

Golestan Palace



A short history of the *Golestan* Palace

The oldest of the historic monuments in Tehran, the *Golestan* Palace (Palace of Flowers) belongs to a group of royal buildings that were once enclosed within the mud-thatched walls of Tehran's historic *Arg* (citadel). The *Arg* was built during the reign of Tahmasb I (r. 1524-1576) of the Safavid dynasty (1502-1736), and was later renovated by Karim Khan Zand (r. 1750-1779). Agha Mohamad Khan Qajaar (1742-1797) chose Tehran as his capital. The *Arg* became the site of the Qajaar dynasty (1794-1925). The *Golestan* Palace became the official residence of the royal family. During the Pahlavi era (1925-1979) *Golestan* Palace was used for formal royal receptions. The most important ceremonies to be held in the Palace during the Pahlavi era were the coronation of Reza Khan (r. 1925-1941) in *Takht-e*

Marmar and the coronation of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi (r. 1941 - deposed 1979) in the Museum Hall.

The *Golestan* Palace is the result of roughly 400 years of construction and renovations. Each building in the palace has a unique history:

Takht-e-Marmar

The spectacular terrace known as *Takht-e-Marmar* (Marble Throne) was built in 1806 by the order of Fath Ali Shah Qajaar (r. 1797-1834). Adorned by paintings, marble-carvings, tile-works, stucco, mirrors, enamel, woodcarvings, and lattice windows, the throne embodies the finest of Iranian architecture. The Marble Throne is one of the oldest buildings of the historic *Arg*. The throne, which is in the middle of the terrace (*iwan*), is made of the famous yellow marble of the Yazd province. The throne is made of sixty-five pieces of marble and was designed by Mirza Baba *Naghaash Bashi* (head painter) of the Qajaar court. Mohammad Ebrahim, the Royal Mason, oversaw the construction and several celebrated masters of the time worked on the execution of this masterpiece. The architectural details and other ornaments of the terrace were completed during the reigns of Fath Ali Shah and Nasser - ed-Din Shah (r. 1848-1896).



Coronations of Qajaar kings, and formal court ceremonies were held on this terrace. The last coronation to be held at *Takht-e-Marmar* was that of, the self-proclaimed King, Reza Khan Pahlavi in 1925.

Khalvat-e-Karim Khani

Dating back to 1759, this building was a part of the interior residence of Karim Khan Zand. The basic structure of the *Khalvat-e-Karim Khani* is similar to *Takht-e-Marmar*. Like the latter, it is a terrace (*iwan*). There is a small marble throne inside the terrace. The structure is much smaller than *Takht-e-Marmar* and it has much less ornamentation. There was once a small pond with a fountain in the middle of this terrace. Water from a subterranean stream (the king's *qanaat*) flowed from the fountain into the pond and was later used to irrigate the Palace grounds.

Nasser-ed-Din Shah was fond of this corner of the *Golestan* Palace. He is said to have spent much time here for relaxation, and smoking his water pipe in quiet reflection. In fact, some believe that it was he who dubbed the structure *Khalvat* (a cozy corner). It seems extraordinary, but the valuable gravestone of Nasser-ed-Din Shah finally found its way to this quiet corner

of the Palace after being misplaced for sometime. This marble stone with an image of Nasser-ed-Din Shah is indeed a site to behold.

Neggaar Khaaneh



Nasser-ed-Din Shah was very impressed by the exhibition of artifacts and valuable objects at European museums during his second European tour of 1872. He arrived back in Tehran determined to build a museum hall to exhibit paintings, royal jewels, and other royal artifacts.

The original collection of the museum hall is now scattered among Tehran's many museums. However, the paintings of the royal court are kept at the *Golestan* Palace – with the European paintings housed in the *Hoaz Khaaneh* and the works of Iranian painters housed in the *Neggaar Khaaneh*. Intended to show the evolution of paintings in Iran during the Qajar era, the works of Iranian painters are exhibited in two sections. In the southern part of the *Neggaar Khaaneh* are the works of early Qajar masters such as *Mirzaa Baabaa*, *Mehr Ali Afshaar*, *Ali Akbar Khan Mozaaien-od-Douleh*, and *Aboul Hassan Sani (Sanie-ol-Molk)*.

The northern *Neggaar Khaaneh*, was the seat of the Royal Guard during the time of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. The northern hall underwent substantial renovations in 1995 and now houses the works of late masters of the Qajar era such as *Mahmoud Khan Sabaa (Malek-ol-Shoaraa)*, *Mohammad Gafaari Kaashaani (Kamaal-ol-Molk)*, *Mehri*, *Mosa Momayez*.

