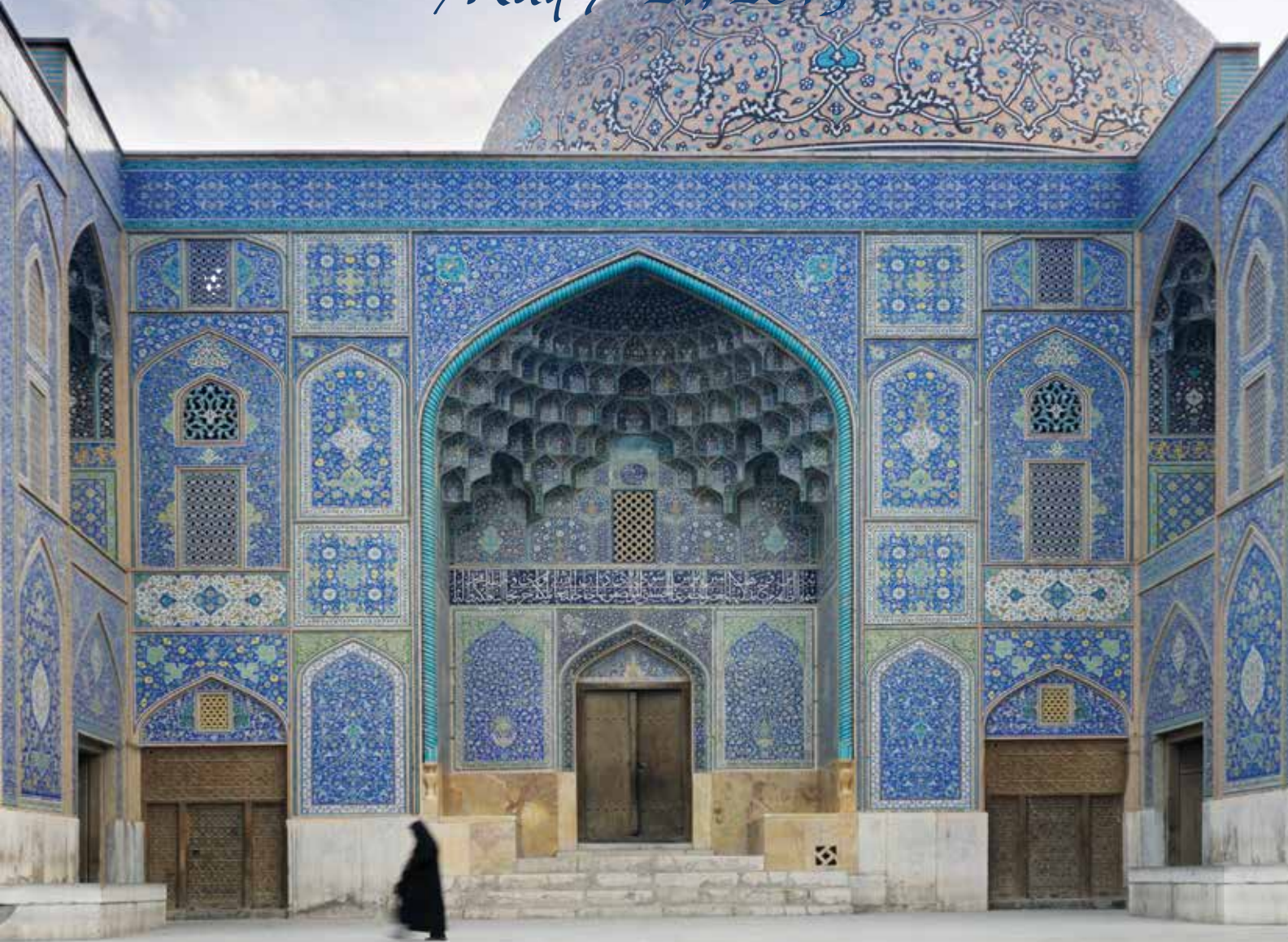


Perspectives of Iran

May 7-21, 2015



Highlights

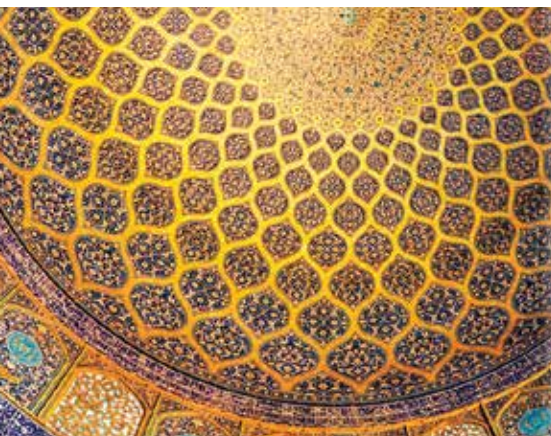
- Join our **Study Leader, Stephen Kinzer**, and Club travelers on a journey through Iran, where vast monuments serve as testament to the extraordinary history of this country.
- Explore **Tehran**, the country's capital, including a visit to the basement vault of the Bank Milli Iran to view the spectacular Crown Jewels, and learn about the thriving Iranian contemporary art scene.
- Discover the gardens of Shah Goli, the amazing tile work of the Blue Mosque, and the town's colorful bazaar in **Tabriz**.
- Experience the country's center of Zoroastrianism in **Yazd**, where the most traditional Persian architecture is found.
- Visit **Shiraz** and take an excursion to the magnificent ruins of **Persepolis** – one of the most remarkable archaeological sites found in the Near East.
- Take in the beauty of **Isfahan** where brilliant blue-tiled buildings and majestic bridges are often recognized as the perfection of Islamic architecture.



