



Our World Heritage

THE HYRCANIAN FORESTS

VISIT RESPONSIBLY

Contact information

**The Iranian Ministry of Cultural Heritage,
Handicrafts and Tourism Organization (MCTH)**

Address: Intersection of Azadi Avenue and
Yadegar-e Emam Highway, Tehran

Tel: (+98) 21 6106 3895

Email: info@mcth.ir

Web: mcth.ir

Department of Environment (DoE)

Address: Shahid Hakim highway, between Sheikh
Fazlollah and yadegar-e Imam, Tehran, Iran

Tel: (+98) 21 4278 1000

Email: info@doe.ir

Web: doe.ir

Front cover picture: Hyrcanian virgin forests in Jahan Nama Protected Area,
one of the 15 component parts of the Hyrcanian Forests World Natural
Heritage Site. Hans. D. Knapp, 2018

Back cover picture: Galesh woman. Hamed Zolfagharikouhi, 2023

**Natural Resources and Watershed
Management Organization**

Address: Artesh Freeway, next to Minicity,
Shemiran, Tehran, Iran

Tel: (+98) 21 2244 6540

Email: info@frw.org.ir

Web: frw.ir



What is World Heritage?

QUICK LOOK

- UNESCO World Heritage sites and status honor Earth's most precious cultural and natural wonders.
- Visiting these sites and experiencing the customs is a great way to engage in sustainable tourism.
- However, many of these sites are under pressure from numerous threats, including unsustainable and mismanaged tourism.
- It is critical for travelers to understand the impacts of responsible tourism at UNESCO sites.
- If we don't take action, we may undermine World Heritage goals and destroy the very reason we love to travel.

Practically since 1975, UNESCO has been working with countries around the world to identify World Heritage sites and ensure their safekeeping for future generations. Places as unique and diverse as the wilds of East Africa's Serengeti, the Pyramids of Egypt, the Great Barrier Reef in Australia and the Baroque cathedrals of Latin America make up our world's heritage. Over 1150 cultural, natural and mixed sites have been inscribed on the World Heritage List. Their splendor enriches our lives and illustrates the diversity of our planet and its inhabitants. They are ours to share, to cherish and to respect. Their disappearance would be an irreparable loss to humanity. Now more than ever, our World Heritage is our shared heritage.

[/UNESCO/](#)





The Persian Iron wood (*Parrotia persica*) is a living fossil, an endemic relic species from Tertiary period. Hans. D. Knapp, 2018

Hyrceanian Forests

The Hyrcanian Forests form a green arc of deciduous mixed broad-leaved forests stretching across some 850 kilometres along the Caspian Sea, from the Talish Mountains in the Republic of Azerbaijan across the Alborz Mountains all the way to Golestan Province in the Islamic Republic of Iran. They tell a fascinating story of uninterrupted and ongoing evolution over some 25 million years from the Tertiary period to this day, an extraordinary story of continuity and survival, of persistence and flexibility, of adaptation and diversification.

The 'Hyrceanian Forests' World Heritage Site is comprised of 15 component sites in Iran and 2 component sites in Azerbaijan. The total area covers about 145,000 ha of forests inscribed under the criterion (ix). These forests are globally an outstanding example of the evolution of temperate forests, the survival of fossil tree species and the ongoing ecological processes of diversification and adaptation to constantly changing environmental conditions.

The Hyrcanian forests host many trees and shrubs, herbs, mosses and mushrooms. They are also the homeland of charismatic large mammals including the Persian Leopard, Brown Bear, Lynx, Wild Cat, Wild Goat and Wild Sheep.



Visit responsibly

World Heritage Sites attract tourists, but increased tourism always carries the risk of harming the very attributes that led to the sites' inscription on the World Heritage List. Through sustainable tourism, visitors can enjoy discovering World Heritage destinations and learn about their natural, cultural and historical characteristics while respecting the environment and the local culture. In addition to building environmental awareness and conserving local ecosystems, sustainable tourism can also help to generate income and employment for local communities.

