

PERSIA

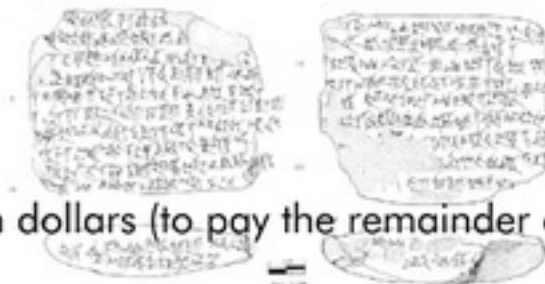
BASIC INFO 1.0



1. ALL participants should provide a photocopy of their passport (to be sent ahead of time to the local travel agency)

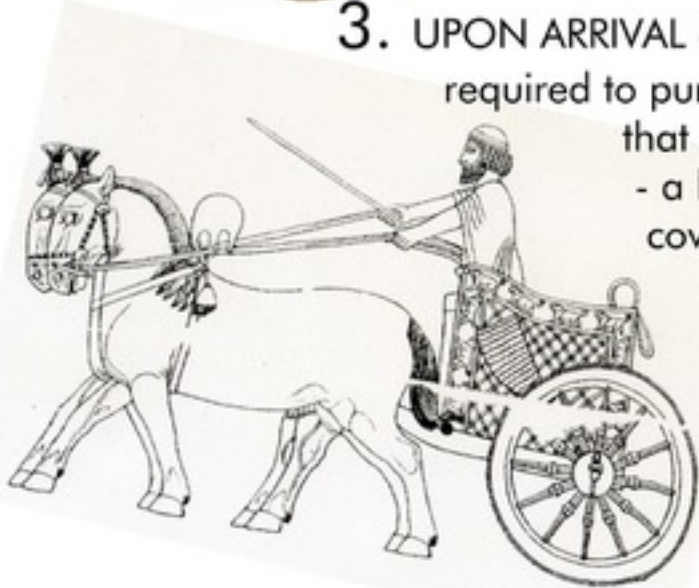


2. PLEASE bring Euros rather than dollars (to pay the remainder of the trip and ease conversion locally).

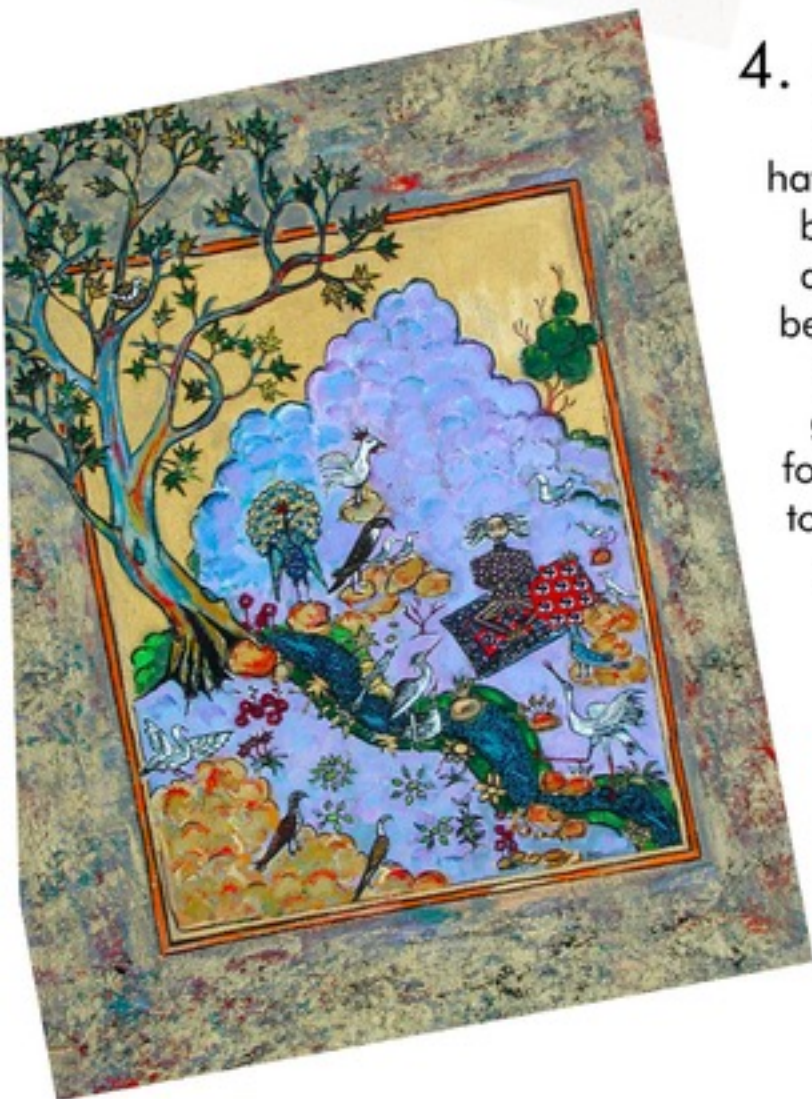


Neo-Babylonian legal document from the Persepolis Fortification (Fort. 11796)

