



Folds and Curves of the Kavir Iran

When astronauts pass over the deserts of central Iran, they are greeted by a striking pattern of parallel lines and sweeping curves. The lack of soil and vegetation in the Kavir desert (Dasht-e Kavir) allows the geological structure to appear quite clearly.

The patterns result from the gentle folding of numerous, thin layers of rock. Later, erosion by wind and water cut a flat surface across the dark- and light-colored folds, not only exposing hundreds of layers but also showing the shapes of the folds. The pattern has been likened to the layers of a sliced onion.

The dark water of a lake (image center) fills a depression in a more easily eroded, S-shaped layer of rock. A small river snakes across the bottom of this October 2014 photograph taken from the International Space Station.