

# Iran

## Key Facts

Total Population:	79,109,000 (2015)
Population aged 0-14 years:	23.69% (male 9,937,715 / female 9,449,716)
Population aged 15-24 years:	17.58% (male 7,386,826 / female 6,998,188)
Migration to the UK:	2001 Census identified over 40,000 people
Capital:	Tehran
Area:	1.65 million sq km (636,313 sq miles)
Languages:	Persian and Persian dialects 58% Turkic and Turkic dialects 26% Kurdish 9% Luri 2% Balochi 1% Arabic 1% Turkish 1% Other 2%
Major religions:	Muslim 98% (Shia 89%, Sunni 9%) Other: includes Zoroastrian, Jewish, Christian, and Baha'i 2%
Ethnic groups:	Persian Azeri Kurd Lur Baloch Arab Turkmen Turkic tribes
Life expectancy:	74 years (2012) male 74 years : female 77 years
President:	Supreme Leader: Ayatollah Ali Khamenei President: Hassan Rouhani



## Geographical Location



## Economy

Iran's economy is limited by strict policies, inefficiencies, and reliance on oil and gas exports. However Iran does possess significant agricultural, industrial, and service sectors. The Iranian government directly owns and operates hundreds of state-owned enterprises and indirectly controls many companies affiliated with the country's security forces. Iran continues to suffer from high unemployment and underemployment. Lack of job opportunities has prompted many educated Iranian youth to seek employment overseas, resulting in a significant "brain drain."

Labour force by occupation	Agriculture	16.3%	(2013)
	Industry	35.1%	(2013)
	Services	48.6%	(2013)
Unemployment rate youths aged 15-24:	Total	10.5%	(2015)
	Male		
	Female		
Population below the poverty line:		18.7%	(2007)
Child labour:	Total	11.4%	(2005-2013)
	Male	12.5%	(2005-2013)
	Female	10.2%	(2005-2013)



## Education

Percentage of children aged over 15 who can read and write (2011):	Total	83%
	Male	87%
	Female	79%

Net primary school attendance ratio (2008-2013):	Male	96.4%
	Female	96.9%

## Child Protection

Percentage of children married	- by age of 15:	2.7%	(2005-2013)
	- by age of 18:	16.7%	(2005-2013)

Births by age 18 years:	5.2%	(2009-2013)
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Adolescent fertility (15-19 years) per 1000 girls:	15.1	(2013)
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## Politics - Key political dates:

**1794** - Mohammad Khan Qajar seizes power and founds the Qajar dynasty.

- **1921** - Military commander Reza Khan seizes power and is later crowned Reza Shah Pahlavi.
- **1935** - Formerly known as Persia, Iran is adopted as the country's official name.
- **1941** - Britain and Russia occupy Iran during Second World War.
- **1953** - Coup engineered by British and US intelligence services after parliament nationalises mainly British-owned oil industry. Shah, who had fled into exile, returns.
- **1979** - Iranian revolution unseats the shah and ushers in the Islamic Republic.
- **1980-1988** - Iran-Iraq war which lasts for 8 years; cease-fire signed in 1988 under the influence of UN. Casualties estimated to be 1 million in Iran and up to 500,000 in Iraq.
- **1990** - Major earthquake kills approximately 40,000 people.
- **1990 September** - Iran and Iraq resume diplomatic ties.
- **1995** - US imposes oil and trade sanctions over Iran's alleged sponsorship of "terrorism", seeking to acquire nuclear arms and hostility to the Middle East process. Iran denies the charges.
- **2002** - US President George W. Bush describes Iran, Iraq and North Korea as "the axis of evil", warning of the proliferation of long-range missiles being developed in these countries.
- **2002 September** - Russian technicians begin construction of Iran's first nuclear reactor at Bushehr despite strong objections from US.
- **2003 December** - 40,000 people are killed in an earthquake in south-east Iran; the city of Bam is devastated.



