

THE FARSI ALPHABET

Final	Medial	Initial	Alone	Transliteration	Pronunciation
ا			ا	a	short, as in 'act', long, as in 'father'
ب	ب	ب	ب	b	as in 'bet'
پ	پ	پ	پ	p	as in 'pet'
ت	ت	ت	ت	t	as in 'ten'
ث	ث	ث	ث	s	as in 'set'
ج	ج	ج	ج	j	as in 'jet'
چ	چ	چ	چ	ch	as in 'chat'
ح	ح	ح	ح	h	as in 'hot'
خ	خ	خ	خ	kh	as the 'ch' in Scottish loch
د			د	d	as in 'dot'
ذ			ذ	z	as in 'zoo'
ر			ر	r	as in 'run'
ز			ز	z	as z above
ژ			ژ	zh	as the 's' in 'measure'
س	س	س	س	s	as s above
ش	ش	ش	ش	sh	as in 'shed'
ص	ص	ص	ص	s	as s above
ض	ض	ض	ض	z	as z above
ط	ط	ط	ط	t	as t above
ظ	ظ	ظ	ظ	z	as z above
ع	ع	ع	ع	'	a glottal stop (see below)
غ	غ	غ	غ	gh/q	a rough, guttural sound (see p423)
ف	ف	ف	ف	f	as in 'fact'
ق	ق	ق	ق	gh/q	as gh/q above
ک	ک	ک	ک	k	as in 'kit'
گ	گ	گ	گ	g	as in 'get'
ل	ل	ل	ل	l	as in 'let'; the common sequence l+a becomes لا
م	م	م	م	m	as in 'met'
ن	ن	ن	ن	n	as in 'net'
و			و	u/w	as in 'rule'/as in 'wary'
ه	ه	ه	ه	h	as in 'hot'
ی	ی	ی	ی	i/y	as in 'marine'/as in 'yacht'

LANGUAGE

l always as in 'leg', never as in 'roll'
 r trilled
 s as in 'sin'
 y as in 'yak'
 zh as the 'g' in 'mirage'
 ' a very weak glottal stop, like the sound made between the words 'uh-oh' or the 'tt' in Cockney 'bottle'

Note: doubled consonants are always pronounced as two distinct sounds, as in 'hat'

'trick' not 'battle'; the sole exception is *Allah* (God), in which the l's are swallowed as in English 'doll'.

ACCOMMODATION

Do you have any rooms available?

otagh khali darin

I'd like a ... room.

single

shared

ye otagh e ... mikham

taki

moshtarak

How much is it for ...?	<i>baraye ... che ghadr mishe?</i>
one night	<i>ye shab</i>
a week	<i>ye hafte</i>
two people	<i>do nafar</i>

We want a room with a ...	<i>ma ye otagh ba ye ... mikhayim</i>
bathroom	<i>dastshuyi</i>
shower	<i>dush</i>
TV	<i>televiziyon</i>
window	<i>panjere</i>

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

The all-purpose greeting in Iran is *salam aleykom*, which does duty for 'good morning', 'good afternoon' and 'good evening'. The same expression is used throughout the Muslim world, so if you learn only one phrase in Iran, this is it!

When addressing a stranger, especially one older than you, it's polite to include *agha* (sir) or *khanom* (madam) at the beginning of the first sentence, or after one of the standard greetings. *Agha ye* and *Khanom e* are the equivalents of Mr, and Mrs/Miss/Ms. *Agha* can be used before or after the first name as a title of respect, eg Mohammad Agha or, more likely, Agha Mohammad.

The pronoun *shoma* is the polite form of 'you' singular, and should be used when addressing people you don't know well – *to* is only generally used when talking to close friends and relatives of the same generation or older, and to children and animals.

