



# IRAN'S HOLIDAY CALENDAR

# 2016

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#### **IRAN'S HOLIDAY CALENDAR**

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(Sourced From an authentic 2016 Iranian Calendar)



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Aside from the national holidays that follow the Persian Solar Calendar, many of Iran's holidays are in accordance with events in the Islamic religion and follow the Muslim Lunar Calendar, which moves about 10 days forward each year. A few examples of Iranian holidays are:

**Iranian New Year (Nowruz):** Celebrated on the first day of spring, this date has been the mark of the New Year for over 5,000 years throughout several ancient cultures. It embraces the spring equinox and has been celebrated in the same unique Iranian way for the past 3,000 years. It is also deeply rooted in the Zoroastrian belief system. During this time, Iranians set up a table with a haft-sin, which is a small decorative area with seven symbolic items that is a reminder of the New Year spirit. The entire month leading up to the New Year is a time where friends and family alike all visit each other and get together. It is a very busy and pleasant time of the year.

**Mehregan (Iranian Thanksgiving):** Also another one of the most ancient celebrations, it is a day where everyone shows the love and appreciation they have to one another.

**Shab-e Cheleh (Yalda Festival):** This is the night of the winter solstice, the longest night of the year, where friends and family gather and celebrate this ancient festival. It is common tradition among the celebrations to consume seven different types of fruit and read bits of the renowned Iranian poet's, Hafez, famous book, to one another.



**Jashn-e Sadeh:** 40 days after Yalda, this mid-winter celebration was held with great magnificence in ancient Iran in order to honour fire and to defeat the forces of cold and darkness.

**Chaharshanbe Suri (Red Wednesday):** The eve of the Wednesday before the New Year (Nowruz), is celebrated by the gathering of all, lighting of fires, and jumping over the fires. Since ancient times, this celebration of fire was one of the purification of the soul and the anticipation of spring.

**Ramadan:** Of the Muslim religion, Also known as Ramezan, it is an entire month where the Muslim population fast from dusk to dawn. This means not consuming any water, food or even smoking. Good to note, during this month, it is forbidden to eat or consume anything in public from dusk to dawn. Even restaurants are closed during the day, however as soon as the sun goes down, the streets, restaurants and cafes are packed!



Iran's Holiday Calendar

2016

## JANUARY

Date	Occasion	Holiday	Tourist Attractions
1	2016 New year	No	Open
6	Ancient Celebration of Deygan	No	Open
21	Ancient Celebration of Bahmangan	No	Open
29	Ancient Celebration of Saadeh	No	Open

## FEBRUARY

Date	Occasion	Holiday	Tourist Attractions
1 to 10	Triumph of the Islamic Revolution & Fajr Film Festival	No	Open
11	Anniversary of the triumph of the Islamic Revolution	Yes	Open
23	Ancient Celebration of Espandgan	No	Open

## MARCH

Date	Occasion	Holiday	Tourist Attractions
5	Arbor Day (National Tree Planting Day)	No	Open
13	Martyrdom/Shahada of Hazrat Fatimah Islamic	Yes	Open
15	Chaharshanbe Suri (Last Wednesday Festival)	No	Open
19	National Day of the Industrialization of Oil	Yes	Open
20	Iranian New Year (Sal-e Now/Nowruz)	Yes	Closed
21 to 23	Nowruz Vacation	Yes	Open
31	Islamic Republic Day	Yes	Open

## APRIL

Date	Occasion	Holiday	Tourist Attractions
1	Sizdah Be-Dar (Nature Day)	Yes	Open
7	Ancient Celebration of Farvardingan	No	Open
21	The Birth of Imam Ali (Hazrat Ali)	Yes	Open
22	Ancient Celebration of Ordibeheshtgan	No	Open

## MAY

Date	Occasion	Holiday	Tourist Attractions
5	Selection of Hazrat Rasool (Prophet Mohammad)	Yes	Open
22	Birth of the 12th Imam, Hazrat Ghaem/ Imam Zaman (Imam of the Age)	Yes	Open
26	Ancient Celebration of Khordadgan	No	Open

## JUNE

Date	Occasion	Holiday	Tourist Attractions
3	The Passing Away of Imam Khomeini	Yes	Open
4	The Uprising of Khordad 15th	Yes	Open
7 to 5 July	Month of Ramadan/Ramezan	No	Open
27	Martyrdom/Shahada of Hazrat Ali	Yes	Closed

