

Geography

-Located just to the north east of the Arabian Peninsula and borders the current days nations of Iraq, Turkey, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, as well as both the Caspian and Arabian seas.

-For the most part Iran is an arid plateau about 4,000 feet above sea level, but also contains bits with enough water only for sheep pastures.

History

-Early History (3200 BC- 625 BC)

-The original settlers of Iran can be traced back as immigrants from Mesopotamia.

-Civilizations such as the Medes, Persians, Bactrians, Parthians, and more populated the region during this time.

-Early Iran was also the birthplace of the religion of Zoroaster around 1000 B.C.

Pre-Islamic Statehood (625 BC- 651 AD)

-The Medes are credited with the unification of the tribes of Iran and the creation of its first empire

-This was replaced by the latest empire of its time, the Persians, by which Iran would be known as until the 1920's. Through the strong leadership of Cyrus the Great and Darius the Great, the empire stretched from the Indus and Oxus rivers in the east to the Mediterranean in the west.

-Around 500 BC Persia engaged in battle with Greece, by which it brought the area influenced both the growth of ethics and human rights in Athens and the growth of the Jewish religion through the teachings of Zoroaster.

-In 334 BC Alexander the Great invaded and brought down the last emperor from Darius' line, effectively fragmenting the empire.

-In 632 AD raiders from the Arab peninsula began to attack, leading the way for the Islamic conquest of Persia.

Middle Ages (652 AD- 1501 AD)

-Although many states resisted, all finally fell to Arab Islamic rule, and Islam officially replaced Zoroaster as the religion of Persia.

-In the 9th and 10th centuries the Persians identity resurged and replaced the Arabs, however Islam remained.

-In the 13th century the Mongols led by Genghis Khan invaded Persia and wrought havoc. As a result of the mass exterminations and famines resulting the population dropped from 2.5 million to only around 250,000.

Early Modern Period (1501 AD- 1921 AD)

-Persia's first Islamic Shi'a state was the Safavid Dynasty established by the first Shah, Shah Ismail I.

-During this time the state became highly centralized and organized.

-Unlike many of its neighbors at the time, Iran was never lost her sovereignty, even through conflict with Russia and Portugal

-In 1870 Persia has The Great Famine resulting in the deaths of 2 million people.

Recent History (1920 AD- Present Day)

-After World War I, Persia was renamed Iran officially

-The old dynasty Shah's were overthrown in 1925 and replaced by Reza Shah, who in 1941 was forced to abdicate to his sons Shah Pahlavi

-In 1951 Dr. Mohammed Mossageh became prime minister and became widely popular for nationalizing Iran's oil reserve; however amidst Cold War fear the United States imitated Operation Ajax which had Mossageh arrested and made the Shah's rule far more autocratic.

-In 1979 the exiled Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini returned during the Iranian or Islamic revolution in which the government of the Shah was toppled and a theocratic rule was established with Khomeini as the supreme leader.

-In November of 1979 a group of Iranian seized the U.S. embassy and held its occupation captive for 444 days until the election of Ronald Regan in 1981.

-From 1982-1988 Iran was involved in the Iran-Iraq war in which Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein engaged in intense chemical warfare causing high amounts of Iranian casualties

-In the early 1990's Presidents Rafsanjani and Khamtani attempted to implement for western capitalistic and freedom based elements, but were seen as relatively unsuccessful.