Welcome.	<i>khosh amadin</i>
Greetings.	<i>salam aleykom</i>
Hello.	<i>salam</i>
Good morning.	<i>sob bekheyr</i>
Good day. (noon)	<i>ruz bekheyr</i>
Good evening.	<i>shab bekheyr</i>
Goodbye.	<i>khoda hafez</i>
How are you?	<i>haletun chetor e?</i>
Fine – and you?	<i>khubam – shoma chetoin?</i>
Yes.	<i>bale</i>
No.	<i>na</i>
Please.	<i>lotfan</i>
Thank you.	<i>dastet darnakone</i>
Thank you (very much).	<i>(kheyli) mamnum (also common is dastet darnakone)</i>
You're welcome.	<i>khahesh mikonam</i>
Excuse me/I'm sorry.	<i>bebakhshid</i>
I like ...	<i>man ... dust dalam</i>
I don't like ...	<i>man ... dust nadaram</i>

What's your name?	<i>esmetun chi ye?</i>
My name is ...	<i>esmam ... e</i>
Where are you from?	<i>kojayi hastin?</i>
I'm from ...	<i>man ahl e ... am</i>
It is God's will.	<i>mashallah</i>

mother	<i>madar</i>
father	<i>pedar</i>
sister	<i>khahar</i>
brother	<i>bavadar</i>
daughter	<i>dokhtar</i>
son	<i>pesar</i>
aunt	<i>khaleh (maternal)/ ameh (paternal)</i>
uncle	<i>dai (maternal)/ amu (paternal)</i>
wife	<i>zan</i>
husband	<i>shohar</i>

SIGNS

ورود	<i>vorud</i>	Entrance
خروج	<i>khoruj</i>	Exit
باز	<i>baz</i>	Open
بسته	<i>baste</i>	Closed
ممنوع ورود	<i>vorud mamnu'</i>	No Entry
ممنوع دخانیات	<i>dokhaniyat mamnu'</i>	No Smoking
ممنوع	<i>mamnu'</i>	Prohibited
توالت	<i>tuvalet</i>	Toilet
مردانه	<i>mardane</i>	Men
زنانه	<i>zanane</i>	Women

DIRECTIONS

Where is the ...?	<i>... koja st?</i>
Can you show me (on the map)?	<i>mishe (tu naghsh) be man neshun bedin?</i>
Is it far from here?	<i>un az inja dur e?</i>
Go straight ahead.	<i>mostaghim berin</i>
To the left.	<i>samt e chap</i>
To the right.	<i>samt e rast</i>
here	<i>inja</i>
there	<i>unja</i>
behind	<i>posht</i>
in front of	<i>jeloye</i>
far (from)	<i>dur az</i>
near (to)	<i>nazdik be</i>
opposite	<i>moghabele</i>

HEALTH

Where is the ...?	<i>... koja st?</i>
chemist	<i>darukhune</i>
dentist	<i>dandun pezeshk</i>
doctor	<i>doktor</i>
hospital	<i>bimarestan</i>

EMERGENCIES

Help!	<i>komak!</i>
Stop!	<i>ist!</i>
Go away!	<i>gom sho!</i>
Call ...!	<i>... khabar konin!</i>
a doctor	<i>ye doktor</i>
an ambulance	<i>ye ambulans</i>
the police	<i>polis o</i>

I wish to contact my embassy/consulate.

mikham ba sefarat/konsulgari khod am tamas begiram

Where is the toilet?

tuvalet koja st?

Shame on you!

khejalat bekesh! (said by a woman to a man bothering her)

I'm sick.	<i>mariz am</i>
antiseptic	<i>zedd e ufuni konande</i>
aspirin	<i>asperin</i>
condom	<i>kandom</i>
contraceptive	<i>zedd e hamelegi</i>
diarrhoea	<i>es-hal</i>
medicine	<i>daru</i>
sunblock	<i>kerem e zedd e aftar</i>

I have ...	<i>... daram</i>
anaemia	<i>kam khuni</i>
asthma	<i>asm</i>
diabetes	<i>diyabet</i>

I'm allergic to ...	<i>be ... hassasiyat daram</i>
antibiotics	<i>antibiyutik</i>
aspirin	<i>asperin</i>
bees	<i>zanbur</i>
peanuts	<i>badum zanini</i>
penicillin	<i>penisilin</i>

LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES**Do you speak English?**

shoma ingilisi baladin?

