

Forget Everything You Knew About Iran: Come and Taste It!

"Travel is fatal to prejudice", wrote the American writer Mark Twain in 1869... He may as well have written it nowadays, coming back from a trip to Iran! The country is one of the most misunderstood ones. Yet, tourism has constantly been growing these past few years, reaching more than six million visitors in 2017 according to official data. Still, prejudices are coming thick and thin.



"What? You're traveling to Iran? Why? It's dangerous!" are the first things travelers about to set sail hear from their relatives. Dangerous, really? Well, it's in fact the perfect opposite. Iran has been rated as safe as Sweden, Germany, Australia, and most European countries by the independent experts of "International SOS" [in their 2019 Travel Risk Map](#). This study considers several criteria such as terrorism, unrest, crimes, and point out that risks for travelers in Iran are "Low".

The country is often depicted as "the safest to travel" by most visitors who experienced it, especially solo female travelers and families, and the Lonely Planet calls its people the "friendliest in the world". It's no surprise for those who are familiar with Iranian culture and the great hospitality its people are famous for. Be ready to chat with perfect strangers in the street, be invited for tea or a family meal wherever you go. Actually, Iranians people are often the first reason why people literally fall in love with Iran. So the question is not "Why?" going to Iran, but rather "Why wouldn't you travel to Iran?"

"There are only deserts in Iran": WRONG!

It's definitely a multiple choice answer, to which a new online platform called "Tastelran" intends to provide a large range of responses. Go there to find out that Iran has some of the most beautiful and

wild deserts of the world: one of them, the Lut desert with its huge formations of Yardang, is where the hottest temperature on earth has been registered! In the middle of these oceans of sand, cities like Yazd offer a dreamlike oasis, while old caravanserais send the traveler back at the time of the Silk Road.

But Iran is way more than deserts, and that's what "[Tastelran](#)" wants to demonstrate, by offering a large range of "experiences" rather than conventional tours, to foreigners eager to discover the real Iran. And the country has one of the best four-season climates all at the same time to offer to them. Go north, to hike in the Hyrcanian forest, with its dense and lush vegetation at coastline of Caspian Sea, and observe endangered species migrating to this heavenly refuge. Do you prefer the blue horizon of the sea? Visit the islands of the Persian Gulf, incredible jewels sculpted by the waters and the wind over centuries, with wild coasts of multicolor sand. If you like strong sensations, then go rafting into wild canyons or climbing the snow-capped Mount Damavand. You have got questions? [Visit Tastelran Facebook Group](#), ask your question and look around experiences visitors have shared.

"It's the same culture everywhere in the Middle East": WRONG!

Besides the wonders of nature, Iran is also a place of culture and history. Too often, Persian culture is mistaken with the Arabic culture of its neighbors, whereas its ancestral traditions are truly unique. Not only, thanks to the legacy of the Persian Empire, which greatness can be admired in Persepolis, in the blue-domed mosques of Isfahan, or in one of 23 sites registered by UNESCO as World Heritages, but also thanks to the multiplicity of the ethnics and religious groups who live on its soil, Iran is a kaleidoscope of cultural influences which can be seen by traveling off the beaten tracks. That's why "[Tastelran](#)" has chosen experiences who give the chance to tourists to share the life of Nomads during their migration, to harvest saffron with Khorasan farmers, to discover the rituals of Zoroastrians and to go on the footstep of Sufi philosophers. These experiences are unique opportunities for travelers, who also participate, this way, in encouraging sustainable activities. In Iran, where tourism has been growing at a fast pace and people in remotest villages still living modestly, the economic development of communities while maintaining their traditions is essential. Thanks to local initiatives mentioned, travelers to Iran can now be more than simple observers: they can also break stereotypes while empowering locals and take part in the conservation of nature and bio diversity in Iran. In this way, **Tastelran has decided to launch a crowd funding campaign to develop those activities**, while encouraging tourists and visitors to participate in this supporting Ecotourism and sustainable development ([You can contribute to this project via this link](#)).