## JULY

Date	Occasion	Holiday	Tourist Attractions
1	Quds Day	No	Open
3	Ancient Celebration of Tirgan	No	Open
6 to 7	Eid-e Fetr (Eid al-Fitr)	Yes	Open
28	Ancient Celebration of Amordadgan	No	Open
30	Martyrdom/Shahada of Imam Jafar-e Sadeh	Yes	Closed

## AUGUST

Date	Occasion	Holiday	Tourist Attractions
25	Ancient Celebration of Shahrivargan	No	Open

## SEPTEMBER

Date	Occasion	Holiday	Tourist Attractions
12	Eid-e Ghorban/Qurbon	Yes	Open
20	Eid-e Ghadir Khumm	Yes	Open
30	Carpet Washing Ceremony at Mashhad-e Ardahal	No	Open

## OCTOBER

Date	Occasion	Holiday	Tourist Attractions
3 to 10	First Ten Days of Muharram	No	Open
7	Ancient Celebration of Mehrgan	No	Open
11	Tasua	Yes	Closed
12	Ahura	Yes	Closed
31	Ancient Celebration of Abangan	No	Open



## NOVEMBER

Date	Occasion	Holiday	Tourist Attractions
20	Arba'een Hosseini / Chehelom	Yes	Closed
28	The Day of the Passing of the Islamic Prophet	Yes	Open
29	Ancient Celebration of Azargan	No	Open
30	Martyrdom/Shahada of Imam Reza	Yes	Open

## DECEMBER

Date	Occasion	Holiday	Tourist Attractions
17	Birthday of the Islamic prophet and Imam Jafar Sadegh	Yes	Open
20	Shab-e Yalda/Cheleh	No	Open
22	Ancient Celebration of Deygan	No	Open
25	Birth of Jesus Christ	No	Open
29	Ancient Celebration of Deygan	No	Open

### 1 January

**Occasion:** 2016 New year

**Holiday:** No

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** For the travellers that are in Iran for the turning of the year, it may come as a surprise that this is not an event that takes over the entire city. However, this doesn't mean that it isn't celebrated. The Christians of Iran all celebrate the turning of the new year at midnight on December 31<sup>st</sup>. Also, although their Christmas trees have been up all December, the Christians of Iran celebrate Christmas on January 6<sup>th</sup> as opposed to December 25<sup>th</sup>. If you wish to be a part of their ceremonies and celebrations, you can visit a church to be a part of or seek out a local gathering event.

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### 6 January

**Occasion:** Ancient Celebration of Deygan

**Holiday:** No

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** Celebrated on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of the month of Dey of the Persian calendar (Dec 23<sup>rd</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> and Jan 7<sup>th</sup>), this Zoroastrian celebration takes place in some select cities and villages. 'Dey' in translation means 'creation' or 'creator'. Rulers of ancient Persia started the celebrations on the first of Dey, which is the day after the winter solstice (longest night of the year), by making public visitations to the people.

### 21 January

**Occasion:** Ancient Celebration of Bahmangan

**Holiday:** No

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** Iranians celebrate the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of each month and refer to it by the name of that month plus the addition of 'Gan'. The month of *Bahman* is derived from 'Vohuman' of the Zoroastrians, meaning 'good intention'. It is believed that the prophet, Zoroaster, gained access to divine knowledge through this character trait. This day is celebrated to remind people of the true divine way.

## 29 January

**Occasion:** Ancient Celebration of Saadeh

**Holiday:** No

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** Saadeh is one of the biggest celebrations of the ancient Iranians. In being so, it is highly recommended for the tourists and visitors to witness and be a part of these ceremonies if they are in Iran at the time. The ceremony begins at dawn, by the collection of wood, at the roofs of their homes or at the mountain top by all of the participating people. In history, this ceremony has always been celebrated by the gathering of all people of a city or village. The ancient ritual was for all to gather and create a large bonfire. The point of the celebration was to embrace fellowship and the helping of one another. Once the fire got going, the townspeople read stories, spoke of wisdom and danced around the large fire. Today, this celebration takes place among all Zoroastrians across the world, where they gather together and create the bonfire.

