From Dubai, fly into Tehran to visit the Crown Jewels and the Archaeological Museum, which houses a magnificent collection of art. Then drive to Kashan amongst traditional Persian gardens and the city’s well-known bazaar, boasting of artisanship famous since the 11th century’s Seljuk dynasty. Staying at the wonderful Abbasi Hotel, enjoy three nights in Isfahan—a town of unsurpassed beauty created by Shah Abbas in the 17th century. The Lotfollah Mosque soars above the main square, its walls splendid with turquoise tiles, gold panels, giant inscriptions and geometric and floral designs. From Shiraz drive to the wonderful site of Persepolis which was built by Darius the Great. On the main staircases superb reliefs depict representatives of the subject nations bringing gifts to Darius. Return home from Tehran via Dubai.

**GROUP SIZE:** From 15 to 20 guests

**PRICING:** $7,595 per person, double occupancy / $1,670 single supplement

**STUDY LEADER:** JOSEPH GREENE, Deputy Director and Curator of the Harvard Semitic Museum

Joe Greene received his PhD in archaeology in 1986 at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. He completed eight seasons of fieldwork in Carthage (Tunisia), directing the Carthage Survey from 1980 to 1983. He has been a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellow in Jordan, a Fulbright Fellow in Cyprus, and has directed excavations and surveys in both countries. In 1987–88 he directed the USAID Cultural Resource Management Project in Jordan and in 2001–2001 served as a consultant to the Petra National Trust, a Jordanian NGO devoted to the preservation of the archaeological site of Petra. He has been editor of the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR) *Archaeological Reports* Series (2003–2008) and of the ASOR Annual (2009–2014). His research interests focus on archaeological survey and landscape archaeology of the Mediterranean/Middle East region with emphasis on the first millennium BC/AD, on cultural resource management in the Mediterranean/Middle East region, and on museums and the history of museums in Mediterranean and Middle Eastern countries. Since the 1980s, he has led tours in the Eastern and Western Mediterranean, most recently to Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan in 2011 and to Turkey and Greece in 2013. In 2014–2015 he was a member of a Harvard-based consulting museum group working in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.
### SCHEDULE BY DAY

*B=Breakfast, *L=Lunch, *D=Dinner

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25**

**DEPART U.S. FOR DUBAI**

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26**

**DUBAI**

Arrive in Dubai this evening on your Emirates flight from Boston.

Check into your hotel and enjoy your dinner at leisure.

Overnight: Raddison Blu Deira Creek Hotel

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 27**

**DUBAI**

After breakfast this morning, step right outside of the hotel and admire the skyscrapers towering above the wooden *abras* that still ply the waters of the Dubai Creek that runs through the heart of the city.

Board traditional abra boats that operate every few minutes. This water taxi ride is like taking a time machine—sailing past Dubai’s few remaining neighborhoods of wind-tower houses and covered souks. From the crowded wharfs, men heave boxes of refrigerators and color television sets onto dhows bound for Iraq and Iran.

Wander through the area known as Bastakia where a number of old merchants’ homes can still be found. Enjoy a refreshing fruit drink at the XVA Gallery housed in a traditional home. The gallery contains a collection of contemporary local art, a selection of handicrafts as well as paintings and photographs of local subjects.

Enjoy a private lunch at the Sheikh Mohammed Centre for Cultural Understanding (SMCCU). Staff from the SMCCU will offer an excellent introduction to Islam. They will begin by covering the very basic components of the religion before moving on to describe Muslim life in the UAE today.

Return to the hotel for a welcome reception and dinner.

Overnight: Raddison Blu Deira Creek Hotel *(B, L, D)*

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 28**

**DUBAI / TEHRAN**

Enjoy this morning at leisure before your 12:30pm flight to Tehran.

This afternoon, visit the Carpet Museum, which has a small number of excellent Iranian carpets for you to view.

Afterward, transfer to your hotel. Settle into your rooms before having dinner at the hotel’s Persian restaurant.

Overnight: Espinas Hotel *(B, L, D)*

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29**

**TEHRAN**

Today, enjoy a full day of sightseeing in Tehran.

