



Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri, said that tour guides play a central role in presenting the country's culture and civilization to the world, marking International Tourist Guide Day on Feb. 21. In his message, Salehi-Amiri described the day as an opportunity to reassess the relationship between tourism, soft power and cultural governance. He said that in the contemporary world, perceived credibility and the ability to produce authoritative narratives are fundamental elements of national power, adding that tour guides operate at the forefront of this field. He said the concept of power in international relations has evolved beyond hard components, noting that symbolic capital, international trust and the mental image of nations have gained determining importance. "In this framework, a tour guide is a strategic actor in public and cultural diplomacy," he said.

Iran Tourism Minister says Tour Guides Shape Country's Global Image

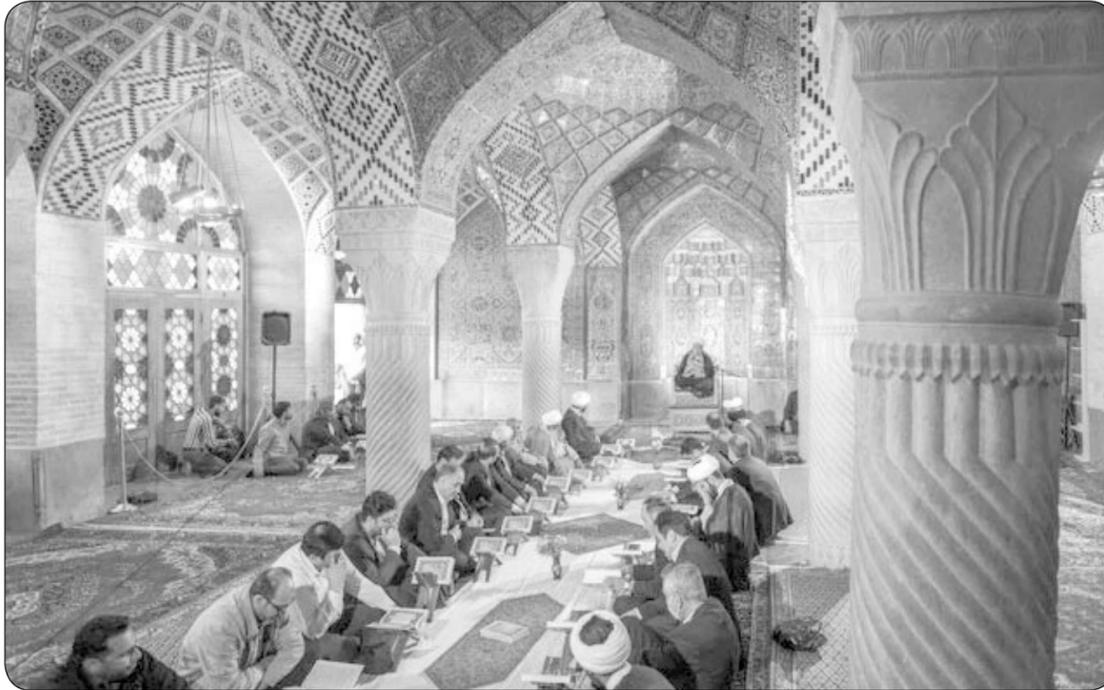
Ramadan Customs Can become Cultural Tourism Product, Researcher Says

The holy month of Ramadan revives deep-rooted rituals that connect faith, popular culture and social life, offering strong potential for cultural narration and ritual tourism development.

As an example, in the southern Fars province, traditions such as cannon firing resembles sighting of the crescent moon, local iftar meals and the "Shab-Chareh" night snack gatherings form part of the region's intangible heritage and could be developed into cultural tourism products.

Amirhossein Hekmatnia, a tourism researcher, author and university professor, said Ramadan rituals in Fars reflect not only religious beliefs but also layers of cultural identity, social solidarity and the historical memory of local communities, Miras Aria reported. Referring to the "Kolookh-Andazan Day" ritual as one of the ancient traditions welcoming Ramadan, he said people gather in promenades around the city at sunset, symbolically declare their innocence of past sins and prepare for the month of worship by breaking loaves and reciting prayers. He described the ritual as embodying concepts of purification, moral renewal and spiritual preparation.

Hekmatnia also cited the "Valoon" custom in Shiraz as an example of the link between religious observance and family ties. In the first Ramadan after a girl's marriage, the bride's family sends a complete iftar meal along with traditional gifts and clothing to the groom's house, a practice he said reinforces social and symbolic bonds within the family. In Estahban, the sighting of the Ramadan crescent moon is traditionally announced by firing several cannons.