- **2004** - US says Iran's nuclear programme is a growing threat and calls for international sanctions.
- **2009 May** - Iran rejects a US state department report saying it remains the "most active state sponsor of terrorism" in the world.
- **2009 June** - Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is declared to have won a resounding victory in the 12 June presidential election. The rival candidates challenge the result, alleging vote-rigging. Their supporters take to the streets, and at least 30 people are killed and more than 1,000 arrested in the wave of protests that follow.
- **2013 June** - Reformist-backed cleric Hassan Rouhani wins presidential election, gaining just over 50% of the vote.
- **2013 November** - Iran agrees to curb uranium enrichment above 5% and give UN inspectors better access in return for about \$7bn in sanctions relief at talks with the P5+1 group - US, Britain, Russia, China, France and Germany - in Geneva.
- **2014 June** - President Rouhani says Iran is ready to assist the Iraqi government in its battle against extremist Sunni insurgents, amid reports that Iranian Revolutionary Guards are in Iraq providing military training and advice.
- **2015 July** - After years of negotiations, world powers reach deal with Iran on limiting Iranian nuclear activity in return for lifting of international economic sanctions. The deal reportedly gives UN nuclear inspectors extensive but not automatic access to Iranian sites.
- **2016** - International economic sanctions are lifted after the UN nuclear watchdog, the IAEA, confirms that Tehran had complied with its promises to scale back its nuclear activities.

### ***Supreme Leader: Ayatollah Ali Khamenei***

The Supreme Leader is the highest power in the land and appoints the heads of the judiciary, military and media. He also confirms the election of the president. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was appointed for life in June 1989, succeeding Ayatollah Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic republic. He previously served two consecutive terms as president in the 1980s.

### ***President: Hassan Rouhani***

Hassan Rouhani was elected as president in June 2013, winning just over 50% of the vote. The cleric, regarded as a religious moderate, was backed by reformists. He says he wants to steer Iran towards "moderation" and one of his main election pledges was to try to ease the crippling international sanctions imposed on Iran over its nuclear programme. Sanctions were dropped early in 2016.

## National Service

The Islamic Republic of Iran national services consist of the Ground Forces, the Navy, the Air Force (IRIAF), the Khatemolambia Air Defence Headquarters, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (Sepah-e Pasdaran-e Enqelab-e Eslami, IRGC), the Aerospace Force, the Qods Force (special operations) and Law Enforcement Forces. The legal age for joining each service is as follows; 18 years of age for compulsory military service; 16 years of age for volunteers; 17 years of age for Law Enforcement Forces; 15 years of age for Basij Forces (Popular Mobilization Army). Conscript military service obligation is 18 months and women are exempt from military service.

## Illicit Drugs

Iran is one of the primary trans-shipment routes for Southwest Asian heroin to Europe. It suffers one of the highest opiate addiction rates in the world, and has an increasing problem with synthetic drugs.



## Human Rights

### Law and imprisonment

Under Iranian law, many crimes are punishable by death, including some that do not involve violence, such as “insulting the Prophet,” apostasy, same-sex relations, adultery, and drug-related offenses. Convicted drug offenders sentenced after flawed trials in revolutionary courts formed the majority of prisoners executed in 2015.

Iran is one of only five countries (along with Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Yemen) that allow the death penalty for individuals under the age of 18. According to unofficial sources, at least four prisoners executed in 2015 may have been child offenders aged under 18 at the time of the murder and rape crimes for which they received death sentences. Dozens of child offenders reportedly remain on death row and at risk of execution. Detained children often do not have the right to due process and are condemned to death. Poor children also do not have sufficient financial means to cover their own judicial fees and expenses.

Iranian law allows capital punishment for persons who have reached the official age of puberty; 9 for girls, 15 for boys. Alleging ties to armed opposition groups, the revolutionary courts have also handed out death sentences on charges of moharebeh (“enmity against God”). Dozens of others sentenced on terrorism-related charges, including many Iranian Kurds and Baluch, were on death row following trials rife with due process violations.

The rate of minors sentenced to death has risen under the current president of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Authorities continue to execute children even under pressure from human rights organizations that denounce the practice.