This morning, visit the National Museum, which is also known as the Archaeological Museum, with its fine collection including a stone capital of a winged lion from Susa and a 6th-century BC audience hall relief of Darius the Great from the Treasury at Persepolis.

Continue on to the Glass and Ceramics Museum of Iran followed by lunch at a local restaurant.

After lunch, view the Iranian Crown Jewels. This spectacular collection of jewels, stored in the basement vault of the Bank Milli Iran, was closed for many years but is now open on certain days to the public. Admire the world’s largest uncut diamond as well as the Peacock Throne.

Before returning to the hotel, meet with the Persian Wildlife Heritage Foundation. The foundation promotes science and research, getting local communities involved in conservation, raising environmental
awareness, and working on national and local policies. Protecting the endangered Asiatic Cheetah and its environment is of particular importance.

Dinner tonight will be at a local restaurant.

Overnight: Espinas Hotel (B, L, D)

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 30**

**TEHRAN**

After breakfast, travel to northern Tehran to visit the Niavaran Palace and Museum, the last home of Mohammad-Reza Shah and his family, located in the northeast part of the city. The complex boasts two palaces, a pavilion, Persian gardens, a museum, and a smaller gallery.

Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant before continuing on to the modest home of Ayatollah Khomeini in Jamaran.

Return to the hotel this afternoon.

Tonight, enjoy a reception followed by a dinner with Nazila Noebashari, owner of the Aaran Gallery. The Aaran Gallery is one of Tehran’s most important contemporary art galleries and Nazila Noebashari will meet you and talk more about contemporary art in Tehran.

Overnight: Espinas Hotel (B, L, D)

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 1**

**KASHAN**

Depart this morning for a three-hour drive to Kashan.

Stop along the way at the historical Garden of Fin, which was first planted during the Safavid period and kept alive with water from the nearby Sulaimanieh Spring. This beautiful garden was expanded by the Zand and Qajar monarchs, with many open pavilions added. A museum on site displays artifacts from nearby Teppe Sialk. Also, visit a fine example of a 19th-century merchant residence known as Taba-Tabai House. Admire its beautiful stucco dome and inlaid mirror work, with some of the best examples of existing “badgirs” (wind-catchers).

Once in Kashan, check in to your hotel, the Manouchehri House, where you will have lunch.

Next, visit Noushabad, a handmade underground city at a depth of 15 to 60 feet. The city, a masterpiece of ancient architecture, consists of many labyrinth corridors, rooms, and wells that can be reached from any location in the city without being seen.

End the day at the historic Kashan Bazaar, the center of trade in the city for almost 800 years. The Khan Amin al-Dowleh Timche, a caravanserai with a magnificent decorated dome, is a wonderful place to sit with a cup of tea and people watch. Be sure to purchase a bag of Kashani cookies from one of the many patisseries, the coconut macaroons (nargili) are absolutely delicious!

Overnight: Manouchehri House (B, L, D)

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 2**

**KASHAN / ISFAHAN**

This morning, visit the Tabatebei House, a traditional house built in the early 1880s and renowned for its mirror and stained glass work. Time the visit correctly and see the sun shining through the stained glass and reflecting like a painting on the floor. There are four courtyards at the house, one with a fountain pool and a model of a traditional house.

After lunch, drive about three hours to Isfahan, stopping along the way at the small village of Abyaneh. This is one of Iran’s oldest villages, located at the foot of Karkass Mountain and full of living traditions, red clay architectural styles, and interesting examples of human adaptation to nature.

Arrive in Isfahan and check into the Abbasi Hotel, a converted caravanserai. The large, double-storied building was originally constructed to house the students and professors of the college, but was later transformed into a wonderful hotel where guests can drink tea inside a garden courtyard.
with a full view of the Madrassa Chahar Bagh’s magnificent yellow and turquoise dome.

This evening, enjoy a Persian buffet dinner served in the hotel courtyard.

Overnight: Abbasi Hotel (B, L, D)

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 3
ISFAHAN

Begin your day exploring Isfahan, perhaps the most beautiful of all Iranian cities.

