



Hiking Iran's Alborz Mountains

14 Days



The Adventure Company | EST. 1969


MT + SOBEKTM
MOUNTAIN TRAVEL SOBEK

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS
AS THE PIONEER OF ADVENTURE TRAVEL

➤ Hiking Iran's Alborz Mountains

Few countries' history and culture are as rich, deep, and palpable as Iran's. In the northern reaches of this enchanted land, the breathtaking Alborz Mountains harbor pristine examples of the nation's textured past and colorful present. On this exclusive MT Sobek adventure, spend 6 glorious days trekking through the Alborz's varied highlands. En route, visit world-class museums, ancient ruins, sacred mosques, local villages, nomadic tribes — even soak in restorative hot springs and sleep in rock caves! Led by an expert guide, this incredible trip offers an unparalleled experience of Iran.

Details

Arrive:	Tehran, Iran
Depart:	Tehran, Iran
Duration:	14 Days
Group Size:	6-15 Guests
Minimum Age:	16 Years Old
Activity Level:	

Testimonials

"I've taken six MTS trips and they have all exceeded my expectations. The staff, the food, the logistics and the communications have always been exceptional. Thank you for being my "go to" adventure travel company!"

Margaret I.

"My wife and I approached this trip with a bit of concern about security and travel hassles. We experienced only warm hospitality and enthusiastic exchanges with Iranians wherever we went and never once felt threatened."

Michael H.

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Why Take This Trip With Us?

REASON #01

MT Sobek has crafted pioneering adventures across the globe for 50 years, and has taken guests through Iran for over five years.

REASON #02

Our team of local guides are true experts, each with over 20 years' of experience trekking in the Alborz Mountains.

REASON #03

This unique adventure takes you out of the tour van and into the mountains to explore by foot — a rarely offered opportunity.

What to Expect



ACTIVITIES

Journey blends hiking up to 8 hours a day on sometimes rocky mountain paths with immersive cultural touring of historical sights.



LODGING

Comfortable hotel accommodations and two nights camping in the Alborz Mountains. Also includes a night at a boutique cave hotel in Kandovan!



CLIMATE

July and September temperatures range from the low-60's F to low-100's F. The mountains are colder in the low 30's F at night. Rain is unlikely.

Meet Our Guides

Our expert guides and trip leaders are truly the key to our trips' success. Many are locals who live in-country year-round; others have made it their second home—all are passionate, enthusiastic and endlessly knowledgeable. Meet two of the guides that might be on your trip.

Hadi, a native of Iran, always dreamed of traveling and interacting with other cultures. After 23 years in tourism, Hadi has led over 285 tours for Western groups, and has held the position of Chairman of the Iranian Tour Guide Association (ITGA) for six years. Aside from leading tours, he spends considerable time exploring the nooks and crannies of Iran and other parts of the world. A diligent student of cultures and of life, Hadi is a warm and incredibly knowledgeable resource, the perfect person to impart understanding of Iranian culture on this cultural odyssey.

Saied Haji-Hadi

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Itinerary

DAY 1

ARRIVE IN IRAN

Welcome to Tehran! Meet your MT Sobek guide and transfer to the hotel. Join the group for a short welcome talk and trip briefing, before a visit to the stunning Carpet Museum, with more than 36,000 square feet of exhibition space containing the largest collection of Persian carpets in the world! After lunch at a local restaurant, visit the Flea Market nearby where you can do some treasure (and bargain) hunting. Then we'll visit the modern Iran Artists Forum-where there are many galleries. Tonight, we gather for a welcome dinner.

Meals: D

DAY 2

BEHOLD THE JEWELS OF TEHRAN

Start the day off with a buffet breakfast before driving into the city center to visit one of the gates of old Tehran. Then spend the rest of the morning visiting the National Museum of Iran, which features some of the world's most valuable Persian antiquities right up to the modern Islamic era. After a hearty lunch, feast your eyes upon the largest and most dazzling collection of jewels in the world at the Crown Jewels Museum, located in the National Treasury. This evening, enjoy dinner with the group.

