

Deh Bala / Shir Kuh (4070 meter)

June 10 - 12, 2004

Khob¹, my old friend Fred G honored us with his bi-yearly visits to Iran and I had the pleasant “duty” of organizing a mountaineering hike for us!

I decided on Shir Kuh² for many reasons:

1. It thought it would be a nice day tour: not too exhausting and challenging enough to justify the long ride to Yazd and Deh Bala. It turned out to be a 10 hour hike!
2. My friend Ali T could host us in his “country residence” in Deh Bala which is at the base of the mountain. I always enjoy spending time with the T family. They have a very exceptional character trait: all the qualities of the Iranians and none of the defects - a rare combination.
3. I thought it would be nice for Fred to visit Yazd if we had the extra time.
4. This year the weather being cooler than usual, it was the last chance to climb in the area before the summer heat sets in and makes the hike unpleasant.
5. Not least, of course, was the attraction of Shir Kuh itself which neither of us had climbed before.

So, or “khob”, we started very relaxed on June 10 at about 11am. from Amanieh. We had planned to start at 5 am. but because of the **Credit Suisse** event³ the evening before which kept us up till late, we took it easy.



We hired a driver so we could relax during the way which, with my good ole Patrol is about an eight-hour drive “if nothing happens”!

Something did happen: the engine fan broke off near Nain. We had it replaced “out patient” by a very nice and competent mechanic in no more than half an hour!

Tehran–Qom–Kashan–Ardestan–Nain–Ardekan– Yazd. About 650 km. mostly on freeways, divided highways and very good roads.



In, Kashan,⁴ we stopped to visit the Fin Gardens⁵. It is a must if one is in the area. A group of young girls from Esfahan were also visiting. Two “daring” and very pleasant ones proposed to have their picture taken with us!



We arrived late in the evening at Deh Bala. Ali T sent us his driver to meet us on the way because although Deh Bala literally means the village above (a better rendering is the French translation “le pays d’en haut”) it is anything but a small village and it would have been impossible for us to find the way to our host’s by ourselves. Here we were greeted by Ali T and treated with



excellent joujeh kabab⁶ (and all that goes with it) that he prepared. Neither drinks nor smokes so we would be in shape the next morning.

¹ So...., Well....in Farsi

² Literally: Lion Mountain

³ Celebrating their 30 years presence in Iran and of which Fred G was the host.

⁴ Old and famous Iranian city about 230 km from Tehran. Known for its carpets, textiles, crafts and culture.

⁵ Beautiful traditional Iranian garden made more famous (or infamous) because it is where Amir Kabir, one of the most important and popular Iranian political figures of the 19th century was murdered.

⁶ Barbecued chicken.

The way to Shir Kuh from Deh Bala is indicated by a big green sign. We drove as far up as possible on the trail to about 2750 meters where we parked the car and started our climb at 6:50 am. The beginning of the way is very straight forward and the path clear. One basically follows the creek for about one and half hours where the path suddenly takes a sharp left. It is the wrong way! We took it. It set us back an hour but fortunately we saw a shepherd in the distance fading away. I managed to yell loudly enough for him to hear us. He stopped. We rushed to him. He offered us excellent yoghurt and bread and put us back on the right track.



One should just keep on following the path by the creek a couple of hundred meters further from where we took "the wrong turn"; there it takes a sharp right and then continues steeply zigzagging all the way to just below the shelter's level which is at 3530 meters. We arrived here at 10:30.

From there it's a long gentle path all the way to the top where we arrived at 12:30. There is another shelter and a military post for transmissions here which was manned by two young soldiers.

At about 5 pm we were back at the car and a little later back at our friend's for a very relaxed evening.

The next day we visited:

- Ali T's wife's family's traditional Yazdi pastry shop. It is unique in Iran and therefore in the world!
- The T family's brand new garment factory which happens to be the largest such unit in the Middle East.
- The Zoroastrian eternal fire temple and a quick tour of a few of Yazd's other historical buildings.

At 2 pm we were on our way back to Tehran with the help of yet another driver and yet another "problem" with the Patrol but still we arrived on time safely in Tehran.



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Photos (top to bottom, left to right):

Fixing the fan in Nain
Ali T's house in Deh Bala
The way up in blue (the wrong way in red)
Fred reaching the shelter
Micky resting by the creek
The Yazdi pastry shop counter
Fred in the garment factory

With "girlfriends" in Fin Garden
Barfkhaneh Tazerjan massif and Deh Bala green valley seen from the way up to Shir Kuh
The way up, closer view. The line ends at about the shelter
At the top with Fred and soldier
Fred resting by the creek
Ali T, Fred and a third generation family owner / manager in the pastry factory
Ali T and Fred in front of eternal fire temple