepolis which was built by Darius the Great. Superb reliefs depict representatives of the subject nations bringing gifts to Darius. End the program in Isfahan - a town of unsurpassed beauty created by Shah Abbas in the 17th century.

Benjamin R. Foster ’75 PhD and Karen Polinger Foster ’76 PhD, with their combined knowledge of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, will provide a unique perspective on Iran. Join them and other Yale alumni on this wonderful itinerary for an unforgettable journey. We encourage you to make your reservation today. (Spaces allocated on a first-come-first-served basis).

This trip combines the security, ease and value of group travel with opportunities for independent exploration. You will enjoy the camaraderie of traveling with a group of like-minded people and, during your free time, feel the thrill of making your own discoveries!

Sincerely yours,

Kathy

Senior Director
International Alumni Relations and Travel
Association of Yale Alumni
ITINERARY

Welcome Phone Call

Tuesday, April 21 (tentative)
Join the group at 6PM EST for a pre-trip welcome call with the Professors in order to learn more about what to expect and get the chance to ask any questions you have.

TEHRAN (D)

Wednesday, May 6
Arrive in Istanbul in the morning and connect with a flight to Tehran. Arrive in Tehran in the late afternoon and transfer to the Laleh Hotel, formerly the Intercontinental Hotel.

TEHRAN (B/L/D)

Thursday, May 7
Morning visit to the Archaeological Museum with its fine collection including a stone capital of a winged lion from Susa and a 6th-century B.C. audience hall relief of Darius the Great from the Treasury at Persepolis.

After lunch and a briefing with a local journalist, view the Iranian crown jewels. This spectacular collection of jewels, stored in the basement vault of the Bank Milli Iran, includes the world’s largest uncut diamond as well as the Peacock Throne.

End the day at the lavish Golestan Palace - a masterpiece of the Qajar era.

TEHRAN (B/L/D)

Friday, May 8
Travel to northern Tehran to visit the modest home of the Ayatollah Khomeini in Jamaran. Continue on to the the Zahir ol Dowleh Cemetery, the resting spot for many of Iran’s writers and artists.

After lunch in a local restaurant visit the Niavaran Palace and Museum, the last home of Mohammad-Reza Shah and his family.

Return to the hotel stopping at the Aaran Gallery and meet with owner Nazila Noebashari for a lively discussion on contemporary art.

Enjoy lunch at the delightful Bagh–e Tariki Gardens, which were designed as traditional Persian gardens.

Drive to the beautiful town of Mahan well-known as the final home of the Sufi saint and poet, Shah Nematollah Vali. Shah Nematollah Vali, who died in 1431, was the founder of a Dervish order, centered in Mahan, which continues to be an active spiritual force in Iran today.

YAZD (B/L/D)

Monday, May 11
This morning explore historical Kerman which includes an attractive ensemble of three buildings inside the Kerman Bazaar and a lovely madrassa built around a garden courtyard.

After lunch drive to Yazd passing through many acres of pistachios.

Upon arrival in Yazd transfer to the Moshir Garden Hotel for dinner and overnight.

YAZD (B/L/D)

Tuesday, May 12
Visit the town’s principal mosque, the Friday Mosque, where the tiled portal is crowned by twin minarets, the tallest in the country.

After lunch spend the afternoon concentrating on the Zoroastrian religion which at one time was the state creed. There are about 400,000 Zoroastrians left in the world, of which about 60,000 live in and around Yazd.

Begin by driving just outside of Yazd to a small village called Taft. Walk through this medieval town along narrow streets to their main fire temple – a simple building where a flame is always lit.

From here return to Yazd and visit the Ateshkade. It is said that the sacred flame here has been burning since about 470 A.D. and was transferred from its original site to here in 1940.

The final stop for the day at sunset will be at two ‘towers of silence’ where, historically, Zoroastrians were laid to rest.

SHIRAZ (B/L/D)

Wednesday, May 13
Morning drive to Shiraz stopping en route at the archaeological site of Pasargad. The town was built by Cyrrus the Great who defeated Astyages the Mede in 550 BC and, built the first Achaemenian capital on the site of his victory. The white limestone tomb of Cyrrus stands apart from the scattered remains of gardens, palaces and temples.

Upon arrival in Shiraz transfer to the Homa Shiraz Hotel.

SHIRAZ (B/L/D)

Thursday, May 14
Morning excursion to Persepolis the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenian Empire and perhaps one of the most beautiful
and spectacular archaeological sites surviving today.

After lunch sitting in the shade of grape vines, visit Naghsh-E Rostam which contains the carved tombs of four Achaemenian tombs.

After a truly wonderful day return to Shiraz and visit the bazaar of Shiraz, considered by many to be the finest in Iran and, here, discover the heart of the city.

**ISFAHAN** (B/L/D)

**FRIDAY, MAY 15**

In the early morning, explore Shiraz beginning in a small garden at the tomb of the celebrated poet Hafez.

Drive 6 hours to Isfahan and transfer to the Abbasi Hotel, a converted caravanserai.

