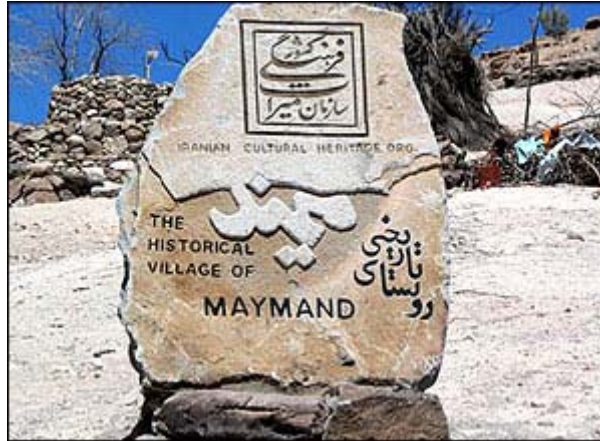


Iran's ancient stone city

A 12,000 years old village of Maymand carved in living rocks located in Shahr-e Babak, Kerman-Iran; whose enjoy impressive architecture representing the peaceful coexistence of man and Nature



The ancient village of Maymand lies in Iran's south-eastern Kerman province. BBCPersian.com reader Mehdi Mortazavi Tabrizi sent pictures of his visit to this historic area.



There are around 350 homes carved into the rock in this 4,000-year-old village.



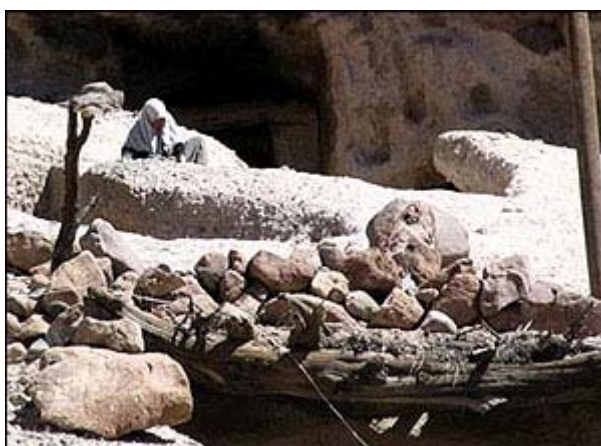
Around the village is a precipice or "taaqa", which acts as a natural fort protecting the inhabitants. Hundreds of years ago archers guarding the village would be posted around its edges.



The homes provide valuable shelter to the region's nomads during the bitterly cold winters.



The village's precious water supply comes from small springs and underground canals using pipes.



Such distinctive water systems have led to the village being registered by Iran's Heritage Organisation.



Inside the homes a thick layer of soot can be seen on all ceilings and walls from the cooking fires lit by residents. The soot collects and stabilises the ceilings and also prevents damp and repels insects.



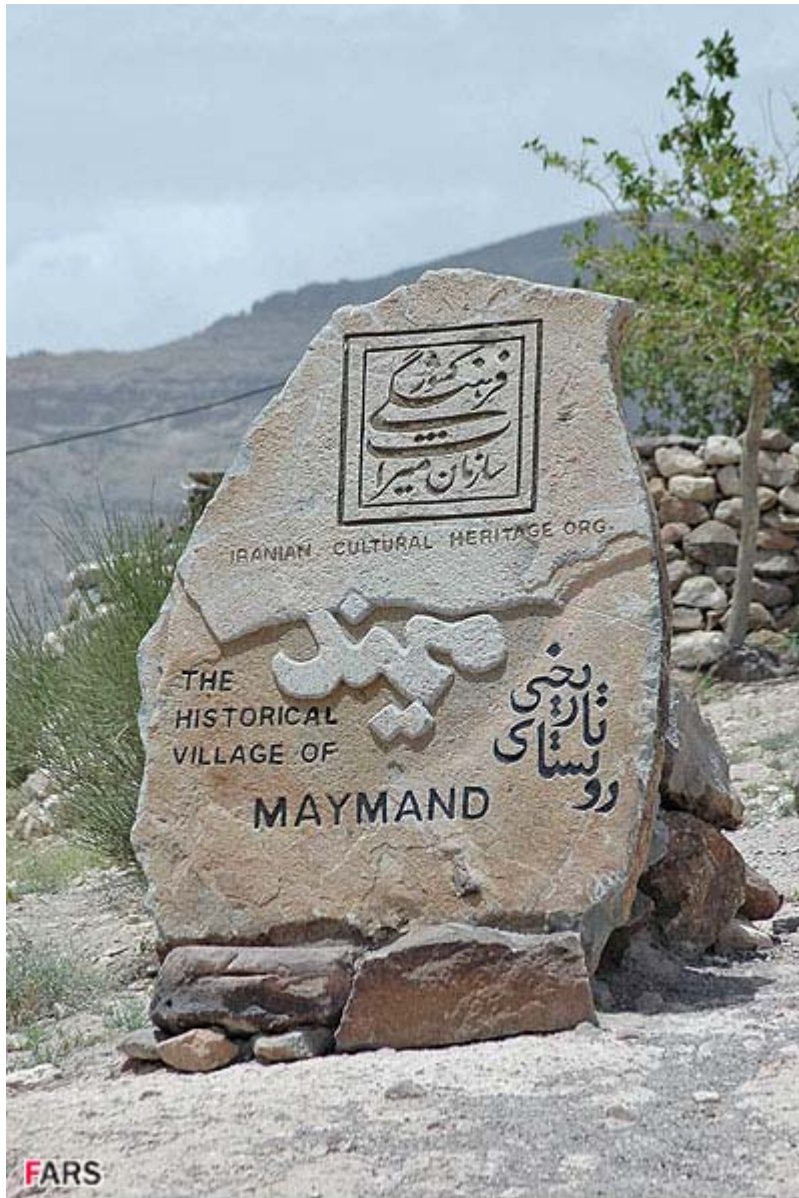
However, some experts studying the village also argue that the presence of such fireplaces suggests the inhabitants may be descendents of Zoroastrians - an ancient pre-Islamic sect which considered fire to be divine.



