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**Iran** ([Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en) or [Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en);[[1]](#cite_note-1) [Template:Lang-fa](/wiki/Template:Lang-fa) [Template:IPA-fa](/wiki/Template:IPA-fa)), also known as **Persia** ([Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en) or [Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en)),[[2]](#cite_note-2) officially the **Islamic Republic of Iran** ([Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) [Template:IPA-fa](/wiki/Template:IPA-fa)), is a [sovereign state](/wiki/Sovereign_state) in [Western Asia](/wiki/Western_Asia).[[3]](#cite_note-3)[[4]](#cite_note-4) It is bordered to the northwest by [Armenia](/wiki/Armenia), the *de facto* [Nagorno-Karabakh Republic](/wiki/Nagorno-Karabakh_Republic), and [Azerbaijan](/wiki/Azerbaijan); to the north by [Kazakhstan](/wiki/Kazakhstan) and [Russia](/wiki/Russia) across the [Caspian Sea](/wiki/Caspian_Sea); to the northeast by [Turkmenistan](/wiki/Turkmenistan); to the east by [Afghanistan](/wiki/Afghanistan) and [Pakistan](/wiki/Pakistan); to the south by the [Persian Gulf](/wiki/Persian_Gulf) and the [Gulf of Oman](/wiki/Gulf_of_Oman); and to the west by [Turkey](/wiki/Turkey) and [Iraq](/wiki/Iraq). Comprising a land area of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), it is the second-largest country in the [Middle East](/wiki/Middle_East) and the 18th-largest in the world. With 78.4 million inhabitants, Iran is the world's 17th-most-populous country.[[5]](#cite_note-5)[[6]](#cite_note-6) It is the only country with both a [Caspian Sea](/wiki/Caspian_Sea) and an [Indian Ocean](/wiki/Indian_Ocean) coastline. The country's central location in Eurasia and Western Asia, and its proximity to the [Strait of Hormuz](/wiki/Strait_of_Hormuz), make it of great [geostrategic](/wiki/Geostrategic) importance.[[7]](#cite_note-7) [Tehran](/wiki/Tehran) is the country's capital and largest city as well as its leading economic center.

Iran is heir to one of the world's oldest [civilizations](/wiki/Civilizations),[[8]](#cite_note-8)[[9]](#cite_note-9) beginning with the formation of the [Proto-Elamite](/wiki/Proto-Elamite) and [Elamite](/wiki/Elam) kingdoms in 3200–2800 BC. The area was first unified by the [Iranian](/wiki/Iranian_peoples) [Medes](/wiki/Medes) 625 BC, who became the dominant cultural and political power in the region.[[10]](#cite_note-10) Iran reached its highest during the [Achaemenid Empire](/wiki/Achaemenid_Empire) founded by [Cyrus the Great](/wiki/Cyrus_the_Great) in 550 BC, which at its greatest extent stretched from parts of [Eastern Europe](/wiki/Eastern_Europe) in the west, to the [Indus Valley](/wiki/Indus_Valley) in the east, making it the largest empire the world had yet seen.[[11]](#cite_note-11) The empire collapsed in 330 BC following the conquests of [Alexander the Great](/wiki/Alexander_the_Great), but reemerged shortly after as the [Parthian Empire](/wiki/Parthian_Empire). Under the [Sassanid Dynasty](/wiki/Sassanid_Dynasty), Iran again became one of the leading powers in the world for the next four centuries.[[12]](#cite_note-12)[[13]](#cite_note-13) Beginning in 633 AD, [Rashidun Arabs conquered Iran](/wiki/Rashidun_conquest_of_the_Sassanian_Empire) and largely displaced the indigenous faiths of [Manichaeism](/wiki/Manichaeism) and [Zoroastrianism](/wiki/Zoroastrianism) by [Sunni Islam](/wiki/Sunni_Islam). Iran became a major contributor to the [Islamic Golden Age](/wiki/Islamic_Golden_Age) that followed, producing many influential scientists, scholars, artists, and thinkers. The rise of the [Safavid Dynasty](/wiki/Safavid_Dynasty) in 1501 [led to the establishment](/wiki/Safavid_conversion_of_Iran_to_Shia_Islam) of [Twelver Shia](/wiki/Twelver_Shia) Islam as the official religion of Iran, marking one of the most important turning points in Iranian and [Muslim history](/wiki/Muslim_history).[[14]](#cite_note-14)[[15]](#cite_note-15) During the 18th century, Iran reached its greatest territorial extent since the Sassanid Empire, and under [Nader Shah](/wiki/Nader_Shah) briefly possessed what was arguably the most powerful empire at the time.[[16]](#cite_note-16) Through the late 18th and 19th centuries, a series of [conflicts with Russia](/wiki/Russo-Persian_Wars) led to significant territorial losses and the erosion of sovereignty.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[[17]](#cite_note-17) Popular unrest culminated in the [Persian Constitutional Revolution](/wiki/Persian_Constitutional_Revolution) of 1906, which established a [constitutional monarchy](/wiki/Constitutional_monarchy) and the country's first legislative body, the [Majles](/wiki/Majles). Following a [coup d'état instigated by the U.K. and the U.S.](/wiki/1953_Iranian_coup_d'état) in 1953, Iran gradually became closely aligned with [the United States and the rest of the West](/wiki/Iran-United_States_relations) but grew increasingly autocratic.[[18]](#cite_note-18) Growing dissent against foreign influence and political repression led to the [1979 Revolution](/wiki/1979_Revolution) and the establishment of an [Islamic republic](/wiki/Islamic_republic).[[6]](#cite_note-6) Iran is a major [regional](/wiki/Regional_power) and [middle power](/wiki/Middle_power),[[19]](#cite_note-19)[[20]](#cite_note-20) and its large reserves of [fossil fuels](/wiki/Fossil_fuels) — which include the largest [natural gas supply](/wiki/Natural_gas_reserves_in_Iran) in the world and the fourth-largest proven [oil reserves](/wiki/Oil_reserves)[[21]](#cite_note-21)[[22]](#cite_note-22) — exert considerable influence in [international energy security](/wiki/Energy_superpower#Iran) and the [world economy](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_(PPP)). Iran's rich cultural legacy is reflected in part by its 19 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, the fourth-largest number in Asia and 12th-largest in the world.[[23]](#cite_note-23) Iran is a founding member of the [UN](/wiki/United_Nations), [ECO](/wiki/Economic_Cooperation_Organization), [NAM](/wiki/Non-Aligned_Movement), [OIC](/wiki/Organisation_of_Islamic_Cooperation), and [OPEC](/wiki/OPEC). Its [political system](/wiki/Politics_of_Iran) is based on the [1979 Constitution](/wiki/Constitution_of_the_Islamic_Republic_of_Iran) which combines elements of a [parliamentary democracy](/wiki/Parliamentary_democracy) with a [theocracy](/wiki/Theocracy) governed by [Islamic jurists](/wiki/Guardianship_of_the_Islamic_Jurists) under the concept of a [*Supreme Leadership*](/wiki/Supreme_Leader_of_Iran). A [multicultural country](/wiki/Demography_of_Iran) comprising numerous ethnic and linguistic groups, most inhabitants are [Shia Muslims](/wiki/Shia_Muslims) and [Persian](/wiki/Persian_language) is the official language.[[24]](#cite_note-24)

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## Etymology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) The term [*Iran*](/wiki/Iran_(word)) derives directly from [Middle Persian](/wiki/Middle_Persian) *Ērān*, first attested in a 3rd-century inscription at [Rustam Relief](/wiki/Naqsh-e_Rustam), with the accompanying [Parthian](/wiki/Parthian_language) inscription using the term *Aryān*, in reference to [Iranians](/wiki/Iranian_people).[[25]](#cite_note-25) The [Middle Iranian](/wiki/Middle_Iranian_languages) *ērān* and *aryān* are oblique plural forms of [gentilic](/wiki/Demonym) *ēr-* (Middle Persian) and *ary-* (Parthian), both deriving from [Proto-Iranian](/wiki/Proto-Iranian_language) *\*arya-* (meaning "[Aryan](/wiki/Aryan)", i.e. "of the Iranians"),[[25]](#cite_note-25)[[26]](#cite_note-26) argued to descend from [Proto-Indo-European](/wiki/Proto-Indo-European_language) [*Template:PIE*](/wiki/Template:PIE), meaning "skillful assembler".[[27]](#cite_note-27) In [Iranian languages](/wiki/Iranian_languages), the gentilic is attested as a self-identifier included in ancient inscriptions and the literature of [Avesta](/wiki/Avesta),[[28]](#cite_note-28)[Template:Efn](/wiki/Template:Efn) and remains also in other Iranian ethnic names such as [*Alans*](/wiki/Ossetians) ([Ossetic](/wiki/Ossetic_language): Ир – *Ir*) and [*Iron*](/wiki/Iron_dialect) ([Ossetic](/wiki/Ossetic_language): Ирон – *Iron*).[[26]](#cite_note-26) Historically, Iran has been referred to as *Persia* by [the West](/wiki/Western_world), due mainly to the writings of [Greek](/wiki/Greeks) historians who called Iran *Persis* ([Template:Lang-gr](/wiki/Template:Lang-gr)),[[29]](#cite_note-29) meaning "land of the [Persians](/wiki/Persian_people)". As the most extensive interactions the [Ancient Greeks](/wiki/Ancient_Greeks) had with any outsider was with the Persians, the term persisted, even long after the Persian rule in [Greece](/wiki/Greece). However, [Persis](/wiki/Persis) ([Old Persian](/wiki/Old_Persian): *Pārśa*; [Modern Persian](/wiki/Modern_Persian): *Pārse*) was originally referred to a region settled by Persians in the west shore of [Lake Urmia](/wiki/Lake_Urmia), in the 9th century BC. The settlement was then shifted to the southern end of the [Zagros Mountains](/wiki/Zagros_Mountains), and is today defined as [Fars Province](/wiki/Fars_Province).

In 1935, [Reza Shah](/wiki/Reza_Shah) requested the international community to refer to the country by its native name, *Iran*. As the [New York Times](/wiki/New_York_Times) explained at the time, "At the suggestion of the Persian Legation in [Berlin](/wiki/Berlin), the Tehran government, on the Persian New Year, [Nowruz](/wiki/Nowruz), March 21, 1935, substituted *Iran* for *Persia* as the official name of the country." Opposition to the name change led to the reversal of the decision, and Professor [Ehsan Yarshater](/wiki/Ehsan_Yarshater), editor of [Encyclopædia Iranica](/wiki/Encyclopædia_Iranica), propagated a move to use *Persia* and *Iran* interchangeably.[[30]](#cite_note-30) Today, both *Persia* and *Iran* are used in cultural contexts; although, *Iran* is the name used officially in political contexts.[[31]](#cite_note-31) Historical and cultural usage of the word *Iran* is not restricted to the modern state proper.[[32]](#cite_note-32)[[33]](#cite_note-33)[[34]](#cite_note-34) *Irānzamīn* or *Irān e Bozorg* ([Greater Iran](/wiki/Greater_Iran))[[35]](#cite_note-35) correspond to territories of the Iranian cultural and linguistic zones. In addition to modern Iran, it includes portions of the [Caucasus](/wiki/Caucasus), [Mesopotamia](/wiki/Mesopotamia), [Anatolia](/wiki/Anatolia), and [Central Asia](/wiki/Central_Asia).[[36]](#cite_note-36)

## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

### Prehistory[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

[thumb|left|A](/wiki/File:Cave_painting_in_Doushe_cave,_Lorstan,_Iran,_8th_millennium_BC.JPG) [cave painting](/wiki/Cave_painting) in Doushe cave, [Lorestan](/wiki/Lorestan), Iran, 8th millennium BC [Template:Further](/wiki/Template:Further) The earliest archaeological artifacts in Iran, like those excavated at the [Kashafrud](/wiki/Kashafrud) and [Ganj Par](/wiki/Ganj_Par) sites, attest to a human presence in Iran since the [Lower Paleolithic](/wiki/Lower_Paleolithic) era, c. 800,000–200,000 BC.[[37]](#cite_note-37) Iran's [Neanderthal](/wiki/Neanderthal) artifacts from the [Middle Paleolithic](/wiki/Middle_Paleolithic) period, c. 200,000–40,000 BC, have been found mainly in the [Zagros](/wiki/Zagros) region, at sites such as [Warwasi](/wiki/Warwasi) and [Yafteh Cave](/wiki/Yafteh).<ref name=Museum>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>[[38]](#cite_note-38)[Template:Page needed](/wiki/Template:Page_needed) Around [10th](/wiki/10th_millennium_BC) to 8th millennium BC, early agricultural communities such as [Chogha Golan](/wiki/Chogha_Golan) and [Chogha Bonut](/wiki/Chogha_Bonut) began to flourish in Iran,[[39]](#cite_note-39)[[40]](#cite_note-40)[[41]](#cite_note-41)[[42]](#cite_note-42) as well as [Susa](/wiki/Susa) and [Chogha Mish](/wiki/Chogha_Mish) developing in and around the Zagros region.[[43]](#cite_note-43)[Template:Page needed](/wiki/Template:Page_needed)[[44]](#cite_note-44)[[45]](#cite_note-45) The emergence of Susa as a city, as determined by [radiocarbon dating](/wiki/Radiocarbon_dating), dates back to early 4,395 BC.[[46]](#cite_note-46) There are dozens of prehistoric sites across the Iranian plateau, pointing to the existence of ancient cultures and urban settlements in the 4th millennium BC.[[45]](#cite_note-45)[[47]](#cite_note-47)[[48]](#cite_note-48) During the [Bronze Age](/wiki/Bronze_Age), Iran was home to several civilizations including [Elam](/wiki/Elam), [Jiroft](/wiki/Jiroft_culture), and [Zayande River](/wiki/Zayandeh_River_Culture). Elam, the most prominent of these civilizations, developed in the southwest of Iran, alongside those in [Mesopotamia](/wiki/Mesopotamia). The emergence of writing in Elam was paralleled to [Sumer](/wiki/Sumerian_language#Writing_system), and the [Elamite cuneiform](/wiki/Elamite_cuneiform) was developed since the 3rd millennium BC.[[49]](#cite_note-49) The Elamite Kingdom continued its existence until the emergence of the [Median](/wiki/Medes) and [Achaemenid](/wiki/Achaemenid) empires. Between 3400 BC until about 2000 BC, northwestern Iran was part of the [Kura-Araxes culture](/wiki/Kura-Araxes_culture) that stretched into the neighbouring regions of the [Caucasus](/wiki/Caucasus) and [Anatolia](/wiki/Anatolia). Since the earliest 2nd millennium BC, [Assyrians](/wiki/Assyria) settled in swaths of western Iran, and incorporated the region into their territories.[Template:CN](/wiki/Template:CN)

### Classical antiquity[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also)

[thumb|A depiction of the united](/wiki/File:Medes_and_Persians_at_eastern_stairs_of_the_Apadana,_Persepolis.JPG) [Medes](/wiki/Medes) and [Persians](/wiki/Persian_people) in [Apadana](/wiki/Apadana), [Persepolis](/wiki/Persepolis) [thumb|right|Modern impression of an Achaemenid](/wiki/File:Cylinder_Seal,_Achaemenid,_modern_impression_05.jpg) [cylinder seal](/wiki/Cylinder_seal) from the 5th century BC, depicting a winged solar disc legitimizing the conquering Persian king who subdues two rampant Mesopotamian [lamassu](/wiki/Lamassu) figures

During the 2nd millennium BC, [Proto-Iranian](/wiki/Ancient_Iranian_peoples) tribes arrived in Iran from the [Eurasian steppes](/wiki/Eurasian_steppes),[[50]](#cite_note-50) rivaling the native settlers of the country.[[51]](#cite_note-51)[[52]](#cite_note-52) As [these tribes](/wiki/Iranian_peoples) dispersed into the wider area of [Greater Iran](/wiki/Greater_Iran) and beyond, the boundaries of modern Iran were dominated by the [Persian](/wiki/Persian_people), [Median](/wiki/Medes), and [Parthian](/wiki/Parthia) tribes.

From the late 10th to late 7th centuries BC, the Iranian peoples, together with the pre-Iranian kingdoms, fell under the domination of the [Assyrian Empire](/wiki/Assyrian_Empire), based in northern [Mesopotamia](/wiki/Mesopotamia).[[53]](#cite_note-53) Under king [Cyaxares](/wiki/Cyaxares), the Medes and Persians entered into an alliance with [Nabopolassar](/wiki/Nabopolassar) of [Babylon](/wiki/Babylon), as well as the [Scythians](/wiki/Scythians) and the [Cimmerians](/wiki/Cimmerians), and together they attacked the Assyrian Empire. The civil war ravaged the Assyrian Empire between 616 BC and 605 BC, thus freeing their respective peoples from three centuries of Assyrian rule.[[53]](#cite_note-53) The unification of the Median tribes under [a single ruler](/wiki/Deioces) in 728 BC led to the foundation of the [Median Empire](/wiki/Median_Empire) which, by 612 BC, controlled the whole Iran and the eastern [Anatolia](/wiki/Anatolia).[[54]](#cite_note-54) This marked the end of the [Kingdom of Urartu](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Urartu) as well, which was subsequently conquered and dissolved.[[55]](#cite_note-55)[[56]](#cite_note-56) [thumb|left|Tomb of](/wiki/File:CyrustheGreatTomb_22059.jpg) [Cyrus the Great](/wiki/Cyrus_the_Great), founder of the [Achaemenid Empire](/wiki/Achaemenid_Empire), [Pasargadae](/wiki/Pasargadae) [thumb|left|Ruins of the](/wiki/File:Gate_of_All_Nations,_Persepolis.jpg) [Gate of All Nations](/wiki/Gate_of_All_Nations), [Persepolis](/wiki/Persepolis) In 550 BC, [Cyrus the Great](/wiki/Cyrus_the_Great), son of [Mandane](/wiki/Mandane) and [Cambyses I](/wiki/Cambyses_I), took over the Median Empire, and founded the [Achaemenid Empire](/wiki/Achaemenid_Empire) by unifying other city states. The conquest of Media was a result of what is called the [*Persian Revolt*](/wiki/Persian_Revolt). The [brouhaha](/wiki/Brouhaha) was initially triggered by the actions of the Median ruler [Astyages](/wiki/Astyages), and was quickly spread to other provinces, as they allied with the Persians. Later conquests under Cyrus and his successors expanded the empire to include [Lydia](/wiki/Lydia), [Babylon](/wiki/Babylon), [Egypt](/wiki/Ancient_Egypt), parts of the [Balkans](/wiki/Balkans) and [Eastern Europe](/wiki/Eastern_Europe) proper, as well as the lands to the west of the [Indus](/wiki/Indus_River) and [Oxus](/wiki/Oxus_River) rivers.

