

Iran

Beyond Our Borders Series

Grade Levels:

Grades 6-12+

Subject Areas:

Geography

History

Social Studies

Religion

Synopsis:

Visits sites in present day Iran, relating them to the ancient migration of Aryan people and the development of Zoroastrian and Muslim cultures in this country. Traces the nation's history from ancient times through the rule of Cyrus the Great, Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan, the Ottoman Turks, the Shahs, and finally the fundamentalist Muslim rule of Ayatollah Khomeini. Traces the evolution of Farsi culture and traditions and their recent modifications to Sharia, or strict Islamic law. Film crews travel throughout the country from the capital, Tehran to heartland, Isfahan; to the ancient city of Hamadan, the central city of Yazd and the strategic islands of the Persian Gulf. Captures contemporary Iranian life including Iranian food, bazaars, schools, sports, and tolerance for minority religions.

Learning Objectives: Students will:

Describe the geography and culture of Iran.

Understand that Iran is a country with a very long history.

Describe Farsi traditions and how they have been modified by Sharia.

Understand that Iranian women are the most highly educated of all Muslim women.

Describe Iranian handicrafts and cultural traditions.

Vocabulary:

Islam, Muslim, Farsi, Zoroastrianism, mosque, minaret, Shi'a, Sufi, mystics, Shah-an-Shah, Indo-European, Gilanis, Kurds, formidable, bazaar, Purim, burqa, saffron, extended families, literacy rate, pistachios, sturgeon, roe, caviar, ethnic heritage, Silk Road, heartland, dervishes, synagogues, minority religions

Pre-Viewing Discussion:

Where is the Iran located? What other countries are its neighbors?

How old is this country? Who were the Aryans?

Who was Cyrus the Great?

What is Zoroastrianism?

Who rules in Iran today? What are the social conditions in present day Iran?

Post-Viewing Discussion:

Who were the original inhabitants of country now known as Iran? What Iranian cultural traditions date back to ancient times?

In Iran, what group of people is equivalent to American pop stars? Why are these people so renown?

What part of Iran is of strategic importance to all of us? Why are we all dependent on this area?

Who are the Farsi, the Gilanis and the Kurds? How do they differ from one another?

How does the city of Shiraz differ from Tehran or Esfahan?

Why is Hamadan sacred to the Jewish people?

Why is sturgeon such a profitable commodity in Iran?

What industries sustain the economy of Iran?

Further Activities:

What was unique about the ancient religion called Zoroastrianism? Investigate the lives of its followers today. How do their religious beliefs differ from conservative Muslim beliefs?

Discover if there are special meanings in the design of Persian carpets. What is the relationship of these carpets and their designs to the ethnic heritage of the Iranian people?

Recreate the typical day of a fisherman in the Persian Gulf or a worker in Iran's petroleum or natural gas industry.

Investigate the influence of Farsi culture in the world today, not just in Iran.

Compare the lives of a typical poor Iranian woman and a woman of the upper class. How much freedom does either woman have?

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