### Freedom of Expression

Freedom of Expression and Information Security authorities continued to clamp down on free speech and dissent, and revolutionary courts handed down harsh sentences against social media users, including death sentences in some cases. As of December, according to Reporters Without Borders, Iran held at least 50 journalists, bloggers, and social media activists in detention. In April, an appeals court in Tehran sentenced six social media users to five to seven years in prison for their Facebook posts on charges of “assembly and collusion against the national security” and “insulting the sanctities.” On July 13, 2014, a Tehran revolutionary court had previously sentenced eight Facebook users to a total of 127 years in prison for allegedly posting messages deemed to insult government officials and “religious sanctities,” among other crimes.

Authorities continue to block websites, including Facebook and Twitter, based on arbitrary and unlawful content-based criteria. The authorities continued to imprison dozens of activists and human rights defenders, such as lawyers.

### Women’s Rights

In 2015, authorities sought to introduce or implement discriminatory laws, including restricting the employment of women in certain sectors and limiting access to family planning as part of official measures to boost Iran’s population. On April 22, the Guardian Council, an unelected body of 12 religious jurists, approved a controversial bill that empowers voluntary Basij paramilitary forces to “promote virtue and prevent vice,” including enforcement of the strict Islamic dress code, or hijab, for women. If passed, the bill would empower individuals to act outside of any official capacity and without any parameters for holding them legally accountable. Iranian women face discrimination in many aspects of their lives, including personal status matters related to marriage, divorce, inheritance, and child custody.

Authorities prevent girls and women from attending certain sporting events, including men’s soccer and volleyball matches. Regardless of her age, a woman cannot marry without the approval of her male guardian, and generally cannot pass on her Iranian nationality to a foreign-born spouse or to her children.



## Child marriage

According to Iranian law, girls must be at least 13 years old to marry, whereas boys must be at least 15. However, many young girls are often given or sold in marriage much earlier, especially in rural areas for economic reasons. Worse still, are the reports of young Iranian girls being sold or forcefully married off to Pakistanis who sexually exploit them.

## Trafficking

Iran is a virtual revolving door for prostitution and child trafficking. Many Iranian children are sold into the sex trade in Pakistan, Turkey, the UAE, Bahrain, or Europe. Young girls and boys between the ages of 9 and 14 can be sold for USD\$15-20. In Iran, the principal buyers are usually truck drivers, religious leaders, and Afghani immigrant workers.

## Child Abuse

Street children have become a serious concern in Iran. Most of these children are not orphans, but usually have drug-addicted parents, which forces them to live in the streets. Others are children of refugees or unemployed parents, which forces the children to work to help support their families. There are currently an estimated 200,000 children living in the streets. They sleep in abandoned buildings, shipping containers, or vehicles and must find work in order to fulfil their own needs or those of their families. Vulnerable and unsupervised, these Iranian children are easy prey for adult predators who take any opportunity to abuse them. More than 60% of these girls have been victims of sexual abuse within the first week of living in the streets. Every six days, a girl is raped and killed in Tehran.

## Child Labour

An estimated 14% of Iranian children are forced to work in dangerous and unsanitary conditions. These children usually work in the streets, in automobile or rug factories, or in the sex industry. Their health care and education fall by the wayside, and they see no chance that their lives may improve.

## Treatment of Minorities

The government denies freedom of religion to Baha'is, Iran's largest non-Muslim religious minority, and discriminates against them. Security and intelligence forces also continued to target Christian converts from Islam, Persian-speaking Protestant and evangelical congregations, and members of the home church movement. Some faced charges such as "acting against the national security" and "propaganda against the state." Authorities restrict political participation and public sector employment of non-Shia Muslim minorities, including Sunnis, who account for about 10 percent of the population. They also prevent Sunnis from constructing their own mosques in Tehran and conducting separate Eid prayers. The government continued to target members of Sufi mystical orders, particularly members of the Nematollahi Gonabadi order. The government restricted cultural as well as political activities among the country's Azeri, Kurdish, Arab, and Baluch minorities.

## Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Same-sex conduct between men in Iran is punishable by flogging or the death penalty. Same-sex conduct between women is punishable by flogging. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are subjected to official harassment, arbitrary arrest and detention, prosecution, and ill-treatment or torture. Although Iran permits and subsidizes sex reassignment surgery for transgender people, no law prohibits discrimination against them.



