



Southeastern Iran

جنوب شرقی ایران

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Best Places to Eat

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Best Places to Sleep

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Why Go?

While central Iran's gem cities are deservedly a far bigger draw, the southeast offers cave-houses, classic gardens, fortresses, deserted villages, oases and fabulous erosion patterns all set in scenery that intersperses great expanses of desert with chains of high mountains. Especially if you're mobile, this is a thrilling region in which to feel like a real-life explorer discovering timeless ancient sites...and enjoying them all on your own.

If planning a multiday loop, do it clockwise: Birjand and Kerman seem far more delightful if you've yet to see Yazd and Esfahan. And crossing the Dasht-e Lut westbound provides a scenic crescendo that reaches a glorious climax at the Kaluts.

When to Go

The best seasons to visit are typically early spring and late autumn. In Kerman city (around 1750m) and surrounding towns, elevation tempers the heat but summers are impossibly hot in the Lut desert. If you're there from June to August, arrive before dawn and be out by 9am.

In winter, desert temperatures are pleasant by day but can plunge to -10°C at night (when even oasis village homestays need heaters). Reaching the desert from Kerman involves crossing the mountains through a tunnel at nearly 2700m, which can be temporarily blocked by winter blizzards.

Meymand

میمند

📍 034 / POPULATION 50 / ELEVATION 2220M

Continuously occupied for millennia – the lowest estimate is 2000 years – Meymand is a unique troglodyte village of *kiche* (cave-houses) burrowed into gently sloping composite rocks and backed by a wild-west

scenic skyline of eroded crags and mesa-like rock formations. Set around a small stream-fed orchard, this Unesco site makes a memorable stop between Kerman and Yazd (or Shiraz).

Meymand Guesthouse (📞 0913 392 6199; www.maymand.ir; Meymand; per person without bathroom foreigner/Iranian from



Southeastern Iran Highlights

- 1 The Kaluts** (p240)
Watching the desert sun setting over extraordinary wind-eroded 'statues' before sleeping beneath the stars.
- 2 Rayen** (p242)
Delving deeper into one of Iran's most appealing small towns, beyond its fabulous Arg.
- 3 Meymand** (p231)
Sleeping in a troglodyte

- cave house while learning about traditional shepherd lifestyles.
- 4 Old Deyhuk** (p242)
Seeking out a whole series of abandoned ghost villages around appealing Boshrooyeh.
- 5 Hamam-e Vakil Chaykhaneh** (p237)
Lunching with traditional

- music in a converted old bathhouse within Kerman's historic bazaar.
- 6 Qa'en Castle Peak** (p244)
Descending from mountaintop fortifications as a muezzin calls to sunset prayers and the lights start to glow on the Bozorgmehr tomb.