

Do You Know These 20 Facts About Iran?

1. Iran, which until 1935 was known as Persia, was the site of some of the world's oldest villages. They were built near the Caspian Sea at least 6,000 years ago.
2. Girls and boys are educated separately until the university level. In addition, girls typically have only female teachers, and boys typically have only male teachers.
3. Soccer is the number one sport in Iran. Both girls and boys enjoy playing the game at school, though usually only men may attend professional games.
4. It is traditional for families to eat meals together on the floor, gathered around dishes of food spread on a kind of tablecloth called a *sofreh*.
5. **Khoresh**, which is a favorite food, is a fragrant stew of meat, fruit or vegetables, nuts, and spices. It is usually served with fluffy white rice.
6. Iran's capital and largest city, Tehran, has some of the worst air pollution in the world. An estimated 27 people die a day from air pollution-related diseases.
7. The current Iranian flag was adopted in 1980 and has three equal horizontal bands of green, white, and red. Green is the color of Islam and represents growth, white symbolizes honesty and peace, and red stands for bravery and martyrdom.
8. Nearly half of Iran has an arid desert climate. It receives less than 4 inches of precipitation each year.
9. The Persian Gulf holds 60% of the world's oil reserves. Iran alone has reserves of 125 billion barrels of oil, or 10% of the world's total reserves. Iran pumps nearly 4 million barrels of oil each day.
10. Iran is one of the world's oldest continuous civilizations, with settlements dating back to 4000 B.C.
11. Approximately 70% of Iran's population is under the age of 30.
12. Since ancient times, people in Iran have used a water supply system called a *qanat* (or *kanat*). It collects underground water and moves it through tunnels to places where people need it.
13. Iranians have woven beautiful rugs for over 2,500 years. When creating rugs, Iranian weavers often make a mistake intentionally. They want to show their belief that "only God is perfect." After oil, Iran's second largest export commodity is carpets.
14. The capital of Iran is Tehran, which means, "warm slope." Nearly 12 million people live there.
15. In Iran, females over the age of nine must wear a hijab in public. Additionally, religious rules do not allow women to wear bathing suits when men are present.
16. The Persian cat is one of the world's oldest breeds. They originated in the high plateaus of Iran where their long silky fur protected them from the cold.
17. Iran is one of the world's largest producers of caviar, pistachios, and saffron..
18. Polo was played in Iran as early as the 6th century B.C., mainly as training for the cavalry.

19. Iran is the 18th largest country in the world and is slightly smaller than Alaska.

20. Iran's constitution dictates that women are mothers and homemakers. If they want to work outside of the home, they need permission from the male head of the household.



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