What to Expect

Participants must be in very good health and able to keep up with an active group. In order to participate, one should be able to walk 1-2 miles comfortably, use steep stairs without handrails or assistance and walk and stand for periods of two hours at a time.

Spring is a lovely time to travel in Iran when temperatures range from 60-85 degrees Fahrenheit. The infrastructure in Iran is quite good with modern roads and buses. Hotels are comfortable with private bathrooms and air-conditioning. Food is freshly prepared and healthy. During the program, participants should be dressed modestly and women will be required to have their head covered while in public areas. More details will be provided upon registering for the trip.



U.S. to TEHRAN

Thursday, May 7

Depart the U.S.

TEHRAN

Friday, May 8

Upon arrival, transfer to the Espinas Hotel.

TEHRAN

Saturday, May 9

Enjoy a full day of sightseeing in Tehran, concentrating on its excellent museums. Visit the Archaeological Museum with its fine collection including a stone capital of a winged lion from Susa. Explore the Glass and Ceramics Museum of Iran and the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art. (B,L,D)

TEHRAN

Sunday, May 10

Visit to the Reza Abbasi Museum which is home to a superior collection of Persian miniatures. View the Iranian crown jewels. This spectacular collection of jewels, stored in the basement vault of the Bank Milli Iran, contains the world's largest uncut diamond, as well as the Peacock Throne. (B,L,D)

TEHRAN

Monday, May 11

Head to northern Tehran to visit Khomeini's home, where one is allowed a glimpse of the dwelling. Enjoy lunch in a lively neighborhood, then stop at the Zahir od Dowleh Cemetery, the resting spot for many of Iran's writers and artists. Visit the Iranian film museum before returning to the hotel. (B,L,D)

TABRIZ

Tuesday, May 12

Fly to Tabriz, the capital of East Azerbaijan. Until recently, Tabriz was the second largest city in Iran. Visit the Blue Mosque of Tabriz, considered a masterpiece of Iranian decorative tile

work due to the quality of the work, the finesse of the design, and the harmony of the overall composition. Continue on to the gardens of the Shah Goli (the Royal Lake), a popular site for summer picnicking and musical performances, and learn about *qanats*, rather extraordinary systems of irrigation that can extend for miles. End the day at the bazaar of Tabriz. Overnight at Pars Hotel. (B,L,D)

TABRIZ

Wednesday, May 13

Today begins with an excursion to the Saint Stepanos Monastery. Dating back to the 7th century, this church is part of a UNESCO World Heritage site. Situated on the south-eastern fringe of the main zone of the Armenian cultural space, the monastery once constituted a major center for the dissemination of Armenian culture in the region. This church, along with Saint Thaddeus Monastery, are the last regional remains of this culture that are still in a state of integrity and authenticity. Return to Tabriz mid-afternoon. Dinner and overnight at the hotel. (B,L,D)

SHIRAZ

Thursday, May 14

In the morning, enjoy a short excursion to the intriguing troglodyte village of Kandovan. The Kandovan people have carved their houses in the rocks and still live in them as in ancient times. Return to Tabriz and connect with an afternoon flight to Shiraz. Upon arrival enjoy an orientation tour of this city known for its nightingales, poetry, and, at one time, wine. Transfer to the Homa Hotel for dinner and overnight. (B,L,D)

SHIRAZ

Friday, May 15

Today we enjoy a full day excursion to Persepolis, the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire and one of the world's most beautiful and spectacular archaeological sites. This palace city was built by craftsmen from across Darius'

vast empire. Superb bas reliefs depict the flow of ritual processions. After a lunch sitting in the shade of grape vines, visit Naghsh-E Rostam, which contains the carved tombs of four Achaemenian kings. (B,L,D)

YAZD

Saturday, May 16

This morning explore the city of Shiraz, stopping at the tomb of the celebrated poet Hafez. The marble tombstone is engraved with a long verse from the poet's works. We then explore the colorful bazaar. After lunch, drive to Yazd, passing through many acres of pistachios. Dinner and overnight at the Moshir Garden Hotel. (B,L,D)

YAZD

Sunday, May 17

In Yazd stop at the home of the former governor of the city to see and learn more about traditional Persian architecture and the *badgers*, wind-towers ingeniously designed to catch a passing breeze. Enjoy a walking tour through the covered streets of the old quarter. Spend an afternoon concentrating on the Zoroastrian religion. Visit one of the two Zoroastrian abandoned Towers of Silence where, until forty years ago, the dead were left at the tops of the towers. (B,L,D)