## Refugees

Afghan refugees and migrant workers, estimated at between 2.5 and 3 million in number, continued to face serious abuses. Authorities reportedly allowed Afghan children, including undocumented ones, to register for schools after Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei issued a ruling reaffirming the need for universal education. However, Afghans continue to face barriers to receiving other forms of social services; are at higher risk for arbitrarily being stopped, questioned, and/or detained by authorities; and have little recourse when abused by government or private actors.

## Family life

### Marriage

In Iran women control marriages for their children, and much intrigue in domestic life revolves around marital matters. A mother is typically on the lookout for good marriage prospects at all times. Even if a mother is diffident about marriage brokering, she is obliged to "clear the path" for a marriage proposal. She does this by letting her counterpart in the other family know that a proposal is forthcoming, or would be welcome. She then must confer with her husband, who makes the formal proposal in a social meeting between the two families. This kind of background work is essential, because once the children are married, the two families virtually merge, and have extensive rights and obligations with each other that are close to a sacred duty. It is therefore extremely important that the families be certain that they are compatible before the marriage takes place.

Marriage within the family is a common strategy, and a young man of marriageable age has an absolute right of first refusal for his father's brother's daughter, his patrilateral parallel cousin. The advantages for the families in this kind of marriage are great. They already know each other and are tied into the same social networks. Moreover, such a marriage serves to consolidate wealth from the grandparents' generation for the family. Matrilateral cross-cousin marriages are also common, and exceed parallel-cousin marriages in urban areas, due perhaps to the wife's stronger influence in family affairs in cities.

In Iran today a love match with someone outside of the family is clearly not at all impossible, but even in such cases, except in the most westernized families, the family visitation and negotiation must be observed. Traditional marriages involve a formal contract drawn up by a cleric. In the contract a series of payments are specified. The bride brings a dowry to the marriage usually consisting of household goods and her own clothing. A specified amount is written into the contract as payment for the woman in the event of divorce. The wife after marriage belongs to her husband's household and may have difficulty visiting her relatives if her husband does not approve. Nevertheless, she retains her own name, and may hold property in her own right, separate from her husband.

Iran is an Islamic nation, and polygyny is allowed. It is not widely practiced, however, because Iranian officials in this century have followed the Islamic prescription that a man taking two wives must treat them with absolute equality. Women in polygynous marriages hold their husbands to this and will seek legal relief if they feel they are disadvantaged. Statistics are difficult to ascertain, but one recent study claims that only 1 percent of all marriages are polygynous.

Divorce is less common in Iran than in the West. Families prefer to stay together even under difficult circumstances, since it is extremely difficult to disentangle the close network of interrelationships between the two extended families of the marriage pair. One recent study claims that the divorce rate is 10 percent in Iran.

Children of a marriage belong to the father. After a divorce, men assume custody of boys over three years and girls over seven. Women have been known to renounce their divorce payment in exchange for custody of their children. There is no impediment to remarriage with another partner for either men or women.



## Domestic Unit

Many branches of an extended family may live in rooms in the same compound. However, they may not all eat together on a daily basis. Sons and their wives and children are often working for their parents in anticipation of a birthright in the form of land or animals. When they receive this, they will leave and form their own separate household. In the meantime they live in their parents' compound, but have separate eating and sleeping arrangements. Even after they leave their parents' home, members of extended families have widespread rights to hospitality in the homes of even their most distant relations.

## Kin Groups

The patriarch is the oldest male of the family. He demands respect from other family members and often has a strong role in the future of young relatives. In particular it is common for members of an extended family to spread themselves out in terms of professions and influence.

## Children

The role of the mother is extremely important in Iran. A mother will protect her children's reputation under all circumstances. Small children are indulged, and not just by their parents. They are magnets for attention from everyone in the society. Older children often raise younger children, especially in rural settings. It is very common to see an older child with full responsibility for care of a toddler.

