



RĀMHORMOZ

RĀMHORMOZ, town and sub-province in Khuzestan province in southwestern Iran.

The town is located at lat 31°16' N, long 49°36' E, elev. 587 feet, about 60 miles east of [Ahvāz](#), 70 miles northwest of [Behbahān](#), and 100 miles southeast of Šuštar. The sub-province (*šahrestān*) has one district (*baḡš*), and four sub-districts (*dehestān*): Abu'l-Fāres, Ḥuma-ye šarqi, Ḥuma-ye ġarbi, and Solṭānābād. Rāmhormoz is the only town in the sub-province and is bordered in the north by Bāġ-e Malek and Haftgel sub-provinces of Khuzestan province, in the east by Behbahān sub-province and Kohgiluya and Boir-Aḥmad province, in the west by Ahvāz sub-province, and in the south by Rāmšir sub-province.

Rāmhormoz is nestled between the Zagros chain to the northeast and alluvial plains to the west. The [Jarrāḥi](#) or Āb-e Kordestān river, originating in the Kohgiluya mountains, traverses the plains, 15 miles to the south of town, but the tributary of A'lā' is immediately outside of Rāmhormoz to the southeast. The Jarrāḥi, also referred to as Ṭāb or Mārūn in medieval sources, provided water to the town via a canal (Le Strange, p. 244). A narrow river, Gupāl, runs north of Rāmhormoz and disappears in the marshland. During the Sasanian era, a number of dams were built in the town's vicinity, but only two survive today. The newly erected Jara dam, 20 miles northeast of Rāmhormoz, has devoured one of the former Sasanian dams, as its relocation proved to be impossible. Today, it supplies the plains of Rāmhormoz with the necessary irrigation water.



The population of the town at the 2006 census was 66,038 (14,144 families). The total population of the *šahrestān* was 123,930 (25,718 families) in the same year. The sub-province comprises 203 settlements. (The town had 8,000 inhabitants in 1900, 7,000 in 1956, and only 9,000 in 1966; Bharier, p. 54.) The population of Rāmhormoz has been an amalgamation of various ethnic and linguistic groups from early on, with a mixture of Persians, Lors, Baḳtiāris, and Arabs (Field, p. 187). Moqaddasi noted that the heads of the people of Rāmhormoz were wide and flat; they did not speak clearly, and their language was incomprehensible (Moqaddasi, p. 371). This perceived incomprehensibility could have been attributed to the mixed Persian-Arabic dialect spoken by the locals (Bābā'i-Ḥā'eri, p. 48). In addition to Persians, the Arabs are the second largest population on the Rāmhormoz plains. The most significant Arab tribe in Khuzestan is the Ka'b confederacy, whose branch, the Āl Ḳamis have been continuous inhabitants on the plains around Rāmhormoz, and who numbered 27,000 in the 1930s (Field, p. 85, Razmārā, 1941, p. 30). Māne' in his book on Ahvāz lists as many as 18 other Arab tribes from the Rāmhormoz region.

The town and sub-province have a hot and arid climate. Summers are prolonged and intense with temperatures often reaching 50 degrees Celsius (Goodell, p. 252). Historians have observed that Rāmhormoz is the only location in the province where snowfalls occur and water may freeze in the winter (Moqaddasi, p. 368). Since medieval times, the fertile plains around Rāmhormoz have been known for the abundance of date palms and orchards, including grapes and walnut, almond, peach, and lemon trees (Moqaddasi, p. 367). In the 10th century the town was famous for silkworm rearing and for the locally made silk clothes destined for export (Eṣṭaḳri, p. 59; Ebn Ḥawqal, p. 254; Le Strange, p. 243). The fields around Rāmhormoz have traditionally sustained such annual crops as wheat, barley, clover, alfalfa, and lentils (Wright-Carter, p. 62). The handicrafts that people still pursue in the region are cloak weaving (*'abābāfi*), rug weaving (*jājimbāfi*), and tanning (*dabbāgi*) (Razmārā, 1951, p. 186). In the mid-1800s, lions abounded in the district of Rāmhormoz (Layard, p. 188). In early 2012, the first Arabian Oryx, from oryxes donated by the State of Qatar, was born in the Dima Protected Area, 6 mi west of Rāmhormoz.