ISFAHAN

Monday, May 18

Drive in the morning to Na'in, an important trade center. It is well known for its carpet making and also for its mosque from the early Islamic period. Continue on to a private house that has some superb 17th century

stucco carvings. After lunch, drive to Isfahan. Upon arrival transfer to the delightful Abbasi Hotel, a converted caravanserai. (B,L,D)

ISFAHAN

Tuesday, May 19

Isfahan is perhaps the most beautiful of all Iranian cities. The central focus of this fascinating city, which never failed to inspire and awe European merchants and ambassadors to the Safavid court, is the immense Meydan-e Shah, or Royal Square. After lunch, spend the afternoon exploring the bazaar of Isfahan and learning more about traditional crafts in Iran. (B,L,D)

ISFAHAN

Wednesday, May 20

Admire some of the five bridges crossing the Zayendehrud River and wander through the city's fascinating Armenian quarter. In the afternoon view the Friday Mosque and the Palace of Forty Columns, a charming pavilion used to receive dignitaries and ambassadors. (B,L,D)

ISFAHAN to U.S.

Thursday, May 21

Depart Isfahan in the early morning, arriving back in the United States the same day.

**Itinerary is subject to change.*



Tour Price Per Person: \$6,395
Single Supplement: \$1,200

*Based on minimum of 15 travelers
and a maximum of 25*

Tour Price includes:

- Accommodation as per itinerary
- Meals as listed in the program
- Bottled water on the bus
- All sightseeing in an air-conditioned coach
- Internal flights
- All entrance fees and special events listed
- Full educational program & Study Leader
- Pre-departure materials and reading list
- The services of a local Iranian guide
- The services of a professional tour manager who will accompany the group
- Gratuities

Does not include:

- International airfare into and out of Tehran (approximately \$1,500)
- Visa fees for Iran (\$128 at time of printing)
- Excess luggage charges
- Medical Expenses
- Trip Insurance
- Items of a purely personal nature





STUDY LEADER

Stephen Kinzer is an award-winning foreign correspondent who has covered more than 50 countries on five continents. His articles and books have led the *Washington Post* to place him "among the best in popular foreign policy storytelling." Kinzer spent more than 20 years working for *The New York Times*, most of it as a foreign correspondent. His foreign postings placed him at the center of historic events and, at times, in the line of fire. While covering world events, he has been shot at, jailed, beaten by police, tear-gassed and bombed from the air.

In 1996 Kinzer was named chief of the newly opened *New York Times* bureau in Istanbul, Turkey. He spent four years there, traveling widely in Iran, Turkey and in the new nations of Central Asia and


the Caucasus. After completing this assignment, Kinzer published *Crescent and Star: Turkey Between Two Worlds*. He is the author of *All The Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror*, published in 2003. This book is based on documents about the coup in Iran (including some lengthy internal CIA reports) that have now been declassified. In 2010 his book *Reset: Iran, Turkey, and America's Future* was published. His most recent book is *The Brothers: John Foster Dulles, Allen Dulles, and Their Secret World War*.

Before joining *The New York Times*, Kinzer was Latin America correspondent for the *The Boston Globe*. He is now a visiting fellow at the Watson Institute for International Studies at Brown University, where he teaches international relations. He contributes to *The Guardian* and *The New York Review of Books*, and writes a world affairs column for *The Boston Globe*.

Please note the State Department has had a Travel Warning for Iran since 1979. You can read this Travel Warning at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_920.html. Our tour operator has operated many trips to Iran, including several fall departures in 2014. The Commonwealth Club and our tour operator are closely monitoring the situation in Iran and will not operate the trip if the situation within the country becomes hostile or unsafe.

Perspectives of Iran

RESERVATION FORM May 7-21, 2015

 **Commonwealth Club Travel**
Phone: 415.597.6720
Fax: 415.597.6729

NAME 1 _____

NAME 2 _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

HOME PHONE _____ CELL _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

I would like to reserve _____ space(s)
Enclosed is a deposit of \$500 per person, in the total amount of \$ _____.

Please make checks payable to "Distant Horizons." Your deposit is fully refundable up until 14 days after receipt of your reservation form. A confirmation letter, full terms and conditions, reading list and a travel insurance application will be mailed to you upon receipt of your deposit.

Room Arrangements

- Single Supplement
- Double Occupancy
I will be sharing a room with: _____
- I would prefer a roommate, but will pay the single supplement if one is not available.

Air Travel Arrangements

- I/we wish to be booked on the group flight from SFO.
- I/we wish to be booked on a flight departing from: _____
- I/we will make my own arrangements to arrive in Tehran.

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM ALONG WITH YOUR DEPOSIT TO:

Commonwealth Club Travel
595 Market St., 2nd floor
San Francisco, CA 94105
You may also fax the form to 415.597.6729