## 1 to 10 February

**Occasion:** Triumph of the Islamic Revolution and Fajr Film Festival

**Holiday:** No

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** The first ten days of February are referred to as 'Daheye Fajr'. The first day of February, 1979, marks the return of Imam Khomeini to Iran after his 15 year-long exile. Ten days later, the Shah's royal army withdrew from maintaining control and so it was then, the last day of the royal order.

Also during this time Iran's top-tier film festival, Fajr Film Festival, which features Persian and international films is held. Over twenty movie theatres in Tehran host red-carpet events and presentations. Parallel to the film festival, the Fajr Theatre Festival is also held during this time. The best performances are held in Shahr Theatre (City Theatre). The Fajr Film and theatre Festival are from the 1st to the 11th of February. Information on both of these fantastic artistic events can be found at:

*[www.fajrfestival.ir](http://www.fajrfestival.ir)*

*[www.fajrtheaterfestival.com](http://www.fajrtheaterfestival.com)*

### 11 February

**Occasion:** Anniversary of the triumph of the Islamic Revolution

**Holiday:** Yes

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** On this day, public parades take over every main street in the entire country to celebrate the triumph of the Islamic Revolution of 1979. This results in the closure of many main roads and access points which may cause problems for some tourists. Although these parades may be interesting for some visitors to watch, for those who don't, there are detours that can help them get around. The parades start at 9 AM and finish at 2 PM.

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### 23 February

**Occasion:** Ancient Celebration of Espandgan

**Holiday:** No

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** As found among the writings of Al-Biruni in 'The Remaining Signs of Past Centuries', this is the day in which ancient Iranians and Zoroastrians celebrate their respect for women and the earth. (Also known as mother's day in some cultures).



## 5 March

**Occasion:** Arbor Day (National Tree Planting Day)

**Holiday:** No

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** This is a day, depending on the season of each region, where citizens of many countries worldwide are encouraged to plant and care for trees. It is normally celebrated near the end of the winter or at the beginning of spring. In Iran, respect for the nature and the environment is celebrated from March 5th – 12th. This day is a great memorable opportunity for tourists and visitors to become more acquainted and a part of with Iran's nature.

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## 13 March

**Occasion:** Martyrdom/Shahada of Hazrat Fatimah

**Holiday:** Yes

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** Daughter of the Islamic Prophet's, Mohammad, grief becomes so deep that a few months after the passing of her father, she too passed away on this day.

## 15 March

**Occasion:** Chaharshanbe Suri (Last Wednesday Festival)

**Holiday:** No

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** Another ancient Iranian event that is celebrated on the last Wednesday of each year. When evening arrives, people gather together in the streets and parks to create fires to jump over. As they jump over the flames, they recite 'my yellowness to you, your redness to me'. This expression basically implies that the fire takes a person's paleness, sickness and struggle and in turn gives them a glow, warmth and strength. The celebration of this ritual is not specific to any race or religion in Iran.

It is important to note that any travel plans best be made before the evening, as many of the streets are closed off and occupied by people participating in this celebration. The lighting of fireworks is also very common on this day, and so participation may be attractive for some tourists and travellers to see and be a part of.

### 19 March

**Occasion:** National Day of the Industrialization of Oil

**Holiday:** Yes

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** After many years of British control over Iran's oil, since 1913, Mohammad Mosaddegh, prime minister, in 1950. This is a very important day for Iranian, as they pay homage to Mr. Mosaddegh and nationalization of Iranian oil.

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### 20 March

**Occasion:** Iranian New Year ( Sal-e Now/Nowruz)

**Holiday:** Yes

**Tourist Attractions:** Closed

**Details:** Nowruz is the first day of the Iranian Solar Hijri Calendar. This is also the first day of spring and of the oldest celebrations of ancient Iran

## 21 to 23 March

**Occasion:** Nowruz Vacation

**Holiday:** yes

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** The first four days of each is a public holiday. Albeit most professions in Iran are on holiday vacation for the first thirteen days. During these days, a large majority of the population go on vacations to other cities and the remaining few visit their family and friends, to welcome the new year. It is a crucial point for travelers and tourists to be aware of that if they plan to visit Iran at this time, they must reserve their stay at their designated hotel beforehand. Hotels are expected to be fully booked in the days approaching the New Year Vacation.