Upon hearing the sound, people say, "The cannon was fired, the moon was seen," a practice rooted in pre-modern methods of public communication, he added.

Hekmatnia described "Shab-Chareh" in Shiraz as a manifestation of Ramadan's night-time social life. After iftar, families visit one another, converse, recite the Quran and share foods such as Ranginak (date-

based sweets) and Zoolbia Bamieh (deep-fried dough pastries soaked in syrup) until dawn.

He also noted that iftar tables set up in green spaces and parks reflect the spirit of participation and social coexistence embedded in Shiraz's Ramadan culture.

In conclusion, Hekmatnia called for systematic documentation and professional

narration of these traditions.

"The Ramadan rituals of Fars province have significant potential to become cultural products and ritual tourism attractions," he said, adding that with a scientific and strategic approach they could help strengthen local identity, promote cultural diplomacy and support sustainable tourism development.

Perspective



101 Shiraz-minted Coins Registered on National Heritage List

A collection of 101 coins minted in the southern city of Shiraz has been registered on Iran's national list of movable cultural heritage, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts said. The collection comprises coins from 30 historical periods during which minting took place in Shiraz. The earliest coin bearing the name of Shiraz dates back



to the reign of Shapur II of the Sassanid dynasty, while the latest was struck during the Qajar era under Naser al-Din Shah Qajar, ISNA reported.

Authorities said the range of coins reflects the city's economic and political role across centuries. Shiraz served at various times as a center of governance and, in some periods, as a capital, during which coins were minted locally.

The collection includes coins issued in periods associated with rulers such as Amr ibn al-Layth and dynasties including the Buyid dynasty, Salghurid Atabegs, Injuids, Muzaffarids, and the Zand dynasty, it added.

The coins are currently on display at the Delgosha Garden Museum in Shiraz for visitors and researchers.

The national registration of the Shiraz-minted coin collection aims to safeguard movable historical heritage, document the political and economic history of Fars province, and strengthen research capacity in numismatics, the report said. Known as the heartland of Persian culture, Shiraz has a rich history stretching back over 2000 years. This city is synonymous with poetry, education, and the arts, and has been a hub for creativity and intellectual pursuits. Once the capital of Iran during the Zand dynasty, Shiraz is home to some of the most iconic landmarks in the country, including the Eram Garden, the Tomb of Hafez, and the ancient ruins of Persepolis.

Iran Plans Maritime Tourism Line Linking Southern Ports



Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization is planning to launch a maritime tourism line connecting the country's southern ports, an official said on Thursday. Allahmorad Afifipour, director general of maritime affairs at the Ports and Maritime Organization, said the body is pursuing the establishment of a sea tourism route linking southern ports using a large vessel.

He said 17.6 million sea voyages were conducted during the first 10 months of the current Iranian year 1404 (started on March 21, 2025), adding that the figure marked a 3% increase compared with the same period last year.

"The 3% growth in sea travel in 1404 compared to the

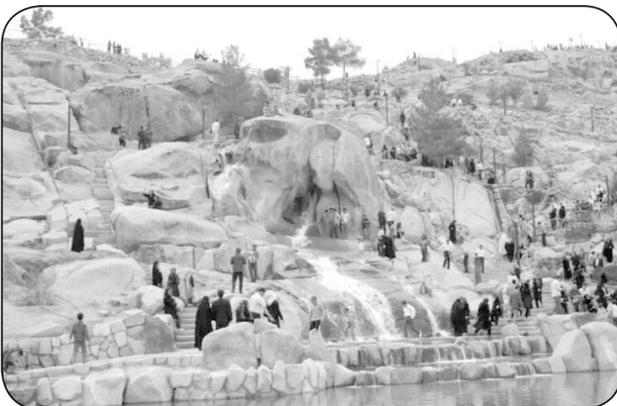
previous year has led the Ports and Maritime Organization to pursue the launch of a maritime tourism line by a large vessel between the southern ports of the country," Afifipour explained. He referred to passenger terminals at several ports, saying there is a suitable passenger terminal at Khorramshahr Port and a modern passenger terminal at Bushehr Port. All agencies related to international travel formalities are based at the passenger terminal of Chabahar Port, he added. Afifipour also said a maritime line between Oman and Chabahar is operational and that the organization is working to open another international sea route at Chabahar Port.

Official Calls for Balanced Distribution of Trips, Quality Services to Nowruz Travelers

Despite the diverse natural and cultural attractions across Iran, the capacity of other cities must be properly introduced so that the distribution of trips, especially during Nowruz, is more balanced and better quality services are provided to the travelers, Mostafa Fatemi, the director-general of the Domestic Tourism Development Office at the Tourism Ministry, said on Saturday.

