

Persian Powder 2023

Trip Brochure



25 Jan to 01 Feb 2023

(and possibly 01-08 Feb 2023)

This trip is an invitation only adventure to ski tour in the Zagros mountains of Iran in winter 2023.

About Zagros

Zagros is in Western Iran, approximately 500km from Tehran. The range is massive, with a lot of 4000m peaks. We will base ourselves in the Zardkouh sub-range, where the peaks are a little lower, and ideal for day tours from a valley base.

The Week

The exact itinerary will be decided upon once current conditions and weather are known, but in a one week trip we anticipate skiing for 6 days. A sample itinerary is contained within the trip brochure. Standard days involve being dropped at a roadhead between 2200m and 2500m and skinning for up to 1200m to reach our objective.

Sample itinerary

DAY 1: Travel day. Hopefully fly to Isfahan. Sightseeing in Isfahan. Overnight in hotel.

DAY 2: Ski touring Samsami peak 3450m. Drive to Chelgerd (3hrs) then drive to 2400m. Ski Tour on Samsami peak 3450m. 1hr drive back, overnight at local house in Chelgerd.

DAY 3: Ski touring Shahmansouri peak 3600m. Drive 1hr to 2500m. Ski tour on Shahmansouri peak 3600m . Overnight at local house in Chelgerd.

DAY 4: Ski touring Gilas peak 3200m. 1hr drive to Gilas village and tour from there. Drive back to Chelgerd.

DAY 5: Ski tour in Mohammad-Abad. 20min drive to Mohammad-Abad at 2300m. Ski touring day from small village to another village (Niakan). 10min drive back. Overnight at local house in Mohamad-Abad.

DAY 6: Ski touring Niakan peak 4050m. Early morning start. Full day ski touring on Niakan peak 4050m. Overnight at local house in Mohamad-Abad.

DAY 7: Back to Isfahan, with the possibility of a short ski tour en route. Overnight in hotel.

DAY 8: Departure. Full day city tour in Isfahan. Shopping. Departure

ADMIN

Flights

Flights to Iran are easy to arrange, with most going via Turkey. We will fly into Tehran or Isfahan. Isafahan has the advantage of minimising travel as it is much closer (5hrs closer!) to where we will be skiing. In order to simplify airport pick-ups we will co-ordinate as a group to try and arrive on the same flights. Due to the fact we are a year ahead of departure most airlines have not yet released their seats. **Therefore we may have to even flex the dates of the trip by a day or two once we have flight options.** Flights will be from London, Geneva, Paris, or Milan. I will keep the group informed over the next few months when flights become available.

Accommodation

The first and last night of the trip to be spent in a comfortable hotel. The rest of the trip we will usually stay in local houses. These are owned and operated by local people and will give you an authentic Persian living and dining experience. Please expect these to be fairly basic. It is recommended that you take a sheet liner (as per hut trips in Europe) as you will be given blankets. You may also wish to take an inflatable mattress. In Persia, mattresses are usually on the floor, rather than on a bed.

Food

All meals are included as per the trip Itinerary. Depending on your flight times you may have to buy a meal at the start or end of the trip. Vegetarians can be catered for in Iran.

Visas

Visas will be needed by everyone. Current prices for UK citizens are £170. For EU citizens it is around half that. EU citizens can collect a visa when they land in Iran via the e-visa process.

https://evisatraveller.mfa.ir/en/request/how_to_apply/ You should allow 3-4 months for getting your visa if from UK/US/Canada. The visa process is simple, but slow. You will be coached through the process.

Money

Take cash. Iranian cash points will only accept Iranian bank cards. **You cannot use credit cards or travellers' cheques in Iran. You should take Euro or USD in cash.** Depending on your spending habits you will only need 200euros for a week. You can change money easily in Iran when in big towns/cities. If you want to buy souvenirs, please take extra cash. A 2m x 3m Persian Rug, of good quality, will cost 200-500 euros. Please note that if you buy a rug you will have to arrange for it to get back home. This will either mean paying excess baggage with the airline, or arranging freight via an International Courier firm. You may also have to pay import duty when the item arrives in Europe. Please don't buy any large items until the end of the trip or we will have to transport it around all week !

Phones

Upon landing you may wish to purchase mobile phone cards from IranCell. These will be the cheapest way of accessing mobile systems.

WiFi

We should have plentiful access to wifi during the trip for e mails etc.

Glaciers

There are only a few glaciers in the area and they are described as being benign, and more like permanent snowfields. Just to avoid any potential issues we will take glacier kit as a precaution.

Culture

Iran has a unique culture that should really enhance the trip. In fact, if you view it as a cultural trip, with ski touring, then it won't be possible to be disappointed. The language is Farsi. The most important thing to note about Iranian culture is that they are not Arabs. They see themselves as being completely different culturally. Women are well respected in Iranian culture – however they do have to wear a head-scarf (hijab) when outside. When skiing, a helmet or a hat is completely fine.

Bad weather

Bad weather is possible in Iran, just like every mountainous area. Tree skiing is not an option in Zagros. If we experience bad weather (usually one day per week) we will either take a rest day, work on Mountain Skills (navigation, survival, rope skills etc), or sample some local culture.