Several decades ago around 4,000 people lived in the village, now this number has dwindled to about 50 families.



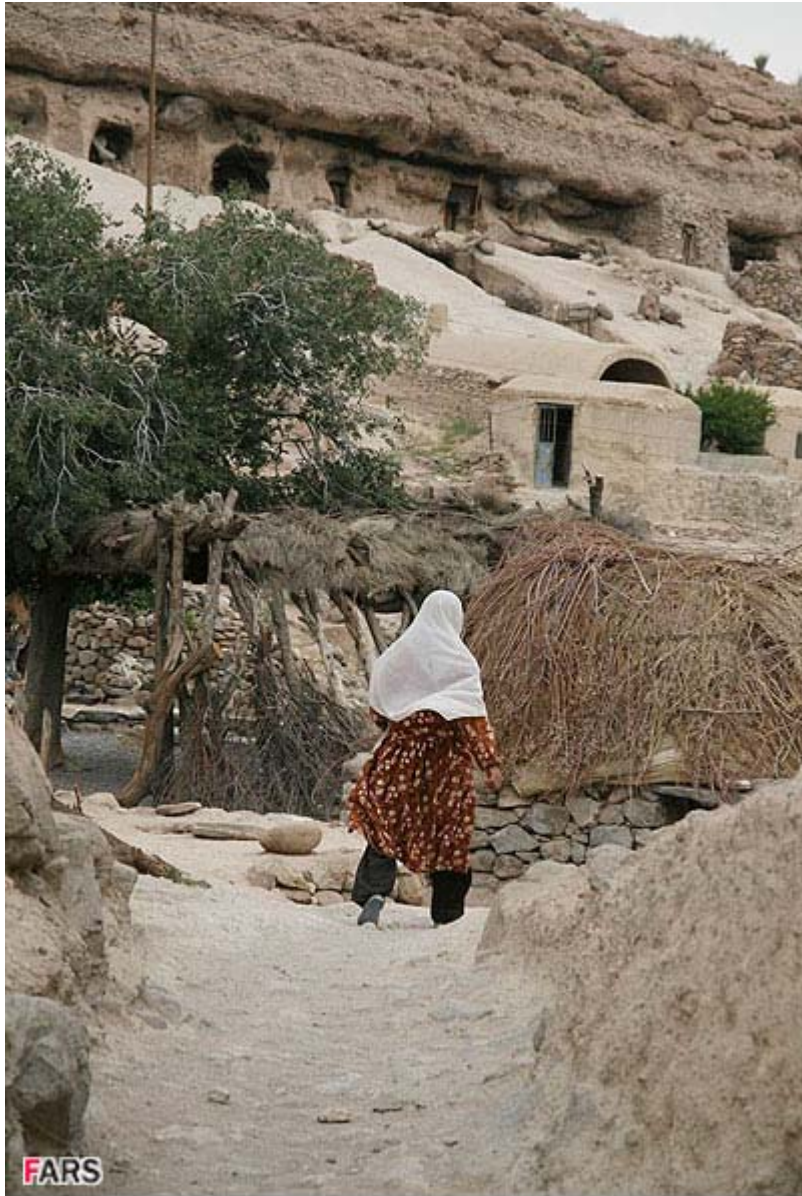
But despite this, those who remain are still courteous to curious visitors, here a local woman is offering nuts to her guests.