539 BC was the year in which Persian forces defeated the Babylonian army at Opis, and marked the end of around four centuries of Mesopotamian domination of the region with the transition from the Neo-Babylonian Period to the Achaemenid Period. Cyrus entered Babylon and presented himself as a traditional Mesopotamian monarch. Subsequent Achaemenid art and iconography reflect the influence of the new political reality in Mesopotamia.

[thumb|Achaemenid Empire around the time of](/wiki/File:Achaemenid_Empire_(flat_map).svg) [Darius I](/wiki/Darius_I) and [Xerxes I](/wiki/Xerxes_I) At its greatest extent, the Achaemenid Empire included the modern territories of Iran, [Azerbaijan](/wiki/Azerbaijan), [Armenia](/wiki/Armenia), [Georgia](/wiki/Georgia_(country)), [Turkey](/wiki/Turkey), much of the [Black Sea](/wiki/Black_Sea) coastal regions, northeastern [Greece](/wiki/Greece) and southern [Bulgaria](/wiki/Bulgaria) ([Thrace](/wiki/Thrace)), northern Greece and [Macedonia](/wiki/Republic_of_Macedonia) ([Paeonia](/wiki/Paeonia_(kingdom)) and [Ancient Macedon](/wiki/Macedonia_(ancient_kingdom))), [Iraq](/wiki/Iraq), [Syria](/wiki/Syria), [Lebanon](/wiki/Lebanon), [Jordan](/wiki/Jordan), [Israel](/wiki/Israel), [Palestine](/wiki/Palestine_(region)), all significant ancient population centers of [ancient Egypt](/wiki/Ancient_Egypt) as far west as [Libya](/wiki/Libya), [Kuwait](/wiki/Kuwait), northern [Saudi Arabia](/wiki/Saudi_Arabia), parts of the [UAE](/wiki/UAE) and [Oman](/wiki/Oman), [Pakistan](/wiki/Pakistan), [Afghanistan](/wiki/Afghanistan), and much of [Central Asia](/wiki/Central_Asia), making it the first [world government](/wiki/World_government) and the largest empire the world had yet seen.[[11]](#cite_note-11) It is estimated that in 480 BC, 50 million people lived in the Achaemenid Empire.[[57]](#cite_note-57)[[58]](#cite_note-58) The empire at its peak ruled over 44% of the world's population, the highest such figure for any empire in history.[[59]](#cite_note-59) In Greek history, the Achaemenid Empire is considered as the *antagonist* of the [Greek city states](/wiki/Polis), for the emancipation of slaves including the [Jewish](/wiki/Jewish_people) [exiles in Babylon](/wiki/Babylonian_captivity), building infrastructures such as [road](/wiki/Royal_road) and [postal](/wiki/Chapar_Khaneh) systems, and the use of an [official language](/wiki/Official_language), the [Imperial Aramaic](/wiki/Imperial_Aramaic), throughout its territories.<ref name=book/> The empire had a centralized, bureaucratic administration under the emperor, a large professional army, and civil services, inspiring similar developments in later empires.[[60]](#cite_note-60)<ref name=schmitt-EI-i>[Schmitt](/wiki/#refachaemenids-EI) Achaemenid dynasty (i. The clan and dynasty)</ref> Furthermore, one of the [Seven Wonders of the Ancient World](/wiki/Seven_Wonders_of_the_Ancient_World), the [Mausoleum at Halicarnassus](/wiki/Mausoleum_at_Halicarnassus), was built in the empire between 353 and 350 BC.

Eventual conflict on the western borders began with the [Ionian Revolt](/wiki/Ionian_Revolt) which erupted into the [Greco-Persian Wars](/wiki/Greco-Persian_Wars), and continued through the first half of the 5th century BC, and ended with the Persian withdrawal from all of their European territories in the [Balkans](/wiki/Balkans) and [Eastern Europe](/wiki/Eastern_Europe) proper.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

In 334 BC, [Alexander the Great](/wiki/Alexander_the_Great) invaded the Achaemenid Empire, defeating the last Achaemenid emperor, [Darius III](/wiki/Darius_III), at the [Battle of Issus](/wiki/Battle_of_Issus). Following the premature death of Alexander, Iran came under the control of the [Hellenistic](/wiki/Hellenistic) [Seleucid Empire](/wiki/Seleucid_Empire). In the middle of the 2nd century BC, the [Parthian Empire](/wiki/Parthian_Empire) rose to become the main power in Iran, and the century-long geopolitical arch-rivalry between Romans and Parthians began, culminating in the [Roman–Parthian Wars](/wiki/Roman–Parthian_Wars). The Parthian Empire continued as a feudal monarchy for nearly five centuries, until 224 CE, when it was succeeded by the [Sassanid Empire](/wiki/Sassanid_Empire).[[61]](#cite_note-61) Together with their neighboring arch-rival, the [Roman](/wiki/Roman_Empire)-[Byzantines](/wiki/Byzantine_Empire), they made up the world's two most dominant powers at the time, for over four centuries.[[12]](#cite_note-12)[[13]](#cite_note-13) [thumb|left|](/wiki/File:Sassanid_reliefs_at_Taq_e_Bostan.jpg)[Sassanid reliefs](/wiki/Sasanian_art) at [Taq Bostan](/wiki/Taq_Bostan) The Sassanids established an empire within the frontiers achieved by the Achaemenids, with their capital at [Ctesiphon](/wiki/Ctesiphon). The Sassanid Empire of the [Late Antiquity](/wiki/Late_Antiquity) is considered as one of the most influential periods of Iran, as Iran influenced the culture of [ancient Rome](/wiki/Culture_of_ancient_Rome) (and through that as far as [Western Europe](/wiki/Western_Europe)),[[62]](#cite_note-62)[[63]](#cite_note-63) [Africa](/wiki/Culture_of_Africa),[[64]](#cite_note-64) [China](/wiki/Chinese_culture), and [India](/wiki/Culture_of_India),[[65]](#cite_note-65) and played a prominent role in the formation of both [European](/wiki/Medieval_art) and [Asian](/wiki/History_of_Eastern_art) medieval art.[[66]](#cite_note-66) [thumb|A bas-relief at](/wiki/File:Bas_relief_nagsh-e-rostam_al.jpg) [Naqsh-e Rostam](/wiki/Naqsh-e_Rostam), depicting the victory of [Shapur I](/wiki/Shapur_I) over [Valerian](/wiki/Valerian_(emperor)), following the [Battle of Edessa](/wiki/Battle_of_Edessa) Most of the era of both Parthian and Sassanid empires were overshadowed by the [Roman-Persian Wars](/wiki/Roman-Persian_Wars), which raged on their western borders at the [Anatolia](/wiki/Anatolia), the western [Caucasus](/wiki/Caucasus), [Mesopotamia](/wiki/Mesopotamia), and the [Levant](/wiki/Levant), for over 700 years. These wars exhausted both Romans and Sassanids, and led to the defeat of both at the hands of the invading Muslim Arabs.

Several offshoots of the Achaemenids, Parthians, and Sassanids, established [eponymous](/wiki/Eponymous) dynasties and branches in Anatolia and the Caucasus, including the [Kingdom of Pontus](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Pontus), the [Mihranids](/wiki/Mihranids), and the Arsacid dynasties of [Armenia](/wiki/Arsacid_dynasty_of_Armenia), [Iberia](/wiki/Arsacid_dynasty_of_Iberia) ([Georgia](/wiki/Georgia_(country))), and [Caucasian Albania](/wiki/Arsacid_Dynasty_of_Caucasian_Albania) (present-day [Azerbaijan](/wiki/Azerbaijan) and southern [Dagestan](/wiki/Dagestan)).

### Medieval period[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

The prolonged [Byzantine-Sassanid Wars](/wiki/Byzantine-Sassanid_Wars), most importantly the climactic [Byzantine-Sassanid War of 602-628](/wiki/Byzantine-Sassanid_War_of_602-628), as well as the [social conflict within the Sassanid Empire](/wiki/Fall_of_the_Sassanid_Empire#Social_problems), opened the way for an Arab invasion to Iran in the 7th century.[[67]](#cite_note-67)[[68]](#cite_note-68) Initially defeated by the Arab [Rashidun Caliphate](/wiki/Rashidun_Caliphate), Iran came under the rule of the Arab caliphates of [Umayyad](/wiki/Ummayad_Caliphate) and [Abbasid](/wiki/Abbasid_Caliphate). The prolonged and gradual process of the [Islamization of Iran](/wiki/Islamization_of_Iran) began following the conquest. Under the new Arab elite of the Rashidun and later the Umayyad caliphates, both converted ([mawali](/wiki/Mawali)) and non-converted ([dhimmi](/wiki/Dhimmi)) Iranians were discriminated against, being excluded from the government and military, and having to pay a special tax called [*Jizya*](/wiki/Jizya).[[69]](#cite_note-69)[[70]](#cite_note-70) [Gunde Shapur](/wiki/Gundeshapur), home of the [*Academy of Gunde Shapur*](/wiki/Academy_of_Gondishapur) which was the most important medical center of the world at the time, survived after the invasion, but became known as an Islamic institute thereafter.[[71]](#cite_note-71) [thumb|Tomb of](/wiki/File:Hafez_880714_095.jpg) [Hafez](/wiki/Hafez), the popular [Iranian poet](/wiki/List_of_Persian_poets_and_authors) whose works are regarded as a pinnacle in [Persian literature](/wiki/Persian_literature) and have left a considerable mark on later Western writers, most notably [Goethe](/wiki/Goethe), [Thoreau](/wiki/Thoreau), and [Emerson](/wiki/Ralph_Waldo_Emerson)[[72]](#cite_note-72)[[73]](#cite_note-73)[[74]](#cite_note-74) In 750, the [Abbasids](/wiki/Abbasids) overthrew the Umayyads, due mainly to the support from the mawali Iranians.[[75]](#cite_note-75) The mawali formed the majority of the rebel army, which was led by the Iranian general [Abu Muslim](/wiki/Abu_Muslim).<ref name=wsu>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>[[76]](#cite_note-76)[[77]](#cite_note-77) The arrival of the Abbasid Caliphs saw a revival of [Iranian culture](/wiki/Iranian_culture) and influence, and a move away from the imposed Arabic customs. The role of the old Arab aristocracy was gradually replaced by an Iranian bureaucracy.[[78]](#cite_note-78) After two centuries of the Arab rule, semi-independent and independent Iranian kingdoms such as the [Tahirids](/wiki/Tahirids), [Saffarids](/wiki/Saffarids), [Samanids](/wiki/Samanids), and [Buyids](/wiki/Buyids), began to appear on the fringes of the declining Abbasid Caliphate. By the Samanid era in the 9th and 10th centuries, the efforts of Iranians to regain their independence had been well solidified.[[79]](#cite_note-79) The blossoming [literature](/wiki/Iranian_literature), [philosophy](/wiki/Iranian_philosophy), [medicine](/wiki/Science_and_technology_in_Iran), and [art](/wiki/Iranian_art) of Iran became major elements in the formation of a new age for the Iranian civilization, during the period known as the [*Islamic Golden Age*](/wiki/Islamic_Golden_Age).[[80]](#cite_note-80)[[81]](#cite_note-81) The Islamic Golden Age reached its peak by the 10th and 11th centuries, during which Iran was the main theater of the scientific activities.[[71]](#cite_note-71) After the 10th century, [Persian language](/wiki/Persian_language), alongside [Arabic](/wiki/Arabic_language), was used for the scientific, philosophical, historical, musical, and medical works, whereas the important Iranian writers, such as [Tusi](/wiki/Nasir_al-Din_al-Tusi), [Avicenna](/wiki/Avicenna), [Qotb od Din Shirazi](/wiki/Qotb_al-Din_Shirazi), and [Biruni](/wiki/Biruni), had major contributions in the scientific writing.

The cultural revival that began in the Abbasid period led to a resurfacing of the [Iranian national identity](/wiki/Iranian_nationalism), and so earlier attempts of [Arabization](/wiki/Arabization) never succeeded in Iran. The Iranian [Shuubiyah](/wiki/Shuubiyah) movement became a catalyst for Iranians to regain independence in their relations with the Arab invaders.[[82]](#cite_note-82) The most notable effect of this movement was the continuation of [Persian language](/wiki/Persian_language) attested to the epic poet [Ferdowsi](/wiki/Ferdowsi), now regarded as the most important figure in Iranian literature.

[thumb|left|](/wiki/File:Toghrol_Tower_in_Ray.jpg)[Toghrol Tower](/wiki/Tughrul_Tower), a 12th-century monument in [Rey, Iran](/wiki/Rey,_Iran) The 10th century saw a mass migration of [Turkic tribes](/wiki/Turkic_tribes) from [Central Asia](/wiki/Central_Asia) into the Iranian plateau.<ref name=thePersians>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref> Turkic tribesmen were first used in the Abbasid army as [mamluks](/wiki/Mamluks) (slave-warriors), replacing Iranian and Arab elements within the army.<ref name=wsu/> As a result, the mamluks gained a significant political power. In 999, large portions of Iran came briefly under the rule of the [Ghaznavids](/wiki/Ghaznavids), whose rulers were of mamluk Turk origin, and longer subsequently under the Turkish [Seljuk](/wiki/Seljuk_Empire) and [Khwarezmian](/wiki/Khwarezmian_Empire) empires. These Turks had been [Persianized](/wiki/Persianisation) and had adopted Persian models of administration and rulership.<ref name=thePersians/> The Seljuks subsequently gave rise to the [Sultanate of Rum](/wiki/Sultanate_of_Rum) in Anatolia, while taking their thoroughly Persianized identity with them.[[83]](#cite_note-83)[[84]](#cite_note-84) The result of the adoption and patronage of [Persian culture](/wiki/Persian_culture) by Turkish rulers was the development of a distinct [Turko-Persian tradition](/wiki/Turko-Persian_tradition).

In 1219–21 the [Khwarezmian Empire](/wiki/Khwarezmian_Empire) suffered a devastating [invasion](/wiki/Invasion) by the [Mongol](/wiki/Mongol) army of [Genghis Khan](/wiki/Genghis_Khan). According to Steven R. Ward, "[Mongol violence and depredations](/wiki/Mongol_conquests) killed up to three-fourths of the population of the Iranian Plateau, possibly 10 to 15 million people. Some historians have estimated that Iran's population did not again reach its pre-Mongol levels until the mid-20th century."<ref name=Immortal>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>

Following the fracture of the Mongol Empire in 1256, [Hulagu Khan](/wiki/Hulagu_Khan), grandson of Genghis Khan, established the [Ilkhanate](/wiki/Ilkhanate) in Iran. In 1370, yet another conqueror, [Timur](/wiki/Timur), followed the example of [Hulagu](/wiki/Hulagu), establishing the [Timurid Empire](/wiki/Timurid_Empire) which lasted for another 156 years. In 1387, Timur ordered the complete massacre of [Isfahan](/wiki/Isfahan), reportedly killing 70,000 citizens.[[85]](#cite_note-85) The [Ilkhans](/wiki/Ilkhans) and the [Timurids](/wiki/Timurids) soon came to adopt the ways and customs of the Iranians, choosing to surround themselves with a culture that was distinctively Iranian.[[86]](#cite_note-86)

### Early modern period[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|right|upright|A](/wiki/File:Сефи_1й_1629-42.jpg) [Venetian](/wiki/Venetian_school_(art)) portrait of [Ismail I](/wiki/Ismail_I), founder of the [Safavid Dynasty](/wiki/Safavid_Dynasty) – the [Uffizi Gallery](/wiki/Uffizi_Gallery) By the [1500s](/wiki/1500s_(decade)), [Ismail I](/wiki/Ismail_I) from [Ardabil](/wiki/Ardabil), established the [Safavid Dynasty](/wiki/Safavid_Dynasty), with [Tabriz](/wiki/Tabriz) as the capital.<ref name=thePersians/> Beginning with Azerbaijan, he subsequently extended his authority over all of the Iranian territories, and established an intermittent Iranian hegemony over the vast relative regions, reasserting the Iranian identity within large parts of the [Greater Iran](/wiki/Greater_Iran).[[87]](#cite_note-87) Iran was predominantly [Sunni](/wiki/Sunni),[[88]](#cite_note-88) but Ismail instigated a [forced conversion](/wiki/Safavid_conversion_of_Iran_from_Sunnism_to_Shiism) to the [Shia](/wiki/Shia) branch of Islam,<ref name=BBCReligion>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> by which the Shia Islam spread throughout the Safavid territories in the [Caucasus](/wiki/Caucasus), Iran, [Anatolia](/wiki/Anatolia), and [Mesopotamia](/wiki/Mesopotamia). As a result, thereof, the modern-day Iran is the only official Shia nation of the world, with it holding an absolute majority in Iran and the [Republic of Azerbaijan](/wiki/Republic_of_Azerbaijan), having there the 1st and 2nd highest number of Shia inhabitants by population percentage in the world.[[89]](#cite_note-89)[[90]](#cite_note-90) The centuries-long geopolitical and ideological rivalry between Safavid Iran and the neighboring [Ottoman Empire](/wiki/Ottoman_Empire), led to numerous [Ottoman–Persian Wars](/wiki/Ottoman–Persian_Wars).<ref name=Immortal/> The Safavid Era peaked in the reign of [Abbas the Great](/wiki/Abbas_the_Great), 1587–1629,[[91]](#cite_note-91) surpassing their Ottoman arch rivals in strength, and making the empire a leading hub in Western Eurasia for the sciences and arts. The Safavid Era saw the start of mass integration from [Caucasian populations](/wiki/Peoples_of_the_Caucasus) into new layers of the society of Iran, as well as mass resettlement of them within the heartlands of Iran, playing a pivotal role in the history of Iran for centuries onwards. Following a gradual decline in the late 1600s and early 1700s, which was caused by the internal conflicts, the continuous wars with the Ottomans, and the foreign interference (most notably the Russian interference), the Safavid rule was ended by the [Pashtun rebels](/wiki/Hotaki_dynasty) who besieged Isfahan and defeated [Soltan Hosein](/wiki/Soltan_Hosein) in 1722.

