



HAMADĀN I. GEOGRAPHY

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Hamadān is one of the western provinces of Persia, situated to the southwest of Tehran between latitudes 33°59' and 35°48' north and longitudes 47°34' and 49°36' east. The city of Hamadān (the capital of the province) is located at 37°47' N and 48°30' E, at an altitude of 1,645 m on the eastern slope of the Alvand massif (q.v.; alt. 3,571 m; the Mount Orontes of the Classical sources). In the National Physical Plan (Ṭarḥ-e kālbodi-e melli), which divides the country into 10 regions, it is identified as a part of the central Zagros sub-region (Mo'assasa-ye 'āli-e pažuheš, p. 1). The province of Hamadān is bounded, clockwise, by the provinces of Zanjān and Qazvin to the north, the Markazi (Central) Province to the east, the province of Lorestān to the south, and the provinces of Kermānšāh and Kordestān to the west. According to the last national census (1996), Hamadān Province covers an area of 19,493 km², constituting about 1.2 percent of the country's total area, with a population of 1,672,957 (Markaz-e āmār-e Irān).

According to the national census of 1956, the present province of Hamadān used to be part of the province of Kermānšāhān, which was composed of the governorships (*farmān-dāri*) of Hamadān, Tuyserkān, Malāyer, and Nehāvand. The governorship of Hamadān had a total population of 695,283, of which 178,949 lived in eight cities (Zanjāni and Raḥmāni, p. 23). It was upgraded to the general governorship (*farmān-dāri-e koll*) of Hama-dān in 1966, but in the



following censuses it was promoted to the province (*ostān*) of Hamadān and its area underwent minor modifications: 20,172 km² in 1966 and 1976, 19,445 km² in 1986, and 19,493 km² in 1996 (Zanjāni and Raḥmāni, p. 6).

The internal division of this province within its present boundaries is shown in [Table 1](#) (Zanjāni et al., p. 7).

Mountains. Hamadān is a mountainous region, located on the eastern flanks of the Zagros range, which stretches from the northwest to the southeast of Persia. The highest point, Alvand Kuh (q.v.), reaches an altitude of 3,580 m above sea level. A mass of granite and diorite, Alvand Kuh extends across the southern and eastern parts of the city of Hamadān and is its most prominent landmark. There are at least 12 other peaks in the Alvand range of more than 3000 m altitude. The lowest point of the province, where the river Gāmāsiāb flows out of the governorship of Nahāvand, descends to the altitude of 1,420 m (Jaʿfari, pp. 77-79; Faraji, p. 1290; Fāṭemi, p. 2). An interesting feature of the Hamadān–Kermānšāh area as far as the Bušeher region is that “the folds are extremely regular, straight in form and parallel in strike, and relatively packed together” (Fisher, p. 17).

Table 2 illustrates the relative importance of various products in 1998.

Orchards account for about 6.1 percent of cultivable land. Annually about 2.2 to 2.6 million tons of agricultural products are produced in Hamadān, which is about 4.8 percent of the produce of the country as a whole (Fāṭemi, p. 124).

Industry. Hamadān has been known for its handicraft industry, including tanning (see [DABBĀGĪ](#)), carpet-weaving, ceramics (qq.v.), and knitting for a long time, and in 1998 some 1,443 production units were active in this field. Hamadān’s contemporary industrial activity extends from light to heavy industry, including the production of food (dairy products, canned fruits, sugar, soft drinks), textiles, plastics, household goods, mining, construction and metallurgy. During the period 1994-98, a total of 453 industrial operation permits were issued. In 1995, there were 266 large industrial units in operation in Hamadān, employing 8,620 people (Markaz-e āmār-e Irān, pp. 188, 191-92). Large units producing agricultural and construction machinery, aluminum products, and steel are already operational or under construction.

Hamadān is fairly rich in minerals, including granite (the most important source of it in the country) and ornamental stones, limestone, silica, lead, zinc,



and iron ore. In 1998, there were 142 active mines in Hamadān, including 52 sandstone, 36 silica, 19 ballas, 13 ornamental stones, and 14 limestone mines, employing 819 persons (Markaz-e āmār-e Irān, pp. 198-99).

There are 2,034 km of inter-city roads in Hamadān, of which 236 km are highways and 492 km are main roads; the rest are secondary roads. There are also 3,068 km of rural roads of which 2,507 are macadam (Markaz-e āmār-e Irān, pp. 227-28).

Languages spoken. Hamadān has been a crossroads of civilizations for millennia and a mosaic of cultures and dialects live there side by side. The main language spoken, especially in the provincial capital and its surroundings, is Persian, which is also the lingua franca in other regions. In the northern parts of the province, however, the language mostly spoken is Azeri Turkish, while in the northwest and west, near the provinces of Kurdistan and Kermānšāhān, people mostly speak Kurdish, while in some other cities such as Malāyer, Nehāvand, and Sāmen most people speak Lori and Lak (Faraji, p. 1296).

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