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## 31 March

**Occasion:** Islamic Republic Day

**Holiday:** yes

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** On this day, the public election turned out in favor of the Islamic Republic 98% to 2%. This day is named after this event in history

## 1 April

**Occasion:** Sizdah Be-Dar (Nature Day)

**Holiday:** Yes

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** As a part of the Nowruz festivities, Sizdah Be-Dar is a public holiday on the 13<sup>th</sup> of spring in which Iranians go outdoors. It is believed by some that the purpose of leaving your house and going out into nature is to rid yourself of any curses or hexes. However, upon studying the literature on history of this event, no such belief is to be found. Another ceremony that has been recently added to this celebration is the knotting of grass blades. It has become a popular superstition for unmarried women to tie knots in blades of grass with the intention that it will bring them happy marriage in the future. After Sizdah Be-Dar, the New Year holidays are finished.

## 7 April

**Occasion:** Ancient Celebration of Farvardingan

**Holiday:** No

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** Celebrated on the 19<sup>th</sup> of the month of Farvardin, *Farvardingan* is another one of the Zoroastrian monthly celebrations. It is a day for embracing the memory of the loved ones that have passed away. However, this is not a day of mourning, as the Zoroastrian religion holds no belief in grieving and mourning the dead and so instead they celebrate and share their happiness with the spirits of the departed. In other words, it can be said that it is a celebration of collective or universal consciousness and the world of spirit. On this day, Zoroastrians visit the burial grounds of their loved ones and place incense, candles, flowers and fruits on their resting places.

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## 21 April

**Occasion:** The Birth of Imam Ali (Hazrat Ali)

**Holiday:** yes

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** The celebration of the birthday of the first Imam of the Islam religion. This day is of special significance to those of the Islamic belief.



## 22 April

**Occasion:** Ancient Celebration of Ordibeheshtgan

**Holiday:** No

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** Also referred to as 'Golestan Jashn' this is another Zoroastrian celebration of fire. The third day of each month is called *Ordibehesht*, and the third day of the month of Ordibehesht is called Ordibeheshtgan. It is believed that this is a good day for visiting the Zoroastrian fire temples and to make one's self of service to the royal government.

## 5 May

**Occasion:** Selection of Hazrat Rasool (Prophet Mohammad)

**Holiday:** Yes

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** Shia Muslims believe that it was on this day that the Islamic prophet, at the age of 40, was selected by god to be a prophet. It is believed that on this day, while praying in Hara Cave, Saint Gabriel went to him and told him that he was selected by god as the Islamic prophet. This is a very dear day for all Shia Muslims across the world as they celebrate coming forth of the prophet.

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## 22 May

**Occasion:** Birth of the 12th Imam, Hazrat Ghaem/Imam Zaman (Imam of the Age)

**Holiday:** yes

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** Shia Muslims and Christians believe that there will come a time when Islam's 12<sup>th</sup> Imam and Jesus Christ will reappear once again to save humankind and bring peace and justice to the world. The birthday of the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam is on the day of 'Nimeh Shaban' of the Hijri (Lunar) Calendar. On this day, followers of this belief hand out sweets and tea on the streets out of wishful intent of the reappearance of the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam and Christ.

## 26 May

**Occasion:** Ancient Celebration of Khordadgan

**Holiday:** No

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** On the sixth of the month of *Khordad*, the Zoroastrian celebration of Khordadgan is held. It is also known as 'Abdolbaghar'. On this day, followers of the Zoroastrian belief spent time at springs, rivers and ocean fronts in embracing the purity of their intent and Ahura Mazda. Afterwards, they move to their temples in order to pay respect to Ahura Mazda and onwards the celebrations continue in light spirits.

### 3 June

**Occasion:** The Passing Away of Imam Khomeini

**Holiday:** Yes

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** The founder of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeini, passed away on this day. Each year, mourners from all over attend to Imam Khomeini's tomb in order to participate in his remembrance and mourning.

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### 4 June

**Occasion:** The Uprising of Khordad 15th

**Holiday:** yes

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** In 1963 Imam Khomeini was arrested and taken away by the Royal army after an angry speech against Reza Shah. This caused in a massive protest between the Shia Muslims and Shah's regime which led to people flooding the streets in anger that in-turn resulted in the death of many protesters. This day is a memorial day to ongoings of that time.