[thumb|left|Statue of](/wiki/File:Nader_Shah_Statue_in_Mashhad.jpg) [Nader Shah](/wiki/Nader_Shah), founder of the [Afsharid Dynasty](/wiki/Afsharid_Dynasty) – the Naderi Museum In 1729, [Nader Shah](/wiki/Nader_Shah), a chieftain and military genius from [Khorasan](/wiki/Greater_Khorasan), successfully drove out and conquered the Pashtun invaders. He subsequently took back the annexed Caucasian territories which [were divided](/wiki/Treaty_of_Constantinople_(1724)) among the Ottoman and [Russian](/wiki/Imperial_Russia) authorities by the ongoing chaos in Iran. During the reign of Nader Shah, Iran reached its greatest extent since the Sassanid Empire, reestablishing the Iranian hegemony all over the [Caucasus](/wiki/Caucasus), as well as other major parts of the [west](/wiki/West_Asia) and [central](/wiki/Central_Asia) Asia, and briefly possessing what was arguably the most powerful empire at the time.[[16]](#cite_note-16) Nader Shah [invaded India and sacked far off Delhi](/wiki/Sack_of_Delhi) by the late 1730s. His territorial expansion, as well as his military successes, went into a decline following the final [campaigns in the Northern Caucasus](/wiki/Nader's_Dagestan_campaign). The assassination of Nader Shah sparked a brief period of civil war and turmoil, after which [Karim Khan](/wiki/Karim_Khan) of the [Zand Dynasty](/wiki/Zand_Dynasty) came to power in 1750, bringing a period of relative peace and prosperity.<ref name=Immortal/>

The geopolitical reach of the Zand Dynasty was limited, compared to its preceding dynasties. Many of the Iranian territories in the Caucasus gained *de facto* independence and were locally ruled through various [Caucasian khanates](/wiki/Khanates_of_the_Caucasus). However, despite the self-ruling, they all remained [subjects](/wiki/Commoners) and vassals to the Zand king.[[92]](#cite_note-92) The khanates exercised control over their affairs via international trade routes between Central Asia and the West.[[93]](#cite_note-93) [thumb|A map showing the northwestern borders of Iran in the 19th century, comprising modern-day Eastern](/wiki/File:Gulistan-Treaty.jpg) [Georgia](/wiki/Georgia_(country)), [Dagestan](/wiki/Dagestan), [Armenia](/wiki/Armenia), and [Azerbaijan](/wiki/Azerbaijan), before being ceded to neighboring [Imperial Russia](/wiki/Imperial_Russia) by the [Russo-Persian Wars](/wiki/Russo-Persian_Wars) Another civil war ensued after the death of Karim Khan in 1779, out of which [Aqa Mohammad Khan](/wiki/Mohammad_Khan_Qajar) emerged, founding the [Qajar Dynasty](/wiki/Qajar_Dynasty) in 1794. In 1795, following the disobedience of the [Georgian](/wiki/Georgians) subjects and their [alliance with the Russians](/wiki/Treaty_of_Georgievsk), the Qajars captured [Tblisi](/wiki/Tblisi) by the [Battle of Krtsanisi](/wiki/Battle_of_Krtsanisi), and drove the Russians out of the entire Caucasus, reestablishing a short-lived Iranian [suzerainty](/wiki/Suzerainty) over the region. The Russo-Persian wars of [1804–1813](/wiki/Russo-Persian_War_(1804–13)) and [1826–1828](/wiki/Russo-Persian_War_(1826–28)) resulted in large irrevocable territorial losses for Iran in the [Caucasus](/wiki/Caucasus), comprising all of [Transcaucasia](/wiki/Transcaucasia) and [Dagestan](/wiki/Dagestan), which made part of the very concept of Iran for centuries,[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) and thus substantial gains for the neighboring [Russian Empire](/wiki/Russian_Empire).

As a result of the 19th century Russo-Persian wars, the Russians took over the Caucasus, and Iran irrevocably lost control over its integral territories in the region (comprising modern-day Dagestan, [Georgia](/wiki/Georgia_(country)), [Armenia](/wiki/Armenia), and [Azerbaijan](/wiki/Azerbaijan)), which got confirmed per the treaties of [Gulistan](/wiki/Treaty_of_Gulistan) and [Turkmenchay](/wiki/Treaty_of_Turkmenchay).[[17]](#cite_note-17)[[94]](#cite_note-94) The area to the north of the river [Aras](/wiki/Aras_River), among which the contemporary Republic of Azerbaijan, eastern Georgia, Dagestan, and Armenia, were Iranian territory until they were occupied by Russia in the course of the 19th century.[[17]](#cite_note-17)[[95]](#cite_note-95)[[96]](#cite_note-96)[[97]](#cite_note-97)[[98]](#cite_note-98)[[99]](#cite_note-99)[[100]](#cite_note-100) As Iran shrank, many [Transcaucasian](/wiki/Transcaucasus) and [North Caucasian](/wiki/North_Caucasus) Muslims moved towards Iran,[[101]](#cite_note-101)[[102]](#cite_note-102) especially until the aftermath [result of the Caucasian War](/wiki/Ethnic_Cleansing_of_Circassians),[[102]](#cite_note-102) and the decades afterwards, while Iran's Armenians were encouraged to settle in the newly incorporated Russian territories,[[103]](#cite_note-103)[[104]](#cite_note-104)[[105]](#cite_note-105) causing significant demographic shifts.

### Late modern period[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

[Template:Context](/wiki/Template:Context) Around 1.5 million people—20 to 25% of the population of Iran—died as a result of the [Great Famine of 1870–1871](/wiki/List_of_famines).[[106]](#cite_note-106) [thumb|The first national](/wiki/File:Parliamenttehran.jpg) [parliament of Iran](/wiki/Parliament_of_Iran), established in 1906 Between 1872 and 1905, a series of protests took place in response to the sale of [concessions](/wiki/Concession_(contract)) to foreigners by [Nasser od Din](/wiki/Nasser_al-Din_Shah) and [Mozaffar od Din](/wiki/Mozaffar_ad-Din_Shah) shahs of [Qajar](/wiki/Qajar), and led to the [Iranian Constitutional Revolution](/wiki/Iranian_Constitutional_Revolution). The first [Iranian Constitution](/wiki/Persian_Constitution_of_1906) and the first [national parliament of Iran](/wiki/Majles) were founded in 1906, through the ongoing revolution. The Constitution included the official recognition of Iran's three religious minorities, namely [Christians](/wiki/Christianity), [Zoroastrians](/wiki/Zoroastrianism), and [Jews](/wiki/Judaism),[[107]](#cite_note-107) which has remained a basis in the legislation of Iran since then.

The struggle related to the constitutional movement continued until 1911, when [Mohammad Ali Shah](/wiki/Mohammad_Ali_Shah) was defeated and forced to abdicate. On the pretext of restoring order, the Russians occupied Northern Iran in 1911, and maintained a military presence in the region for years to come. During [World War I](/wiki/World_War_I), the British occupied much of Western Iran, and fully withdrew in 1921. The [Persian Campaign](/wiki/Persian_Campaign) commenced furthermore during World War I in Northwestern Iran after an Ottoman invasion, as part of the [Middle Eastern Theatre of World War I](/wiki/Middle_Eastern_Theatre_of_World_War_I). As a result of Ottoman hostilities across the border, a large amount of the Assyrians of Iran [were massacred](/wiki/Assyrian_Genocide) by the Ottoman armies, notably in and around [Urmia](/wiki/Urmia).<ref name=autogenerated2>Richard G. Hovannisian. [*The Armenian Genocide: Cultural and Ethical Legacies*](https://books.google.nl/books?id=K3monyE4CVQC&pg=PA271&dq=assyrian+genocide+in+urmia&hl=nl&sa=X&ei=bQ9IVd6vGcLYU9CxgaAO&ved=0CCAQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=assyrian%20genocide%20in%20urmia&f=false). pp. 270–271. Transaction Publishers, 31 dec. 2011 ISBN 1412835925</ref>[[108]](#cite_note-108) Apart from the rule of Aqa Mohammad Khan, the Qajar rule is characterized as a century of misrule.<ref name=thePersians/>

In 1921, the [Qajar Dynasty](/wiki/Qajar_Dynasty) [was overthrown](/wiki/1921_Persian_coup_d'état) by [Reza Khan](/wiki/Reza_Khan) of the [Pahlavi Dynasty](/wiki/Pahlavi_Dynasty), who was the [Prime Minister of Iran](/wiki/List_of_Prime_Ministers_of_Iran) and the former general of the [Persian Cossack Brigade](/wiki/Persian_Cossack_Brigade), and he became the new [Shah](/wiki/Shah).

[thumb|left|upright|](/wiki/File:Mohammad_Pahlavi_Coronation.jpg)[Mohammad Reza Pahlavi](/wiki/Mohammad_Reza_Pahlavi) and the Imperial Family during the coronation ceremony of the Shah of Iran in 1967 In 1941, Reza Shah was forced to abdicate in favor of his son, [Mohammad Reza Pahlavi](/wiki/Mohammad_Reza_Pahlavi), and established the [Persian Corridor](/wiki/Persian_Corridor), a massive supply route that would last until the end of the ongoing war. The presence of so many foreign troops in the nation also culminated in the [Soviet-backed](/wiki/Soviet_Union) establishment of two puppet regimes in the nation; the [Azerbaijan People's Government](/wiki/Azerbaijan_People's_Government), and the [Republic of Mahabad](/wiki/Republic_of_Mahabad). As the Soviet Union refused to relinquish the occupied Iranian territory, the [Iran crisis of 1946](/wiki/Iran_crisis_of_1946) was followed, which particularly resulted in the dissolution of both puppet states, and the withdrawal of the Soviets.

[thumb|upright|](/wiki/File:Mossadeghmohammad.jpg)[Mohammad Mosaddegh](/wiki/Mohammad_Mosaddegh), democracy advocate and deposed [Prime Minister of Iran](/wiki/Prime_Minister_of_Iran) In 1951, [Mohammad Mosaddegh](/wiki/Mohammad_Mosaddegh) was elected as the [prime minister](/wiki/Prime_Minister_of_Iran). He became enormously popular in Iran, after he [nationalized](/wiki/Nationalize) [Iran's petroleum industry](/wiki/Petroleum_industry_in_Iran) and oil reserves. He was deposed in the [1953 Iranian coup d'état](/wiki/1953_Iranian_coup_d'état), an Anglo-American covert operation that marked the first time the US had overthrown a foreign government during the [Cold War](/wiki/Cold_War).[[109]](#cite_note-109) After the coup, the Shah became increasingly [autocratic](/wiki/Autocracy) and [sultanistic](/wiki/Sultanism), and Iran entered a phase of decades long [controversial close relations](/wiki/Iran–United_States_relations) with the United States and some other foreign governments.[[110]](#cite_note-110) While the Shah increasingly modernized Iran and claimed to retain it as a fully [secular state](/wiki/Secular_state),[[18]](#cite_note-18) arbitrary arrests and torture by his secret police, the [SAVAK](/wiki/SAVAK), were used to crush all forms of political opposition.

[Ayatollah](/wiki/Ayatollah) [Ruhollah Khomeini](/wiki/Ruhollah_Khomeini) became an active critic of the Shah's [White Revolution](/wiki/White_Revolution), and publicly denounced the government. Khomeini was arrested and imprisoned for 18 months. After his release in 1964, Khomeini publicly criticized the United States government. The Shah sent him into exile. He went first to Turkey, then to Iraq, and finally to France.

Due to the [1973 spike in oil prices](/wiki/1973_oil_crisis), the economy of Iran was flooded with foreign currency, which caused [inflation](/wiki/Inflation). By 1974, the economy of Iran was experiencing double digit inflation, and despite many large projects to modernize the country, corruption was rampant and caused [large amounts of waste](/wiki/Background_and_causes_of_the_Iranian_Revolution#1970–1975). By 1975 and 1976, an [economic recession](/wiki/Economic_recession) led to increased unemployment, especially among millions of youth who had migrated to the cities of Iran looking for construction jobs during the boom years of the early 1970s. By the late 1970s, many of these people opposed the Shah's regime and began to organize and join the protests against it.[[111]](#cite_note-111)

### After the 1979 Revolution[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|upright|right|](/wiki/File:Imam_Khomeini_in_Mehrabad.jpg)[Ruhollah Khomeini](/wiki/Ruhollah_Khomeini) [returning to Iran](/wiki/Ruhollah_Khomeini's_return_to_Iran) after 14 years exile, on February 1, 1979 The [1979 Revolution](/wiki/1979_Revolution), later known as the *Islamic Revolution*,[[112]](#cite_note-112)[[113]](#cite_note-113)[[114]](#cite_note-114) began in January 1978 with the first major demonstrations against the Shah.[[115]](#cite_note-115) After a year of [strikes](/wiki/Iranian_Revolution#General_strike,_increasing_opposition,_and_military_government) and [demonstrations](/wiki/Iranian_Revolution#Renewed_protests) paralyzing the country and its economy, [Mohammad Reza Pahlavi fled the country and Ruhollah Khomeini returned](/wiki/Iranian_Revolution#The_Shah's_exile_and_Khomeini's_return) from exile to Tehran in February 1979, forming a new government.[[116]](#cite_note-116) After holding a [referendum](/wiki/Iranian_Islamic_Republic_referendum,_March_1979), in April 1979, Iran officially became an [Islamic Republic](/wiki/Islamic_Republic).[[117]](#cite_note-117) A second [referendum](/wiki/Iranian_constitutional_referendum,_December_1979) in December 1979 approved a [theocratic constitution](/wiki/Constitution_of_the_Islamic_Republic_of_Iran).[[118]](#cite_note-118) The immediate nationwide uprisings against the new government began by the [1979 Kurdish rebellion](/wiki/1979_Kurdish_rebellion_in_Iran) with the [Khuzestan uprisings](/wiki/1979_Khuzestan_uprising), along with the uprisings in [Sistan and Baluchestan Province](/wiki/Sistan_and_Baluchestan_Province) and other areas. Over the next several years, these uprisings were subdued in a violent manner by [the new Islamic government](/wiki/Consolidation_of_the_Iranian_Revolution). The new government went about [purging itself of the non-Islamist political opposition](/wiki/Consolidation_of_the_Iranian_Revolution#Suppression_of_opposition), as well as of those Islamists who were not considered radical enough. Although both nationalists and Marxists had initially joined with Islamists to overthrow the Shah, tens of thousands were executed by the Islamic government afterward.[[119]](#cite_note-119) On November 4, 1979, [a group of students](/wiki/Muslim_Student_Followers_of_the_Imam's_Line) seized the United States Embassy and [took the embassy with 52 personnel and citizens hostage](/wiki/Iran_hostage_crisis),[[120]](#cite_note-120) after the United States refused to return Mohammad Reza Pahlavi to Iran to face trial in the court of the new regime and all but certain execution. Attempts by the [Jimmy Carter](/wiki/Jimmy_Carter) administration to [negotiate for the release of the hostages](/wiki/Iran_hostage_crisis_negotiations), and a failed [rescue attempt](/wiki/Operation_Eagle_Claw), helped force Carter out of office and brought [Ronald Reagan](/wiki/Ronald_Reagan) to power. On Jimmy Carter's final day in office, the last hostages were finally set free as a result of the [Algiers Accords](/wiki/Algiers_Accords).

The [Cultural Revolution](/wiki/Iranian_Cultural_Revolution) began in 1980, with an initial closure of universities for three years, in order to perform an inspection and cleanup in the cultural policy of the education and training system.<ref name=autogenerated1>[Supreme Cultural Revolution Council](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/iran/scrc.htm) *GlobalSecurity.org*</ref>

On September 22, 1980, the Iraqi army [invaded the Iranian Khuzestan](/wiki/Iran–Iraq_War#1980:_Iraqi_invasion), and the [Iran–Iraq War](/wiki/Iran–Iraq_War) began. Although the forces of Saddam Hussein made several early advances, by mid 1982, the Iranian forces successfully managed to [drive the Iraqi army back](/wiki/Iran–Iraq_War#1982:_Iraqi_retreat,_Iranian_offensive) into Iraq. In July 1982, with Iraq thrown on the defensive, Iran took the decision to invade Iraq and conducted countless offensives in a bid to conquer Iraqi territory and capture cities, such as Basra. The war continued until 1988, when the Iraqi army defeated the Iranian forces inside Iraq and pushed the remaining Iranian troops back across the border. Subsequently, Khomeini accepted a [truce mediated by the UN](/wiki/United_Nations_Security_Council_Resolution_598). The total Iranian casualties in the war were estimated to be 123,220–160,000 [KIA](/wiki/Killed_in_action), 60,711 [MIA](/wiki/Missing_in_action), and 11,000–16,000 [civilians killed](/wiki/Civilian_casualties).[[121]](#cite_note-121)[[122]](#cite_note-122) [thumb|The *Silent Demonstration* during the](/wiki/File:6th_Day_-_Green_Condolence.jpg) [2009–10 Iranian election protests](/wiki/2009–10_Iranian_election_protests) Following the Iran–Iraq War, in 1989, [Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani](/wiki/Akbar_Hashemi_Rafsanjani) and his administration concentrated on a pragmatic pro-business policy of rebuilding and strengthening the economy without making any dramatic break with the ideology of the revolution. In 1997, Rafsanjani was succeeded by the moderate [reformist](/wiki/Iranian_reform_movement) [Mohammad Khatami](/wiki/Mohammad_Khatami), whose government attempted, unsuccessfully, to make the country more free and democratic.[[123]](#cite_note-123) The [2005 presidential election](/wiki/Iranian_presidential_election,_2005) brought conservative populist candidate, [Mahmoud Ahmadinejad](/wiki/Mahmoud_Ahmadinejad), to power.[[124]](#cite_note-124) During the [2009 Iranian presidential election](/wiki/Iranian_presidential_election,_2009), the [Interior Ministry](/wiki/Ministry_of_Interior_(Iran)) announced incumbent president Ahmadinejad had won 62.63% of the vote, while [Mir-Hossein Mousavi](/wiki/Mir-Hossein_Mousavi) had come in second place with 33.75%.[[125]](#cite_note-125)[[126]](#cite_note-126) Allegations of large irregularities and fraud provoked the [2009 Iranian presidential election protests](/wiki/2009_Iranian_presidential_election_protests), both within Iran and in major cites outside the country.[[127]](#cite_note-127) [Hassan Rouhani](/wiki/Hassan_Rouhani) was elected as [President of Iran](/wiki/President_of_Iran) on June 15, 2013, defeating [Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf](/wiki/Mohammad_Bagher_Ghalibaf) and four other candidates.[[128]](#cite_note-128)[[129]](#cite_note-129) The electoral victory of new Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has improved the relations of Iran with other countries.[[130]](#cite_note-130)

## Geography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|300px|Provinces of Iran by area (km2)](/wiki/File:Provinces_of_Iran_by_area_(km2).svg) Iran has an area of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert).[[22]](#cite_note-22) Iran lies between latitudes [24°](/wiki/24th_parallel_north) and [40° N](/wiki/40th_parallel_north), and longitudes [44°](/wiki/44th_meridian_east) and [64° E](/wiki/64th_meridian_east). Its borders are with [Azerbaijan](/wiki/Azerbaijan) ([Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), with [Azerbaijan-Naxcivan](/wiki/Nakhchivan_Autonomous_Republic) exclave, [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert))[[131]](#cite_note-131) and [Armenia](/wiki/Armenia) ([Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)) to the north-west; the [Caspian Sea](/wiki/Caspian_Sea) to the north; [Turkmenistan](/wiki/Turkmenistan) ([Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)) to the north-east; [Pakistan](/wiki/Pakistan) ([Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)) and [Afghanistan](/wiki/Afghanistan) ([Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)) to the east; [Turkey](/wiki/Turkey) ([Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)) and Iraq ([Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)) to the west; and finally the waters of the Persian Gulf and the [Gulf of Oman](/wiki/Gulf_of_Oman) to the south.