Hoaz Khaaneh

Works of European painters presented to the Qajar court are housed in the *Hoaz Khaaneh*. *Hoaz* means pond and *khaaneh* means house, thus the name *Hoaz Khaaneh* means house on a pond. The *Hoaz Khaaneh* was used as a royal summer residence during the Qajar era. A special cooling system pumped water from a subterranean system of streams (*qanats*) – in this case the king's *qanaat* – into small ponds inside the chambers. The system was designed to pass through as many summer rooms as was necessary. The water was then channeled outside to irrigate the royal gardens. This system is no longer in use due to some health concerns.



Taalaar-e Berelian

Taalaar-e Berelian (Hall of Herkimer crystals) was named so for it is adorned by the brilliant mirror works and chandeliers of Iranian artisans. The Hall was built by Nasser-ed-Din Shah to replace *Taalaar Bolour* (Crystal Hall). Built by Fath Ali Shah, the Bolour Hall is no longer in existence. An oil painting by Yahya Khan Sanie-ol-Molk Ghafari, showing the decorations of this hall before renovations by Mozafar-ol-Din Shah (r. 1896-1907), is on display in the *Golestan* Palace.

Taalaar-e Aaj

Taalaar-e Aaj (Hall of Ivory) was used as a dining room. It was decorated with gifts presented to Nasser-ed-Din Shah by European monarchs and heads of states.

Among the *Golestan* Palace collection, a watercolor by Mahmoud Khan Malek-ol-Shoaraa, shows the exterior view of this hall during the Qajar period.

Mooze-ye-Makhsous

This building is located under the Salaam Hall or the Museum. It is indeed a part of the first Iranian museum, which was built by Mohamad Ebrahim Khan Me'mar Baashi.

In Nasser-ed-Din Shah's period, this building was used as a warehouse for china and silverware gifts to Qajar kings.

In the Pahlavi period, this warehouse was turned in to a museum to put on display the rare gifts given to the Qajar kings.

In addition to the gifts some objects housed in the museum are:

- 1- The helmet of king Esmail Safavid.
- 2- Bow and arrows of King Nader.
- 3- Armband of Fath Ali Shah.
- 4- The collection of Qajar Seals.

- 5- Aaqaa Mohamad Khan's crown.
- 6- A decorated ostrich egg.

Taalaar-e-Zorouf

This building replaced the Narenjestan building which was located to the north of Aaj Hall or Sofre Khaaneh. All the chinaware that was presented (as gifts) to Qajaar kings by European monarchs or heads of states are arranged in show cases built for this purpose in this hall. Most exceptional among these are:

- 1- The chinaware that shows the Napoleonic wars (gifts of Napoleon Bonaparte).
- 2- The chinaware gift of Czar Nicholas I.
- 3- Chinaware studded with gems and jewels (gift of Queen Victoria).
- 4- The chinaware, gift of Kaiser Wilhelm I to the Iranian Crown Prince.
- 5- A dining set made from precious stones (gift of Czar Alexander III).



Taalaar-e Aineh

Taalaar-e Aineh (Hall of Mirror) is the best known gallery in the palace. This relatively small hall is famous for its extraordinary mirror work. The Hall was designed by Haj Abdoul Hossein Me'mar bashi (Sanie-ol-Molk). Yahaya Khan Moetamed-ol-Molk, the Minister of Architecture, acted as consultant to the designer.

Taalaar-e Salaam

Taalaare Salaam (Reception Hall) was originally designed to be a museum. After the *Takht-e-Tavoos* (Iran's famous Jeweled Peacock Throne) was moved to the Royal Jewelry Collection at the Central Bank, this hall was designated for special receptions in the presence of the king, hence the name *Taalare Salam*.

Emaarat-e Khaabgaah

Built as the residence of Queen Elizabeth II during her short visit to Iran in 1955, The *Emaarat-e-Khaabgaah* (Siesta House) is the most recent addition to the *Golestan* Palace.

The building was designed to house the Royal Manuscripts Library and the Qajaar photograph collection. The Royal Manuscript Library is currently housed at a temporary location awaiting its eventual move to its permanent home in the *Khaabgaah*. The Library's collection contains some of the most valuable illustrated works in Iran.



Shams-ol-Emaareh

Shams-ol-Emareh (Edifice to the Sun) is one of the most stunning structures in the *Golestan* Palace.

The idea of a tall structure came to Nasser-ed-Din Shah before his first European tour and from his impressions of photographic and paintings of European buildings. The Monarch wanted a structure from which he could have a panoramic view of the city.

