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# Travel with The Met

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April 22–May 7, 2019

**Persia: Ancient to Modern**  
with Kim Benzel, Curator in Charge  
of the Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art



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# Persia: Ancient to Modern

Dear Members and Friends of The Metropolitan Museum of Art,

As a scholar of the Ancient Near East, I find Iran, with its rich history, wealth of antiquities, dazzling architecture, and sumptuous decorative arts, to be one of the most fascinating places on Earth. Next spring, I invite you to join me on an exploration of this captivating country. Together, we will discover the region's most spectacular museums, ancient sites, mosques, palaces, and public centers. We'll also enjoy Iran's contemporary culture, with opportunities to attend a live performance of traditional Persian music, dine at local restaurants, and shop at lively bazaars.

We begin in Tehran, exploring collections of art, artifacts, and jewelry at several of the city's finest museums. Admire extraordinary tilework at the UNESCO-listed Golestan Palace complex, and experience cutting-edge creativity at the city's contemporary art museum. In Yazd, visit gardens, shrines, a mosque, and the Zoroastrian Fire Temple, whose sacred flame has burned for 1,500 years. In Shiraz, discover tombs of mystical Persian poets and in Persepolis, spend a day wandering vast ruins that have remained nearly unchanged since the city was destroyed by Alexander the Great.

Once we reach Isfahan, the 17th-century capital of the Safavid Dynasty, we will stroll her magnificent square, the Maidan-e-Naghsh-e-Jahan, and explore a sumptuous palace, a music museum, the city's Armenian Quarter, and a historic bazaar known for its handicrafts and kilim rugs. Upon return to Tehran, we will visit the Pahlavi Dynasty palaces, including the home of the last shah, and view the dazzling Peacock Throne and jewelry collection at the Jewels Museum.

With the endless array of cultural splendors that awaits, this journey to Iran promises to be a trip of a lifetime. Please join me.

Sincerely,

Kim Benzel  
Curator in Charge, Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art  
*The Metropolitan Museum of Art*



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## Traveling with You

Kim Benzel

Kim Benzel is the Curator in Charge of the Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art at The Met. Since coming to The Met in 1990, she has worked on numerous exhibitions and related publications including *The Royal City of Susa: Ancient Near Eastern Treasures in the Louvre*; *Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.*; *Afghanistan: Hidden Treasures from the National Museum, Kabul*; and *Assyria to Iberia at the Dawn of the Classical Age*. She has also published numerous articles and essays on the jewelry arts of the Ancient Near East. Benzel has participated in several archaeological excavations, primarily at sites in Syria.

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## Trip Highlights

- Enhance your appreciation of exquisite Persian antiquities with the Curator in Charge of the Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art
- Discover eight UNESCO World Heritage Sites, from ancient ruins to medieval mosques to lush gardens
- Browse age-old bazaars in Shiraz and Isfahan
- Enjoy a performance at Isfahan's Music Museum, with its collection of traditional Persian instruments
- Explore 2,500-year-old Persepolis, founded by Darius the Great and destroyed by Alexander
- Visit Pasargadae, site of the Tomb of Cyrus the Great, who freed the Jews from captivity and supported the rebuilding of their temple in Jerusalem



Persepolis



Photos clockwise from top right: Map of the region; Tomb of Cyrus the Great, Pasargadae; Iranian women in Isfahan; Yazd skyline; Naranjestan Palace, Shiraz; and Persepolis. Front cover: Ancient Achaemenid bull statue as a column capital in Persepolis. Back Cover: Persepolis (top) and Tilework at the Friday Mosque, Yazd (bottom).

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# Persia: Ancient to Modern

April 22–May 7, 2019

## Departure

Monday, April 22

Depart on an overnight flight to Iran.

## Tehran, Iran

Tuesday, April 23

Following an evening arrival in Tehran, transfer to the centrally located Hotel Espinas.

## Tehran

Wednesday, April 24

Our introduction to Tehran's treasures begins at the National Museum, with its impressive ancient artifacts, and continues at the Islamic Era Museum next door. After lunch, explore the nearby Glass Museum (Abgineh Museum), housed in an elegant mansion from the Qajar period; and the Reza Abbasi Museum, containing ceramics, important finds in gold and silver, and masterpieces of illumination and illustration of Persian books. Gather this evening for welcome remarks by Kim Benzel, followed by dinner. B, L, D

## Tehran

Thursday, April 25

Depart this morning for the Golestan Palace complex, a UNESCO World Heritage Site dating from the 18th to early 20th century. Visit the Marble Hall and the Hall of Mirrors, used as a coronation room, and stroll the garden to view the ornate tile-covered walls. Following lunch, visit the Carpet Museum, displaying a fine array of carpets from ancient to contemporary, and the Contemporary Arts Museum. B, L, D