Isfahan is perhaps the most beautiful of all Iranian cities. After consolidating his control, Shah Abbas I initiated one of the world's grandest experiments in city planning. Mosques, palaces, bazaars and public parks were built under the monarch's personal supervision over the next thirty years. The result is glorious.

**ISFAHAN** (B/L/D)

**SATURDAY, MAY 16**

Spend the morning at the immense Maydan-e Shah, or Royal Square. The square is the central focus of this fascinating city and never failed to inspire and awe European merchants and ambassadors to the Safavid court.

The afternoon is spent exploring the Bazaar of Isfahan and learning more about traditional crafts in Iran. See carpets, meet a well-known painter of miniatures, wander through aisles of old copper and brass ware, gold jewelry, lacquered boxes and many other wonderful items!

**ISFAHAN** (B/L/D)

**SUNDAY, MAY 17**

This morning admire some of the five bridges crossing the Zayendehrud River at Isfahan.

After seeing the Bridge of 33 Arches, drive to the Armenian quarter of Isfahan. This dates from the time of Shah Abbas who set up this colony of Christians from the town of Jolfa and named it New Jolfa.

In the afternoon visit the Friday Mosque, which is like a museum with its tiled ivans, vaulted ceilings and lofty domes.

Farewell dinner at the hotel.

**RETURN** (B/L/D)

**MONDAY, MAY 18**

Very early this morning, transfer to the airport for the return flight to Istanbul.

Note: Itinerary subject to change. Some excursions in this program involve a significant amount of walking.

Included meals indicated each day as B/L/D = Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner.

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**PROGRAM COSTS AND INCLUDED FEATURES**

**Trip Price:** $6,590 (Per person, based on double occupancy)

**Single Supplement:** $1,260 (limited availability)

**Group size limited to 34 participants**

**PROGRAM COST INCLUDES:** Educational Program of lectures and discussions with a Yale lecturer. Accommodations in hotels as outlined in the itinerary based on double occupancy, all meals listed with unlimited drinks, bottled water kept on the bus, sightseeing and excursions as listed, transportation in a deluxe, air conditioned motor coach, the services of a Distant Horizons escort and an Iranian escort, local guides, and all gratuities.

**PROGRAM COST DOES NOT INCLUDE:** Airfare into Tehran and out of Isfahan, meals not specified in the itinerary; visa fees, personal items such as laundry, email, fax or telephone calls, room service, independent and private transfers and excess luggage charges. Any increases in the in-tour airfare (included as part of the program cost), security, or fuel surcharges imposed after the initial pricing of this program are not included. Airfare is subject to change without notice by the airlines.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

The infrastructure in Iran is quite good with modern roads and buses. Hotels are comfortable with private bathrooms and air-conditioning. Food is freshly prepared and we eat at delightful local restaurants. During the program participants should be dressed modestly and women will be required to have their head covered while in public areas. Please note that alcohol is illegal in Iran. More details will be provided upon registering for the trip.
Homa Shiraz Hotel
Situated next to Shiraz’s largest park, Azadi, this modern property offers high-quality services and comfortable rooms.

Benjamin R. Foster ’75 PhD is professor of Assyriology in the department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. He graduated from Princeton University, spent a year studying Arabic in Lebanon and, after serving in the armed forces, pursued graduate study at Yale. As his research is concentrated in ancient Mesopotamia, Professor Foster has broad-ranging intellectual interests and teaches in the Humanities Program at Yale. His lively lectures are very popular with undergraduates and alumni alike.

Karen Polinger Foster ’76 PhD is a specialist in the art and archaeology of the Aegean Bronze Age, with particular interests in the luxury products of Minoan Crete. She received an A.B. from Mount Holyoke College. At Yale, she teaches Aegean and Near Eastern art in the Departments of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations and History of Art. She has excavated in the Near East and Europe, written numerous scholarly books and articles, and lectured widely, including on several previous Yale trips.

Laleh Hotel
Located on Laleh Park with views of the nearby mountains, the hotel offers comfort and service in the center of Tehran.

Pars Hotel
This hotel, located just outside Kerman, offers comfortable facilities and rooms.

Moshir Garden Hotel
Built in the style of a traditional Iranian garden, the hotel offers small, tasteful rooms.

Homa Shiraz Hotel
Situated next to Shiraz’s largest park, Azadi, this modern property offers high-quality services and comfortable rooms.

Abbasi Hotel
Built in a former caravanserai complex, the Abbasi Hotel is one of Iran’s loveliest with airy gardens and comfortable rooms, the majority of which are located in a modern annex.

Yale Lecturers

Reader’s Corner

Want to learn more about Iran?

Here are some selections to get you started. All trip participants receive a list of suggested books recommended by the program faculty.

The Ayatollah Begs to Differ by Hooman Majd
Bi-cultural and bi-lingual (Majd translated for Ahmadinejad at the UN), Majd introduces Persian culture and modern Iran with wit and affection.