The foundation of Rāmhormoz is attributed to [Hormozd I](#) (r. 272-73 CE; Moghaddam-Miri, p. 49). In [Sasanian](#) sources the town's full name was Rām-Ohrmazd-Ardašir "Ardašir's Peace of Ohrmazd" (Brunner, p. 753). The

meaning of the first component of the name was subject to speculation among historians. According to Yāqut, *Rām* means “wish, desire, aim, object” (Meynard, p. 254), while Emām-Šuštari (p. 202) proposed “town, settlement, place of living,” as did [Maḥmud Mirzā](#) Qajar (p. 83), the son of [Fath-‘Ali Shah](#), who was governor of [Kermanshah](#), Lorestān, and Khuzestan. The contracted forms *Rāmez* and *Rāmoz*, primarily used by the local population, are attested as early as the 10th century (Meynard, p. 254). By error, the *Ḥodud al-‘Ālam* separately discusses *Rāmhur* (i.e., *Rāmhuz*) and *Rām-Urdmezd* (*sic*) in its chapter on Khuzestan (*Ḥodud*, tr., pp. 25, 130).

Archeological findings have shown that the Rāmhormoz plains were settled as early as the Middle and Late Susiana periods of the 5th millennium BCE (Wright-Carter, p. 75). The continuous occupation of the area up to Islamic times, its location along the Royal Road of the [Achaemenids](#), and later the Islamic trade routes, clearly demonstrates the significance of the region. After its foundation, Rāmhormoz was itself connected to [Fārs](#), the [Persian Gulf](#) coast, and the central plateau by an easterly and northerly network of roads. By the 5th century CE, Rāmhormoz had become prominent enough to be made a suffragan diocese of *Bēth Huzāyē*, a metropolitan province of the Assyrian Church of the East. The metropolitans of *Bēth Huzāyē* sat at [Bēth Lāpāt](#) ([Gondēšāpur](#)) and had jurisdiction over the diocese of “*Ram-Ḥormizd*,” i.e., Rāmhormoz. The diocese was most active during the 6th century CE, when its bishops, *Mihršābur* and *Ḥnānīšō*’, were signatories of the acts of consecutive patriarchal synods, those of *Ezekiel* in 576, and of *Īšō’yahb I* in 585 (Chabot, pp. 368, 423). By the end of the 9th century CE, the diocese of Rāmhormoz seems to have lapsed. Several traditions recorded that in 277 [Mani](#) was executed and exposed on the town gates in Rāmhormoz ([Eṣṭakri](#), p. 59; [Ebn Ḥawqal](#), p. 254; *Ḥodud*, p. 130). This view was contested by other Arabic sources as well as modern scholarship (see [Mani](#)) that claim *Mani*’s imprisonment and death took place in *Bēlābād* (the Aramaic form of [Gondēšāpur](#)).

With the gradual Muslim conquest of Khuzestan in the 7th century, Rāmhormoz was the scene of a peace agreement between the local Sasanian satrap, *Hormozān*, and the commander of the Muslim army (Robinson, p. 25). The town was eventually conquered in 17/638 or 19/640 or 20/641 ([Ebn al-‘Atir](#), p. 1470). In 75/694, [Ḥajjāj b. Yusof](#), the Omayyad governor of Iraq, restored discipline among the troops of Kufa and Basra garrisoned at Rāmhormoz, who had left their camp without leave and were loitering in the neighboring towns ([Dietrich](#)). [Ya‘qub b. Layṭ](#), the founder of the [Saffarid](#) dynasty, used



Rāmhormoz as a stopover for his conquest of Lower Iraq in 261/875 (Bosworth, 1975, p. 119). His successor, ‘Amr b. Layṭ, sent a successful expedition in 266/880 to Rāmhormoz against the Kurdish chief of Fārs, Moḥammad b. ‘Obaydallāh b. Āzādmard, a former adherent of Ya‘qub’s, who was suspected of aiding the Zanj rebels. A century later, the *Ḥodud al-‘Ālam* described Rāmhormoz as “a large town, flourishing, prosperous, and very pleasant” (*Ḥodud*, p. 130). It was also a resort of merchants.

