

THE CHURCH OF SAINT JOSEPH OF ARIMETHEA IN IRAN

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In the early 1600s, some 150,000

Armenians fled persecution from the Ottoman Empire to settle in Isfahan, Persia under the protection of Shah Abbas. There they created an extraordinary trading network that stretched from Amsterdam to Manila, becoming prosperous in the process. This enabled them to build extraordinary Armenian Apostolic Church cathedrals – Armenian Christianity being one of the oldest Christian denominations originating in the 1st century AD.

Here you see the Armenian Apostolic Church in Isfahan, built in 1606 and dedicated to Saint Joseph of Arimathea, the disciple who took Jesus' body off the Cross. The Armenian Quarter of Isfahan remains populated by thousands of Armenian Christians today who may freely practice their faith, albeit strictly within the confines of their neighborhood and never beyond. Nonetheless, it comes as a shock to see this in present-day Mullah Iran. (*Glimpses of Our Breathtaking World #262 photo ©Jack Wheeler*)

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