



Tehran تهران

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Best Places to Eat

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Why Go?

Hugging the lower slopes of the magnificent, snowcapped Alborz Mountains, Tehran is Iran's most secular and liberal city. Spend time here – as you should – and you'll soon realise that the city is so much more than a chaotic jumble of concrete and crazy traffic blanketed by a miasma of air pollution. This is the nation's dynamic beating heart and *the* place to get a handle on modern Iran and what its future will likely be.

Exploring this fascinating metropolis will transport you on a journey through more than 250 years of Iranian history – from the glittering Golestan Palace and the adjacent Grand Bazaar to the beautiful Azadi Tower and the notorious former US embassy. Then there are the city's many excellent museums and serene gardens. In such places, as well as in contemporary cafes, traditional teahouses and on the walking trails in the mountains, you can relax and enjoy all that's good about Tehran.

When to Go

The best time to visit Tehran is during the two-week No Ruz (Iranian New Year) holiday from 21 March. Given more than 60% of Tehranis come from somewhere else and head for home for the holiday, the usual traffic chaos is replaced by relative calm.

During April and May, and September to early November, the weather is relatively mild. Summer is hot and can be very humid, and while winter isn't as cold as some places, air pollution tends to be at its worst during December and January.



Tehran Highlights

- 1 Golestan Palace** (p37) Taking in the opulence of this monument to Qajar excess.
- 2 Grand Bazaar** (p39) Exploring the mother of all Iranian markets, which sells it all – from skimpy knickers to antique carpets.
- 3 Treasury of National Jewels** (p40) Gazing at the

Peacock Throne and a shah's ransom of bling.

4 Tochal Telecab (p50) Riding the gondola to near the summit of Mt Tochal, where there's a small ski resort.

5 Persian Food Tours (p53) Getting a hands-on experience of making an Iranian meal with an expertly run cooking class.

6 Darband (p51) Enjoying a gentle hike up into the foothills of the Alborz Mountains at this north Tehran village packed with teahouses.

7 Islamic Museum (p40) Feasting your eyes on a gorgeous collection of arts and crafts from down the ages.