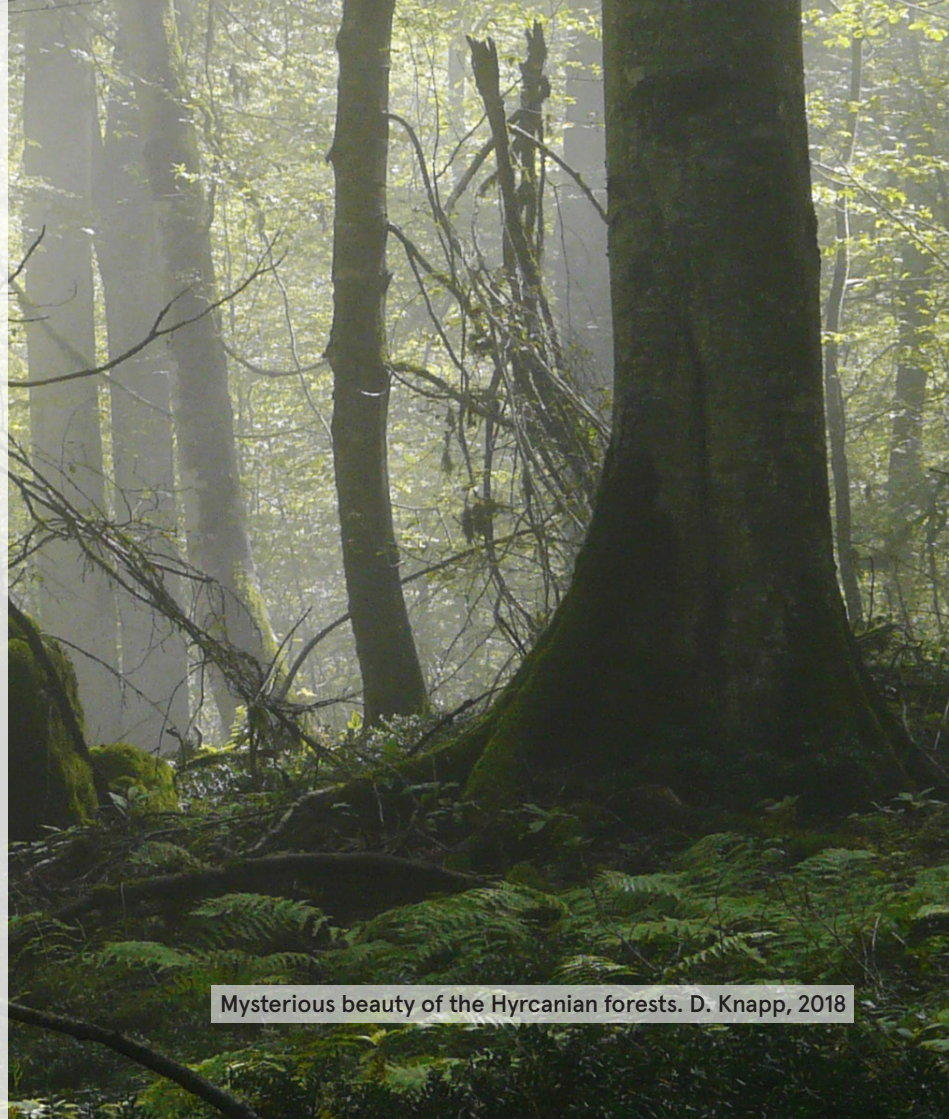
✔ DO'S

1. Every place has a natural and cultural value of its own. Get to know the natural and cultural values prior to your visit;
2. Just observe, do not disturb;
3. Use local facilities and accommodations with eco-aware policies;
4. Connect yourself with the certified World Heritage specialist guides;
5. Open your mind to other cultures and traditions. Be tolerant and respect diversity;
6. Respect the nature/human rights. Exploitation in any form conflicts with the fundamental aims of tourism;
7. Help preserve natural environment;
8. Activities should be conducted with respect for the natural and cultural heritage;
9. Your trip can contribute to economic and social development. Purchase local handicrafts, products and services to support the local economy.



🚫 DONT'S

- 1.** Don't throw your waste away. Keep wastes with you until you find a waste basket or bin;
- 2.** Don't purchase products made through harming nature;
- 3.** Avoid behavior that could offend the local population;
- 4.** Don't break saplings or take away the forest products;
- 5.** Don't make fire in the vicinity of the forest.



Mysterious beauty of the Hyrcanian forests. D. Knapp, 2018



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