

# Introduction

## **PART ONE GENERAL INFORMATION**

### 1 Chapter

1 Background Information 3 Geography and climate 3, Natural history and conservation 4, History 6, Government and politics 17, Economy 22, People 24, Language 24, Religion 26, Education 29, Culture 30

### Chapter 2

Practical Information 31 When to visit 31, Highlights 31, Suggested itineraries 31, Tourist information 32, Tour operators 32, Time difference 33, Red tape 33, Embassies, consulates, missions 36, Getting there and away 36, Health 37, Safety 42, What to take 44, Export and import restrictions 46, Money 47, Budgeting 48, Getting around 48, Accommodation 51, Eating and drinking 53, Public holidays 55, Shopping 58, Culture and entertainment 60, Media and communications 62, Business 65, Cultural etiquette 65, Travelling positively 69

## **PART TWO THE GUIDE 71**

### Chapter 3

Tehran and the Road South 73 Getting there and away 74, Getting around 74, Where to stay 75, Where to eat and drink 76, What to see and do 77, South of Tehran 86

### Chapter 4

West of Tehran: Qazvin and Hamadan 91 Qazvin 91, Hamadan 96, Around Hamadan 100, East of Hamadan to Kermanshah Province 102

### Chapter 5

From Kashan to Esfahan 109 Kashan 109, On the road 114, Along the Kashan-Yazd road 115, Na'in 116, Around Na'in 117, Esfahan 119

### Chapter 6

The Caspian Region 139 Getting there 139, Towards Gilan 141, West and southwest of Bandar-e Anzali 143, East of Bandar-e Anzali 143, Amol and around 145, Sari 147, Gonbad-e Qabus 149, Bastam and around 151, Damghan 152, Semnan 154, Semnan to Tehran 155

Chapter 7 Iranian Azerbaijan 157 Getting there 157, Ardabil and around 158, Tabriz 160, North of Tabriz 165, Orumiyyeh and beyond (to the south and southeast) 168

Chapter 8 Shiraz and Around 175 Shiraz 175, Around Shiraz 187

## Chapter 9

Persepolis and the Surrounding Area 195 Persepolis 195, Naqsh-e Rostam 200, Istakhr 202, Pasargadae 202

## Chapter 10

The South Coast 205 Ahvaz 205, Shushtar 208, Shush (Susa) 209, Northwest of Shush/Susa 212, Southeast of Shush/Susa 212, East of Shush/Susa 214, South of Ahvaz 217, Eastwards along the coast 218, Further along the coast road 221

## Chapter 11

En Route to Yazd and Kerman 229 Coming to Yazd from the southwest 229, Yazd 231, Kerman 238, Mahan 245, Bam 246, Zahedan and around 248

## Chapter 12

To Mashhad and Beyond 251 Mashhad 251, Around Mashhad 262, South of Mashhad 264, To Kashmar 267, Nishapur and around 268

Appendix 1 Language 271

Appendix 2 Glossary 273

Appendix 3

Further Information 276

Index 280