FARS

Photo:hamid Sadeghi

FARS NEWS AGENCY



FARS

Photo:hamid Sadeghi

FARS NEWS AGENCY



FARS

Photo:hamid Sadeghi

FARS NEWS AGENCY



FARS

Photo:hamid Sadeghi

FARS NEWS AGENCY



FARS

Photo:hamid Sadeghi

FARS NEWS AGENCY



FARS

Photo:hamid Sadeghi

FARS NEWS AGENCY



FARS

Photo:hamid Sadeghi

FARS NEWS AGENCY



FARS

Photo:hamid Sadeghi

FARS NEWS AGENCY



FARS

Photo:hamid Sadeghi

FARS NEWS AGENCY



FARS

Photo:hamid Sadeghi

FARS NEWS AGENCY



FARS

Photo:hamid Sadeghi

FARS NEWS AGENCY



FARS

Photo:hamid Sadeghi

FARS NEWS AGENCY



FARS

Photo:hamid Sadeghi

FARS NEWS AGENCY



FARS

Photo:hamid Sadeghi

FARS NEWS AGENCY



FARS

Photo:hamid Sadeghi

FARS NEWS AGENCY



FARS

Photo:hamid Sadeghi

FARS NEWS AGENCY



FARS

Photo:hamid Sadeghi

FARS NEWS AGENCY



FARS

Photo:hamid Sadeghi

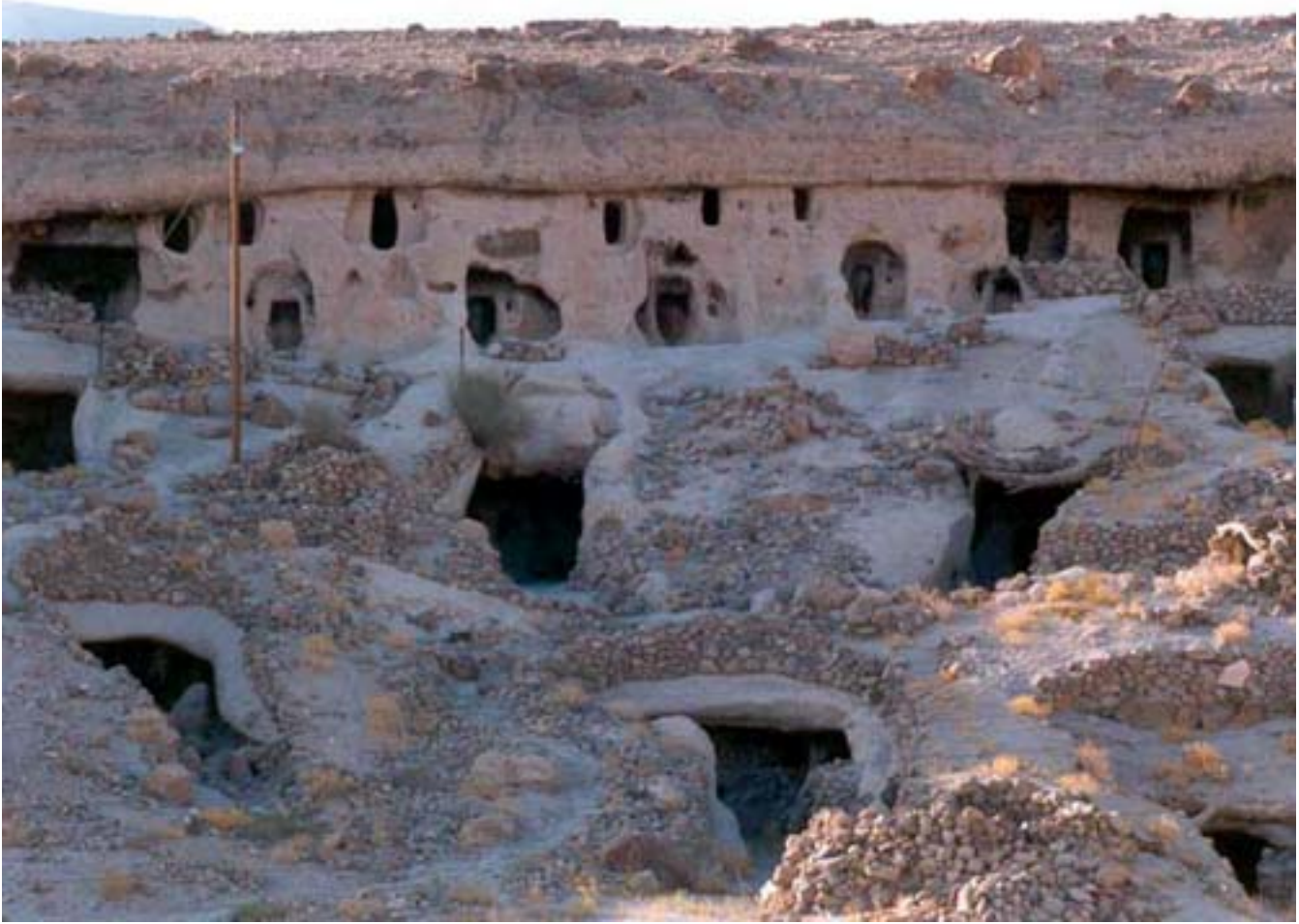
FARS NEWS AGENCY

Maymand village, located near to Shahr-e Babak city, used to be full of pistachio and wild almond trees. A lot of berry and black berry trees can also be seen not far from the village. Maymand plain is full of desert animals such as snakes, crocodiles, hedgehogs, and turtles. Besides in the mountains of Maymand there are different kinds of wild animals such as deer, leopard, wolf, fox, zebra, ibex and different kinds of birds.