Things I’ve Been Silent About by Azar Nafisi
A masterful memoir by the best-selling author of Reading Lolita in Tehran offers an eloquent portrait of her family and childhood in Iran, centered around her powerful mother, her manipulative fictions about herself and her past, and her unusual marriage, as she reflects on women’s choices and her own struggle to free herself from her mother’s influence.
Enclosed is a deposit for $______________ ($1,000 deposit per person) to hold place(s) on the Yale “Iran: The Ancient Land of Persia” trip May 5-18, 2015.

1) Name as on passport ____________________________
   Date of Birth ____________________ Yale Affiliation __________
   Passport Country of Origin ____________________________

2) Name as on passport ____________________________
   Date of Birth ____________________ Yale Affiliation __________
   Passport Country of Origin ____________________________
   Relationship ________________________________

3) Name as on passport ____________________________
   Date of Birth ____________________ Yale Affiliation __________
   Passport Country of Origin ____________________________
   Relationship ________________________________

4) Name as on passport ____________________________
   Date of Birth ____________________ Yale Affiliation __________
   Passport Country of Origin ____________________________
   Relationship ________________________________

*How is the person related to the person making the deposit?

Address: ________________________________________________

City __________________ State ___ Zip ______________________

Primary Phone __________________________________________

Secondary Phone __________________________________________

E-mail ____________________________________________

Signature(s) ____________________________________________

Date: _________________

Visit www.yaleedtravel.org/iran15

to book online or return the above form with your deposit check payable to “Distant Horizons” to
Association of Yale Alumni, P.O. Box 209010, New Haven, C T 06520-9010. Phone: (203) 432-1952. Fax: (203) 432-0587.

Terms and Conditions

CANCELLATIONS AND REFUNDS: Distant Horizons and the Association of Yale Alumni reserve the right to cancel any tour prior to departure for any reason, including insufficient number of participants, and to decline to accept or retain any person as a participant at any time. Should this happen, refunds will be made without obligation, although we cannot be held responsible for any additional costs already incurred by participants. The tour price is based on a number of people traveling together. If bookings fall below the minimum required, passengers will be advised of additional costs for that departure date. If a participant cancels, the following refunds will be available upon written notice of cancellation to Yale Educational Travel:

Notice more than 90 days prior to departure: a refund less a $500 cancellation charge. Notice between 90 days and 30 days prior to departure: a refund less 35% of trip price. No refund shall be issued if cancellation is received less than 30 days prior to departure date. No refunds shall be issued after the tour has commenced. No refunds shall be issued for occasional missed meals, sightseeing tours or any unused services.

INSURANCE: We highly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance. An application for travel insurance will be mailed upon confirmation. Neither the Association of Yale Alumni nor Distant Horizons accept liability for any airline cancellation penalty incurred by the purchase of a non-refundable airline ticket or other expenses incurred by tour participants in preparing for the tour.

RESPONSIBILITY: Distant Horizons and the Association of Yale Alumni act only in the capacity of agents for the hotels, airlines, bus companies, railroads, ship lines or owners or contractors providing accommodations, transportation or other services. As a result, all coupons, receipts or tickets are issued subject to the terms and conditions specified by the supplier. By acceptance of tour membership, the participant agrees that neither Distant Horizons nor the Association of Yale Alumni nor any of their subsidiaries shall become liable or responsible for personal injury, damage to persons or property, loss, delay or irregularity caused by persons not controlled by it, such as (without limitation) airlines, bus and shipping companies, suppliers of accommodations or other services, or resulting from any acts of God, defects in vehicles, strikes, wars, whether declared or otherwise, civil disturbances, medical or customs regulations, acts of terrorism, epidemics or government restrictions. Distant Horizons and the Association of Yale Alumni cannot be held responsible for hotel changes or substitutions, unfavorable weather or closure of access routes due to bad weather conditions. Distant Horizons and the Association of Yale Alumni are not responsible for any additional expenses or liability sustained or incurred by the participant as a result of the above mentioned causes.

Tour participant acknowledges receipt of a copy of these terms and conditions and signifies acceptance of, and consents to, all of the terms and conditions set forth herein, on behalf of any participants they may act for and for themselves when registering for, or making payments on, this tour.

Please note that participants must be in good physical condition and be able to walk for long distances over uneven cobblestones and up and down stairs without problems. This is a rigorous, fast-paced program.

QUESTIONS: Please contact Yale Educational Travel at (203) 432-1952 or edtravel@yale.edu

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Explore Tehran, the country's capital, including a visit to the basement vault of the Bank Milli Iran to view the spectacular Crown Jewels.

Discover the preserved medieval city of Rayen, molded from the red clay of the surrounding desert.

Experience the country's center of Zoroastrianism in Yazd where the most traditional Persian architecture is found.

Visit the Fars Museum in Shiraz and take an excursion to the magnificent ruins of Persepolis — one of the most remarkable archaeological sites found in the Near East.

Take in the beauty of Isfahan where brilliant blue-tiled buildings and majestic bridges are often recognized as the perfection of Islamic architecture.

Enjoy excellent cuisine and art and the warmth of the people of Iran throughout the journey.