Does anyone here speak English?

inja kesi ingilisi balad e?

I understand.

mifahmam

I don't understand.

na mifahmam

How do you say ... in Farsi?

... ro dar farsi chetori migin?

What does ... mean?

ma'ni ye ... chi ye?

Please write it down.

lotfan un o benevisin

NUMBERS

Unlike Arabic written text, numbers are written from left to right (as in English). The numbers four and six can be written two different ways depending on the calligraphic style

0	<i>sefr</i>	۰
1	<i>yek</i>	۱
2	<i>do</i>	۲
3	<i>se</i>	۳
4	<i>chahar</i>	۴ or ۴
5	<i>panj</i>	۵
6	<i>shish</i>	۶ or ۶
7	<i>haft</i>	۷
8	<i>hasht</i>	۸
9	<i>noh</i>	۹
10	<i>dah</i>	۱۰
11	<i>yazdah</i>	۱۱
12	<i>davazdah</i>	۱۲
13	<i>sizdah</i>	۱۳
14	<i>chahardah</i>	۱۴
15	<i>punzdah</i>	۱۵
16	<i>shanzdah</i>	۱۶
17	<i>hifdah</i>	۱۷
18	<i>hijdah</i>	۱۸
19	<i>nuzdah</i>	۱۹
20	<i>bist</i>	۲۰
21	<i>bist o yek</i>	۲۱
22	<i>bist o do</i>	۲۲
30	<i>si</i>	۳۰
40	<i>chehel</i>	۴۰
45	<i>chehel o panj</i>	۴۰
50	<i>panjah</i>	۵۰
60	<i>shast</i>	۶۰
70	<i>haftad</i>	۷۰
80	<i>hashtad</i>	۸۰
90	<i>navad</i>	۹۰
100	<i>sad</i>	۱۰۰
167	<i>sad o shast o haft</i>	۱۶۷
200	<i>divist</i>	۲۰۰
300	<i>sisad</i>	۳۰۰
400	<i>chaharsad</i>	۴۰۰
500	<i>punsad</i>	۵۰۰
1000	<i>hezar</i>	۱۰۰۰
2000	<i>do hezar</i>	۲۰۰۰
3000	<i>se hezar</i>	۳۰۰۰
4000	<i>chahar hezar</i>	۴۰۰۰

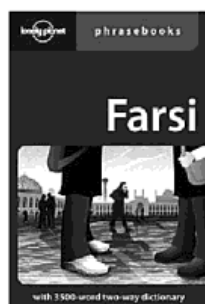
one million *yek milyon*

QUESTION WORDS

Who?	<i>ki?</i>
What?	<i>che?</i>

Is this the road to ...?*in jadde be ... mire?***Where's a service station?***pomp e benzin e ba'di kojast?***Please fill it up.***lotfan bak o por konin***I'd like ... litres.***... litr benzin mikham*

diesel	<i>gazoyil</i>
leaded petrol	<i>ma'muli</i>
unleaded (petrol)	<i>bedun e sorb</i>

How long can we park here?*che ghadr mishe inja park kard?***(I/We) need a mechanic.***ye mekanik (mikhaham/mikhayim)***The car/motorbike has broken down at ...***mashin/mororsiklet dar ... kharab shode***I've run out of petrol.***benzin am tamam shode***I had an accident.***man tasadof kardam***TRAVEL WITH CHILDREN****Is there a/an ...?** *yek....hast?***I need a ...** *man yek....lazem daram***baby change room** *otaghe avaz kardane bachche***car baby-seat** *sandaliye bachche***children's menu** *liste ghazaye bachche ha***disposable nappies/****diapers** *pushak***formula (infant milk)** *shire khoshk***highchair** *sandaliye boland***potty** *lagane bachche***stroller** *kaleske***Are children allowed?** *bachche ha ejaze darand?*