The most elaborate description of Rāmhormoz during the Buyid era is provided by Moqaddasi, who described it as a large capital with a fine Friday mosque, flourishing markets, and an abundance of agricultural products (Moqaddasi, p. 367). This seems to be an early mention of the *qayṣariya* (see [Bazar i. General](#)), the covered and gated market for elite traders that later became characteristic of many Islamic markets (Kennedy, p. 28). The *qayṣariya* in Rāmhormoz had been built by ‘Azod-al-Dawla, and in addition to being clean and elegant, it was “decorated, ornamented, paved, and covered” (Moqaddasi, p. 367). The gates of the markets were locked at night. According to Moqaddasi (p. 367), the town was so overrun by gnats that mosquito curtains were a necessity. During this period, Rāmhormoz was a major center of Mu‘tazilite learning with a splendid library built by Ebn Sawwār. Moqaddasi claims that the library was second only to that of Basra in the wealth of its collection (Barthold, p. 194). Rāmhormoz also had a recorded Buyid mint in the years 127-32/745-50 (Miles, pp. 369, 375). In the 14th century, based on Mostawfi’s account, Rāmhormoz was still a flourishing center, with grain, cotton, and sugar cane grown in its surrounding areas.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the Rāmhormoz plains were infested by marauding parties of Lors and Arabs (Layard, p. 278), and the local people changed allegiance regularly between Fārs and Khuzestan. The region was also intermittently under the control of the Arab Ka‘b confederacy (Floor, p. 287). In the early 20th century, Rāmhormoz district was under the jurisdiction of the Baḳtiāri khans (see [Baḳtiāri Tribe](#)), who made a yearly payment of 15,000 tomans to the Persian treasury at Šuštār and enjoyed the revenues from the town’s extensive trade network (Lorimer, pp. 1575-76).

Several traditions connect the birth of Salmān-e Fārsi (d. 653, the Persian companion of the Prophet) with Rāmhormoz (Levi Della Vida), and the local lore considers this assertion as a historical fact (Bābā’i-Ḥā’eri, p. 86). Ebn Ḳallād, a Mu‘tazilite theologian, is also said to have been born in Rāmhormoz (Bābā’i-Ḥā’eri, p. 106). It is more likely that he was born in Basra and spent a

considerable time of his scholarly activity in Rāmhormoz, where he died. The most celebrated person born in Rāmhormoz was Bozorg b. Šahriār, a Persian sea captain (*nāḳodā*) of the first half of the 10th century, and author of the *Ketāb ‘Ajā’eb al-Hend* “Book of the Marvels of India” (Fück).

The town and the sub-province are home to a number of historic sites. In Rāmhormoz, in a city park stands the alleged tomb of [Hormozd I](#). Next to it lies the tomb (*emāmzāda*) of Bibi Sitti, who is believed to be the daughter of Ḥasan al-‘Askari, the eleventh Imam of the Twelver Shi’a (Maḥmud Mirzā Qājār, p. 84). Two forts from the Qajar period, the Qal’a-ye Amir Mojāhed and the ‘Emārat-e Šamimi, are still extant. The latter used to be the seat of the city’s Baḳtiāri chiefs and at present houses an anthropological museum. In 1969, an extensive archeological survey was conducted on the Rāmhormoz plains to locate and excavate ancient settlements (Wright-Carter, p. 76-82). Altogether, 42 sites were identified. The most significant of these sites is Tepe Bormi from the Middle Elamite period, located to the south of town near Kima village. Fortresses from the Sasanian era include the Qal’a-ye Dā va Doḳtar, 2 mi north of Rāmhormoz on top of a rocky height, and Qal’a-ye Yazdegerd, 20 mi north of the town. Mt. Fire (locally known as Teškuh) is located to the northeast, close to Gonbad-e Lorān village. Hydrocarbon gases emitted from underground layers cause fire to burn on the side of the mountain around the clock. Near Māmātin village, 20 mi northeast of Rāmhormoz, is a natural liquid tar spring. Native myths hold that the spring is the blood of the dragon killed by [Esfandiār](#), the legendary Kayanid prince (see [Kayāniān](#)). Curzon also cites the well-known naphtha springs in the neighborhood of Rāmhormoz and Šuštar (Curzon, p. 527).

Rāmhormoz has in recent decades benefited from the expansion of the Khuzestan [oil industry](#), with the Haftgel oilfield to the north, and the [Āḡājāri](#) oilfield to the south. Currently, the town of Rāmhormoz incorporates five public parks, one hospital, one stadium, one [ḥosayniya](#), and a branch of the Islamic Azad University.

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