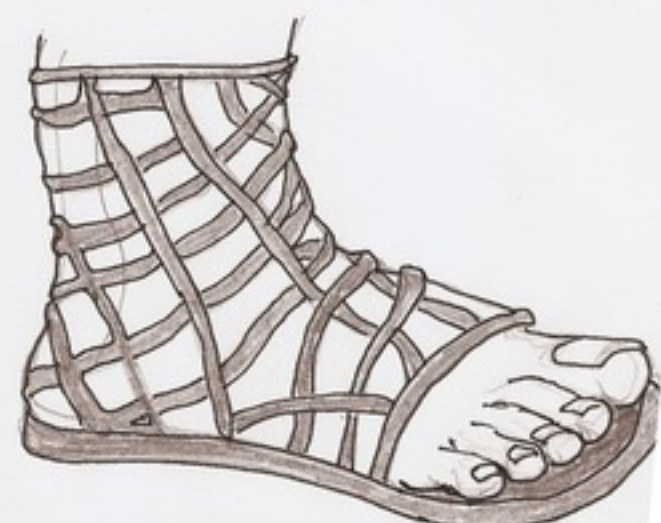
3. UPON ARRIVAL at Tehran airport (Imam Khomeini Airport = IKA) you will be required to purchase for Euro 15,- or 16,- a local health insurance - which means that anything that you need doing there will be free (they have very good doctors - a lot of foreigners go there for plastic surgery! among other specialities), as covered by said insurance. *** Depending on the various arrival times of the different people (hopefully not too late in the afternoon of the 1st of November 2018 - as we need to proceed to Kashan - which is about 2 to 2 and a half hours away from the capital - and could be a bit longer given the airport location as starting point - and best to stick together while waiting for the transport to pick us up from IKA.



4. REGARDING THE CLIMATE in Persia in November - it will be cold in the capital city (landing and last day/departure day - you will be free in the capital - if you have time before your flight's departure: NB. you should be at the airport 3 hours before your flight's departure) hence please bring some woollens and a jacket - and possibly some warm underclothing (good light sport woollen T-shirts/etc. to be had) as it can be bitterly cold, and windy. Inside buildings you will be fine (not 35 degrees as in Penang, but almost !). Again, best to try travelling "light" i.e. good warm/adaptable clothing - but maybe not thick Alpine ski jackets ! If very foldable/reducible in size in your bag, all the better - but you know your reaction to cold - so best to listen to your body! As we travel down South, the weather will get warmer (!). Our first overnight stop will be in Kashan - probably as cold as Tehran. The weather is rather dry - so the warmth is not humid as in Penang, hopefully not a problem. In the desert, at night it will probably be cold and pleasant during the day. Will get more info regarding sleeping arrangements while in the desert - and also maybe not to pack in too much - to leave some space to take things back with you ! Where we stay more than 1 day, you can have your clothing washed/ironed (not expensive) in the hotels.



5. SHOES: Regarding the walking in the desert, best to take closed shoes/sports shoes - not too heavy - so as to be able to walk nicely. The desert walk will not be the whole day (!), a couple of hours per day (2 days) and safety will be assured thanks to discrete following - so no panic! Sunglasses probably a good idea, sun cream - at that time of the year the sun is "low" hence not very intense, but a light sun screen can be useful for delicate skin.



6. **FOOD:** Rest assured, in Persia people eat plenty of rice! There tends to be Indian Basmati rice (cheaper) and Persian rice - which the locals much prefer, but are not always prepared to pay the price difference! (some restaurants save money that way). A lot of chicken is eaten, with rice and veggies. Various ways of rice preparation: saffron and barberries (almost like goji berries); rice with dill; rice with tomatoes, etc. There is also lamb/mutton, some steak. Also some good fish from the Gulf. The local flat bread - at times in hotels/restaurants, they make it fresh - out of the oven... it is wonderfully tasty and irresistible for me (no gluten and do cheat !!)



7. **USUALLY BREAKFAST** in hotels is done buffet style: fruits/egg - omelette/potatoes/certain bean dishes at times - even types of soup (in cold weather not a bad idea!): cold cereal - cooked cereal (like a porridge) etc./sausages/toast/jams/yogurt/dates/tomatoes/cucumbers/etc. Sometimes the choice is more limited, but have no fear, portions are generally generous, hence no fear of starving! Usual choice of coffee/tea/chocolate (not always) and possibly hot milk. Notice that you might find a tea pot perched on a gizmo to keep it warm: do not take the pot with you - as it contains the "essence" i.e. very strong tea (like in Russia the Samovar - meaning "self cooking") and just pour a limited amount, and next to it, there should be a thermos/hot water source - to reduce the strength - and dilute it to your taste. Often, there will be lemon slices for the tea available.

8. **LUNCH & DINNER:** Sometimes in certain restaurants, a complimentary "small dish" will be offered with some delicate items as a welcome gesture. Not all places do that, though. Could be a local drink, some small portion of the chef's speciality, etc.



9. **ETIQUETTE:** Ladies must wear a scarf of their head - covering the neck and most of the hair. A lot of "fashionista ladies" in the cities - taunt this custom a bit - and use it as a fashion statement, allowing said scarf to move back a little, and at times more than a little! But best not to play - and find a solution which is comfortable, easy and elegant if you so wish, at the same time. Some foreign ladies find very interesting ways of resolving this conundrum!

10. **IRANIAN LADIES** are more "handshaking" than their Arabic counterparts (Moslem), thus it is not unusual to see Persian ladies shaking hands with a man (family, good friend, known person). To avoid any confusion, for our ladies best to shake hands (if situation demands it) with ladies and greet gents with a slight bow of the head/greeting.

11. Normally, I shall convene a meeting - you will be invited for tea/coffee and will brief you a bit more on some cultural/historical items/places we'll visit, so that you have an idea and do not panic for whatever reason! Or, I can just respond to your questions, and not divulge too much, and leave you with some surprises.

12. Hopefully, the trip will be a memorable experience, especially as you need to leave some ideas behind, given the Western view of the country that is promoted ad nauseam. The fact that you are participating in this trip, shows your adventurous spirit. All the power to you!