Also available from Lonely Planet:
Farsi Phrasebook

The Farsi alphabet

<i>Farsi letter</i>	<i>Roman equivalent</i>	<i>Name of letter</i>	<i>Farsi letter</i>	<i>Roman Equivalent</i>	<i>Name of letter</i>
ا, آ	a, â	alef	ض	z	zâd
ب	b	be	ط	t	tâ
پ	p	pe	ظ	z	zâ
ت	t	te	ع	'	ayn
ث	s	se	غ	gh	ghayn
ج	j	jim	ف	f	fe
چ	ch	che	ق	gh	ghâf
ح	h	he-ye hoti	ک	k	kâf
خ	kh	khe	گ	g	gâf
د	d	dâl	ل	l	lâm
ذ	z	zâl	م	m	mim
ر	r	re	ن	n	nun
ز	z	ze	و	v, u, ô	vâv
ژ	zh	zhe	ه	h	he-ye dô chesm
س	s	sin	ی	y, i	ye
ش	sh	shin	ء	'	hamze
ص	s	sâd			

NOTES

- Note that the short vowels **a**, **e**, and **o** are not normally written.
- Ayn** and **hamze** are not always written in the transliteration used in this book.

Numbers

.	۱	۲	۳	۴/۳	۵	۶	۷	۸	۹	۱۰
0	1	2	3	4*	5	6	7	8	9	10

* The two forms for 4 are interchangeable.

Glossary

Here, with definitions, are some unfamiliar words and abbreviations. Generally the Farsi words in this book are transliterations of colloquial usage. See Language (p423) for other useful words and phrases. See also the food glossary (p84) for culinary terms.

- agha** – sir; gentleman
Allah – Muslim name for God
aramgah – resting place; burial place; tomb
arg, ark – citadel
astan-e – sanctuary; threshold
ateshkadeh – a Zoroastrian fire temple where a flame was always kept burning
ayatollah – Shiite cleric of the highest rank, used as a title before the name; literally means a ‘sign or miracle of God’
azad – free; liberated
azadi – freedom
- badgir** – windtower or ventilation shaft used to catch breezes and funnel them down into a building to cool it
bagh – garden
bandar – port; harbour
Bandari – indigenous inhabitant of the Persian Gulf coast and islands
bastan – ancient; ancient history; antiquity
bazar – bazaar; market place
bazari – shopkeeper in the bazaar
behesht – paradise
boq’eh – mausoleum
borj – tower
bozorg – big, large, great
burqa – a mask with tiny slits for the eyes worn by some Bandari women
- caliphate** – the dynasty of the successors of the Prophet Mohammed as rulers of the Islamic world
caravanserai – an inn or way-station for camel trains; usually consisting of rooms arranged around a courtyard
chador – literally ‘tent’; a cloak, usually black, covering all parts of a woman’s body except the hands, feet and face
coffeenet – internet café
cuneiform – ancient wedge-shaped script used in Persia
- dar baste** – literally closed door, used in taxis to indicate you want a private hire
darvazeh – gate or gateway, especially a city gate
darya – sea
dasht – plain; plateau; desert, specifically one of sand or gravel

enqelab – revolution

Farsi – Persian language or people
Ferdosi – one of the great Persian poets, born about AD 940 in Tus, near Mashhad; wrote the first epic poem, the *Shahnamah* (see p74)
fire temple – see *ateshkadeh*

gabbeh – traditional rug
golestan – rose garden; name of poem by *Sa’di*
gombad – dome, domed monument or tower tomb; also written ‘gombad’

Hafez – one of the great Persian poets, born in Shiraz in about AD 1324; see the boxed text (p74)
haj – pilgrimage to Mecca
halal – permitted by Islamic law; lawful to eat or drink
hammam – bath, public bathhouse; bathroom
Hazrat-e – title used before the name of Mohammed, any other apostle of Islam or a Christian saint
hejab – veil; the ‘modest dress’ required of Muslim women and girls
Hossein – the third of the 12 *imams* recognised by Shiites as successors of the Prophet Mohammed (see the boxed text, p56)
Hosseinieh – see *takieh*

imam – ‘emam’ in Farsi; religious leader, also title of one of the 12 descendants of Mohammed who, according to Shiite belief, succeeded him as religious and temporal leader of the Muslims; see the boxed text (p56)
Imam Reza – the eighth Shiite *imam* (see the boxed text, p353)
imamzadeh – descendant of an *imam*; shrine or mausoleum of an *imamzadeh*
insh’Allah – if God wills it
istgah – station (especially train station)
ivan – ‘eivan’ in Farsi; barrel-vaulted hall opening onto a courtyard