## Tehran / Yazd

Friday, April 26

Depart this morning for Yazd, stopping en route in Kashan to discover the UNESCO-listed Fin Garden. We will also visit Tabatabai House, a 19th-century merchant residence with a beautiful stucco dome, inlaid mirror work, and some of the best examples of existing *badgirs* (windcatchers). Arrive in the late afternoon in Yazd and check in at the lovely Moshir Garden Hotel. B, L, D

## Yazd

Saturday, April 27

At the Zoroastrian Fire Temple, marvel at its sacred flame, which has burned for 1,500 years, and visit one of the two Zoroastrian Towers of Silence. See the Friday Mosque,

boasting the tallest minarets in Iran, and the Amir Chakhmaq complex. Following lunch, visit the gracious 18th-century Dowlat-Abad Garden, also known as the Governor's Pavilion, featuring pomegranate orchards and a hexagonal house with a *badgir*. Pass the Seljuk shrine dedicated to the Twelve Shi'ite Imams en route back to the hotel for dinner. B, L, D

## Yazd / Shiraz

Sunday, April 28

Depart this morning for Shiraz, stopping en route at ancient Pasargadae to explore the ruins of the capital, palaces, and majestic Tomb of Cyrus the Great, revered in the Old Testament as the liberator of the Jews. Continue through dramatic mountain scenery and descend into the valley towards Shiraz. Arrive in the early evening for check-in and dinner at the Homa Hotel. B, L, D

## Shiraz

Monday, April 29

Begin the morning at Eram Garden, one of the celebrated gardens of this "city of roses and nightingales," then continue to the pink-tiled 19th-century Nasir al-Mulk Mosque and the Qajar-period Naranjestan Palace. After lunch, see the 18th-century citadel of Arg-e Karim Khan and the elegant Pars Museum. Conclude the day at the colorful Vakil Bazaar. B, L, D

## Shiraz / Persepolis

Tuesday, April 30

Once the center of the Persian Empire, Persepolis was one of the most important sites of the ancient world. Explore the remains of the palaces of Darius the Great, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes. Continue to Naghsh-é-Rajab, a nearby grotto with Sasanian reliefs. At the fascinating necropolis of Naghsh-é-Rostam, see the Royal Tombs and the Ka'bé-Zardosht "fire temple." Dinner is at the hotel. B, L, D

## Shiraz

Wednesday, May 1

Focus this morning on two of Persia's most famous poets. Stroll in the Musalla Gardens, site of the tomb of Iran's greatest lyric poet, Hafez. Afterwards see the tomb of Sa'di, also located in a beautiful garden. After lunch visit the Stone Museum, followed by dinner in a nearby restaurant. B, L, D

## Shiraz / Isfahan

Thursday, May 2

Drive to Isfahan, stopping and Izad-Khast to explore the 17th-century Safavid *caravanseraï* and the remains of the ancient fort facing the hill. Arrive in Isfahan for check-in and dinner at the elegant Hotel Abbasi. B, L, D

## Isfahan

Friday, May 3

Isfahan, the 17th-century capital of the Safavid Dynasty, is referred to as Nesf-e-Jahan, or "Half of the World." Explore the magnificent Friday Mosque or Masjid-I Jameh, considered to be a museum of more than a thousand years of religious architecture. Marvel at the sumptuous Palace of Chehel Sotoun, whose twenty columns reflected in the garden pool give the palace its name of "Forty Columns." Following lunch, visit the Armenian Quarter, where Shah Abbas I transplanted a colony of skilled Christian entrepreneurs in 1604, and see the Cathedral of Vank. Continue to the Music Museum to admire its collection of traditional Persian instruments and attend a performance. Our day concludes with a visit to three of the famous eleven bridges of Isfahan. B, L, D

## Isfahan

Saturday, May 4

Depart the hotel on foot for the 17th-century Hasht Behesht pavilion, a small but intricate building lined with trees and

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## More Travels with The Met

**Cuba by Sea Aboard *Variety Voyager*** January 24—February 1, 2019

**Alluring Arabia Featuring the Louvre Abu Dhabi** February 8—20, 2019

**Morocco: Land of Mists & Mysteries** March 8—21, 2019

**Waterways of the Tsars: Moscow to St. Petersburg Aboard *Volga Dream*** June 5—15, 2019

For details please go to [metmuseum.org/travel](http://metmuseum.org/travel)