Many seasonal rivers, qanats (aqueducts), and springs can be seen in Maymand village and its suburbs, which have helped the region with a fruitful agriculture.

Living conditions in Maymand are harsh due to the aridity of the land and to high temperatures in summers and very cold winters. Maymand consists of a set of houses that have been dug in the hearth of the mountain and the rocks which are called Hand-dug houses.



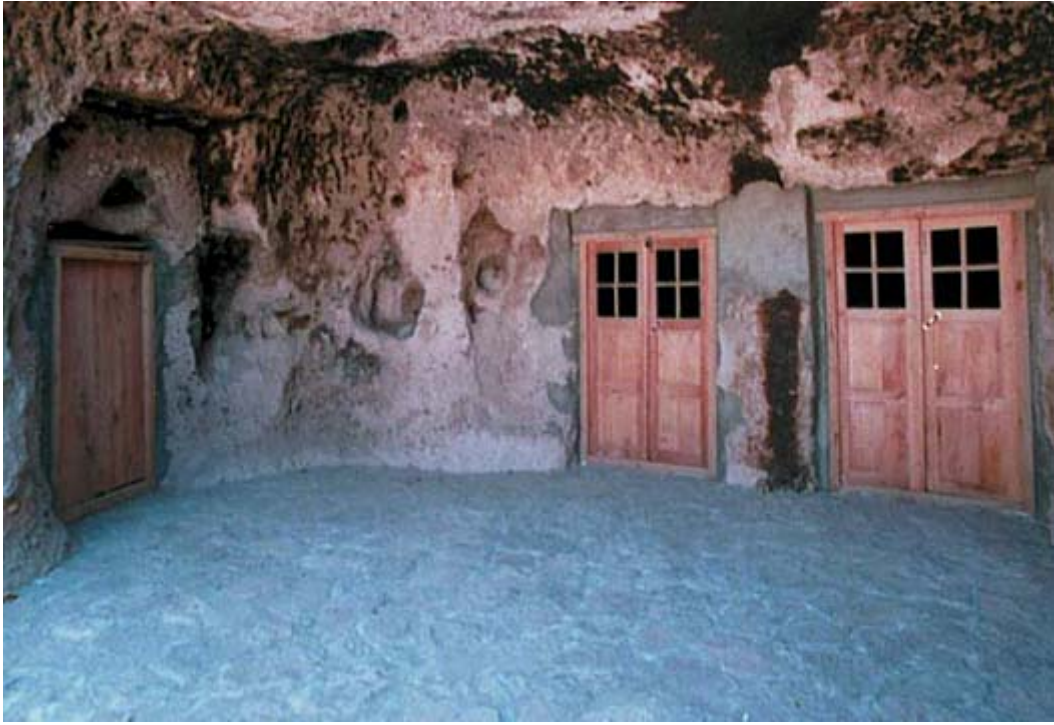
"The houses which are used during the summer are called "Kapar" which are small wooden rooms with low ceilings. In these kapars, a stream of cold air is always flowing. Another architectural style which is called "Gonbeh" is a circled stoned wall houses with a wooden conical roof which has been covered by soil and mud. Inside the Gonbeh is warmer than Kapar.



Sometimes the villagers of Maymand live in a kind of white tent called "Pollas", the vertical fibers of which are of cotton and the horizontal ones of goat's wool. The villagers are busy with animal breeding or fruit gardens during the summer.



The rock houses of Maymand, some of which have been inhabited for as long as 3000 years, start at a height of 3 meters of Khorin Mountain and stretch to the flat plain of Khatoonabad.



Courtesy : Phil Masters