Stating that more than 46 percent of domestic trips are made to six provinces, he said: "To reduce the pressure of travel in these provinces, 114 complementary cities will be identified and introduced to the public."

Fatemi told IRNA: "The cities of Mashhad, Shiraz, Tehran, Isfahan, Bandar Abbas, Qom, Karaj, Rasht, Ahvaz, Khorramabad, Bushehr, Qeshm, Yazd, Bandar Genaveh, Kermanshah, Bandar Anzali, Tabriz, Hamedan, Nowshahr, Gorgan, Sari, Dargahan, Kish, Dezful, Zanjan, Ramsar, Chalus, Amol, Babolsar, Ardebil, Kashan, Semnan, Mahmudabad, Lahijan, Shahroud, Marzanabad, Lavandevil, Babol, Chamestan and Shushtar respectively received the highest number of passengers during Nowruz holidays in March 2025. He continued: "In addition to Tehran province, which has a suitable accommodation capacity, cities that complement travel in the east of the country include the cities of Rafsanjan, Jiroft, Bam and Sirjan in Kerman province, the cities of Konarak, Zarabad, Nikshahr, Hamun, Zabol and Zahak in Sistan-Baluchestan province, the cities of Ardakan, Mehriz, Bafq and Abarkuh in Yazd province, the cities of Ferdows, Birjand and Tabas in South Khorasan province, the cities of Ardestan, Na'in and Varzaneh in Isfahan province, the cities of Shahroud and Mahdishahr in Semnan province, the cities of Samalqan and Shirvan in North



Khorasan province, and the cities of Quchan, Sabzevar, Neyshabur, Torbat-e Heydarieh, Gonabad, Khaf and Torbat-e Jam in Khorasan Razavi province." Fatemi stated that 13 complimentary travel cities in Fars and Hormozgan provinces have been considered to replace the trip of Nowruz travelers, including the cities of Lar, Darab, Estahban, Neyriz, Fasa, Jahrom, Kazerun and Eqlid in Fars province and the cities of Minab, Sirik, Bastak, Parsian and Bandar Khamir in Hormozgan province.

He said: "Given the increasing interest of tourists in traveling to Zanjan, we are looking to hold the events and introduce the attractions of this province. Travel packages should be designed with diverse accommodation options such as guesthouses, pilgrimage centers, and eco-tourism resorts so that more people can use tourism services." In response to the question of whether cheap travel packages have been considered for Nowruz, Fatemi clarified that given the people's willingness to travel during Nowruz and the full capacity of accommodation centers, travel packages are usually considered for retirees, and other segments of society for times when there are no passenger trains, in coordination with institutions such as Education and Training Department, The National Pension Fund of Iran, and governmental agencies. He said: "A travel facilities headquarters has also been formed to manage Nowruz trips, reduce accidents, and introduce complementary tourist destinations and cities."

Fatemi added that according to the surveys, people have recently searched the most for booking tours, accommodation centers, and purchasing tickets.

26 Golestan Events Added to National Tourism Calendar

Some 26 tourism events of Golestan province have been included in Iran's National Tourism Events Calendar. According to IRIB, Yaser Qandehari, the deputy head of Golestan Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department, described the measure as a way to organize and professionalize the event-based tourism. He added: "This measure was taken with the aim of strengthening the event-based tourism, distributing travel evenly throughout the year, and introducing the province's cultural, natural, and economic capacities." Qandehari announced the most important registered events as Turkmen thoroughbred horse beauty festival, strawberry festival, colorful fall festival, silk cocoon harvest festival, cotton festival, the Narcissus harvest festival, and the ceremony of commemorating Iranian-Turkmen poet Makhtoomgholi Faraghi.

He em-

phasized that registering the events provides the basis for more coherent planning and improving the quality of their holding.

Golestan province, located in northern Iran, boasts a diverse array of tourism attractions, making it a prime destination for both sightseers and nature lovers. The provincial capital, Gorgan, features a rich historical fabric, including the well-preserved Esterabad district, which is renowned for its ancient houses, madrasas, and mosques. Beyond its historical significance, Golestan offers breathtaking natural landscapes, such as the lush Alangdareh and Naharkhoran forest parks, which provide visitors with opportunities for hiking, picnicking, and wildlife observation. Golestan's coastal areas along the Caspian Sea add to its allure, featuring pristine beaches and scenic views. The province is also home to several cultural and recreational festivals that celebrate its rich heritage and vibrant community.