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flowers, a reflecting pool, and water rills. Continue to the breathtaking, UNESCO-listed square, Maidan-e-Naghsh-e-Jahan. The *maidan* (town square) is flanked by the Ali-Qapu Palace and two of the world's greatest mosques: the Sheikh Lotfollah and the Masjid-i Iman, both featuring splendid tilework. Finally, no visit to Isfahan would be complete without a stop at the historic bazaar, where hundreds of shops sell traditional Persian handicrafts. B, L, D



Masjed-e Jameh, Isfahan

## Isfahan / Tehran

Sunday, May 5

On today's drive to Tehran, stop in Natanz to visit the 12th-century Masjed-e Jameh built with a four-*ivan* (an open, vaulted space) courtyard plan. Then see the Tomb of Sheikh Abdol-Samad Isfahani. Arrive in Tehran in the late afternoon and transfer to the Hotel Espinas. B, L, D

## Tehran / Return

Monday, May 6 & Tuesday, May 7

Drive to fashionable northern Tehran for a visit to the Niavaran Palace complex, set among the foothills of the Alborz mountains. See the former Pahlavi residences and tour the museum of paintings and artifacts collected by Farah Diba, the last Empress of Iran. Return to central Tehran for lunch. Then visit the Jewels Museum, housed in the vaults of the Central Bank of Iran, displaying one of the most dazzling collections in the world, including the legendary Peacock Throne. Following dinner, transfer to the airport for the flights home, departing very early the morning of May 7. Our hotel rooms are reserved for late check-out. B, L, D

This itinerary is subject to change at the discretion of The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Arrangements Abroad. For complete details, please carefully read the terms and conditions at [www.arrangementsabroad.com/terms](http://www.arrangementsabroad.com/terms).

### A Note about Travel to Iran

Participants must be in good health and able to keep pace with an active group. They must be able to walk up to one mile a day on uneven terrain; walk and stand for periods of two hours at time; climb stairs (some without handrails) at monuments and other locations not handicapped accessible; and board a motorcoach unassisted. Any condition that may require assistance or special medical attention must be reported at the time of your reservation. Participants are advised to bring "broken-in" walking shoes, a sun hat, and comfortable attire.

Iranian people are warm and hospitable towards visitors. Certain rules of dress and conduct are strictly observed in Iran and all trip participants are expected to adhere to local laws and customs. Alcohol is forbidden at all times, and details about appropriate attire will be shared with participants prior to departure. Long drives are to be expected during this program; however, the remarkably varied landscapes of Iran will offer a scenic panorama along the way. Review the U.S. State Department's Travel Advisory for Iran at [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov).

## Program Rate

**\$9,999 per person, double occupancy**

**\$11,399 single occupancy**

## Rate Includes

- Thirteen nights accommodations plus late check-out as per itinerary
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, R=Reception, D=Dinner); bottled water and coffee/tea with all meals
- Enrichment program of lectures and talks
- Escorted sightseeing, transportation and entrance fees for all included visits
- Airport/hotel/airport group transfers for all participants on suggested flights
- Gratuities to local guides and drivers
- Taxes, service charges, and portage

### Not included in rate

International airfare; passport/visa fees; meals not specified; personal items and expenses; trip insurance; baggage in excess of one suitcase; airport transfers other than those for suggested flights; any other items not specifically mentioned as included.

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### Reservation Form

To secure your reservation, please call Arrangements Abroad at 844-TRVLMET (844-878-5638), or complete this form and return it with your deposit of \$1,000 per person (of which \$500 is non-refundable for administrative fees), to be paid by debit card, credit card, wire transfer, or check payable to *Arrangements Abroad*. Mail to: Arrangements Abroad, 1040 Avenue of the Americas, 23rd Floor, New York, NY 10018-3721.

Names in full as on passports. Please print.

Address

City State Zip

Telephone (home) (business)

Fax Email

### Accommodations

Hotel room preference  One bed  Two beds  Single

I wish to share a room with \_\_\_\_\_

### Form of payment

Enclosed is my check (payable to *Arrangements Abroad*)  Debit card  Credit card

Name on debit/credit card

Debit/credit card number

3- or 4-digit security code

Expiration date

**Each participant must sign below. I/We have read, understand and agree to the Terms & Conditions at [www.arrangementsabroad.com/terms](http://www.arrangementsabroad.com/terms) and detailed in program documents. I/ We agree to full payment 120 days prior to departure.**

Signature (required)

Date

Signature (required)

Date

# Persia: Ancient to Modern

April 22–May 7, 2019

The Metropolitan  
Museum of Art

1000 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10028

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Visa Deadline: December 15, 2018



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# Travel with The Metropolitan Museum of Art



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