## 7 June to 5 July

**Occasion:** Month of Ramadan/Ramezan

**Holiday:** No

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** This is a month of the Arabian calendar in which followers of the Muslim faith fast. In order to respect those who are fasting, all of those, Muslim or non-Muslim are forbidden to eat, drink and/or smoke in public. During the day, the majority of restaurants are closed and the ones few that are open only serve cold food, in order for the smell not to bother the fasters. Fasting continues until evening, at sunset (Azan: invitation to prayer at sunset). Travellers visiting Iran during this month, which are not fasting, are suggested to carry food with them in their bag during their travels and to dine in their own privacy.

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## 27 June

**Occasion:** Martyrdom/Shahada of Hazrat Ali

**Holiday:** Yes

**Tourist Attractions:** Closed

**Details:** On this day, the first Imam of the Islamic religion passed away. It is common for those who had previously made a vow to handout the charities they'd promised. All tourist attractions are closed on this day.

## 1 July

**Occasion:** Quds Day

**Holiday:** No

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** Also written as 'Ghods Day', this is the last Friday of the month of Ramadan. On this day, in order to show support for the Palestinians, people of all cities in Iran march and parade onto the streets. It is important for travellers to note of and make the necessary detour plans if they wish to go anywhere, as the main streets and squares will be completely blocked.



### 3 July

**Occasion:** Ancient Celebration of Tirgan

**Holiday:** No

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** The celebration of Tirgan is another festival which is celebrated by gatherings of followers of the Zoroastrian belief. This was done in order to commemorate the declaration of Peace between Iran Turan, two long standing enemies in history. The declaration was based on the merit that they were to have an archer from the Iranian army shoot an arrow from the top of Mount Damavand to determine Iran's new border. The young Arash of the Iranian army was chosen and as legend has it, his arrow flew to the Jeyhun River which marked the border of Turan and Iran. In accordance with the vast amount of territories and cultures that this event added to Iran, this celebration is of diversity.

Also, on this same day, at the time of the Sasanid Dynasty Iran was going through a very harsh drought. Legend tells of the fleeing of the Persian into the desert in order to focus their intent in praying for water. Upon doing this, the drought ended and rain started to, again, fall in Iran. In memory of this day, Iranians celebrate by splashing water onto one another.

## 6 to 7 July

**Occasion:** Eid-e Fetr (Eid al-Fitr)

**Holiday:** Yes

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** The last day of fasting and month of Ramadan is marked by this day, Eid-e Fetr. Fasting Muslims celebrate their last day and the day after of fasting by handing out sweets and candy. Good to note for travellers, after Eid-e Fetr, you can freely eat, drink and smoke in public once again.

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## 28 July

**Occasion:** Ancient Celebration of Amordadgan

**Holiday:** No

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** Celebrated on the 7<sup>th</sup> of the month of *Amordad* of the Zoroastrian calendar (3<sup>rd</sup> of Mordad of the Iranian Calendar). 'Amordad' in translation means 'immortal'. This event is dedicated to Amshaspand Amertat, the angel of health and long life. Zoroastrians have celebrated this event since ancient times by praying to Ahura Mazda in nature and open air. Afterwards they would have a feast together and embrace the beauties of nature.

## 30 July

**Occasion:** Martyrdom/Shahada of Imam Jafar-e Sadegh

**Holiday:** Yes

**Tourist Attractions:** Closed

**Details:** The sixth Imam of the Shia Muslims, Imam Jafar Sadegh was known as a theoretician and a main pillar of the Shia sect in Islam. Notable for travellers and visitors of Iran, all tourist and historic attraction are closed on this day.

### 25 August

**Occasion:** Ancient Celebration of Shahrivargan

**Holiday:** No

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** This event is celebrated on fourth day of every month of the Zoroastrian Calendar. However, going by the Iranian Calendar it has aligned with the 30th of Mordad. Shahrivargan is the Zoroastrian Father's Day. It is another day of feasting together and is symbolized by the basil plant. After the feast, the celebration is also accompanied by singing and dancing. Aside from celebrating, this day is also a time for helping the oppressed and less fortunate.

### 12 September

**Occasion:** Eid-e Ghorban/Qurbon

**Holiday:** Yes

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** Eid-e Ghorban is one of the most important celebrations for Muslims around the world. In translation, 'Eid-e Ghorban' means 'Holiday of Sacrifice'. On this day, Muslims sacrifice a sheep, cow, or camel and distribute the meat to their neighbours and the less fortunate.