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 3

ENTER THE ALBORZ MOUNTAINS

Lace up your hiking boots! Wake for a 3.5-hour drive to the rugged mountains and valleys of Alamut, near Qazvin. Along the way, stop for a 2-hour hike near Ovan Lake, a pretty alpine lake tucked away in the hills of the northern Alborz. From there, travel to ancient Alamut Castle which is dramatically perched atop a craggy outcrop. It is best-known as the 14th-century secret fortress of Hassan-i Sabbah, founder of the ancient order of Assassins. Tonight, enjoy a traditional homestay in Gazor Khan.

Activity: 2 hours/2.5 miles hiking with 3,300' elevation gain

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 4

MOUNTAIN HIKE TO PICHEH BON

Today's hike will take you deeper into the Alborz Mountains and includes a dry, rocky mountain pass at 10,500-foot elevation. Start the day with a 1-hour drive to Garmarud, where your 5-hour hike begins. We will hike over a dry mountain pass with very little vegetation characteristic of the southern Alborz ranges. En route you will pass through two rural villages before heading up to the pass, where you'll take in spectacular views of the Alborz

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Range. After the pass, descend into a different climate and watch the terrain gradually change into a lush, green forested area. Camp overnight at Picheh Bon village (9,500').

Activity: 5 hours/7 miles hiking with 2,950' elevation gain & 1,650' elevation loss

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 5

VISIT SALAMBAR CARAVANSERAI & HIKE TO SHAHRESTAN

Gear up for a 6-hour hike crossing a high mountain pass at 10,800' feet. After the pass, we enter a very different climate as the terrain changes to a green, forested area in the Caspian Sea region. Along the way, you will have the opportunity to visit Salambar caravanserai, an ancient roadside inn, then overnight in Shahrestan village.

Activity: 6 hours/8 miles hiking with 1,300' elevation gain & 3,600' elevation loss

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 6

HIKE TO DAR SARYA PLAIN AND DRIVE TO RAMSAR

Today, we will drive from Shahrestan village to Do-Hezar region, a spectacular valley near the Caspian Sea. We will start from our trailhead at 5,900' and hike 2 hours to Darya Sar plain at 7,550'. We will continue hiking for a couple more hours and then have a picnic lunch in a beautiful setting. We will then descend to the main road and drive to Ramsar.

Activity: 6 hours/6 miles hiking with 1,650' elevation gain & loss

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 7

DRIVE TO SAREIN AND TAKE A LEISURELY HIKE

Today, we will drive from Ramsar to Sarein via Asalem and Khalkhal Roads. En-route visit the tomb of Sherikh Safyeddin Ardebil and enjoy an easy hourlong hike in the green mountainous area.

Activity: 1 hour/2-3 miles hiking with minimal elevation gain & loss

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 8

HIKE MT. SABALAN & RELAX AT SAREIN'S HOT SPRINGS

Get back into your boots! Embark on a hour hike on the slopes of sacred Mt. Sabalan (15,784'), Iran's third-highest mountain. This area is also a home base for the local Shabsavan nomadic pastoral tribe, with whom you enjoy a cup of tea. This afternoon, your feet will thank you for soaking them in Sarein's soothing hot springs.

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The area's mineral-rich waters are known throughout Iran for their healing and spiritual powers. Each spring is slightly different in mineral composition, size, and temperature, and is recognized for curing particular ailments.

Activity: 4 hours/4-5 miles hiking with 500' elevation gain

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 9

TAKE IN THE TREASURES OF TABRIZ

After breakfast, drive to the cultural mecca of Tabriz, home to the 14th-century Arg-e Alishah (also known as the Arg-e Tabriz) ruins, allegedly the largest brick structure ever built. Explore the archeological and historical Azerbaijan Museum, featuring superb metal and stone relics up to 3,000 years old, Ahad Hossein's powerful sculptures of life and war, plus a re-weave of the legendary Ardebil carpet. Also visit the splendid Masjed-e Kaboud, or the Blue Mosque. Constructed in 1465, the mosque is renowned for its remarkable domed ceilings, dazzling turquoise tile mosaics, and intricate calligraphy.

