



My Drift

Title: Tehran

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Did you see the advertisements for the new Apple TV+ series titled “Tehran”?



Niv Sultan Stars in this Espionage Thriller

Protagonist Tamar Rabinyan, a young Jewish woman born in Iran but raised in Israel, is a Mossad agent and computer hacker, sent on a mission to the Iranian capital, assigned to disabling an Iranian nuclear reactor.

Sounds like an interesting show and an interesting city. I just need to figure out how to see the show on my iPhone or computer.

Now you know where I got the idea for this article.

Most of us know that Tehran is the capital of Iran. Here is a map showing where it is located.



**Iran is right in the middle of the Mideast Muslim countries.
You can find Tehran in the north central (top) part of Iran.**

History

The settlement of Tehran dates back over 7,000 years. That makes it one of the oldest cities on earth. I'm not going to write the long extensive history of Tehran but here is a short abbreviated one.

City origins



**The word Tehran means warm mountain slope.
Tehran is located at the foot of the Alborz Mountain Range.**

The Village of Tehran is first mentioned in the 11th century as a small village north of Shahr-e Rey "City of Ray" or simply Ray. Archaeological remains from the city of Ray show signs of settlement on the site as long ago as 6000 BCE. Ray became the capital city of the Seljuq empire in the 11th century but later declined with factional strife between different neighbors. Ray was later destroyed by the Mongols in 1220 A.D. The ruins and a number of its historical monuments can be seen today in Ray 4 miles south of Tehran.

Tehran was first chosen as the capital of Iran by Agha Mohammad Khan of the Qajar dynasty in 1786. It is still the capital but there has been talk recently of moving the capital to another city. The primary reason for this is the fact that Tehran is one of the world's most polluted cities. According to local health officials, about 3,000 people die every month due to the hazardous air quality. 80% of the city's pollution is due to cars. The remaining 20% is due to industrial pollution.



The Air Quality in Tehran is Terrible



The Traffic in Tehran is Terrible

Enough history. When you try to research the history of Tehran, it becomes the history of Iran and I don't want to get into that for this article.

Tehran today

Population

There are a lot of people living in Tehran. With a population over 9 million in the city and over 16 million in the larger metropolitan area, Tehran is the most populous city in Iran and Western Asia, and is second largest in the Middle East after Cairo, Egypt that has 10 million in the city and 20 million in the metropolitan area. The area of Tehran City is 500 square miles and 863 square miles for the Metropolitan area. That equates to about 31,000 people per square mile.

Language

The majority of the population of Tehran are Persian-speaking people, and roughly 99% of the population understand and speak Persian, but there are large populations of other ethno-linguistic groups who live in Tehran and speak Persian as a second language.

Ethnic groups

Tehran is home to diverse ethnic groups with 55% of people in Tehran identifying themselves as Persians. Iranian Azeris form the second-largest ethnic group of the city, comprising about 25% of the total population, while ethnic Mazanderanis are the third largest, comprising about 17% of the total population.

Religion

95% of Tehran citizens are officially Twelver Shia Muslims, which has also been the state religion since the 16th-century Safavid conversion. Other religious communities in the city include followers of the Sunni and Mystic branches of Islam, various Christian denominations, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and the Bahá'í Faith.

Refugees

The unstable situation and the war in neighboring Afghanistan and Iraq prompted a rush of refugees into the country who arrived by the millions, with Tehran being a magnet for people seeking work. Refugees work for far less pay than local construction workers. Even today there are still sizable groups of Afghan and Iraqi refugees in Tehran who are reluctant to leave, being pessimistic about the situation in their own countries.

Transportation

The Iranian government used all those refugee workers to help modernize the city of Tehran and its transportation systems.

Airports

Tehran is served by the international airports of Mehrabad and Khomeini. Mehrabad Airport, an old airport in western Tehran that doubles as a military base, is mainly used for domestic and charter flights. Khomeini Airport, located 31 miles south of the city, handles the main international flights.

Buses

Buses have served the city since the 1920s. Tehran's transport system includes conventional buses, trolleybuses, and bus rapid transit (BRT).

Railway and subway

Tehran has a central railway station that connects services round the clock to various cities in the country, along with a Tehran–Europe train line also running. The construction of Tehran's subway system started in the 1970s and the first two of the eight projected metro lines were opened in 2001.

Cars / Taxis

Tehran has more than 200,000 taxis plying the roads daily, with several types of taxi available in the city. Airport taxis have a higher cost as opposed to regular green and yellow taxis in the city.



Tehran's Bus Rapid Transit



Tehran's Hybrid Taxi

Tehran highway and road system were designed to have a capacity of about 300,000 cars, but today there are more than five million cars on the roads. This many cars results in total gridlock most of the time in downtown Tehran.



Tehran has modern Highways like the Hemmat Expressway



**Keshavarz Boulevard
Main Street in Downtown Tehran**

There are 3.5 million motorcycles registered in Tehran. These along with the millions of motor scooters and bicycles make driving in the city of Tehran scary and almost impossible.

Parks and green spaces

There are over 2,100 parks within the metropolis of Tehran, with one of the oldest being Jamshidieh Park, which was first established as a private garden for Qajar prince Jamshid Davallu, and was then dedicated to the last empress of Iran, Farah Pahlavi. The total green space within Tehran stretches over 12,600 hectares, covering over 20 percent of the city's area.



Jamshidieh Park

Climate

Tehran's climate is largely defined by its geographic location, with the towering Alborz mountains to its north and the country's central desert to the south. It can be generally described as mild in spring and autumn, hot and dry in summer, and cold and wet in winter.