Jameh Mosque – Masjed-e Jameh in Farsi; meaning Congregational Mosque, sometimes mis-translated as Friday Mosque

kabir – great
kalisa – church (sometimes cathedral)
kavir – salt desert
khalij – gulf; bay
khan – feudal lord, title of respect
khan-e sonnati – traditional house
kuche – lane; alley

Kufic – ancient script found on many buildings dating from the about the 7th to 13th centuries

madraseh – school; also Muslim theological college

Majlis – Iranian Parliament

manar – minaret; tower of a mosque

markazi – centre; headquarters

masjed – mosque; Muslim place of worship

Masjed-e Jameh – see *Jameh Mosque*

mehmankhaneh – hotel

mehmanpazir – a simple hotel

mehmansara – government-owned resthouse or hotel

mihrab – niche inside a mosque indicating the direction of Mecca; in Iran, specifically the hole cut in the ground before the niche

minbar – pulpit of a mosque

Moharram – first month of the Muslim lunar calendar, the Shiite month of mourning

mosaferkhaneh – lodging-house or hotel of the cheapest, simplest kind; ‘mosafer’ means traveller or passenger

muezzin – person at mosque who calls Muslims to prayer

mullah – Islamic cleric; title of respect

No Ruz – Iranian New Year’s Day, celebrated on the vernal equinox (usually around 21 March)

Omar Khayyam – born in Neishabur in about 1047 and famous as a poet, mathematician, historian and astronomer; his best-known poem is the *Rubaiyat*; see the boxed text (p74)

pasazh – passage; shopping arcade

Persia – old name for Iran

Persian – adjective and noun frequently used to describe the Iranian language, people and culture

pik-up – utility vehicle with a canvas cover

pol – bridge

qal’eh – fortress; fortified walled village

qalyan – water pipe, usually smoked in traditional teahouses

qanat – underground water channel

qar – cave

Quran – Muslim holy book

Ramazan – ninth month in the Muslim lunar calendar; the month of fasting

rial – currency of Iran; equal to one-tenth of a *toman*

rud, rudkhuneh – river; stream

Rumi – famous poet (born in 1207) credited with founding the Maulavi Sufi order – the whirling dervishes (see the boxed text, p74)

ruz – day

Sa’di – one of the great Persian poets (AD 1207–91); his most famous works are the *Golestan* (Rose Garden) and *Bustan* (Garden of Trees); see the boxed text (p74)

sardar – military governor

savari – private car; local word for a shared taxi, usually refers to longer trips between cities

shah – king; the usual title of the Persian monarch

shahid – martyr; used as a title before the forename of a fighter killed during the Islamic Revolution or the Iran–Iraq War

shahr – town or city

shuttle taxi – common form of public transport within cities; they usually run on set routes

ta’arof – ritualised politeness; see the boxed text (p45)

takht – throne, also the daybed-style tables in teahouses

takieh – building used during the rituals to commemorate the death of Imam Hossein during Moharram; sometimes called a *Hosseinieh*

tappeh – hill; mound

terminal – terminal; bus station

toman – unit of currency equal to 10 *rials*

vakil – regent

yakh dan – mud-brick ice house

zarih – the gilded and latticed ‘cage’ that sits over a tomb

ziggurat – pyramidal temple with a series of tiers on a square or rectangular plan

Zoroastrianism – ancient religion, the state creed before the Islamic conquest; today Zoroastrians are found mainly in Yazd, Shiraz, Kerman, Tehran and Esfahan

zurkhaneh – literally ‘house of strength’; a group of men perform a series of ritualised feats of strength, all to the accompaniment of a drumbeat; see the boxed text (p52)