

## Sarein, city of magical springs

By Zahra Mirzafarjouny\*

Sarein, a city in Ardabil Province of Iran is one of the most beautiful cities with a pristine nature and pure climate that lies at the foot of Sabalan Mountains. It is a natural spa region with numerous hot mineral springs well-known for their therapeutic value.

Spectacular Ardabil Province located in northwestern Iran bordering the Republic of Azerbaijan, is one of Iran's most scenic provinces. Beautiful nature, green plains, and hot mineral springs create pleasant memories. Besides, visiting its historical monuments as well as its villages bring energy and enjoyment along.



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The province is divided into 10 counties: Ardabil, Bilasavar, Germi, Khalkhal, Kowsar, Meshginshahr, Namin, Sarein, Nir, and Parsabad.

Sarein, or Sareyn, is a small city, 28 kilometers west of Ardabil with an area of more than 1,28 square kilometers. The city is famous for its numerous spa springs, marked as one of the tourist areas of Ardabil Province.

Sarein attracts more than five million tourists annually from different parts of Iran and the world because of its climate and hot springs. There are nine hot springs in the region which are very different in terms of composition and properties.

### Etymology

The word Sarein in the Persian dictionary means 'a cool place' and 'headwater'.

### Culture

To study the culture of Sarein, we have to study the culture of Azerbaijani people, especially Ardabil.



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### Traditional foods

'Ashe Doogh', also known as 'yogurt soup', is one of the traditional soups in Sarein. It is a soup usually made from yogurt or doogh, as well as chickpeas and vegetables.

'Doogh' or 'ayran', a classic Iranian drink, is a combination of water, yogurt, mint and salt. Local 'kebabs' in this area are also very popular and delicious for tourists.

### Souvenir

Made locally by bee keepers of the region, honey is one of the most famous products in Sarein. It is produced from hyacinth, basil and vetches slopes of Sabalan Mountains, being renowned for its quality.

### Sarein tourist attractions

Sarein is famous for its numerous



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hot springs, attracting many tourists every year in the summer.

'Gavmesh Goli' hot springs; one of the most popular hot springs in Sarein, is very useful for the treatment of general ailments and heart diseases, as well as strengthening of the body.

Qarah Soo (A'saab), Sari Soo, Gavmesh Goli, Besh Bajilar, Qahveh Suci and Pehentu Thermal Spring are some of Sarein hot springs to name a few.

'Anahita Hill' in Sarein was once called Water Goddess. It has been discovered on the basis of excavated earthenware and historical documentation.

'Gulestan Valley' is one of the widest and most beautiful valleys in Ardabil Province. It is Sabalan's east valley and habitat of partridges, goats and mouflons.

'Vargehsaran Waterfall' is one of the most spectacular spots of Saba-



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Another attraction of Sarein is 'Googoor Waterfall', located 10 to 15 kilometers from Sarein. It is 12 meters high, located in the northern slopes of Sabalan Mountain. It attracts many nature lovers to the province.

'Kanzag' is a historic village in the central district of Sarein. It has historic caves from the Parthian period which have been registered in Iran's National Heritage List.

'Alvares' is a ski resort, 24 kilometers from the city of Sarein. Many tourists travel to this area to ski and enjoy winter sports every

lan's green slopes.

### Best season to visit

The best season to visit Sarein is late spring and summer. It is not a favorite destination in autumn and winter since it gets very cold. The minimum temperature in the city is -8°C and the maximum 25°C.

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The above article is taken from Mehr News Agency.

Under pressure from frequent flyers alarmed over climate change, the airline industry says it is 'hellbent' on reducing emissions — but the technology needed to drastically reduce its carbon footprint is still out of reach.

In recent months climate activists have stepped up efforts to convince travelers to boycott air travel, with Swedish schoolgirl and campaigner Greta Thunberg spearheading the trans-over-planes movement and making 'flygskam', or flight shame, a buzzword in the Scandinavian country, AFP reported.

"The sector is under considerable pressure," admitted Alexandre de Juniac, the chief executive of the International Air Transport Association (IATA), whose members met this week in Seoul.