Walk to the Palace of Forty Columns, a charming pavilion used to receive dignitaries and ambassadors. Continue on to the immense Mayden-e Shah, or Royal Square. The square is the central focus of this fascinating city and never failed to inspire and awe European merchants and ambassadors to the Safavid court.

Enjoy lunch at the Bastani Restaurant, located at the heart of the bazaar. Enjoy additional free time exploring the bazaar before returning to the hotel mid-afternoon.

Dinner tonight is at a local restaurant.

Overnight: Abbasi Hotel (B, L, D)

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 4
ISFAHAN

Spend the morning admiring some of the five bridges crossing the, sadly dry, Zayendehrud River at Isfahan. Perhaps the most beautiful is the two-story Khaju Bridge, which was constructed by Shah Abbas II in about 1650. The second story is flanked by arcaded galleries leading to hexagonal pavilions. These tiled and painted rooms were known as the Prince’s Parlors and were reserved for the pleasure outings of Shah Abbas II and his court. The oldest bridge is the Shahrestan where, over massive stone piers dating from the Sassanid period, the Seljuks built pointed arches designed to allow for the rush of spring waters.

After seeing the Bridge of 33 Arches, drive to the Armenian quarter of Isfahan. This dates from the time of Shah Abbas I who set up this colony of Christians from the town of Jolfa and named it New Jolfa. There are fourteen churches here and you will view them on a walking tour beginning at the Bethlehem Church.

Enjoy a private guided tour this morning at Isfahan’s new Music Museum, which showcases more than 300 instruments from around Iran, many unchanged from their depictions in centuries-old paintings. The visit will end with an intimate performance, where traditional love songs and Persian poetry are played by modern masters.

Stop for lunch at the Hermes Café before continuing on foot to the Vank Cathedral. This was one of the first Armenian churches to be established in the Jolfa district after the Ottoman War of 1603-1605. Construction took over 50 years and consists of a domed sanctuary similar to a Persian mosque, but with the addition of a semi-octagonal apse and raised chancel usually seen in western churches. The interior is covered with gilded carvings and intricate paintings of Biblical stories.

Return to the hotel and enjoy dinner at Shahzrazd, a local restaurant within walking distance.

Overnight: Abbasi Hotel (B, L, D)

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 5
SHIRAZ

Early this morning, begin the five hour drive to Naqsh-e-Rustam, an ancient necropolis with elaborately carved tombs.

After a pleasant lunch visit Persepolis, the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenian Empire and one of the most spectacular archaeological sites remaining from the ancient world. The city was started by Darius I around the 6th century BCE with work carried on by Xerxes and Artaxerxes for another 200 years until the city’s destruction by Alexander the Great in 330 BCE. Examine the site’s major ruins, including the Gate of All Nations, the Hall of a Hundred Columns, the Gate House of Xerxes, and the Treasury. Persepolis
is truly the symbol of ancient Persia, if not modern Iran.

Enjoy dinner at the hotel this evening

Overnight: Zandiyeh Hotel, Homa Shiraz (B, L, D)

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6
SHIRAZ

This morning, visit the Eram Garden, built during the 19th century in a quadripartite Persian Paradise Garden structure. Continue to the Fars Museum. This octagonal pavilion was originally built by Karim Khan and was used for official reception.

Walk a short distance to the citadel, or Arg-e Karim Khan. In shape it resembles a medieval fortress. During the Zand dynasty it was used by Karim Khan as his living quarters and later, during the Qajar period, it was the governor’s seat. Today the citadel has been restored as a museum.

Stop at the Pink Mosque, or Nasir-ol-Molk Mosque, which is the oldest mosque in Shiraz and one of the most elegant mosques in southern Iran. Its foundations can be traced to the 9th century, although what is seen today largely dates from the Safavid rebuilding. The mosque gets its name from the beautiful pink colored tiles used for its interior design. Colored glass is also used extensively in its design. Remove your shoes and step into the building on the side where the sun shines through the colored glass.