[thumb|left|](/wiki/File:Damavand3.jpg)[Mount Damavand](/wiki/Mount_Damavand), Iran's highest point, is located in [Amol County](/wiki/Amol_County), [Mazanderan](/wiki/Mazanderan). Iran consists of the [Iranian Plateau](/wiki/Iranian_Plateau) with the exception of the coasts of the Caspian Sea and [Khuzestan Province](/wiki/Khuzestan_Province). It is one of the world's most mountainous countries, its landscape dominated by rugged [mountain ranges](/wiki/Mountain_range) that separate various [basins](/wiki/Drainage_basin) or [plateaux](/wiki/Plateau) from one another. The populous western part is the most mountainous, with ranges such as the [Caucasus](/wiki/Caucasus_Mountains), [Zagros](/wiki/Zagros_Mountains) and [Alborz](/wiki/Alborz) Mountains; the last contains Iran's highest point, [Mount Damavand](/wiki/Mount_Damavand) at [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), which is also the highest mountain on the Eurasian landmass west of the [Hindu Kush](/wiki/Hindu_Kush).[[132]](#cite_note-132) The northern part of Iran is covered by dense rain forests called [Shomal](/wiki/Caspian_Hyrcanian_mixed_forests) or the Jungles of Iran.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) The eastern part consists mostly of [desert](/wiki/Desert) basins such as the [Dasht-e Kavir](/wiki/Dasht-e_Kavir), Iran's largest desert, in the north-central portion of the country, and the [Dasht-e Lut](/wiki/Dasht-e_Lut), in the east, as well as some [salt lakes](/wiki/Salt_lake). This is because the mountain ranges are too high for rain clouds to reach these regions.

The only large [plains](/wiki/Plain) are found along the coast of the Caspian Sea and at the northern end of the Persian Gulf, where Iran borders the mouth of the [Arvand river](/wiki/Shatt_al-Arab). Smaller, discontinuous plains are found along the remaining coast of the Persian Gulf, the [Strait of Hormuz](/wiki/Strait_of_Hormuz) and the Gulf of Oman.

<gallery mode=packed> Aerial View of Damavand 26.11.2008 04-25-38.JPG|Aerial view of [Mount Damavand](/wiki/Mount_Damavand) Namarestagh.jpg|[Namarestagh](/wiki/Namarestagh) Badab-e Surt Samaee.jpg|[Badab-e Surt](/wiki/Badab-e_Surt) The misty mountains.jpg|Mountains in [Arasbaran](/wiki/Arasbaran) Sand dunes of Maranjab Desert in Kavir National Park.jpg|[Maranjab Desert](/wiki/Maranjab_Desert) LATON14.jpg|[Laton Jungle](/wiki/Laton_Waterfall) in [Gilan](/wiki/Gilan) Haraz river.jpg|Haraz River in [Amol](/wiki/Amol) Kados maklawany.jpg|[Maklavan](/wiki/Maklavan) Kaluts, Iran (5072510138).jpg|[Lut Desert](/wiki/Dasht-e_Lut) File:Alvand1.jpg|[Alvand](/wiki/Alvand) Oshtoran kuhj.jpg|[Sepiddasht](/wiki/Sepiddasht,_Lorestan) in [Lorestan Province](/wiki/Lorestan_Province) </gallery>

### Climate[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|Climate map of Iran (](/wiki/File:Iran_map_of_Köppen_climate_classification.svg)[Köppen-Geiger](/wiki/Köppen-Geiger)) {| style="width:100%;" |- | valign=top | [Template:Legend](/wiki/Template:Legend) [Template:Legend](/wiki/Template:Legend) [Template:Legend](/wiki/Template:Legend) [Template:Legend](/wiki/Template:Legend) [Template:Legend](/wiki/Template:Legend) [Template:Legend](/wiki/Template:Legend) |} Iran's [climate](/wiki/Climate) ranges from [arid](/wiki/Desert_climate) or [semiarid](/wiki/Semiarid), to [subtropical](/wiki/Subtropical) along the Caspian coast and the [northern forests](/wiki/Jungles_of_Iran).[[133]](#cite_note-133) On the northern edge of the country (the Caspian coastal plain) temperatures rarely fall below freezing and the area remains humid for the rest of the year. Summer temperatures rarely exceed [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert).[[134]](#cite_note-134)[[135]](#cite_note-135) Annual precipitation is [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) in the eastern part of the plain and more than [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) in the western part. United Nations Resident Coordinator for Iran Gary Lewis has said that "Water scarcity poses the most severe human security challenge in Iran today".[[136]](#cite_note-136) To the west, settlements in the [Zagros](/wiki/Zagros_Mountains) basin experience lower temperatures, severe winters with below zero average daily temperatures and heavy snowfall. The eastern and central basins are arid, with less than [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of rain, and have occasional deserts.[[137]](#cite_note-137) Average summer temperatures rarely exceed [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert).[[134]](#cite_note-134) The coastal plains of the Persian Gulf and [Gulf of Oman](/wiki/Gulf_of_Oman) in southern Iran have mild winters, and very humid and hot summers. The annual precipitation ranges from [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert).[[134]](#cite_note-134)

### Fauna[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|left|](/wiki/File:Persian_Leopard_sitting.jpg)[Persian leopard](/wiki/Persian_leopard), an [endangered species](/wiki/Endangered_species) living primarily in Iran The wildlife of Iran is composed of several animal species, including [bears](/wiki/Bears), [gazelles](/wiki/Gazelles), [wild pigs](/wiki/Wild_pigs), [wolves](/wiki/Wolves), [jackals](/wiki/Jackals), [panthers](/wiki/Panthera), [Eurasian lynx](/wiki/Eurasian_lynx), and [foxes](/wiki/Foxes).[[138]](#cite_note-138)[[139]](#cite_note-139) The domestic animals of Iran include [sheep](/wiki/Sheep), [goats](/wiki/Goats), [cattle](/wiki/Cattle), [horses](/wiki/Horses), [water buffaloes](/wiki/Water_buffaloes), [donkeys](/wiki/Donkeys), and [camels](/wiki/Camels). [Pheasants](/wiki/Pheasant), [partridges](/wiki/Partridge), [storks](/wiki/Stork), [eagles](/wiki/Eagles), and [falcons](/wiki/Falcons) are also native to the wildlife of Iran.

One of the most famous members of the Iranian wildlife is the critically endangered [Asiatic cheetah](/wiki/Asiatic_cheetah), also known as the *Iranian cheetah*, whose numbers were greatly reduced after the 1979 Revolution.[[140]](#cite_note-140) Iran had lost all its [Asiatic lions](/wiki/Asiatic_lion) and the now extinct [Caspian tigers](/wiki/Caspian_tiger) by the earlier part of the 20th century.[[141]](#cite_note-141) At least 74 species of Iranian wildlife are on the red list of the [International Union for the Conservation of Nature](/wiki/International_Union_for_the_Conservation_of_Nature), a sign of serious threats against the country’s biodiversity. The [Iranian Parliament](/wiki/Iranian_Parliament) has been showing disregard for wildlife by passing laws and regulations such as the act that lets the [Ministry of Industries and Mines](/wiki/Ministry_of_Industries_and_Mines_(Iran)) exploit mines without the involvement of the [Department of Environment](/wiki/Department_of_Environment_(Iran)), and by approving large national development projects without demanding comprehensive study of their impact on wildlife habitats.[[142]](#cite_note-142) [Template:Anchor](/wiki/Template:Anchor)

### Regions, provinces and cities[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [Template:Provinces of Iran Labelled Map](/wiki/Template:Provinces_of_Iran_Labelled_Map) [thumb|The most populated cities of Iran in 2010](/wiki/File:The_most_populated_cities_of_iran.svg) Iran is divided into five [regions](/wiki/Regions_of_Iran) with thirty one [provinces](/wiki/Provinces_of_Iran) (*ostān*),[[143]](#cite_note-143) each governed by an appointed governor (*ostāndār*). The provinces are divided into counties ([*shahrestān*](/wiki/Counties_of_Iran)), and subdivided into districts ([*bakhsh*](/wiki/Bakhsh)) and sub-districts (*dehestān*).

Iran has one of the highest urban growth rates in the world. From 1950 to 2002, the urban proportion of the population increased from 27% to 60%.[[144]](#cite_note-144) The United Nations predicts that by 2030, 80% of the population will be urban.[[145]](#cite_note-145)[Template:Failed verification](/wiki/Template:Failed_verification) Most internal migrants have settled near the cities of [Tehran](/wiki/Tehran), [Isfahan](/wiki/Isfahan), [Ahvaz](/wiki/Ahvaz), and [Qom](/wiki/Qom). The listed populations are from the 2006/07 (1385 [AP](/wiki/Iranian_calendars)) census.[[146]](#cite_note-146)[Template:Failed verification](/wiki/Template:Failed_verification)

Tehran, with a population of around 8.1 million (2011 census), is the capital and largest city in Iran. It is an economical and cultural center in Iran, and is the hub of the country's [communication](/wiki/Communications_in_Iran) and [transport](/wiki/Transport_in_Iran) network.

The country's second largest city, [Mashhad](/wiki/Mashhad), has a population of around 2.7 million (2011 census). It is the capital of [Razavi Khorasan Province](/wiki/Razavi_Khorasan_Province), and is a holy city in [Shia Islam](/wiki/Shia_Islam), as it is the site of the [Imam Reza Shrine](/wiki/Imam_Reza_Shrine). About 15 to 20 million pilgrims visit the Shrine of Imam Reza every year.[[147]](#cite_note-147)[[148]](#cite_note-148) [Isfahan](/wiki/Isfahan), with a population of around 1.7 million (2011 census), is Iran's third largest city and the capital of [Isfahan Province](/wiki/Isfahan_Province). It was also a former capital of Iran, and contains a wide variety of historical sites; including the famous [Image of the World Square](/wiki/Naqsh-e_Jahan_Square), [Siose Bridge](/wiki/Siose_Bridge), and the sites at the Armenian district of [New Jolfa](/wiki/New_Jolfa).[[149]](#cite_note-149) It is also home to the [5th largest shopping mall in the world](/wiki/List_of_largest_shopping_malls_in_the_world), namely [Isfahan City Center](/wiki/Isfahan_City_Center).

The fourth major city of Iran, [Karaj](/wiki/Karaj), has a population of around 1.6 million (2011 census). It is the capital of [Alborz Province](/wiki/Alborz_Province), and is situated 20 km west of Tehran, at the foot of the [Alborz](/wiki/Alborz) mountains. It is a major industrial city in Iran, with large factories producing sugar, textiles, wire, and alcohol.

[Tabriz](/wiki/Tabriz), the capital of [East Azerbaijan Province](/wiki/East_Azerbaijan_Province), is considered the second industrial city of Iran (after Tehran). With a population of around 1.4 million (2011 census), it is the fifth major city of Iran, which had been the second-largest until the late 1960s. It is one of the former capitals of Iran, the first capital of the [Safavid Empire](/wiki/Safavid_Empire), and has also been proven extremely influential in the country’s recent history.

[Shiraz](/wiki/Shiraz), with a population of around 1.4 million (2011 census), is the sixth major city of Iran. It is the capital of [Fars Province](/wiki/Fars_Province), and was also a former capital of Iran. The area was greatly influenced by the [Babylonian](/wiki/First_Babylonian_Dynasty) civilization, and after the emergence of the ancient [Persians](/wiki/Persian_people), soon came to be known as [Persis](/wiki/Persis). Persians were present in the region since the 9th century BC, and became rulers of a large empire under the reign of the [Achaemenid Dynasty](/wiki/Achaemenid_Dynasty) in the 6th century BC. The ruins of [Persepolis](/wiki/Persepolis) and [Pasargadae](/wiki/Pasargadae), two of the four capitals of the Achaemenid Empire, are located around the modern-day city of Shiraz.

[Template:Largest cities of Iran](/wiki/Template:Largest_cities_of_Iran)

[Template:Clear](/wiki/Template:Clear)

## Government and politics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumbnail|](/wiki/File:Ali_Khamenei_and_Vladimir_Putin.jpg)[Ali Khamenei](/wiki/Ali_Khamenei), the Supreme Leader of Iran, meeting with Russian President [Vladimir Putin](/wiki/Vladimir_Putin) on November 23, 2015 [thumb|Iran's syncretic political system combines elements of a modern Islamic theocracy with democracy.](/wiki/File:Iran_gov_power_structure.svg)

The political system of the Islamic Republic is based on the [1979 Constitution](/wiki/Constitution_of_the_Islamic_Republic_of_Iran), and comprises several intricately connected governing bodies. [The Leader of the Revolution](/wiki/Supreme_Leader_of_Iran) ("Supreme Leader") is responsible for [delineation and supervision](/wiki/Guardianship_of_the_Islamic_Jurist) of the general policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran.[[150]](#cite_note-150)The Supreme Leader is Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, controls the military intelligence and security operations, and has sole power to declare war or peace.[[150]](#cite_note-150) The heads of the judiciary, state radio and television networks, the commanders of the police and military forces and six of the twelve members of the [Guardian Council](/wiki/Guardian_Council) are appointed by the Supreme Leader.[[150]](#cite_note-150) The [Assembly of Experts](/wiki/Assembly_of_Experts) elects and dismisses the Supreme Leader on the basis of qualifications and popular esteem.[[151]](#cite_note-151) According to the [Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran](/wiki/Constitution_of_the_Islamic_Republic_of_Iran), the powers of government in the Islamic Republic of Iran are vested in the legislature, the judiciary, and the executive powers, functioning under the supervision of the "Absolute [Guardianship and the Leadership](/wiki/Guardianship_of_the_Islamic_Jurist) of the [Ummah](/wiki/Ummah)" ([Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang)) that refers to the [Supreme Leader of Iran](/wiki/Supreme_Leader_of_Iran).[[152]](#cite_note-152) After the Supreme Leader, the Constitution defines the [President of Iran](/wiki/President_of_Iran) as the highest state authority.[[150]](#cite_note-150)[[153]](#cite_note-153) The President is elected by [universal suffrage](/wiki/Universal_suffrage) for a term of four years and can only be re-elected for one term.[[153]](#cite_note-153)[Template:Dubious](/wiki/Template:Dubious) Presidential candidates must be approved by the Guardian Council before running, in order to ensure their allegiance to the ideals of the Islamic Revolution.[[154]](#cite_note-154) The President is responsible for the implementation of the Constitution and for the exercise of executive powers, except for matters directly related to the Supreme Leader, who has the final say in all matters.[[150]](#cite_note-150) The President appoints and supervises the [Council of Ministers](/wiki/Council_of_Minsters_of_Iran), coordinates government decisions, and selects government policies to be placed before the legislature.[[155]](#cite_note-155) Eight Vice-Presidents serve under the President, as well as a cabinet of twenty-two ministers, who must all be approved by the legislature.[[156]](#cite_note-156) The legislature of Iran (known as the [Islamic Consultative Assembly](/wiki/Islamic_Consultative_Assembly_(Iran))) is a [unicameral](/wiki/Unicameral) body.[[157]](#cite_note-157) The Parliament of Iran comprises 290 members elected for four-year terms.[[157]](#cite_note-157) The parliament drafts legislation, ratifies international [treaties](/wiki/Treaties), and approves the national budget. All parliament candidates and all legislation from the assembly must be approved by the Guardian Council.[[158]](#cite_note-158) The Guardian Council comprises twelve jurists including six appointed by the Supreme Leader. The others are elected by the [Iranian Parliament](/wiki/Iranian_Parliament) from among the jurists nominated by the Head of the [Judiciary](/wiki/Judicial_system_of_Iran).<ref name=autogenerated4>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>[[159]](#cite_note-159) The Council interprets the constitution and may veto Parliament. If a law is deemed incompatible with the constitution or [Sharia](/wiki/Sharia) (Islamic law), it is referred back to Parliament for revision.[[153]](#cite_note-153) The [Expediency Council](/wiki/Expediency_Discernment_Council) has the authority to mediate disputes between Parliament and the Guardian Council, and serves as an advisory body to the Supreme Leader, making it one of the most powerful governing bodies in the country.[[160]](#cite_note-160) [Local city councils](/wiki/City_and_Village_Councils_of_Iran) are elected by public vote to four-year terms in all cities and villages of Iran.