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### 20 September

**Occasion:** Eid-e Ghadir Khumm

**Holiday:** Yes

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** On this day, the Islamic prophet assigned, Hazrat Ali, as his successor while he was in Mecca.

## 30 September

**Occasion:** Carpet Washing Ceremony at Mashhad-e Ardahal

**Holiday:** No

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** A traditional and religious event, the ceremony of carpet washing of Kashan and Ardahal both happen together at Ardahal every year on the second Friday of the month of *Mehr*. It is the only Islamic event that is aligned with the Iranian Solar Calendar. On this day participants gather together, with a long piece of wood in hand, and wash the Persian carpets in spring water as a symbol of washing away the blood of Ali ibn Bagher. As of 2012, this event has been inscribed in UNESCO's list of *Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity*. Note to travellers and tourists that are interested in cultural events, this ceremony may be of great attraction to you.



### 3 to 10 October

**Occasion:** First Ten Days of Muharram

**Holiday:** No

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** The first month of the Arabian (Lunar) Calendar is Muharram, in which the mourning of Imam Hossein (Husayn ibn Ali) begins. During the first days, Muslims who have a *Tekyeh* are busy setting up and getting ready for the days of *Tasua* and *Ashura*. A *Tekyeh* somewhat translates to a religious shrine, that the strict mourners of Imam Hossein set up in commemoration of his death (Day of Ashura). For Travelers and tourists that are visiting Iran at this time, there is an opportunity to watch one of the biggest Islamic ceremonies in all of Iran. The biggest performances of this ritual are in Iran's more religious cities; Mashhad, Yazd, Kashan, Chahar Mahal Bakhtiari...etc. The ceremony is also performed differently by each city. For example, in Chahar Mahal Bakhtiari the performers cover themselves with mud and in Yazd, heavy coffins (Called *Nakhl*) covered in black and green cloth and raised high and spun to begin the ceremony. In most of the performance, the scene of the battle in Karbala, in which Imam Hossein was killed, is re-enacted by performers just as it happened thousands of years ago. The acting out and depiction of the battle scene is called 'Namayesh Ta-zieh'.

## 7 October

**Occasion:** Ancient Celebration of Mehrgan

**Holiday:** No

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** On the 16<sup>th</sup> day of the month of *Mehr*, is another Zoroastrian feast and celebration on the day of Mehrgan which is named after the Yazata (divine angel) of Mehr. The word 'mehr' means love, kindness and friendship. After Nowruz (beginning mark of spring and summer), the celebration of Mehrgan is of great importance as it the beginning mark of autumn and winter season. The event being celebrated on this day is the mythical triumph of Kave the Blacksmith over Zahhak, and his replacement with Fereydun as the ruler of Iran. It is also regarded as the day farmers collect their crops and store them for sure in the winter time. Today, Zoroastrians visit their fire temples to pray to Ahura Mazda, feast, and partake in their traditional ceremonies of learning, singing and spreading good intent.

## 11 October

**Occasion:** Tasua

**Holiday:** Yes

**Tourist Attractions:** Closed

**Details:** This is the ninth day of Muharram, which is the evening before Ashura, of which Hossein ibn Ali was seen alongside his comrades and family. For Shia Muslims, this is a very important time in Islamic history. It is a day spent entirely in mourning. For travellers and tourists visiting Iran at this time, it is good to note that all tourist and historic attractions are closed.

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## 12 October

**Occasion:** Ahura

**Holiday:** Yes

**Tourist Attractions:** Closed

**Details:** The tenth day of Muharram is a very holy day for Muslims. It is a day of commemoration of the events of the year 61 AH (680 CE), in which Hossein ibn Ali, the third Imam of the Shia Muslims, was killed in the battle of Karbala alongside his comrades. This entire day is dedicated to mourning and the remembrance of Hossein ibn Ali. For travellers and tourists visiting Iran at this time, it is good to note that all tourist and historic attractions are closed.

## 31 October

**Occasion:** Ancient Celebration of Abangan

**Holiday:** No

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** On the tenth of the month of *Aban*, the Zoroastrian feast of Abangan takes place. It is the celebration of the waters of the earth. Many historians believe that it was during the long wars between Iran and Turan, that Afrasiab (King of Turan) ordered his army to dismantle and ruin the underground water canals that brought water to Iran. It was only after the war had ended that Tahmaseb's son, Zu, of Iran, ordered for the clearing of the canals. It was due to this order that water once again flowed to Iran land and so celebrations took place because of it.