Enjoy lunch at the Shaterabbas Restaurant, which serves superb Persian cuisine.

After lunch visit the tomb of Saadi. Born in 1213, he became one of the major Persian poets of the time, known both in Persian speaking countries and into the west. His works have been quoted as recently as 2009 by President Barack Obama.

End the day at the tomb of the celebrated poet Hafez, located in a small garden. The poet lived in Shiraz his entire life (1300-1389) and is well known to Iranians.

Dinner this evening is at the Haft Khan Restaurant.

Overnight: Zandiyeh Hotel, Homa Shiraz (B, L, D)

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 7
SHIRAZ / DUBAI

Enjoy the morning at the bazaar before transferring to the airport for your 1:45pm Air Arabia flight back to Sharjah in the UAE, just a short drive from Dubai.

Upon arrival in Dubai, check into your hotel where there will be a farewell dinner tonight.

Overnight: Raddison Blu Deira Creek Hotel (Executive Floor Rooms) (B, L, D)

MONDAY, OCTOBER 8
DEPART FOR U.S.

Depart for your international flight home.
ACCOMMODATIONS:

RADISSON BLU
DEIRA CREEK HOTEL
DUBAI

The Radisson Blu lies within the beautiful Deira Creek area of Dubai, a short walk to the bus and metro stations and only 7 kilometers from Dubai International Airport. The hotel, first built in 1975, is a classic fixture of Old Dubai. This area teems with shopping malls as well as traditional souks such as the Spice Market. Each of the 288 rooms and suites boasts a private balcony, coffee or tea provisions and other upscale amenities such as a complimentary cocktail hour and access to the Club Floor Lounge. It makes for a comfortable stay in Dubai, whether you’re visiting for leisure or business.

ESPINAS HOTEL
TEHRAN

Espinas Hotel is a grand family residence situated right in the heart of Tehran’s capital city center. The superb location of the hotel, surrounded by Tehran’s most spectacular attractions, and its accessibility to public transportation terminals makes it a very top choice to stay in Tehran for both business and pleasure.

To address your curiosity, it’s worth mentioning that The Espinas name was proudly borne from the highest mountain in the geographical area of Astara City-Gilan province and means settling down in highland area.

MANOUCHEHRI HOUSE
KASHAN

The Manouchehri House is a boutique hotel situated in Kashan’s historic residential neighborhood, a gold mine of traditional Persian architecture and craftsmanship. Nurtured by a passion for design and a profound respect for history, this private residence has been brought back to life with the highest standards of historic preservation and the latest in modern amenities.

ABBASI HOTEL
ISFAHAN

Here stands the oldest hotel on Chaharbagh Abbasi Avenue in Isfahan, Iran. An unrepeatable heritage in Isfahan architectural style from the glorious Safavid era. Abbasi Hotel, now a 300-year-old building in the heart of the city Isfahan, a museum referred to as "Nesf-e-Jahan" (meaning half of the world), a monument which as local and international tourists, historians, leading architects and professional tourists claim, carries the nickname "The world's most beautiful hotel". Here, the spirit living in the patterns and paintings, the interplay of colors and light, and the fluidity of beauty have submitted to the capital for the genuine art and drawn on the body of the building, as though being around between the doors and walls is sauntering along a walkway to the past and present, where the patterns come to life drawing the fervor of the beauty of the predecessors' art in the eyes of the beholder.

ZANDIYEH HOTEL
SHIRAZ

The Modern Zandiyeh Hotel being an Iranian Original Persian Hotel has been constructed at the heart of Shiraz City and in the vicinity of the historical and most invaluable complex of Zandiyeh – namely of Zand Dynasty – who chose Shiraz City their Capital about two hundred years ago. Built with a unique appearance and deeply inspired by Shiraz historical architecture, the hotel presents an eye-catching and most relaxing atmosphere for the guests. The sky towering brick-made citadel, the marvelous Zand Royal Palace (now the museum), the gorgeous mosque with its glittering azure blue minarets and the magnificent roofed Vakil Bazar extending from North to the South of the city are all just within your sight.