Iran has adopted the [separation of powers](/wiki/Separation_of_powers), having three typical division of branches: [Executive](/wiki/President_of_Iran) (incumbent: [Hassan Rouhani](/wiki/Hassan_Rouhani)), [Legislature](/wiki/List_of_Speakers_of_the_Parliament_of_Iran) (incumbent: [Ali Larijani](/wiki/Ali_Larijani)), and the [Judiciary](/wiki/Chief_Justice_of_Iran) (incumbent: [Sadeq Larijani](/wiki/Sadeq_Larijani)).

### Law[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|right|The](/wiki/File:Parliament_of_Iran_2.jpg) [Iranian Parliament](/wiki/Iranian_Parliament). The Supreme Leader appoints the head of Iran's judiciary, who in turn appoints the head of the Supreme Court and the chief public prosecutor.[[161]](#cite_note-161) There are several types of courts including public courts that deal with civil and criminal cases, and [revolutionary courts](/wiki/Islamic_Revolutionary_Court) which deal with certain categories of offenses, including crimes against [national security](/wiki/National_security). The decisions of the revolutionary courts are final and cannot be appealed.[[161]](#cite_note-161) The Special Clerical Court handles crimes allegedly committed by [clerics](/wiki/Cleric), although it has also taken on cases involving [lay people](/wiki/Layperson). The Special Clerical Court functions independently of the regular judicial framework and is accountable only to the Supreme Leader. The Court's rulings are final and cannot be appealed.[[161]](#cite_note-161) The Assembly of Experts, which meets for one week annually, comprises 86 "virtuous and learned" clerics elected by adult suffrage for eight-year terms. As with the presidential and parliamentary elections, the Guardian Council determines candidates' eligibility.[[161]](#cite_note-161) The Assembly elects the Supreme Leader and has the constitutional authority to remove the Supreme Leader from power at any time.[[161]](#cite_note-161) It has not challenged any of the Supreme Leader's decisions.[[161]](#cite_note-161)

### Foreign relations[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|Iranian President](/wiki/File:Hassan_Rouhani_and_Vladimir_Putin_(1).jpg) [Hassan Rouhani](/wiki/Hassan_Rouhani) meeting with Russian President [Vladimir Putin](/wiki/Vladimir_Putin) – Iran and Russia are strategic allies.[[162]](#cite_note-162)[[163]](#cite_note-163)[[164]](#cite_note-164)

The Iranian government's officially stated goal is to establish a [new world order](/wiki/New_world_order_(politics)) based on [world peace](/wiki/World_peace), global [collective security](/wiki/Collective_security) and justice.[[165]](#cite_note-165)[[166]](#cite_note-166) Often, Iran's foreign relations since the time of the revolution have been portrayed as being based on two strategic principles: eliminating outside influences in the region and pursuing extensive diplomatic contacts with developing and [non-aligned countries](/wiki/Non-Aligned_Movement).[[167]](#cite_note-167) [thumb|left|Iranian FM](/wiki/File:Secretary_Kerry_greets_Iranian_Foreign_Minister_Zarif.jpg) [M. Javad Zarif](/wiki/M._Javad_Zarif) shaking hands with the US Secretary of State [John Kerry](/wiki/John_Kerry) during the [Iranian nuclear talks](/wiki/Negotiations_leading_to_the_Joint_Comprehensive_Plan_of_Action) – There is no formal diplomatic relationship between Iran and the [US](/wiki/United_States).

Iran is considered a [State Sponsor of Terrorism](/wiki/Iran_and_state-sponsored_terrorism) by the [United States](/wiki/United_States).[[168]](#cite_note-168) Since 2005, [Iran's nuclear program](/wiki/Nuclear_program_of_Iran) has become the subject of contention with the international community following earlier quotes of Iranian leadership favoring the use of an atomic bomb against Iran's enemies and in particular Israel.[[169]](#cite_note-169) Many countries have expressed concern that [Iran's nuclear program](/wiki/Nuclear_program_of_Iran) could divert civilian nuclear technology into a weapons program. This has led the [UN Security Council](/wiki/UN_Security_Council) to impose [sanctions against Iran](/wiki/Sanctions_against_Iran) which had further isolated Iran politically and economically from the rest of the global community. In 2009, the US [Director of National Intelligence](/wiki/Director_of_National_Intelligence) said that Iran, if choosing to, would not be able to develop a nuclear weapon until 2013.[[170]](#cite_note-170) [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), Iran maintains diplomatic relations with 99 members of the United Nations,[[171]](#cite_note-171) but not with the United States or Israel, a state which Iran has not recognized since the 1979 Revolution.[[172]](#cite_note-172) On July 14, 2015, Tehran and the [P5+1](/wiki/P5+1) came to a historic [agreement](/wiki/Joint_Comprehensive_Plan_of_Action) to end [economic sanctions](/wiki/United_Nations_Security_Council_Resolution_1929) after demonstrating a peaceful nuclear research project that meets [International Atomic Energy Agency](/wiki/International_Atomic_Energy_Agency) standards.[[173]](#cite_note-173) Iran is also a member of dozens of international organizations including the [G-15](/wiki/Group_of_15), [G-24](/wiki/Group_of_24), [G-77](/wiki/Group_of_77), [IAEA](/wiki/IAEA), [IBRD](/wiki/IBRD), [IDA](/wiki/International_Development_Association), [IDB](/wiki/Islamic_Development_Bank), [IFC](/wiki/International_Finance_Corporation), [ILO](/wiki/International_Labour_Organization), [IMF](/wiki/International_Monetary_Fund), [International Maritime Organization](/wiki/International_Maritime_Organization), [Interpol](/wiki/Interpol_(organization)), [OIC](/wiki/Organisation_of_Islamic_Cooperation), [OPEC](/wiki/OPEC),<ref name=rubin80>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref> the [United Nations](/wiki/United_Nations), [WHO](/wiki/World_Health_Organization), and currently has observer status at the [World Trade Organization](/wiki/World_Trade_Organization).

### Military[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

[right|thumb|](/wiki/File:Fotros_drone.jpg)[Fotros (UCAV)](/wiki/Fotros_(UCAV)) is considered the largest in Iran's arsenal of unmanned aerial vehicles. Iran has made several indigenous [UAVs](/wiki/UAV). The Islamic Republic of Iran has two types of armed forces: the regular forces [Islamic Republic of Iran Army](/wiki/Islamic_Republic_of_Iran_Army), [Islamic Republic of Iran Air Force](/wiki/Islamic_Republic_of_Iran_Air_Force), [Islamic Republic of Iran Navy](/wiki/Islamic_Republic_of_Iran_Navy) and the [Revolutionary Guards](/wiki/Army_of_the_Guardians_of_the_Islamic_Revolution), totaling about 545,000 active troops. Iran also has around 350,000 Reserve Force totaling around 900,000 trained troops.[[174]](#cite_note-174) Iran has a paramilitary, volunteer militia force within the IRGC, called the [Basij](/wiki/Basij), which includes about 90,000 full-time, active-duty uniformed members. Up to 11 million men and women are members of the Basij who could potentially be called up for service; GlobalSecurity.org estimates Iran could mobilize "up to one million men". This would be among the largest troop mobilizations in the world.[[175]](#cite_note-175) In 2007, Iran's military spending represented 2.6% of the GDP or $102 per capita, the lowest figure of the [Persian Gulf](/wiki/Persian_Gulf) nations.[[176]](#cite_note-176) Iran's military doctrine is based on [deterrence](/wiki/Deterrence_theory).[[177]](#cite_note-177) In 2014 arms spending the country spent $15 billion and was outspent by the states of the [Gulf Cooperation Council](/wiki/Gulf_Cooperation_Council) by a factor of 13.[[178]](#cite_note-178) Iran supports the military activities of its allies in Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon ([Hezbollah](/wiki/Hezbollah)) with thousands of rockets and missiles.[[179]](#cite_note-179) Since the 1979 Revolution, to overcome foreign embargoes, Iran has developed its own military industry, produced its own [tanks](/wiki/Tanks), [armored personnel carriers](/wiki/Armored_personnel_carriers), [guided missiles](/wiki/Guided_missile), [submarines](/wiki/Submarine), military vessels, [guided missile destroyer](/wiki/Iranian_destroyer_Jamaran), [radar](/wiki/Radar) systems, [helicopters](/wiki/Helicopters) and [fighter planes](/wiki/Fighter_planes).[[180]](#cite_note-180) In recent years, official announcements have highlighted the development of weapons such as the [Hoot](/wiki/Hoot_(missile)), [Kowsar](/wiki/Kowsar), [Zelzal](/wiki/Zelzal), [Fateh-110](/wiki/Fateh-110), [Shahab-3](/wiki/Shahab-3) and [Sejjil](/wiki/Sejjil) missiles, and a variety of [unmanned aerial vehicles](/wiki/Unmanned_aerial_vehicles) (UAVs).[[181]](#cite_note-181) The [Fajr-3 (MIRV)](/wiki/Fajr-3_(MIRV)) is currently Iran's most advanced [ballistic missile](/wiki/Ballistic_missile), it is a [liquid fuel](/wiki/Liquid_fuel) missile with an undisclosed range which was developed and produced domestically.

## Economy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|270px|](/wiki/File:Provinces_of_Iran_by_contribution_to_national_GDP.svg)[Iran's provinces](/wiki/Provinces_of_Iran) by their contribution to national GDP, 2014 [Iran's economy](/wiki/Economy_of_Iran) is a [mixture](/wiki/Mixed_economy) of [central planning](/wiki/Planned_economy), [state ownership](/wiki/State_ownership) of oil and other large enterprises, village agriculture, and small-scale private trading and service ventures.[[182]](#cite_note-182) In 2014, GDP was $404.1 billion ($1.334 trillion at PPP), or $17,100 at [PPP](/wiki/Purchasing_power_parity) per capita.[[22]](#cite_note-22) Iran is ranked as an upper-middle income economy by the [World Bank](/wiki/World_Bank).[[183]](#cite_note-183) In the early 21st century the service sector contributed the largest percentage of the GDP, followed by industry ([mining](/wiki/Mining_in_Iran) and manufacturing) and [agriculture](/wiki/Agriculture_of_Iran).[[184]](#cite_note-184) The [Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran](/wiki/Central_Bank_of_the_Islamic_Republic_of_Iran) is responsible for developing and maintaining the [Iranian rial](/wiki/Iranian_rial), which serves as the country's [currency](/wiki/Currency). The government doesn't recognize [trade unions](/wiki/List_of_trade_unions#Iran) other than the [Islamic Labour Councils](/wiki/Islamic_Labour_Council), which are subject to the approval of employers and the security services.<ref name=ayatoil>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref> The minimum wage in June 2013 was 487 million rials a month ($134).<ref name=irannum>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> Unemployment has remained above 10% since 1997, and the unemployment rate for women is almost double that of the men.<ref name=irannum/>

In 2006, about 45% of the government's budget came from oil and natural gas revenues, and 31% came from taxes and fees.[[185]](#cite_note-185) [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), Iran had earned $70 billion in [foreign exchange reserves](/wiki/Foreign_exchange_reserves) mostly (80%) from crude oil exports.[[186]](#cite_note-186) Iranian budget [deficits](/wiki/Deficits) have been a chronic problem, mostly due to [large-scale state subsidies](/wiki/Iranian_Economic_Reform_Plan#Subsidy_reform_plan), that include foodstuffs and especially gasoline, totaling more than $84 billion in 2008 for the energy sector alone.[[187]](#cite_note-187)[[188]](#cite_note-188) In 2010, the [economic reform plan](/wiki/Iranian_Economic_Reform_Plan#Subsidy_reform_plan) was approved by parliament to [cut subsidies](/wiki/Iranian_subsidy_reform_plan) gradually and replace them with targeted social assistance. The objective is to move towards [free market](/wiki/Free_market) prices in a 5-year period and increase productivity and [social justice](/wiki/Social_justice).[[189]](#cite_note-189) The administration continues to follow the [market reform plans](/wiki/Iranian_Economic_Reform_Plan) of the previous one and indicated that it will diversify Iran's oil-reliant economy. Iran has also developed a [biotechnology](/wiki/Science_in_Iran#Biotechnology), [nanotechnology](/wiki/Science_in_Iran#Nanotechnology), and [pharmaceuticals](/wiki/Pharmaceuticals_in_Iran) industry.[[190]](#cite_note-190) However, nationalized industries such as the [bonyads](/wiki/Bonyad) have often been managed badly, making them ineffective and uncompetitive with years. Currently, the government is trying to [privatize these industries](/wiki/Privatization_in_Iran), and, despite successes, there are still several problems to be overcome, such as the [lagging corruption in the public sector](/wiki/Corruption_in_Iran) and lack of competitiveness. In 2010, Iran was ranked 69, out of 139 nations, in the [Global Competitiveness Report](/wiki/Global_Competitiveness_Report).[[191]](#cite_note-191) Iran has leading manufacturing industries in the fields of car-manufacture and transportation, construction materials, home appliances, food and agricultural goods, armaments, pharmaceuticals, information technology, power and petrochemicals in the Middle East.[[192]](#cite_note-192) According to [FAO](/wiki/Food_and_Agriculture_Organization), Iran has been a top five producer of the following agricultural products in the world in 2012: [apricots](/wiki/Apricot), [cherries](/wiki/Cherry), [sour cherries](/wiki/Sour_cherry), [cucumbers](/wiki/Cucumber) and [gherkins](/wiki/Gherkin), [dates](/wiki/Date_(fruit)), [eggplants](/wiki/Eggplant), [figs](/wiki/Common_fig), [pistachios](/wiki/Pistachio), [quinces](/wiki/Quince), [walnuts](/wiki/Walnut), and [watermelons](/wiki/Watermelon).[[193]](#cite_note-193) Economic [sanctions against Iran](/wiki/Sanctions_against_Iran), such as the embargo against Iranian crude oil, have affected the economy.<ref name=everend>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref> Sanctions have led to a steep fall in the value of the rial, and as of April 2013 one US dollar is worth 36,000 rial, compared with 16,000 in early 2012.[[194]](#cite_note-194) Following a successful implementation of the [2015 nuclear and sanctions relief deal](/wiki/Joint_Comprehensive_Plan_of_Action), the resulting benefits might not be distributed evenly across the Iranian economy as political elites such as the [Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps](/wiki/Islamic_Revolutionary_Guard_Corps) have garnered more resources and economic interests.[[195]](#cite_note-195)[[196]](#cite_note-196)

### Tourism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|Over 1 million tourists visit](/wiki/File:Kish-island-Persian-Gulf.jpg) [Kish Island](/wiki/Kish_Island) each year.[[197]](#cite_note-197) Although tourism declined significantly during the war with Iraq, it has been subsequently recovered. About 1,659,000 foreign tourists visited Iran in 2004, and 2.3 million in 2009, mostly from Asian countries, including the republics of [Central Asia](/wiki/Central_Asia), while about 10% came from the [European Union](/wiki/European_Union) and [North America](/wiki/North_America).[[198]](#cite_note-198)[[199]](#cite_note-199)<ref name = presstvtour>[Iran hosted 2.3 million tourists this year](https://web.archive.org/web/20131221100152/http://previous.presstv.com/detail.aspx?id=121199&sectionid=351020108). PressTV, March 19, 2010. Retrieved March 22, 2011.</ref> Over five million tourists visited Iran in the fiscal year of 2014–2015, ending March 21, four percent more year-on-year.[[200]](#cite_note-200) Alongside the capital, the most popular tourist destinations are [Isfahan](/wiki/Isfahan), [Mashhad](/wiki/Mashhad) and [Shiraz](/wiki/Shiraz).[[201]](#cite_note-201) In the early 2000s, the industry faced serious limitations in infrastructure, communications, industry standards and personnel training.[[202]](#cite_note-202) The majority of the 300,000 [tourist visas](/wiki/Tourist_visa) granted in 2003 were obtained by Asian [Muslims](/wiki/Muslims), who presumably intended to visit important [pilgrimage](/wiki/Pilgrimage) sites in [Mashhad](/wiki/Mashhad) and [Qom](/wiki/Qom).<ref name = presstvtour/> Several organized tours from Germany, France and other European countries come to Iran annually to visit archaeological sites and monuments. In 2003, Iran ranked 68th in tourism revenues worldwide.[[203]](#cite_note-203) According to [UNESCO](/wiki/UNESCO) and the deputy head of research for [Iran Travel and Tourism Organization (ITTO)](/wiki/Cultural_Heritage,_Handcrafts_and_Tourism_Organization), Iran is rated 4th among the top 10 destinations in the [Middle East](/wiki/Middle_East).[[203]](#cite_note-203) [Domestic tourism](/wiki/Domestic_tourism) in Iran is one of the largest in the world.[[204]](#cite_note-204)<ref name=BYI>[Template:Cite journal](/wiki/Template:Cite_journal)</ref>[[205]](#cite_note-205) Weak advertising, unstable regional conditions, a poor public image in some parts of the world, and absence of efficient planning schemes in the tourism sector have all hindered the growth of tourism.

### Energy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|Iran holds 10% of the world's proven](/wiki/File:CIAIranKarteOelGas.jpg) [oil reserves](/wiki/Oil_reserves) and 15% of its gas. It is [OPEC's](/wiki/OPEC) second largest exporter and the world's fourth oil producer. Iran has the second largest proved [gas reserves](/wiki/Natural_gas_reserves_in_Iran) in the world after [Russia](/wiki/Russia), with 33.6 trillion [cubic metres](/wiki/Cubic_metres),<ref name=wsjgas>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref> and third [largest natural gas production](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_natural_gas_production) in the world after [Indonesia](/wiki/Indonesia), and [Russia](/wiki/Russia). It also ranks fourth in [oil reserves](/wiki/Oil_reserves_in_Iran) with an estimated 153,600,000,000 barrels.[[206]](#cite_note-206)[[207]](#cite_note-207) It is [OPEC's](/wiki/OPEC) 2nd largest oil exporter and is an [energy superpower](/wiki/Energy_superpower#Iran).[[208]](#cite_note-208)[[209]](#cite_note-209)In 2005, Iran spent US$4 billion on fuel imports, because of [contraband](/wiki/Smuggling_in_Iran) and inefficient domestic use.[[210]](#cite_note-210) Oil industry output averaged [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) in 2005, compared with the peak of six million barrels per day reached in 1974. In the early years of the 2000s (decade), industry infrastructure was increasingly inefficient because of technological lags. Few exploratory [wells](/wiki/Oil_well) were drilled in 2005.

