



A View of Tehran

## Tehran Province

### History

Human settlement of the region dates from Neolithic times, but the development of Tehran, which started as a small village in the foothills of the Alborz mountains, was very slow and its rise to prominence largely accidental.

In 1197, after the Mongols sacked the nearby town of Rey (at that time the major urban center in central Persia), Tehran began to develop in its place as small, moderately prosperous trading center.

In the mid-16th century. Tehran's attractive natural setting, many trees, clear rivers and good hunting brought it into the favor of the early Safavid king, Tahmasbi, under his patronage, gardens were built and heavily fortified walls were erected to protect the town and its steadily increasing population the later Safavid kings.

As a result of the Ghajar threat to his throne, in 1758 Karim Khan Zand transferred his army here from his capital at Shiraz, with the intention of moving in on his enemy. At the same time he refortified Tehran and began the construction of a royal residence.

Perhaps he had intended to move his capital here, but when his army killed the Ghajar chieftain, Muhammed Hassan Khan, and took his young son Agha Muhammed Khan hostage, Karim Khan abandoned the unfinished palace and returned to Shiraz.



Golestan Palace

In 1789 Agha Muhammed Khan declared Tehran his capital and six years later he had himself crowned as shah of all Persia. He destroyed Karim Khan and carried it back to Tehran in a final act of revenge. The town continued to grow slowly under later Ghajar rulers.



Azadi Monument

From the early 1920s the city was extensively modernized on a grid system, and this period marked the start of the phenomenal population growth and uncontrolled urban



**Carpet Museum**

development that continues to this day.

In 1887, the population was 250,000, and by 1930 had only increased to half a million, with the city's rapid expansion only slowing during WWII. In 1956 however, the population was 1.8 million, by 1976, it had risen to 4.5 million, and by the time of the 1986 census, Tehran's population had soared to more than 8.7 million.

Exact figures of the current population are unavailable, and the government possibly underestimates the figure anyway, but it is probably more than 10 million.

### **Golestan Palace**

This palace was constructed in the year 1268 AH, under the order of Naseredin Shah. This palace is comprised of the entrance along with various pavilions, such as mirror, diamonds, ivory and crystal pavilions, as well as Salam pavilion in which the famous 'Takht-e-Tavoos' or 'the Peacock Throne' that Nader Shah took as ransom from India in his conquest in 1739, is placed.

This throne has seven jeweled stands with two steps. On its back, there is a statue of a dragon. It has a delicate back seat which is ornamented by beautiful inscriptions.

### **Azadi Monument**

Built in 1971 to commemorate the 2500th anniversary of the Persian Empire, is an inverted Y-shaped 45 m high monument. Upstairs, the Azadi Museum contains a small collection of art and archaeological finds.

### **Mt Damavand**

The magnificent conical volcano of Mt Damavand (5671m) is the highest in the country. Shaped like Mt Fuji, the mountain is worth a closer look, even if you have no intention of climbing it.

The mountain is actually just in Mazandaran province, but is more easily accessible from Tehran.

### **Carpet Museum**

This beautiful architecture structure, with the carpet-shaped facade, is located north west of Laleh Park. The display area covers 3,400 sq. m. and consists of two halls exhibiting carpets and Kilims.

It was inaugurated in 1977. Its library is enriched with 3500



**MT Damavand**

books. The collection of carpet museum comprises of samples of Iranian carpets from the 9th century AH. up to this date. About 135 master pieces of Iranian carpets are displayed in the ground floor. The art of carpet weaving in Iran, considering the 2500 year old 'Pazirik' which was discovered in southern Siberia in the year 1949, dates back to pre-Achaemenian period.