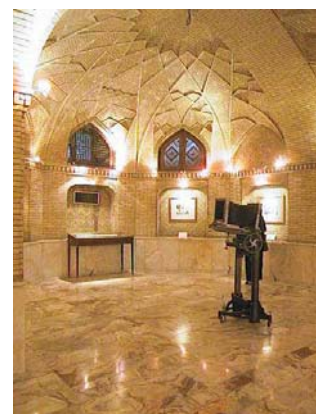
Designed by Moayer-ol-Mamaalek, *Shams-ol-Emaareh's* construction

began in 1865 and was completed two years later. The architect was Master Ali Mohammad Kaashi.

The building has two identical towers. The exterior views have multiple arches, intricate tile work and ornate windows. This building is a fusion of Persian and European architecture.

Aks khaaneh (House of Photographs)

The *Aks Khaaneh* (House of Photographs) is a large summer chamber under the *Baadgir*. As with the *Hoaz Khaaneh*, this room was cooled using a cooling system that pumped water from a subterranean stream (*qanaat*) into a small pond. This system is no longer in use. This room has undergone major renovations and is now used for the exhibition of photographs from the Qajaar period. Nasser-ed-Din Shah took an interest in photography not long after the invention of the camera. In fact, he was an avid photographer. The *Aks Khaaneh* houses some picture taken by Nasser-ed-Din Shah and some captioned by him.



Emaarat Baadgir (Building of the Wind Towers)

Emaarat Baadgir (Building of the Wind Towers) was constructed during the reign of Fath Ali Shah (circa 1806). The building underwent major renovations, including structural changes, during the reign of Nasser-ed-Din Shah. A watercolor rendering by Mahmood Khan Malek-ol-Shoaraa shows the original structure prior to renovations.

The building is flanked by two rooms known as *Gooshvaar* (earring). There is a central room which boasts of having the finest stained glass windows in the *Golestan* Palace. On the outside, there are four wind towers of blue, yellow and black glazed tiles and a golden cupola. The wind towers are constructed to allow cooling winds to move through the structure.

Chaador Khaaneh (House of Tents)

Located between the *Baadgir* and *Almaas* (Diamond) Hall, the *Chaador Khaaneh* (House of Tents) was used as a warehouse for royal tents. The Qajaars loved the outdoors and made several royal camping trips each year. These trips were grand affairs with multitudes of servants and attendants – in addition to all royal necessities. Many tents were needed to accommodate the entourage. The *Chaador Khaaneh* has undergone major renovations and is now used as a meeting and lecture hall.



Taalaar-e Almaas (Hall of Diamonds)

Taalaar Almaas is located in the southern wing of *Golestan* Palace next to the *Baadgir* Building. It is called Hall of Diamonds because of the exceptional mirror work inside the building. The construction of this hall dates to the time of Fath Ali Shah (circa 1806). Nasser-ed-Din Shah renovated this hall changing its appearance and replacing the hall's oval arches with Roman ones. He also ordered the walls covered with wallpaper imported from Europe. The basic structure of this building dates back to the time of Fath Ali Shah and it is devoted to the exhibition of art and handicrafts from that period.

Abyaze (White) Palace

The Ottoman king, Sultan Abdoul-Hamid, send precious gifts to Nasser-e-Din Shah. Reportedly, these gifts were copious and enough to fill a castle. The Qajaar monarch was delighted with these gifts. He decided to build an exhibit hall worthy of the gifts within the confines of the *Golestan* Palace. It is believed that Nasser-ed-Din Shah designed the building himself with a central hall large enough to house the carpet that was sent to him by Sultan Abdoul-Hamid. Completed in 1883, the *Abyaze* Palace now houses one of the most interesting ethnological collections in Iran. There is a colorful exhibition of traditional Iranian costumes, as well as a folk art exhibition.



Grand Conspirators



Photo by G. R. Baraadaraan Khosrovshahi

**One is thinking, one is laughing,
what is cooking?**

A Mathematical Challenge from Anahita

I challenge every mathematician and physicist attending this meeting to a mathematical game. I let you choose any pattern of any given length $n > 2$ of 0's and 1's. Then I choose another pattern of the same length. We then set the computer to generate a stream of 0's and 1's randomly with equal probability of 0 and 1. The pattern of whichever contestant appears first wins the game. Fair enough?! I bet I can beat each and every one of you mathematicians and physicists, and we will repeat the game as many times as each one of you wants.



💡 Special Announcement

On the day following the Tuesday festivity we will be having a special "Problem Session" to discuss open problems in the field. (We'll leave the door open to the possibility that all our mathematical problems will be solved!)