The father is the disciplinarian of the family. Whereas most fathers dote on their small children, they can become fierce and stern as children approach puberty. It is the father's responsibility to protect the honour of the family, and this means keeping close watch on the women and their activities. A girl is literally a treasure for the family. If she remains chaste, virginal, modest, and has other attributes such as beauty and education she has an excellent chance of making a marriage that will benefit everyone. If she falls short of this ideal, she can ruin not only her own life, but also the reputation of her family. Boys are far more indulged than girls. Their father teaches them very early, however, that the protection of family honour also resides with them.

## Cultural Etiquette

- Men greeting Men - Common forms of greeting include a firm handshake, a hug (usually three hugs alternating the shoulders) and also a kiss or two or three on each cheek.
- Women greeting Women - A handshake and hug is common. Some women will exchange kisses on the cheek.
- Men greeting Women - Greetings depend on whether the two people are religious or not. Those who are religious do not shake hands at all or make eye contact with members of the opposite sex when in public. They maintain distance, especially if they are not related. If they have to greet one another, a slight bow is made and some distance is kept; 3 feet apart or more.
- Touching members of the opposite sex is a big No-No; especially in public. Also touching between family members is not too common; especially between those of the opposite sexes.
- Members of the opposite sex do not usually use direct eye contact. They would instead look to the ground, especially in public places.
- A downward gaze in Iran is a sign of respect.

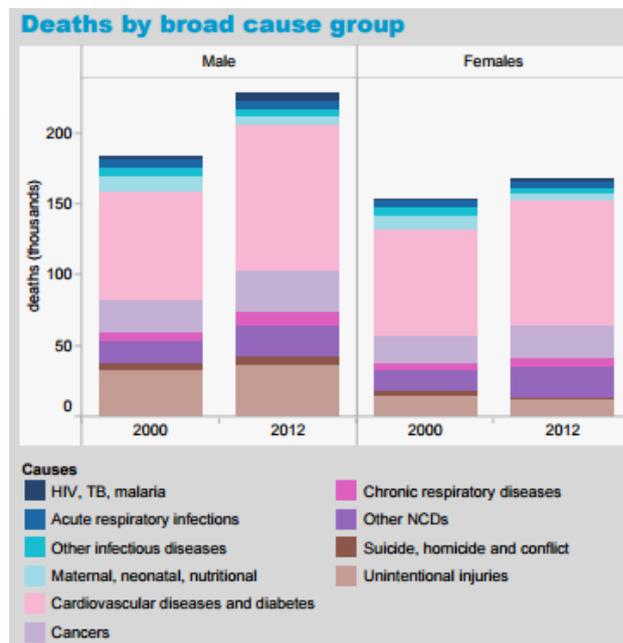
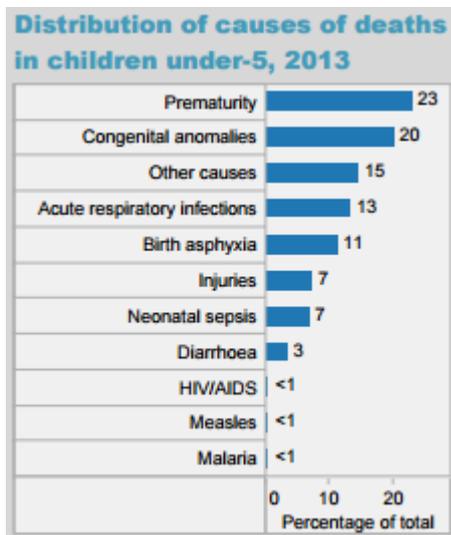