There is another tale regarding the history of this date. It describes Iran going through an eight year drought, which came to a halt on this day in Aban. The rain that began to fall from that day forth cured every one of their diseases and poverty. Regardless of the exact tale, Zoroastrians celebrate and embrace the water of the earth on this day.

### 20 November

**Occasion:** Arba'een Hosseini / Chehelom

**Holiday:** Yes

**Tourist Attractions:** Closed

**Details:** This day marks the 40<sup>th</sup> day of the death of Imam Hossein, as Shia Muslims dedicate this whole day to mourning. Notable for travellers and visitors of Iran, all tourist and historic attraction are closed on this day.

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### 28 November

**Occasion:** The Day of the Passing of the Islamic Prophet

**Holiday:** Yes

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** On this day, the Islamic prophet passed away at the age of 63.

### 29 November

**Occasion:** Ancient Celebration of Azargan

**Holiday:** No

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** The celebration of Azargan takes place on the third day of the month of *Azar*. 'Azar' means fire; which one of the four sacred elements of fire, water, wind and earth. Ahura Mazda placed fire among the highest of the elements because of its power to bring clarity, light, pureness, and warmth. On this day, Zoroastrians attend formal ceremonies at the fire temples in order to pray and focus their intent on sacredness of fire.

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### 30 November

**Occasion:** Martyrdom/Shahada of Imam Reza

**Holiday:** Yes

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** Imam Reza is of special importance to Shia Muslims around the world and so every year on this day, many make a pilgrimage to his tomb. His tomb is located in Mashhad city, Iran. History tells of his death being caused by him being poisoned by the hand of an ancient ruler named Mamoon.

### 17 December

**Occasion:** Birthday of the Islamic prophet and Imam Jafar Sadegh

**Holiday:** Yes

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** This holiday is dedicated to the birth of the Islamic prophet and Imam Jafar Sadegh.

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### 20 December

**Occasion:** Shab-e Yalda/Cheleh

**Holiday:** No

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** This celebration is of the oldest of Iranian culture, in which marks the longest night of the winter as well as the turning of the season from winter to spring. On this night, Iranian families and friends come together in their homes and have a big feast and, according to tradition, to eat seven different fruits. After the feast is finished, they gather around and the elders tell stories to the rest of the family. Horoscopes of the famous Iranian poet, Hafez, are also read out for each person (called Fal-e Hafez). It is common for these ceremonies to last all night until sunrise.

### 22 December

**Occasion:** Ancient Celebration of Deygan

**Holiday:** No

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** Celebrated on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of the month of *Dey* of the Persian calendar (Dec 23<sup>rd</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> and Jan 7<sup>th</sup>), this Zoroastrian celebration takes place in some select cities and villages. 'Dey' in translation means 'creation' or 'creator'. Rulers of ancient Persia started the celebrations on the first of Dey, which is the day after the winter solstice (longest night of the year), by making public visitations to the people..

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### 25 December

**Occasion:** Birth of Jesus Christ

**Holiday:** No

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** This day marks the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. The Christians of Iran are of two groups: Armenians and Ashuris. Unlike the Ashuris who celebrate the birth of Christ on this day, Armenians celebrate it on January 6<sup>th</sup>. However, all Christian alike celebrate the eve of December 24<sup>th</sup> with feasts, presents and decorated homes and Christmas trees. Iranian Christians also celebrate this event by attending church ceremonies and prayers.



### 29 December

**Occasion:** Ancient Celebration of Deygan

**Holiday:** No

**Tourist Attractions:** Open

**Details:** Celebrated on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of the month of *Dey* of the Persian calendar (Dec 23<sup>rd</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> and Jan 7<sup>th</sup>), this Zoroastrian celebration takes place in some select cities and villages. 'Dey' in translation means 'creation' or 'creator'. Rulers of ancient Persia started the celebrations on the first of Dey, which is the day after the winter solstice (longest night of the year), by making public visitations to the people.

# IRAN'S HOLIDAY CALENDAR

(Sourced From an authentic 2016 Iranian Calendar)

January 2016



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