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### Far Out Fars

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The Ostan (Province) of Fars in Iran is the hearthland of the Persian people. Within this area of slightly more than 68,000 square miles<sup>1</sup> (slightly less than the area of Oklahoma) Pasargadae and Persepolis (Takht-i-Jamshid) are situated. These cities were the focus of Achaemenian culture (circa 700 B.C. - 0) under which the Persian empire reached its maximum extent and effected its greatest cultural impact. In many ways Fars is Persia, and a sampling of its characteristics will give some useful insights into Persian attitudes, mores, and culture.

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<sup>1</sup>An irregular coastal section has recently become detached to form another Ostan, but adequate data are available only for the larger former Fars.

The maximum extent of Fars is from 50° to 55° 25' E. and from 26° 30' N. to 31° 30' N. The broad ranges of the northwest-southeast trending Zagros and their intervening valleys cover most of the area, except in the coastal fringe and the extreme east where plains and plateau country dominate. The folded, overthrust, and faulted Zagros dominate the region, and man's activities have been severely conditioned and modified by the mountains and intervening intermontane basins. The youthful nature of the mountains is evidenced by significant consequent relief and occasional earthquakes.

The semitrellis drainage pattern is influenced by alternating ridges and valleys, and the streams are fed by snow melt from the mountains. All of the area experiences a Mediterranean rainfall regime with virtually all precipitation falling between November and April. Reliable data are not available for precipitation except in a few locales, but it is estimated that it varies from less than 5 inches per annum near the coast to more than 20 inches in the mountains. The errant cyclone which delivers moisture does not detract significantly from the high percentage of sunshine experienced at all seasons. Summers are virtually cloudless. Most stations would be classified as BSh or BWh using the Koeppen scheme.

Hot summers prevail in all but the highest mountains, and mild winters are the rule, although high altitude regions in the northern part of the Ostan may suffer from winter cold. Except for areas adjacent to the Persian Gulf, where relative humidities are high, relative humidities are low at all seasons. At interior locations relative humidities frequently drop below 10%.

Sedimentary rocks, dominantly calcareous, weathering under what was apparently deciduous forest over much of the region initially have yielded a group of soils which are generally imperfectly known. Inferentially it appears that most soils are chestnut brown or brown with a high mineral content and moderate quantities of organic material. Original vegetative cover has been denuded from most of the region leaving behind patchy remnants or original forest cover, but over most of the area xerophytic species, widely spaced, now characterize the vegetative mantle.

*Population and Land Use*—Approximately 1,400,000 people inhabit this rather forbidding landscape, and in most years a small agricultural surplus is produced. Agriculture, including grazing, is overwhelmingly the most important economic pursuit.

Figures obtained from the Governor-General of Fars show that in the Iranian year 1343 (March 21, 1964-March 21, 1965) a total of 514,100 hectares were cultivated. Of this amount 320,000 hectares were in dry land cultivation and 194,100 hectares were irrigated. Irrigation water was supplied by qanats, small reservoirs, wells, and a few perennial streams.

Crops fall into three broad categories: hardy perennials, winter-grown annuals, and irrigated specialties. The hardy perennials include licorice and pistachio nuts. These commodities are exported in significant quantities to the United States and Europe. The winter-grown annuals include wheat, barley, and other small grains which are admirably suited to the rainfall regime. Irrigated specialties include rice, sugar beets, fruits, vegetables, and certain forage crops. Table I reveals extent and productivity of agricultural commodities in 1964-65.

*Transportation and Communications*—The focus of transportation within Fars is on Shiraz, the capitol and largest city. Asphalt roads radiate from Shiraz a short distance towards Kazerun, Firuzabad, and Ardekan (the paved roads do not reach any of these cities). An asphalted road leads to Tehran via Abadeh and Isfahan.

All-weather roads of dubious quality connect Shiraz with Fasa, Jahrum, Lar, Bandar Lengeh, and Bushehr. Secondary roads—again of dubious quality—connect most of the populated centers of the Ostan. Telephone and telegraph communications link most populated centers and Iranair provides air service to Shiraz, Bushehr, and Bandar Lengeh.

People and goods move primarily by road, and there is an intricate bus network along with frequent service even to remote areas. Trails and animal routes supplement those which are available by bus and air. Transportation routes show a close orientation to population clusters and resource surplus areas.

TABLE I. PRODUCTION OF AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES IN FARS OSTAN

Crops	Hectares	Crop Tons (Long)	Average Yields in Tons
Wheat	331000	185000	0.56
Barley	131000	52700	0.40
Other Cereals	13500	10900	0.81
Cotton	20800	19500	0.95
Rice	7650	21500	2.81
Sugar Beets	10000	170000	17.00
Potatoes	580	1300	2.24
Vegetables	2000	31000	15.50
Jaliz (Melons, egg plant, etc.)	3000	16000	5.33
Tobacco	1600	1100	0.69
Oil Seeds	1150	590	0.05
Alfalfa	95	600	6.32
Other Green Feed	650	3630	5.58
Spices	890	1740	1.95

*Manufacturing*—Manufacturing (Table II) within the Ostan reveals a typical pattern which one associates with a developing area. The focus is on food processing, production of materials for construction, amenities and sundries manufacturing, and handicrafts. A major exception to this general pattern is the chemical fertilizer plant. This large plant was constructed by the national government, and has been developed in recognition of the significant agricultural role of Fars.

*Inter-Ostan Affiliations*—Fars continues to serve as the Iranian ethnic heartland, as a focus for tourists, and as a food surplus producing area. The Ostan is of great significance in national life, and its development in the near future seems to be virtually assured. Its affiliations with the rest of the country are/will be abiding, because this remains the cultural home of Iran.

**TABLE II. NUMBERS OF INDUSTRIAL UNITS PROCESSING COMMODITIES IN FARS OSTAN (Iranian Year, 1340 = A.D. Mar. 21, 1961 to Mar. 20, 1962).**

Commodities	Units	Commodities	Units
Flour	105	Woodwork	5
Doors and windows	67	Printing	5
Machinery	34	Cotton	4
Gatch (plaster)	23	Sugar (refined)	3
Mosaics	22	Alcohol (industrial)	3
Power	22	Stonework	3
Ice	14	Alcoholic beverages	2
Furniture	10	Vegetable oil	1
Soap	9	Soft drinks	1
Tile and brick	8	Cement	1
Cane sugar (crude)	7	Boxes	1
Textiles	5	Chemical fertilizers	1