



Iran



Country Overview:

Location: Middle east, bordering the Gulf of Oman, the Persian Gulf, and the Caspian Sea, between Iraq and Pakistan

Size: 1,648,195 sq. km.

Population: 79,853,900 (July 2013 est.)

Capital: Tehran

Export-commodities: petroleum 80%, chemical and petrochemical products, fruits and nuts, carpets

Import-commodities: industrial raw materials and intermediate goods, capital goods, foodstuffs and other consumer goods, technical services

Currency: Iranian Rials (IRR)

Ethnic groups: Persian 61%, Azeri 16%, Kurd 10%, Lur 6%, Baloch 2%, Arab 2%, Turkmen and Turkic tribes 2%, other 1%

Religion: Muslim 98% (Shia 89% and Sunni 9%), other (includes Zoroastrian, Jewish, Christian and Baha'i) 2%

Government type: theocratic republic

Chief of State: Supreme Leader Ali Hoseini-KAHAMENEI (since June 1989)

Head of Government: President Mahmud AHMADI-NEJAD (since Aug. 2005); First Vice President Mohammad Reza RAHIMI (since Sept. 2009)

Language: Persian (official) 53%, Azeri Turkic and Turkic dialects 18%, Kurdish 10%, Gilaki and Mazandarani 7%, Luri 6%, Balochi 2%, Arabic 2%, other 2%

Iran is the 19th largest economy in the world.



Islamic Republic of Iran/ Jomhuri-ye Eslami-ye Iran

Meetings and Negotiations

-Be **punctual**, and **confirm** date and time prior to meeting.

-When addressing your Iranian business partner you may find names to be confusing, so it is best to use their names in **English**. Upon being introduced take note of his name and proper pronunciation.

-For men use “*agha*” preceding the surname and “*khanoom*” with women. Ex: Jim Smith will be ‘Agha-e Smith’ or Karen Adams will be ‘Khanoom-e Adams.’

-When greeting, **shake hands**. A businesswomen should wait for the man to initiate the greeting. If you are a businessman greeting an Iranian woman, wait for her to initiate or just simply smile and nod your head.

-Carry multiple **business cards** because they will be exchanged often. Expect Farsi on one side and English on the other.

-Commonly Iranian companies are

family run, so for them business is personal.

Business Attire

-Iranians are very conservative regarding wardrobe so expect; the chest, shoulders, stomach, calves, thighs and hair (women) to be covered.

-Men wear a long sleeve jacket and shirt with a collar, and pants. Ties are **uncommon**. Avoid wearing jewelry; specifically around the neck.

-Women dress modestly with loose clothing.

Behavior

- Alcohol and pork are **not consumed** by those that observe the Muslim religion.

- The left hand is considered **unclean** and used for hygiene purposes; avoid using it to eat or touching things.

- The thumbs up hand gesture is considered **offensive**.

- Avoid crossing your legs while sitting or showing the bottoms of your feet!

-Whenever two men arrive at a doorway, the one on the right always enters first, regardless of respective rank.

Gift Giving

- When giving a gift use discretion and modesty; avoid overly lavish and expensive gifts or it may be viewed as bribery.

- Be sure that your gift is of good **quality** and make.

- The most senior person should always receive the gift.

Appropriate Gifts:

- Perfume/cologne, gifts of beauty or quality or food items from your native country. Offer to do a favor

Gifts to Avoid:

- **alcohol**, perfumes containing alcohol, pigskin products, personal items, sharp objects, toy dogs or pictures of dogs

Business Tips continued

Conversation

- The majority of Iranians speak Farsi (Persian), but within international business companies there should be an English speaker on staff.

- The most common greeting in Iran is ‘salam’ (which is a shortened term translating to “peace be with you”), and is repeated back.

- It is important to establish a

personal relationship prior to conducting business.

- It is considered rude to talk business right away, so smoothly transition after personal conversation.

- Loud speech and raucous laughter are considered **vulgar**.

- Iranians are deliberate negotiators who can drive a hard bargain.

- Personal relationships form the

basis of business dealings.

Topics to Discuss:

- Iranian culture, and history, education, sports (soccer), current affairs

Topics to Avoid:

- The Revolution of 1979, Iranian-US relations and Israeli foreign and domestic policy, personal question, negative comments regarding Iran