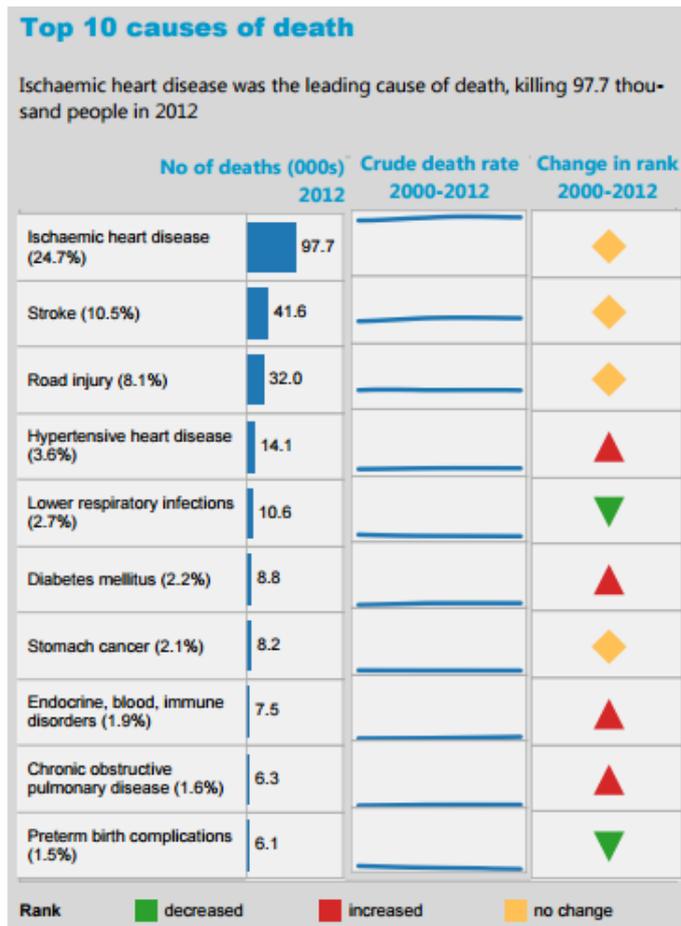
- Most Iranian people would not be categorized as being direct communicators. Many are not very comfortable with saying NO to the requests of people whom they are not so close to because they think this answer might hurt their feelings.
- The thumbs up sign is considered a rude gesture.
- Common gestures are a high five between younger people, usually guys. They also do a typical greeting bow where the right hand is put on the left chest with a slight bow.
- Saying “ba-ba” means something is really good.
- Making a swishy, back-and-forth movement with your hand means, “sin on your head.”
- It is not polite to point someone from distance with the index finger, especially when that person is a stranger.

## Health

### Mortality

Neonatal mortality rate per 1000 live births:	10.3	(2013)
Infant mortality rate per 1000 live births:	14.4	(2013)
Under 5 mortality rate per 1000 live births:	16.8	(2013)





## Infectious diseases

- TB - This country has a low rate of tuberculosis (less than 40/100,000).
- HIV - The rate of HIV in this country is  $\leq 1\%$ .
  - Number of children living with HIV was 2100 in 2013.
- Hepatitis B - Iran has an intermediate prevalence of hepatitis B.
- Malaria - There is a risk of malaria in some areas of this country predominantly due to *P. vivax*.
  - Incidence of confirmed cases per 1000 population is 0.6.
- Enteric fever - There is a risk of typhoid infection in Iran.
- Helminths - There is a risk of helminth infections including soil transmitted helminthiasis in Iran.



## Immunisations

Percentage coverage in under 1s:

DPT3/pentavalant	98%	combination vaccine: diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, hepatitis B and Hib
Measles	98%	
BCG	99%	
PCV3	0%	
HBV3 (hepatitis B)	99%	
Rotavirus	0%	
Hib	0%	
Polio	98%	
Newborns protected against tetanus	95%	

## Nutrition

Percentage of babies exclusively breastfed for 6 months:	53.1%
Introduction to solid, semi-solid or soft foods 6-8 months:	75.9%
Exclusively breastfed for 6 months:	23%
Breastfeeding at age 2:	51%
Percentage of whose growth was stunted:	6.8%
Percentage whose growth was wasted:	4%
Percentage with low birthweight:	7.7%

Anaemia - The estimated prevalence of anaemia in pre-school children is 20-40%.

Vitamin A deficiency - There is a risk of vitamin A deficiency in Iran.

Iodine deficiency - People from Iran may be at risk of iodine induced hyperthyroidism due to excessive intake.

## Health Beliefs

Food and other substances are believed to play a role in health and illness. Some Iranians use teas, such as Gole gov zabon (an herb) for nervous upsets or Nabat (a concentrated sugar) for stomach upsets. Iranians mention eating only fresh foods and avoiding canned or frozen foods to prevent illness.