Ski Resorts north of Tehran



Maranjab Desert south of Tehran

As the city has a large area, with significant differences in elevation among various districts, the weather is often cooler in the hilly north than in the flat southern part of Tehran. For instance, Valiasr Street runs from Tehran's railway station at 3,665 feet elevation above sea level in the south of the city to Tajrish Square at 5,612 feet elevation in the north.

Summer is long, hot, and dry with little rain, but relative humidity is generally low, making the heat tolerable. Average high temperatures are between 90 and 99 °F, and it can occasionally drop to 57 °F in the mountainous north of the city at night. Most of the light annual precipitation occurs from late autumn to mid-spring, but no one month is particularly wet. The hottest month is July, with a mean minimum temperature of 79 °F and a mean maximum temperature of 93 °F, and the coldest is January, with a mean minimum temperature of 23 °F and a mean maximum temperature of 34 °F. The weather of Tehran can sometimes be unpredictably harsh. The record high temperature is 109 °F and the record low is −4 °F.

Sights to See in Tehran

There are many things to do and see in Tehran but I'm just going to pick 5 of the most famous.

#1 Tehran Grand Bazaar



The Tehran Grand Bazaar is a vital economic center of Tehran where everyone comes to buy anything.

#2 Azadi Tower

An icon of Iran known around the world, the Azadi Tower – known as the Shah's Memorial Tower before the revolution – marking the west entrance to Tehran and is part of the Azadi Cultural Complex.

There is a museum underground which is included in your ticket or you can either walk or take two elevators up the 148-foot tall structure. And yes, the entire thing is clad in cut marble so you can imagine how incredible it looks at sunset though the views of the city at the top are pretty incredible too.



Azadi Tower

#3 Tabi'at Bridge / Nature Bridge Tehran



Opened in 2014, the Tabi'at Bridge (also known as the Nature Bridge in Tehran) is a popular hangout for Iranians who come to enjoy a variety of dining options, views, and relaxation areas. This 886-foot three-level bridge connecting two parks in Tehran is probably the most beautiful piece of urban architecture built since the revolution.

#4 US Den of Espionage / Embassy of the United States in Tehran

The famous former US embassy in Tehran, where 52 diplomats were taken hostage for 444 days by students during the 1979 revolution!

Even today, the massive compound is still controlled by the Student Basij Organization, who are tasked with defending the revolution and have turned the building into a museum. Be sure to take the free tour to make the most of

the colorful propaganda both visually and spoken. It is also absolutely fascinating to see the once-secret rooms used for spying now embarrassingly on full display – and to get a real sense of the work undertaken in the US embassy before the revolution. It is truly like walking back in time and straight onto a movie set, you can't miss the opportunity to visit the historic US Den of Espionage.



US Den of Espionage
The former Embassy of the United States in Tehran

#5 Tochal Telecabin Tehran



If the inevitable smog of Tehran gets a bit too much for you – why not head to the mountains with the Tochal Telecabin / Sky Lift? Located in the north of Tehran, you can make a 45-minutes trip straight up to the summit of Mount Tochal (12,904 feet). As you would expect, the views are out of this world – both of the mountains and back down over the chaos that is Tehran.

Okay, that is about it except for a few “burning” questions we need to get answered.

Can Americans travel to Iran? Americans can travel to Iran freely, but they do need to know a few things about tours and visas before planning their trip. The relationship with Iran is strained due to many political and economic reasons but it is perfectly legal to travel to Iran as an American citizen.

Is Tehran safe? Considering the size and the population, Tehran is a relatively safe city for those travelers that practice common sense and take the usual precautions against pickpockets.

Do female tourists have to cover up in Iran? All women in Iran, including foreigners, are required by law to wear loose-fitting clothes to disguise their figures. They must also cover their hair. The only skin females can show is the face and hands.



How Women Dress in Tehran

Is there a dress code for men in Iran? Yes. Hawaii visitors who show up in Tehran wearing shorts, flip-flops, and a tank top will be arrested! However, there are fewer rules for men, but you need to wear jeans or trousers, shoes and socks, and a shirt.

Are Iranians Arabs?

Many people continue to believe that “Persian” and “Arab” are interchangeable terms, when in reality they are labels for two distinct ethnicities. In other words, most people in Iran are Persians and are not Arabs.

Is dancing illegal in Iran? Dancing itself has not been defined as a crime in Iran's penal code but the law is pretty vague. Based on Iran's constitution, committing an "indecent" act in public is a crime, so dancing in public can be interpreted as an indecent act and punished. Dancing can be performed on stage in Iran, although only by men.

How many wives can a man have in Iran? Iranian law currently allows Muslim men to have up to four wives, but only after obtaining a court order demonstrating the permission of the first spouse and his ability to treat them all equally.

Is adultery illegal in Iran? Adultery is punishable by 100 lashes for unmarried people and by death on the fourth offense. It is punishable by death by stoning for married people and in all cases of incest.

Can you get beer in Iran? As you may already know, Iran's official religion is Islam; therefore, according to the law, alcoholic drinks cannot be produced or sold in the country which means there are also no liquor stores, bars or nightclubs in Iran. If you get caught drinking alcohol, you can be fined, lashed, or serve prison time.

Well, that does it – I'm never going to Tehran or any country in the Middle East!!

I do plan to watch the new Apple TV+ series titled "Tehran" since I like spy shows.

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