In 2004, a large share of [natural gas reserves in Iran](/wiki/Natural_gas_reserves_in_Iran) were untapped. The addition of new [hydroelectric](/wiki/Hydroelectric) stations and the streamlining of conventional coal and oil-fired stations increased installed capacity to 33,000 megawatts. Of that amount, about 75% was based on natural gas, 18% on oil, and 7% on hydroelectric power. In 2004, Iran opened its first wind-powered and geothermal plants, and the first [solar](/wiki/Solar_power) thermal plant is to come online in 2009. Iran is the third country in the world to have developed [GTL](/wiki/Gas_to_liquid) technology.[[211]](#cite_note-211) [Demographic](/wiki/Demographics_of_Iran) trends and intensified industrialization have caused [electric power](/wiki/Electric_power) demand to grow by 8% per year. The government’s goal of 53,000 megawatts of installed capacity by 2010 is to be reached by bringing on line [new gas-fired plants](/wiki/List_of_power_stations_in_Iran) and by adding hydroelectric, and nuclear power generating capacity. [Iran’s first nuclear power plant](/wiki/Bushehr_Nuclear_Power_Plant) at [Bushehr](/wiki/Bushehr) went online in 2011. It is the second [Nuclear Power Plant](/wiki/Nuclear_Power_Plant) that ever built in the Middle East after [Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant](/wiki/Metsamor_Nuclear_Power_Plant) in [Armenia](/wiki/Armenia).[[212]](#cite_note-212)[[213]](#cite_note-213)

## Education, science and technology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

[upright|thumb|An 18th-century Persian](/wiki/File:Astrolabe-Persian-18C.jpg) [astrolabe](/wiki/Astrolabe) [Education in Iran](/wiki/Education_in_Iran) is highly centralized. [K-12 education](/wiki/K-12_education) is supervised by the [Ministry of Education](/wiki/Ministry_of_Education_(Iran)), and higher education is under the supervision of the [Ministry of Science and Technology](/wiki/Ministry_of_Science,_Research_and_Technology). The adult literacy rated 93.0% in September 2015,[[214]](#cite_note-214) while it had rated 85.0% in 2008, up from 36.5% in 1976.<ref name=unescolit>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

The requirement to enter into higher education is to have a [high school diploma](/wiki/High_school_diploma) and pass the national university entrance examination, [Iranian University Entrance Exam](/wiki/Iranian_University_Entrance_Exam) (known as *concour*), which is the equivalent of the US [SAT](/wiki/SAT) exams. Many students do a 1–2 year course of [pre-university](/wiki/University-preparatory_school) (*piš-dānešgāh*), which is the equivalent of [GCE](/wiki/General_Certificate_of_Education) [A-levels](/wiki/A-levels) and [International Baccalaureate](/wiki/International_Baccalaureate). The completion of the pre-university course earns students the Pre-University Certificate.[[215]](#cite_note-215) [thumb|left|Central office of the](/wiki/File:The_central_offices.jpg) [FUM](/wiki/Ferdowsi_University) Higher education is sanctioned by different levels of diplomas. *Kārdāni* ([associate degree](/wiki/Associate_degree); also known as *fowq e diplom*) is delivered after 2 years of higher education; *kāršenāsi* ([bachelor's degree](/wiki/Bachelor's_degree); also known as *licāns*) is delivered after 4 years of higher education; and *kāršenāsi e aršad* ([master's degree](/wiki/Master's_degree)) is delivered after 2 more years of study, after which another exam allows the candidate to pursue a doctoral program ([PhD](/wiki/PhD); known as *doctorā*).[[216]](#cite_note-216) According to the [Webometrics Ranking of World Universities](/wiki/Webometrics_Ranking_of_World_Universities), the top-ranking universities in the country are the [University of Tehran](/wiki/University_of_Tehran) (468th worldwide), the [Tehran University of Medical Sciences](/wiki/Tehran_University_of_Medical_Sciences) (612th) and [Ferdowsi University of Mashhad](/wiki/Ferdowsi_University_of_Mashhad) (815th).[[217]](#cite_note-217) Iran has increased its publication output nearly tenfold from 1996 through 2004, and has been ranked first in terms of output growth rate, followed by China.[[218]](#cite_note-218) According to [SCImago](/wiki/SCImago), Iran could rank fourth in the world in terms of research output by 2018, if the current trend persists.[[219]](#cite_note-219) [thumb|200px|](/wiki/File:Omid_0651.jpg)[Safir rocket](/wiki/Safir_rocket) – Iran is the [ninth country to put a domestically built satellite into orbit](/wiki/Timeline_of_first_orbital_launches_by_country#List_of_first_orbital_launches_by_country) and the sixth to send [animals in space](/wiki/Animals_in_space). In 2009, a SUSE Linux-based HPC system made by the Aerospace Research Institute of Iran (ARI) was launched with 32 cores, and now runs 96 cores. Its performance was pegged at 192 [GFLOPS](/wiki/GFLOPS).[[220]](#cite_note-220) [Sorena 2](/wiki/Surena_(robot)) Robot, which was designed by engineers at the [University of Tehran](/wiki/University_of_Tehran), was unveiled in 2010. The [Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers](/wiki/Institute_of_Electrical_and_Electronics_Engineers) (IEEE) has placed the name of Surena among the five prominent robots of the world after analyzing its performance.[[221]](#cite_note-221) [thumb|left|Production line for](/wiki/File:inside_Aryogen.jpg) [AryoSeven](/wiki/AryoSeven), inside the biopharmaceutical company of [AryoGen](/wiki/AryoGen) In the biomedical sciences, Iran's [Institute of Biochemistry and Biophysics](/wiki/Institute_of_Biochemistry_and_Biophysics) is a UNESCO chair in biology.[[222]](#cite_note-222) In late 2006, [Iranian scientists](/wiki/List_of_modern_Iranian_scientists) successfully [cloned](/wiki/Cloning) a sheep by somatic cell nuclear transfer, at the [Royan Research Center](/wiki/Royan_Institute) in Tehran.[[223]](#cite_note-223) According to a study by David Morrison and Ali Khadem Hosseini (Harvard-MIT and Cambridge), [stem cell](/wiki/Stem_cell) research in Iran is amongst the top 10 in the world.[[224]](#cite_note-224) Iran ranks 15th in the world in [nanotechnologies](/wiki/Nanotechnologies).[[225]](#cite_note-225)[[226]](#cite_note-226)[[227]](#cite_note-227) Iran placed its domestically built [satellite](/wiki/Satellite), [Omid](/wiki/Omid) into orbit on the 30th anniversary of the 1979 Revolution, on 2 February 2009,[[228]](#cite_note-228) through [Safir rocket](/wiki/Safir_(rocket)), becoming the [ninth country](/wiki/Timeline_of_first_orbital_launches_by_country) in the world capable of both producing a satellite and sending it into [space](/wiki/Space) from a domestically made [launcher](/wiki/Launch_pad).[[229]](#cite_note-229) The [Iranian nuclear program](/wiki/Iranian_nuclear_program) was launched in the 1950s. Iran is the seventh country to produce [uranium hexafluoride](/wiki/Uranium_hexafluoride), and controls the entire [nuclear fuel cycle](/wiki/Nuclear_fuel_cycle).[[230]](#cite_note-230)[[231]](#cite_note-231) Iranian scientists outside Iran have also made some major contributions to science. In 1960, [Ali Javan](/wiki/Ali_Javan) co-invented the first [gas laser](/wiki/Gas_laser), and [fuzzy set theory](/wiki/Fuzzy_set) was introduced by [Lotfi Zadeh](/wiki/Lotfi_Zadeh).[[232]](#cite_note-232) Iranian cardiologist, [Tofy Mussivand](/wiki/Tofy_Mussivand) invented and developed the first artificial cardiac pump, the precursor of the [artificial heart](/wiki/Artificial_heart). Furthering research and treatment of diabetes, [HbA1c](/wiki/HbA1c) was discovered by [Samuel Rahbar](/wiki/Samuel_Rahbar). Iranian physics is especially strong in [string theory](/wiki/String_theory), with many papers being published in Iran.[[233]](#cite_note-233) [Iranian-American](/wiki/Iranian-American) string theorist [Kamran Vafa](/wiki/Kamran_Vafa) proposed the [Vafa-Witten theorem](/wiki/Vafa-Witten_theorem) together with [Edward Witten](/wiki/Edward_Witten). In August 2014, [Maryam Mirzakhani](/wiki/Maryam_Mirzakhani) became the first-ever woman, as well as the first-ever Iranian, to receive the [Fields Medal](/wiki/Fields_Medal), the highest prize in mathematics.[[234]](#cite_note-234)

## Demographics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=21)]

[thumb|270px|Iran's provinces by population, 2014](/wiki/File:Provinces_of_Iran_by_population.svg) [thumb|270px|Iran's provinces by their population density, 2013](/wiki/File:Provinces_of_Iran_by_population_density.svg) [Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [Template:Historical populations](/wiki/Template:Historical_populations) Iran is a diverse country, consisting of many religious and ethnic groups that are unified through a shared [Persian language and culture](/wiki/Persian_culture).[[235]](#cite_note-235) Iran's population grew rapidly during the latter half of the 20th century, increasing from about 19 million in 1956 to around 75 million by 2009.[[236]](#cite_note-236)[[237]](#cite_note-237) However, Iran's [birth rate](/wiki/Birth_rate) has dropped significantly in recent years, leading to a population growth rate—recorded from July 2012—of about 1.29%.[[238]](#cite_note-238) Studies project that the growth will continue to slow until it stabilizes above 105 million by 2050.[[239]](#cite_note-239)[[240]](#cite_note-240) Iran hosts one of the largest [refugee](/wiki/Refugee) populations in the world, with more than one million refugees, mostly from [Afghanistan](/wiki/Afghan_refugees) and [Iraq](/wiki/Iraq).[[241]](#cite_note-241) Since 2006, Iranian officials have been working with the [UNHCR](/wiki/UNHCR) and Afghan officials for their [repatriation](/wiki/Repatriation).[[242]](#cite_note-242) According to estimates, about five million [Iranian citizens](/wiki/Iranian_citizens_abroad) have emigrated to other countries, mostly since the 1979 Revolution.[[243]](#cite_note-243)[[244]](#cite_note-244) According to the [Iranian Constitution](/wiki/Iranian_Constitution), the government is required to provide every citizen of the country with access to [social security](/wiki/Social_security) that covers retirement, unemployment, old age, [disability](/wiki/Disability), accidents, calamities, health and medical treatment and care services.[[245]](#cite_note-245) This is covered by [tax revenues](/wiki/Labor_and_tax_laws_in_Iran) and income derived from public contributions.[[246]](#cite_note-246)

### Languages[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=22)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

The majority of the population speak [Persian language](/wiki/Persian_language), which is also the [official language](/wiki/Official_language) of the country. Others include speakers of the rest of the [Iranian languages](/wiki/Iranian_language) within the greater [Indo-European languages](/wiki/Indo-European_languages), and the languages of the other ethnicities in Iran.

In northern Iran, mostly confined to [Gilan](/wiki/Gilan_Province) and [Mazenderan](/wiki/Mazandaran_Province) provinces, [Gilaki](/wiki/Gilaki_language) and [Mazenderani](/wiki/Mazandarani_language) languages are widely spoken. They both have affinities to the neighboring [Caucasian languages](/wiki/Languages_of_the_Caucasus). In parts of [Gilan](/wiki/Gilan_Province), [Talysh language](/wiki/Talysh_language) is also widely spoken, which stretches up to the neighboring country of [Azerbaijan](/wiki/Azerbaijan). [Kurdish](/wiki/Kurdish_language) is widely spoken in [Kurdistan Province](/wiki/Kurdistan_Province) and nearby areas. In [Khuzestan](/wiki/Khuzestan), [many distinct Persian dialects](/wiki/Persian_dialects_in_Khuzestan) are spoken. [Luri](/wiki/Luri_language) and [Lari](/wiki/Lari_language) languages are spoken in southwestern and southern Iran.

[Turkic languages](/wiki/Turkic_languages) and dialects, most importantly [Azerbaijani language](/wiki/Azerbaijani_language) which is by far the most spoken language in the country after Persian,[[247]](#cite_note-247) are spoken in different areas in Iran, but is especially widely and dominantly spoken in [Iranian Azerbaijan](/wiki/Iranian_Azerbaijan).

Notable minority languages in Iran include [Armenian](/wiki/Armenian_language), [Georgian](/wiki/Georgian_language), [Neo-Aramaic](/wiki/Neo-Aramaic_languages), and [Arabic](/wiki/Arabic). [Khuzi Arabic](/wiki/Khuzestani_Arabic) is spoken by the [Arabs in Khuzestan](/wiki/Ahwazi_Arabs), and the wider group of [Iranian Arabs](/wiki/Iranian_Arabs). [Circassian language](/wiki/Circassian_language) was also once widely used by the large Circassian minority, but, due to assimilation over the many years, no sizable number of Circassians speak the language anymore.[[248]](#cite_note-248)[[249]](#cite_note-249)[[250]](#cite_note-250)[[251]](#cite_note-251) Percentages of spoken language continue to be a point of debate, as many opt that they are politically motivated; most notably regarding the largest and second-largest ethnicities in Iran, the Persians and [Azerbaijanis](/wiki/Azerbaijanis). The following percentages are according to the [CIA's](/wiki/CIA) [World Factbook](/wiki/World_Factbook): 53% Persian, 16% [Azerbaijani](/wiki/Azerbaijani_language), 10% [Kurdish](/wiki/Kurdish_language), 7% [Mazenderani](/wiki/Mazandarani_language) and [Gilaki](/wiki/Gilaki_language), 7% [Luri](/wiki/Luri_language), 2% [Turkmen](/wiki/Turkmen_language), 2% [Balochi](/wiki/Balochi_language), 2% [Arabic](/wiki/Arabic_language), and 2% the remainder [Armenian](/wiki/Armenian_language), [Georgian](/wiki/Georgian_language), [Neo-Aramaic](/wiki/Neo-Aramaic_language), and [Circassian](/wiki/Circassian_language).[[22]](#cite_note-22)

### Ethnic groups[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=23)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) As with the spoken languages, the ethnic group composition also remains a point of debate, mainly regarding the largest and second largest ethnic groups, the Persians and Azerbaijanis, due to the lack of Iranian state censuses based on ethnicity. [The CIA's World Factbook](/wiki/The_World_Factbook) has estimated that around 79% of the population of Iran are a diverse [Indo-European](/wiki/Proto-Indo-Europeans) [ethno-linguistic group](/wiki/Ethnolinguistics) that comprise the speakers of [Iranian languages](/wiki/Iranian_languages),[[252]](#cite_note-252) with [Persians](/wiki/Persian_people) (incl. [Mazenderanis](/wiki/Mazandarani_people) and [Gilaks](/wiki/Gilaks)) constituting 61% of the population, [Kurds](/wiki/Kurds) 10%, [Lurs](/wiki/Lurs) 6%, and [Balochs](/wiki/Baloch_people) 2%. Peoples of the other ethnicities in Iran make up the remaining 21%, with [Azerbaijanis](/wiki/Azerbaijani_people) constituting 16%, [Arabs](/wiki/Arabs) 2%, [Turkmens](/wiki/Turkmen_people) and [Turkic tribes](/wiki/Turkic_peoples) 2%, and others 1% (such as [Armenians](/wiki/Armenians), [Talysh](/wiki/Talysh_people), [Georgians](/wiki/Georgians), [Circassians](/wiki/Circassians), [Assyrians](/wiki/Assyrians)).[[253]](#cite_note-253) The [Library of Congress](/wiki/Library_of_Congress) issued slightly different estimates: Persians 65% (incl. Mazenderanis, Gilaks and Talysh people), [Azerbaijanis](/wiki/Azerbaijani_people) 16%, [Kurds](/wiki/Kurds) 7%, [Lurs](/wiki/Lurs) 6%, [Baluchi](/wiki/Baloch_people) 2%; Turkic tribal groups such as [Qashqai](/wiki/Qashqai_people) 1%, and [Turkmens](/wiki/Turkmens) 1%; and non-Iranian, non-Turkic groups such as Armenians, Georgians, Assyrians, Circassians, and Arabs less than 3%. It determined that Persian is the first language of at least 65% of the country's population, and is the second language for most of the remaining 35%.[[254]](#cite_note-254) [thumb|400px|Ethnicities and religions in Iran](/wiki/File:Ethnicities_and_religions_in_Iran.png) Other [non-governmental](/wiki/Non-governmental) estimations regarding the groups other than the Persians and Azerbaijanis roughly congruate with the World Factbook and the Library of Congress. However, many scholarly and organisational estimations regarding the number of these two groups differ significantly from the mentioned census. According to many of them, the number of ethnic Azerbaijanis in Iran comprises between 21.6–30% of the total population, with the majority holding it on 25%.[Template:Ref](/wiki/Template:Ref)[[255]](#cite_note-255)[Template:Ref](/wiki/Template:Ref)[[256]](#cite_note-256)[[257]](#cite_note-257)[[258]](#cite_note-258)[[259]](#cite_note-259)[[260]](#cite_note-260) In any case, the largest population of Azerbaijanis in the world live in Iran.