The industry has been under fire over its carbon emissions, which at 285 grams of CO<sub>2</sub> emitted per kilometer travelled by a passenger far exceed all other modes of transport. Road transportation follows at 158 and rail travel is at 14, according to European Environment Agency figures.

De Juniac said the industry was 'hellbent' on lowering emissions but the sector is also accused of underestimating its environmental impact, with the IATA chief lobbying heavily against a 'green tax' on aviation backed by several countries including the Netherlands.

"Often these taxes are absorbed in the budgets of states and are spent on whatever they want, except the environment," he said.

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) estimates that air transport is responsible for two percent of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions — roughly equivalent to the overall emissions of Germany, according to consulting firm Sia Partners.

But aircraft also emit particles such as nitrogen oxides, which can trap heat at high altitude, meaning the industry is actually responsible for five percent of global warming, according to the Climate Action Network, an umbrella group of environmental NGOs.

## Pressure mounts on aviation industry over climate change



MAURO PIMENTEL/AFP

The industry has committed to improving fuel efficiency by 1.5 percent per year from 2009 to 2020 and stabilizing its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in preparation for a 50 percent reduction by 2050 compared to 2005.

It is a major challenge given that the number of passengers is expected to double over the next two decades to reach 8.2 billion in 2037.

### Biofuels, electric engines

Companies are banking on a new

generation of less polluting planes with updated engines, aerodynamic modifications and fittings that weigh less — among them tablets to replace heavy pilot manuals.

However, Shukor Yusof, analyst with Malaysia-based Endau Analytics, told

"But that only solves around 30 percent of the problem," he said. The rest, he added, can only be resolved by developing sustainable biofuels or turning to electric power — technology which is currently impractical.

Several airlines have begun testing biofuels but production costs remain high and industry experts do not believe electric engines will be rolled out commercially for another two decades.

"Batteries today are still too big and heavy to be used as the main source of power for aircraft," said Leithen Francis, managing director of Singapore-based aviation public relations agency Francis & Low.

"Aircraft today take off heavy — because the aircraft is carrying a full load of fuel — but then the aircraft uses up its fuel during the flight and lands light.

"Aircraft powered by batteries will take off heavy and then have to land heavy, so developing aircraft that can do that — without having a hard landings or causing structural damage to the airframe — will be a challenge," Francis told AFP.

The ICAO said better management of air traffic can help and a new generation of more fuel-efficient plane designs is predicted within five or ten years.

But time is not on the aviation industry's side.

A landmark UN report last year concluded that CO<sub>2</sub> emissions must drop 45 percent by 2030 — and reach 'net zero' by 2050 — if the rise in Earth's temperature is to be checked at the safer limit of 1.5°C.

Plouvier of the Boston Consulting Group said to meet the 2050 goal, the aviation industry "must start today and very quickly".

## Britain to launch new scheme to pay households for unused renewable power



DARREN STAPLES/REUTERS

Britain will launch a new scheme to pay households producing energy from renewable sources, such as solar panels, for their surplus electricity, the government said on Sunday.

Around 800,000 homes in Britain have solar panels installed and the scheme will replace a feed-in-tariff system which ended in April, according to Reuters.

"The new smart export guarantee will ensure households that choose to become green energy generators will be guaranteed a payment for electricity supplied to the grid," Energy and Clean Growth minister Chris Skidmore said.

Monthly installation of new solar panels in Britain fell to a 9-year low in April, following the end of the feed-in-tariff scheme, provisional government data shows.

Under the new scheme, households will be paid for the power they produce by their energy supplier, which sets the prices offered.

"If households with panels and batteries can store electricity and sell it back to the grid when it is most needed we could see some homes with negative power bills," said Greg Jackson, CEO of British energy supplier Octopus, which is one of a small number of suppliers already offering an export tariff.

The new guarantee will apply to homes with up to five megawatts of renewable power capacity installed, with generation tracked by smart meters.

The government will set legislation for the scheme to become mandatory for any energy supplier with more than 150,000 customers from January 1, 2020, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy said.

Challenger energy brand Bulb and E.ON also currently offer some customers export tariffs.