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 10

VISIT ST. STEPANOS MONASTERY & TABRIZ'S LEGENDARY BAZAAR

Start the day exploring ancient tomb and caravanserai ruins en route to the architecturally masterful St. Stepanos Monastery. Built in the 9th century entirely of stone, it has been restored and rebuilt several times over the centuries. After lunch, return to Tabriz to hunt for treasures at its vibrant, UNESCO-listed bazaar explored by Marco Polo in the 13th century. Stroll through its 22 magnificent brick-domed halls and 24 caravanserais filled with carpets, jewelry, spices, hats, leather, housewares, produce, and much more.

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 11

TREK THE SACRED VALLEY OF KANDOVAN

Drive to Maragheh and stop on the way for another day of trekking, though this time it's through the scenic valley of Kandovan in the historic Mt. Sahand foothills, a 30-mile drive from Tabriz. Sahand, a dormant volcano, is the highest mountain in Iran's East Azerbaijan province. Cut into its slopes is the remarkable village of Kandovan, where just over 600 people reside year-round, comprised of manmade cliff dwellings excavated inside volcanic rocks and tuffs. Tonight you settle into bed in Maragheh.

Activity: 2 hours/4 miles hiking with negligible elevation gain/loss

Meals: B, L, D

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DAY 12

MOUNTAIN DRIVE SOUTH TO ZANJAN

Another mountain drive this morning through the Zagros mountains' passes and villages leads to the spectacular Sassanid Takht-e Soleyman citadel. This UNESCO World Heritage Site includes the principal Zoroastrian sanctuary, partly rebuilt in the 13th-century Mongol period, and a Sasanian-period (6th- and 7th-century) temple dedicated to Anahita, divinity of the waters. The designs of the fire temple, the palace, and the general layout have strongly influenced the development of religious Islamic architecture, as well as other cultures.

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 13

VISIT BREATHTAKING SOLTANIYEH AND QAZVIN

Behold breathtaking UNESCO-listed Soltaniyeh, home to Iran's oldest (1302-1312) and tallest double-shell dome, and one of the world's largest brick domes. Sadly much of the Dome of Soltaniyeh's exterior decor has been lost over the centuries, but the interior's remarkable mosaics, murals, calligraphy, and faience have been preserved. Next is Qazvin, an ancient Persian Empire capital known today as the calligraphy capital of Iran. Visit its wonderfully restored caravanserai-turned-arts precinct, architectural marvels, sensorial bazaars, and atmospheric alleyways. After lunch, return to Tehran for a farewell dinner.

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 14

DEPART FROM TEHRAN

After a farewell breakfast, transfer to Tehran's international airport for your homeward-bound flight.

Meals: B

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Dates

Jul 1 - 14, 2020

Sep 1 - 14, 2020

For full terms and conditions please visit www.mtsobek.com/terms. Please note that our itineraries may be subject to change.

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Pricing

2019

\$ 7,295 per person

Additional Cost

\$ 185 Iran Visa

\$ 1,700 Single Supplement

2020

\$ 7,295 per person

Additional Cost

\$ 200 Iran Visa

\$ 1,700 Single Supplement

PRICE INCLUDES

- Expert leadership from experienced adventure guides
- Accommodations as noted in the itinerary
- Meals as noted in the daily itinerary
- Potable water and snacks throughout
- All tips and gratuities for support staff with the exception of your lead adventure guide(s)
- All necessary specialty activity gear
- All group entrance fees, activities, and ground transportation
- Arrival and departure airport transfers

PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE

- International airfare, any airport taxes, or excess baggage charges
- All wine and beer since alcohol is illegal in Iran
- Optional tips to your lead adventure guides
- Personal expenses such as medical immunizations, phone calls, laundry, or souvenirs
- Optional travel protection

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➤ **The World of MT Sobek**

At Mountain Travel Sobek, we believe life is an adventure and adventure is life.

As the originators, innovators and leaders in adventure travel for more than five decades, we passionately create, craft and share indelible, transformative journeys to the world's most memorable places. Our more than 200 unique and once-in-a-lifetime trips are designed to inspire and exhilarate, enliven and excite--opening eyes and minds through profoundly personal connections with nature and culture.

Our small group and custom adventures span the globe, and the spectrum—of interests, environments and activities—every one expertly planned and knowledgeably and passionately guided. And our commitment to making every experience a remarkable one has earned us preferred travel outfitter status for National Geographic Active Expeditions, Active New York Times Journeys, and Smithsonian Active Journeys.

We are *the* adventure company.

Awards



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