### Religion[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=24)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) Historically, [Proto-Iranian religion](/wiki/Proto-Indo-Iranian_religion) and the subsequent [Zoroastrianism](/wiki/Zoroastrianism) and [Manichaeism](/wiki/Manichaeism) were the dominant religions in Iran, particularly during the [Median](/wiki/Medes), [Achaemenid](/wiki/Achaemenid_Empire), [Parthian](/wiki/Parthian_Empire) and [Sassanid](/wiki/Sasanian_Empire) empires. This changed after the fall of the Sassanid Empire by the [Muslim Conquest of Iran](/wiki/Muslim_conquest_of_Persia). Iran was predominantly Sunni until the conversion of the country (as well as the people of what is today the neighboring Republic of Azerbaijan) to Shia Islam by the order of the [Safavid dynasty](/wiki/Safavid_dynasty) in the 16th century.[[88]](#cite_note-88) Today, the [Twelver](/wiki/Twelver) Shia Islam is the official [state religion](/wiki/State_religion), to which about 90% to 95%[[261]](#cite_note-261)[[262]](#cite_note-262) of the population officially belong. About 4% to 8% of the population are [Sunni Muslims](/wiki/Sunni_Muslims), mainly [Kurds](/wiki/Iranian_Kurdistan) and Balochs. The remaining 2% are non-Muslim [religious minorities](/wiki/Religious_minorities_in_Iran), including [Christians](/wiki/Christians_in_Iran), [Jews](/wiki/Persian_Jews), [Bahais](/wiki/Bahá'í_Faith), [Mandeans](/wiki/Mandeans), [Yezidis](/wiki/Yezidi), [Yarsanis](/wiki/Yarsan), and [Zoroastrians](/wiki/Zoroastrians_in_Iran).[[22]](#cite_note-22)[[263]](#cite_note-263) Judaism has a long history in Iran, dating back to the [Achaemenid Conquest of Babylonia](/wiki/Nabonidus#The_Persian_conquest_of_Babylonia). Although many left in the wake of the establishment of the State of Israel and the 1979 Revolution, around 8,756 Jews remain in Iran, according to the latest census.<ref name=IranCensusMurder>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> Iran has the largest Jewish population in the Middle East outside of Israel.[[264]](#cite_note-264) Around 250,000–370,000 Christians reside in Iran,[[265]](#cite_note-265)[[266]](#cite_note-266) and it is the largest recognized minority religion in the nation. Most are of [Armenian](/wiki/Iranian_Armenians) background with a sizable minority of [Assyrians](/wiki/Assyrians_in_Iran) as well.[[267]](#cite_note-267) Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and the Sunni branch of Islam are officially recognized by the government, and have reserved seats in the Iranian Parliament.[[107]](#cite_note-107) But the Bahá'í Faith, which is said to be the largest non-Muslim religious minority in Iran,[[268]](#cite_note-268) is not officially recognized, and has been persecuted during its existence in Iran since the 19th century. Since the 1979 Revolution, the [persecution of Bahais](/wiki/Persecution_of_Bahais) has increased with executions, the denial of civil rights and liberties, and the denial of access to higher education and employment.[[269]](#cite_note-269)[[270]](#cite_note-270)[[271]](#cite_note-271) The government has not released statistics regarding [irreligiosity](/wiki/Irreligion_in_Iran). However, the irreligious figures are growing and are higher in the [diaspora](/wiki/Iranian_diaspora), notably among [Iranian Americans](/wiki/Iranian_American#Religion).[[272]](#cite_note-272)[[273]](#cite_note-273)<gallery mode=packed> Takht-e-soleiman-3.jpg|[Adur Gushnasp Temple](/wiki/Takht-e_Soleymān) IranShushGrabDaniels3.jpg|[Tomb of Daniel](/wiki/Tomb_of_Daniel) Armenian Monastery of Saint Thaddeus - closeup.jpg|[Saint Thaddeus Monastery](/wiki/Saint_Thaddeus_Monastery) Saint Stephen Church - 8614907041.jpg|[Saint Stepanos Monastery](/wiki/Saint_Stepanos_Monastery) Sheikh lotfolla.jpg|[Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque](/wiki/Sheikh_Lotfollah_Mosque) Mosque of Jamkaran.png|[Jamkaran Mosque](/wiki/Jamkaran_Mosque) Imam reza shrine in Mashhad.jpg|[Imam Reza Shrine](/wiki/Imam_Reza_Shrine) </gallery>

## Culture[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=25)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) The earliest recorded cultures within the region of Iran date back to the Lower Paleolithic era.

Owing to its dominant geopolitical position and culture in the world, Iran has directly influenced cultures as far away as Greece, [Macedonia](/wiki/Macedonia_(region)), and [Italy](/wiki/Italy) to the West, Russia to the North, the [Arabian Peninsula](/wiki/Arabian_Peninsula) to the South, and indirectly [South](/wiki/South_Asia) and [East Asia](/wiki/East_Asia) to the East.

### Art[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=26)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|Ceiling of the](/wiki/File:Isfahan_Lotfollah_mosque_ceiling_symmetric.jpg) [Lotfollah Mosque](/wiki/Lotfollah_Mosque) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Miniator_hotel_shah_abbas_deevar.jpg)[Safavid painting](/wiki/Safavid_art) kept at the [Abbasi Caravanserai](/wiki/Abbasi_Hotel) in [Isfahan](/wiki/Isfahan) Iranian works of art show a great variety in style, in different regions and periods.[[274]](#cite_note-274) Iranian art encompasses many disciplines, including [architecture](/wiki/Architecture), [painting](/wiki/Painting), [weaving](/wiki/Weaving), [pottery](/wiki/Pottery), [calligraphy](/wiki/Calligraphy), [metalworking](/wiki/Metalworking), and [stonemasonry](/wiki/Stonemasonry). The Median and Achaemenid empires left a significant classical art scene which remained as basic influences for the art of the later eras. The art of the Parthians was a mixture of Iranian and [Hellenistic](/wiki/Hellenistic_art) artworks, with their main motifs being scenes of royal hunting expeditions and [investitures](/wiki/Investiture).[[275]](#cite_note-275)[[276]](#cite_note-276) The [Sassanid art](/wiki/Sassanid_art) played a prominent role in the formation of both European and Asian medieval art,[[66]](#cite_note-66) which carried forward to the [Islamic world](/wiki/Islamic_world), and much of what later became known as Islamic learning, such as [philology](/wiki/Philology), [literature](/wiki/Islamic_literature), [jurisprudence](/wiki/Fiqh), [philosophy](/wiki/Early_Islamic_philosophy), [medicine](/wiki/Islamic_medicine), [architecture](/wiki/Islamic_architecture), and [science](/wiki/Islamic_science), were of Sassanid basis.[[277]](#cite_note-277)[[278]](#cite_note-278)[[279]](#cite_note-279) There is also a vibrant [Iranian modern and contemporary art](/wiki/Iranian_modern_and_contemporary_art) scene, with its genesis in the late 1940s. The 1949 *Apadana Gallery* of Tehran, which was operated by Mahmoud Javadi Pour and other colleagues, and the emergence of artists such as [Marcos Grigorian](/wiki/Marcos_Grigorian) in the 1950s, signaled a commitment to the creation of a form of modern art grounded in Iran.[[280]](#cite_note-280) Iranian carpet-weaving dates back to the Bronze Age, and is one of the most distinguished manifestations of the art of Iran. Iran is the world's largest producer and exporter of handmade carpets, producing three quarters of the world's total output and having a share of 30% of world's export markets.[[281]](#cite_note-281)[[282]](#cite_note-282) Iran is also home to one of the [largest jewel collections](/wiki/Iranian_Crown_Jewels) in the world.

### Architecture[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=27)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) The history of Iranian architecture goes back to the 7th millennium BC.[[283]](#cite_note-283) Iranians were among the first to use [mathematics](/wiki/Mathematics), [geometry](/wiki/Geometry), and [astronomy](/wiki/Astronomy) in architecture.

Iranian architecture displays great variety, both structural and aesthetic, developing gradually and coherently out of earlier traditions and experience.[[284]](#cite_note-284) The guiding motifs of Iranian architecture are unity, continuity, and cosmic [symbolism](/wiki/Symbol).[[285]](#cite_note-285) Iran ranks seventh among countries with the most archaeological architectural ruins and attractions from antiquity, as recognized by UNESCO.[[286]](#cite_note-286) [Template:Clear](/wiki/Template:Clear) <gallery mode=packed> Persepolis\_06.jpg|Ruins of [Persepolis](/wiki/Persepolis) Naghshe Jahan Square Isfahan modified.jpg|[Naqsh-e Jahan Square](/wiki/Naqsh-e_Jahan_Square) Soltan amir bath house2.jpg|[Qasemi Bath](/wiki/Sultan_Amir_Ahmad_Bathhouse) Isfahan Royal Mosque entrance.JPG|Entrance of the [Shah Mosque](/wiki/Shah_Mosque) Azadi Tower in Tehran, 2011.jpg|[Azadi Tower](/wiki/Azadi_Tower) </gallery> <gallery mode=packed> Allahverdi khan Bridge.jpg|[Siose Bridge](/wiki/Siose_Bridge) Shazde Garden, Mahan, Kerman.jpg|[Shazdeh Garden](/wiki/Shazdeh_Garden) Ghavam Garden Darafsh (6).JPG|[Qavam House](/wiki/Qavam_House) Bazaar of Yazd.jpg|A ceiling at the [Bazaar](/wiki/Bazaar) of [Yazd](/wiki/Yazd) Golestan palace Tehran.jpg|[Golestan Palace](/wiki/Golestan_Palace) </gallery>

### Literature[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=28)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|right|Mausoleum of](/wiki/File:ferdowsi_tomb4.jpg) [Ferdowsi](/wiki/Ferdowsi) in [Tus](/wiki/Tus,_Iran) Iranian literature is one of the world's oldest literatures, dating back to the poetry of Avesta and Zoroastrian literature.

Poetry is used in many Iranian classical works, whether in literature, science, or metaphysics. [Persian language](/wiki/Persian_language) has been dubbed as a worthy language to serve as a conduit for poetry, and is considered as one of the four main bodies of world literature.[[287]](#cite_note-287) Dialects of Persian are sporadically spoken throughout regions from China to Syria and Russia, though mainly in the Iranian Plateau.[[288]](#cite_note-288)[[289]](#cite_note-289) Iran has a number of famous poets; most notably [Rumi](/wiki/Rumi), [Ferdowsi](/wiki/Ferdowsi), [Hafez](/wiki/Hafez), [Saadi Shirazi](/wiki/Saadi_Shirazi), [Khayyám Ney-Shapuri](/wiki/Khayyám), and [Nezami Ganjavi](/wiki/Nezami_Ganjavi).[[290]](#cite_note-290) Historically, Iranian literature has inspired writers including [Johann Wolfgang von Goethe](/wiki/Johann_Wolfgang_von_Goethe), [Henry David Thoreau](/wiki/Henry_David_Thoreau), and Ralph Waldo Emerson.[[72]](#cite_note-72)[[73]](#cite_note-73)[[74]](#cite_note-74)

### Philosophy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=29)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|left|alt=The Farohar Symbol from Persepolis|Depiction of a](/wiki/File:Farvahar001.JPG) [Fravarti](/wiki/Farvahar) in [Persepolis](/wiki/Persepolis) Iranian philosophy originates to [Indo-Iranian](/wiki/Indo-Iranians) roots, with [Zarathustra's](/wiki/Zarathustra) teachings having major influences.

According to the [Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy](/wiki/Oxford_Dictionary_of_Philosophy), the chronology of the subject and science of philosophy starts with the Indo-Iranians, dating this event to 1500 BC. The Oxford dictionary also states, "Zarathushtra's philosophy entered to influence Western tradition through Judaism, and therefore on [Middle Platonism](/wiki/Middle_Platonism)."

While there are ancient relations between the Indian [*Vedas*](/wiki/Vedas) and the Iranian *Avesta*, the two main families of the Indo-Iranian philosophical traditions were characterized by fundamental differences, especially in their implications for the human being's position in society and their view of man's role in the universe.

The [Cyrus cylinder](/wiki/Cyrus_cylinder), which is known as "the first charter of [human rights](/wiki/Human_rights)", is often seen as a reflection of the questions and thoughts expressed by Zarathustra, and developed in Zoroastrian schools of the Achaemenid Era.[[291]](#cite_note-291)[[292]](#cite_note-292) The earliest tenets of Zoroastrian schools are part of the extant scriptures of the Zoroastrian religion in [Avestan language](/wiki/Avestan_language). Among them are treatises such as the [Shikand-gumanic Vichar](/wiki/Shikand-gumanic_Vichar), [Denkard](/wiki/Denkard), Zātspram, as well as older passages of Avesta, and the [Gathas](/wiki/Gathas).[[293]](#cite_note-293)

### Mythology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=30)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|Statue of](/wiki/File:Arash_statue_in_Sa'dābād_palace.jpg) [Arash the Archer](/wiki/Arash_the_Archer) at the [Sadabad Complex](/wiki/Sadabad_Palace) Iranian [mythology](/wiki/Mythology) consists of ancient [Iranian folklore](/wiki/Iranian_folklore) and stories, all involving extraordinary beings. They reflect attitudes towards the confrontation of [good and evil](/wiki/Good_and_evil), actions of the gods, and the exploits of heroes and fabulous creatures.

Myths play a crucial part in the culture of Iran, and understanding of them is increased when they are considered within the context of actual events in the history of Iran. The geography of Greater Iran, a vast area covering the present-day Iran, [the Caucasus](/wiki/The_Caucasus), Anatolia, Mesopotamia and Central Asia, with its high mountain ranges, plays the main role in much of the Iranian mythology.

[*Shahnameh*](/wiki/Shahnameh) of Ferdowsi is the main collection of the mythology of Iran, which draws heavily on the stories and characters of Zoroastrianism, from the texts of Avesta, Denkard, and [Bundahishn](/wiki/Bundahishn).

### Observances[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=31)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|right|](/wiki/File:7SEEN_89.jpg)[Haft-Seen](/wiki/Haft-Seen) (or *Haft-Čin*), a customary of the [Iranian New Year](/wiki/Nowruz)

Iran has three official calendar systems, including the [Solar calendar](/wiki/Solar_Hijri_calendar) as the main, the [Gregorian calendar](/wiki/Gregorian_calendar) for international and Christian events, and the [Lunar calendar](/wiki/Islamic_calendar) for Islamic events.

The main national annual of Iran is Nowruz, an ancient tradition celebrated on 21 March to mark the beginning of spring and the [New Year](/wiki/New_Year) of Iran. It is enjoyed by people with different religions, but is a holiday for Zoroastrians. It was registered on the list of [Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity](/wiki/Masterpieces_of_the_Oral_and_Intangible_Heritage_of_Humanity),[[294]](#cite_note-294) and was described as the *Persian New Year*[[295]](#cite_note-295)[[296]](#cite_note-296)[[297]](#cite_note-297)[[298]](#cite_note-298) by UNESCO in 2009.

Other remained national annuals of Iran include:

* [Čā'r Šanbe Suri](/wiki/Chaharshanbe_Suri): A prelude to Nowruz, in honor of [Ātar](/wiki/Atar) (the *Holy Fire*), celebrated by fireworks and fire-jumping, on the last Wednesday before Nowruz
* [Sizda' be Dar](/wiki/Sizdah_Bedar): Leaving the house to join the nature, on the thirteenth day of the New Year (April 2)
* [Čelle ye Zemestān](/wiki/Yalda): Also known as *Yaldā*; the longest night of the year, celebrated on the eve of [Winter Solstice](/wiki/Winter_Solstice), by reciting poetry and having the customary fruits which include watermelon, [pomegranate](/wiki/Pomegranate), and [mixed nuts](/wiki/Mixed_nuts)
* [Tirgān](/wiki/Tirgan): A mid summer festival, in honor of [Tishtrya](/wiki/Tishtrya), celebrated on [Tir](/wiki/Tir_(month)) 13 (July 4), by splashing water, reciting poetry, and having traditional dishes such as šole-zard and spinach soup
* [Mehrgān](/wiki/Mehrgan): An autumn festival, in honor of [Mithra](/wiki/Mithra), celebrated on [Mehr](/wiki/Mehr_(month)) 16 (October 8), by family gathering and setting a table of sweets, flowers, and a mirror
* [Sepand Ārmazgān](/wiki/Sepandarmazgan): Dedicated to [Ameša Spenta](/wiki/Amesha_Spenta) (the *Holy Devotion*); celebrated by giving presents to partners, on [Esfand](/wiki/Esfand) 15 (February 24)

Along with the national celebrations, annuals such as [Ramezān](/wiki/Ramadan), [Eid e Fetr](/wiki/Eid_al-Fitr), and [Ruz e Āšurā](/wiki/Day_of_Ashura) are marked by Muslims; [Noel](/wiki/Christmas), [Čelle ye Ruze](/wiki/Lent), and [Eid e Pāk](/wiki/Easter) are celebrated by Christians; and the festivals [Purim](/wiki/Purim), [Eid e Fatir](/wiki/Passover), and [Tu Bišvāt](/wiki/Tu_BiShvat) are celebrated by Jewish people in Iran.

### Music[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=32)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Karna-Persian-Instrument-Persepolis-Museum.JPG)[Karna](/wiki/Zurna), an ancient Iranian musical instrument from the 6th century BC Iran is the apparent birthplace of the earliest complex instruments, as evidenced by the archaeological records found in Western Iran, dating back to the 3rd millennium BC.[[299]](#cite_note-299) The Iranian use of both vertical and horizontal angular [harps](/wiki/Harp) have been documented at the sites Madaktu and [Kul-e Farah](/wiki/Kul-e_Farah), with the largest collection of [Elamite](/wiki/Elamite) instruments documented at Kul-e Farah. Multiple depictions of horizontal harps were also sculpted in Assyrian palaces, dating back between 865 and 650 BC.

[Xenophon's](/wiki/Xenophon) [*Cyropaedia*](/wiki/Cyropaedia) refers to a great number of singing women at the court of the [Achaemenid Iran](/wiki/Achaemenid_Iran). [Athenaeus of Naucratis](/wiki/Athenaeus_of_Naucratis) states that, by the time of the last Achaemenid king, [Artashata](/wiki/Artashata) (336–330 BC), Achaemenid singing girls were captured by the [Macedonian](/wiki/Macedonia_(ancient_kingdom)) general, [Parmenion](/wiki/Parmenion).[[300]](#cite_note-300) Under the Parthian Empire, a type of epic music was taught to youth, depicting the national epics and myths which were later represented in the *Shahnameh* of Ferdowsi.[[301]](#cite_note-301) History of the [Sassanid music](/wiki/Sassanid_music) is better documented than the earlier periods, and is specially more evident in the [Zoroastrian](/wiki/Zoroastrian) contexts.<ref name=EI-mhphi>[Template:Harv](/wiki/Template:Harv) iv. First millennium C.E. (1) Sasanian music, 224–651.</ref> By the time of [Khosrow II](/wiki/Khosrow_II), the Sassanid royal court was the host of prominent musicians, namely Ramtin, [Bamshad](/wiki/Bamshad), [Nakisa](/wiki/Nakisa), Azad, [Sarkash](/wiki/Sarkash), and [Barbad](/wiki/Barbad).