Equipment

It will be very hard to replace any broken ski equipment once in Iran. The resorts sell regular downhill kit, but not touring gear. You are therefore recommended to only take gear in good condition. I will take a spare set of bindings and skins just in case. You are recommended to take pin bindings and compatible boots. A detailed kit list is below.

Insurance

This is mandatory and must include Rescue and Medical Cover as well as Covid cover. Hopefully we have almost seen the back of Covid, but it is impossible to know and it would be prudent to take out cover just in case. Covid cover should include inability to travel due to contraction of covid and also travel restrictions.

Medical/Rescue

This is not Europe. Our primary means of rescue is self-rescue, and then a vehicle will take a casualty to the nearest hospital in Chelgerd. For more serious injuries there is a bigger hospital in Shahrekord. For very serious injuries there is the possibility to call the Red Cross helicopter. To assist in self-rescue I will carry a rescue sled which the team will train with before we ski.

Your Mountain Guide

Stuart Macdonald is a former British Army Officer, who left the military in 2003 to pursue his true passion for adventure. He is a fully certified IFMGA Mountain Guide, based full time in Chamonix in the French Alps since 2007. He has climbed around the globe from the North Face of the Eiger to the summit of Mount Everest, and has skied in Europe, Canada the Arctic and Antarctic. The most memorable expedition he has ever been on was a trip to South Georgia in the Antarctic.

Price

€1850 per person.

Inclusions

- Full Board accommodation for the duration of the trip.
- Guiding for the duration of the trip.

- All road transfers and daily driving as per the itinerary.
- All trip planning.
- Group safety equipment (rescue sled, emergency beacon, First Aid kit)

Not Included:

- Avalanche Safety Equipment (there will be kit available to rent for those without)
- Flights
- Insurance (to cover travel, ski touring, and covid contraction/travel restrictions)
- First/last meal of the trip depending on your flight timings.

Booking

In order to confirm your booking, please fill in a booking form and pay a 20% deposit via the website.

This is a chance to experience a completely different ski touring venue. It is not currently on the radar of many ski operators, and hence is quiet and unspoiled. Let's get there before the crowds ! Currently I am offering one week only. If the week fills I will offer a second trip the following week.

Equipment List

Skis with touring bindings - Dyanfit bindings recommended. Please don't bring multiple pairs of skis. Go light, and accept that you might have to ski variable snow.

Touring Boots

Poles - Fixed length poles preferred to adjustable.

Shovel - Metal only. DO NOT BRING PLASTIC !

Probe. 2.4m length minimum. Ortovox, Quechua, and Black Diamond recommended. Avoid ultra light poles that fit inside a shovel handle - they break easily.

Transceiver - Mammut Barryvox and Ortovox recommended. All transceivers must have had their antennae checked within the past 3 years. Fresh batteries will easily last the whole week.

Skins for skis. These must be fitted to your skis, and the glue must be in good condition. Coltex, Montana and Black Diamond recommended.

Ski Crampons (aka Couteaux or Harscheisen). These are mandatory, not optional.

Thermal shirt x 2

Thick socks.x 6prs

Warm hat

Facemask/scarf

Headscarf for ladies

Sun Hat

Sunglasses (Category 4 glacier glasses).Bolle, Vuarnet, Julbo and Cebe all recommended

Goggles. Low vis lenses recommended.

Warm gloves (at least 2 pairs). Thinner pair, and thicker pair recommended.

Fleece/Softshell Jacket. Arc'teryx recommended.

Ski touring trousers/mountain trousers. Soft shell recommended.

Thermal long johns

Spare warm jacket in case of bad weather. Synthetic, large jackets work best so they can be put on over existing clothing. Arc'teryx recommended.

Waterproof/windproof outer layer (Gore Tex is very popular). Arc'teryx recommended

Crampons* (lightweight ski mountaineering). Simond Caiman recommended. NB - Any crampons must fit your ski touring boots.

Ice Axe* - Lightweight ski mountaineering type. Approx 45cm length.

Harness* (if skiing on glacial terrain). Black Diamond lightweight touring recommended.

Ice Screw*. 17cm length approx. Black Diamond Express recommended.

Karabiner*. Locking gate x 4

Sling. 1.2m x 2.

Prussik Loops*. 20-30cm when flat x 2. Could be replaced by Petzl Micro Traxion, ropeman or tibloc.

Lip Salve (SPF >30)

Sun cream (SPF >30)

Rucksack (Approx 40 litre capacity). Arc'teryx and Mammut Recommended.

Personal First Aid Kit (personal medication plus paracetamol and blister kit)

Water Bottle. 1 litre, nalgene recommended

Headtorch. Petzl Tika Plus recommended

Packed Lunch and Thermos flask

Lightweight camera (and charging leads if required)

Soft Holdall x 1 minimum

Sportube Ski Case or similar hardened ski case for your skis to protect them during travel.

Casual clothing for evenings and travel days.

*Only required for glacial ski tours.

NB: Anyone needing to borrow safety gear (shovel, transceiver, probe) must let me know in advance.