[thumb|left|A](/wiki/File:Mehmoonifinal2.jpg) [Safavid painting](/wiki/Safavid_art) at [Hasht Behesht](/wiki/Hasht_Behesht), depicting a 7th-century Iranian banquet Some Iranian traditional musical instruments include [saz](/wiki/Saz_(musical_instrument)), [Persian tar](/wiki/Tar_(string_instrument)), [Azerbaijani tar](/wiki/Tar_(Azerbaijani_instrument)), [dotar](/wiki/Dotar), [setar](/wiki/Setar), [kamanche](/wiki/Kamanche), [harp](/wiki/Harp), [barbat](/wiki/Barbat_(lute)), [santur](/wiki/Santur), [tanbur](/wiki/Tanbur), [qanun](/wiki/Qanun_(instrument)), [dap](/wiki/Daf), [tompak](/wiki/Tonbak), and [ney](/wiki/Ney).

[thumb|The](/wiki/File:Iran_national_orchestra.jpg) [National Orchestra of Iran](/wiki/Iran's_National_Orchestra), conducted by [Khaleghi](/wiki/Rouhollah_Khaleghi) in the 1940s The first national music society of the modern-day Iran was founded by Rouhollah Khaleghi in the 1940s, with the *School of National Music* established in 1949.[[302]](#cite_note-302) Today, the main orchestra of Iran include the National Orchestra, the [Nations Orchestra](/wiki/Melal_Orchestra), and the [Symphony Orchestra of Tehran](/wiki/Tehran_Symphony_Orchestra).

[Iranian pop music](/wiki/Iranian_pop_music) emerged by the Qajar Era.[[303]](#cite_note-303) It was led to major developments in the 1950s, by the emergence of stars such as [Viguen](/wiki/Viguen), who was referred to as the *king of Persian pop and jazz*.[[304]](#cite_note-304) The 1970s is known as a "Golden Age" for Iranian pop music, where a revolution was formed in the music industry of Iran, using indigenous instruments and forms and adding [electric guitar](/wiki/Electric_guitar). [Hayedeh](/wiki/Hayedeh), [Faramarz Aslani](/wiki/Faramarz_Aslani), [Farhad Mehrad](/wiki/Farhad_Mehrad), [Googoosh](/wiki/Googoosh), and [Ebi](/wiki/Ebi) are among the leading artists of this period.

The emergence of genres such as [modern rock](/wiki/Iranian_rock) in the 1970s and [hip hop](/wiki/Iranian_hip_hop) in the 1980s, which replaced the outdated musical styles among the youth, followed major movements and influences in the music of Iran.[[305]](#cite_note-305)[[306]](#cite_note-306)[[307]](#cite_note-307)[[308]](#cite_note-308) [Template:Clear](/wiki/Template:Clear)

### Theater[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=33)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|The](/wiki/File:City_Theater,_Tehran,_Iran.jpg) [City Theater of Tehran](/wiki/City_Theater_of_Tehran) Theater background of Iran dates back to [antiquity](/wiki/Ancient_history). The earliest recorded representations of dancing figures within Iran were found in prehistoric sites such as Tepe Siyalk and Tepe Mūsīān.[[309]](#cite_note-309) The oldest initiation of theater and phenomena of acting among the people of Iran can be traced in the epic ceremonial theaters, such as *Soug e Sivash* and *Mogh Koshi* (*Megakhouni*), and also dances and theater narrations of Iranian mythological tales reported by [Herodotos](/wiki/Herodotos) and Xenophon.

There are several theatrical genres which emerged before the advent of cinema in Iran, including *Xeyme Shab Bazi* ([Puppetry](/wiki/Puppetry)), *Saye Bazi* ([Shadow play](/wiki/Shadow_play)), *Ru-howzi* (Comical plays), and [*Tazieh*](/wiki/Tazieh) (Sorrow plays).

Before the 1979 Revolution, the Iranian national stage had become a famous performing scene for known international artists and troupes,[[310]](#cite_note-310) with the [Roudaki Hall](/wiki/Roudaki_Hall) of Tehran constructed to function as the national stage for [opera](/wiki/Opera) and [ballet](/wiki/Ballet). Opened on October 26, 1967, the hall is home to the Symphony Orchestra of Tehran, the Opera Orchestra of Tehran, and the [Iranian National Ballet Company](/wiki/Iranian_National_Ballet_Company), and continues now with *Vahdat Hall* as its official name.

The opera [*Rostam o Sohrab*](/wiki/Rostam_and_Sohrab_(opera)), based on the epic of [*Rostam and Sohrab*](/wiki/Rostam_and_Sohrab) from *Shahnameh*, is an example of opera performances in the modern-day Iran.

### Cinema and animation[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=34)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) The earliest examples of visual representations in Iranian history are traced back to the [bas-reliefs](/wiki/Bas-relief) of Persepolis, c. 500 BC. Persepolis was the ritual center of the ancient kingdom of [Achaemenids](/wiki/Achaemenids), and the figures at Persepolis remain bound by the rules of grammar and syntax of visual language.[[311]](#cite_note-311) The Iranian visual arts reached a pinnacle by the [Sassanid Era](/wiki/Sassanid_Era). A bas-relief from this period in Taq Bostan depicts a complex hunting scene. Similar works from the period have been found to articulate movements and actions in a highly sophisticated manner. It is even possible to see a progenitor of the cinema close-up in one of these works of art, which shows a wounded wild pig escaping from the hunting ground.[[312]](#cite_note-312) By the early 20th century, the five-year-old modern industry of cinema came to Iran. The first Iranian filmmaker was [Mirza Ebrahim Khan (Akkas Bashi)](/wiki/Mirza_Ebrahim_Khan_Akkas_Bashi), the official photographer of [Mozaffar od Din Shah](/wiki/Mozaffar_ad-Din_Shah_Qajar) of Qajar. He obtained a camera and filmed the Shah's visit to Europe.

In 1904, [Mirza Ebrahim Khan (Sahhaf Bashi)](/wiki/Mirza_Ebrahim_Khan_Sahhafbashi) opened the first movie theater in Tehran.[[313]](#cite_note-313) After him, several others like Russi Khan, Ardeshir Khan, and Ali Vakili tried to establish new movie theaters in Tehran. Until the early 1930s, there were around 15 cinema theaters in Tehran and 11 in other provinces.[[312]](#cite_note-312) The first silent Iranian film was made by Professor [Ovanes Ohanian](/wiki/Ovanes_Ohanian) in 1930, and the first sounded one, [*Lor Girl*](/wiki/Lor_Girl), was made by [Abd ol Hossein Sepanta](/wiki/Abdolhossein_Sepanta) in 1932.

[thumb|left|upright|](/wiki/File:Behrouz_Vossoughi.jpg)[Behrouz Vossoughi](/wiki/Behrouz_Vossoughi), a well-known Iranian actor who has appeared in more than 90 films, with over 40 years of experience in motion picture industry The 1960s was a significant decade for Iranian cinema, with 25 commercial films produced annually on average throughout the early 60s, increasing to 65 by the end of the decade. The majority of production focused on melodrama and thrillers. With the screening of the films [*Kaiser*](/wiki/Qeysar_(film)) and [*The Cow*](/wiki/The_Cow_(film)), directed by [Masoud Kimiai](/wiki/Masoud_Kimiai) and [Dariush Mehrjui](/wiki/Dariush_Mehrjui) respectively in 1969, alternative films established their status in the film industry. Attempts to organize a film festival that had begun in 1954 within the framework of the Golrizan Festival, bore fruits in the form of the Sepas Festival in 1969. The endeavors also resulted in the formation of the Tehran World Festival in 1973.[[314]](#cite_note-314) [thumb|upright|](/wiki/File:Kiarostami-1940.jpg)[Abbas Kiarostami](/wiki/Abbas_Kiarostami) After the Revolution of 1979, as the new government imposed new laws and standards, a new age in Iranian cinema emerged, starting with *Viva...* by [Khosrow Sinai](/wiki/Khosrow_Sinai) and followed by many other directors, such as Abbas Kiarostami and [Jafar Panahi](/wiki/Jafar_Panahi). Kiarostami, an admired Iranian director, planted Iran firmly on the map of world cinema when he won the [Palme d'Or](/wiki/Palme_d'Or) for [*Taste of Cherry*](/wiki/Taste_of_Cherry) in 1997.[[315]](#cite_note-315) The continuous presence of Iranian films in prestigious international festivals, such as the [Cannes Film Festival](/wiki/Cannes_Film_Festival), the [Venice Film Festival](/wiki/Venice_Film_Festival), and the [Berlin International Film Festival](/wiki/Berlin_International_Film_Festival), attracted world attention to Iranian masterpieces.[[316]](#cite_note-316) In 2006, six Iranian films, of six different styles, represented Iranian cinema at the Berlin International Film Festival. Critics considered this a remarkable event in the history of Iranian cinema.[[317]](#cite_note-317)[[318]](#cite_note-318) [Asghar Farhadi](/wiki/Asghar_Farhadi), a well-known Iranian director, has received a [Golden Globe Award](/wiki/Golden_Globe_Award) and an [Academy Award](/wiki/Academy_Award) for [Best Foreign Language Film](/wiki/Academy_Award_for_Best_Foreign_Language_Film), and was named as one of the 100 Most Influential People in the world by [Time Magazine](/wiki/Time_(magazine)) in 2012.

[thumb|Reproduction of the world's oldest example of animation, dating back to the late half of the 3rd millennium BC, found in](/wiki/File:Vase_animation.svg) [Burnt City](/wiki/Burnt_City), Iran The oldest records of animation in Iran date back to the late 3rd millennium BC. An earthen goblet discovered at the site of the 5,200-year-old Burnt City in southeastern Iran, depicts what could possibly be the world’s oldest example of animation. The artifact bears five sequential images depicting a [Persian ibex](/wiki/Wild_goat) jumping up to eat the leaves of a tree.[[319]](#cite_note-319)[[320]](#cite_note-320) The art of animation, as practiced in modern Iran, started in the 1950s. After four decades of Iranian animation production and three-decade experience of [Kanoon Institute](/wiki/Institute_for_the_Intellectual_Development_of_Children_and_Young_Adults), the Tehran International Animation Festival (TIAF) was established in February 1999. Every two years, participants from more than 70 countries attend this event in Tehran, which holds Iran's biggest national animation market.[[321]](#cite_note-321)[[322]](#cite_note-322)

### Media[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=35)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) Iran's telecommunications are handled by the state-owned [Telecommunication Company of Iran](/wiki/Telecommunication_Company_of_Iran). Almost all of the media outlets in Iran are state-owned or subject to authority monitoring. Outlets such as books, movies and music albums must be approved by the [Ministry of Ershad](/wiki/Ministry_of_Culture_and_Islamic_Guidance) before being released to the public.

Most of the [newspapers published in Iran](/wiki/List_of_Iranian_newspapers) are in Persian. The most widely circulated periodicals of the country are based in Tehran. Iran's widespread daily and weekly newspapers include [*Ettela'at*](/wiki/Ettela'at), [*Kayhan*](/wiki/Kayhan), [*Hamshahri*](/wiki/Hamshahri) and [*Resalat*](/wiki/Resalat_(newspaper)).<ref name=BYI/> [*Tehran Times*](/wiki/Tehran_Times), *Iran Daily*, and [*Financial Tribune*](/wiki/Financial_Tribune) are among the English language newspapers based in Iran.

Television was introduced to Iran in 1958.[[323]](#cite_note-323) Although the [1974 Asian Games](/wiki/1974_Asian_Games) was broadcast in color, full color programming began in 1978.[[323]](#cite_note-323) Since the 1979 Revolution, Iran's largest media corporation is the [Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting](/wiki/Islamic_Republic_of_Iran_Broadcasting) (IRIB).<ref name=BYI/> Over 30 percent of Iranians watch [satellite channels](/wiki/Satellite_channel), but observers state that the figures are likely to be higher.[[324]](#cite_note-324) Iran received access to the Internet in 1993. According to 2014 census, around 40% of the population of Iran are Internet users.[[325]](#cite_note-325) Iran ranks 24th among [countries by number of Internet users](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_number_of_Internet_users). According to the statistics provided by the web information company of [Alexa](/wiki/Alexa_Internet), [Google Search](/wiki/Google_Search) and [Yahoo!](/wiki/Yahoo!) are the most used search engines in Iran.[[326]](#cite_note-326) Over 80% of the users of [Telegram](/wiki/Telegram_(software)), a [cloud](/wiki/Cloud_computing)-based [instant messaging](/wiki/Instant_messaging) service, are from Iran.[[327]](#cite_note-327) [Instagram](/wiki/Instagram) is the most popular online [social networking service](/wiki/Social_networking_service) in Iran.[[326]](#cite_note-326) Direct access to [Facebook](/wiki/Facebook) has been blocked in Iran since the 2009 Iranian presidential election protests, due to organization of the opposition movements on the website;[[328]](#cite_note-328) but however, Facebook has around 12 to 17 million users in Iran who are using [virtual private networks](/wiki/Virtual_private_network) and [proxy servers](/wiki/Proxy_server) to access the website.[[329]](#cite_note-329) Around 90% of Iran's [e-commerce](/wiki/E-commerce) takes place on the Iranian online store of Digikala, which has around 750,000 visitors per day and more than 2.3 million subscribers.[[330]](#cite_note-330) Digikala is the most visited online store in the Middle East, and ranks 4th among the most visited websites in Iran.[[326]](#cite_note-326)

### Sports[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=36)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [left|thumb|](/wiki/File:Azadistadium.jpg)[Azadi Stadium](/wiki/Azadi_Stadium), [Tehran](/wiki/Tehran) With two thirds of Iran's population under the age of 25, many sports are played in Iran, both traditional and modern.

Iran is the birthplace of [polo](/wiki/Polo),[[331]](#cite_note-331) known as *čowgān* in Persian, and [*košti e pahlevāni*](/wiki/Pahlevani_and_zoorkhaneh_rituals), which means "the heroic [wrestling](/wiki/Wrestling)". [Freestyle wrestling](/wiki/Freestyle_wrestling) has been traditionally regarded as Iran's [national sport](/wiki/National_sport), where the national team [has been Olympic and world champion](/wiki/Iran_national_freestyle_wrestling_athletes).

[Association football](/wiki/Football_in_Iran) has been regarded as the most popular sport in Iran, with [men's national team](/wiki/Iran_national_football_team) having won the [Asian Cup](/wiki/Asian_Cup) on three occasions.

Volleyball has been Iran's second most popular sport.[[332]](#cite_note-332)[[333]](#cite_note-333) [Men's national team](/wiki/Iran_men's_national_volleyball_team) ranked fourth in [2014 FIVB Volleyball World League](/wiki/2014_FIVB_Volleyball_World_League), ranked sixth in [2014 FIVB Volleyball Men's World Championship](/wiki/2014_FIVB_Volleyball_Men's_World_Championship), and achieved the best result among the Asian national teams.[[334]](#cite_note-334)[[335]](#cite_note-335)[[336]](#cite_note-336) [thumb|right|Skiers at the](/wiki/File:Dizin,_Iran.jpeg) [Dizin Ski Resort](/wiki/Dizin) Being a mountainous country, Iran is a venue for [hiking](/wiki/Hiking), [rock climbing](/wiki/Rock_climbing),[[337]](#cite_note-337) and [mountain climbing](/wiki/Mountain_climbing).[[338]](#cite_note-338)[[339]](#cite_note-339) Iran is home to several skiing resorts, the most famous being [Tochal](/wiki/Tochal), Dizin, and [Shemshak](/wiki/Shemshak), which are all within one to three hours traveling time from the city of Tehran.[[340]](#cite_note-340) Tochal resort is the world's fifth-highest ski resort ([Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) at its highest station).

[Basketball](/wiki/Basketball) is also popular in Iran, with [men's national team](/wiki/Iran_national_basketball_team) having won three [Asian Championships](/wiki/FIBA_Asia_Championship) since 2007.[[341]](#cite_note-341) In 1974, Iran became the first country in West Asia to host the [Asian Games](/wiki/Asian_Games), which were held from September 1, 1974 to September 16, 1974 in Tehran.

### Cuisine[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=37)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Kuku_Sabzi_(Iranian_food).jpg)[*Kuku*](/wiki/Kuku_(food)) *Sabzi* with herbs, topped with [barberries](/wiki/Barberries) and [walnuts](/wiki/Walnuts)

Iranian cuisine is diverse due to its variety of ethnic groups and the influence of other cultures. Herbs are frequently used along with fruits such as plums, pomegranates, quince, prunes, apricots, and raisins. Iranians usually eat plain [yogurt](/wiki/Yogurt) with lunch and dinner; it is a staple of the diet in Iran. To achieve a balanced taste, characteristic flavourings such as saffron, dried limes, cinnamon, and parsley are mixed delicately and used in some special dishes. Onions and garlic are normally used in the preparation of the accompanying course, but are also served separately during meals, either in raw or pickled form. Iran is also famous for its [caviar](/wiki/Caviar).[[342]](#cite_note-342)

## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=38)]

[Template:Portal](/wiki/Template:Portal)

* [List of Iran-related topics](/wiki/List_of_Iran-related_topics)
* [Outline of Iran](/wiki/Outline_of_Iran)

## Notes[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=39)]

[Template:Notelist](/wiki/Template:Notelist)

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* [*Iran: A Country Study*](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/pdf/CS_Iran.pdf). 2008, Washington, D.C.: [Library of Congress](/wiki/Library_of_Congress), 354 pp.
* [Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)
* [Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)
* [Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)

## References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=41)]

[Template:Reflist](/wiki/Template:Reflist)

## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=42)]

[Template:Sister project links](/wiki/Template:Sister_project_links)

* [The e-office of the Supreme Leader of Iran](http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/)
* [The President of Iran](http://www.president.ir/en/)
* [Iran.ir](http://en.iran.ir/)
* [Template:CIA World Factbook link](/wiki/Template:CIA_World_Factbook_link)
* [Template:GovPubs](/wiki/Template:GovPubs)
* [Template:Dmoz](/wiki/Template:Dmoz)
* [Template:Wikiatlas](/wiki/Template:Wikiatlas)

Videos

* [Iran](https://www.youtube.com/iranprogrampresstv)—Weekly program that explores Iran's past, present and future with exclusive reports. ([PressTV](/wiki/PressTV))

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