History
Iran at the Crossroad of Civilizations
- **Iran** has been inhabited by humans since *prehistoric* times.

- Ancient Iranian culture existed centuries before the earliest civilizations arose in nearby Mesopotamia.

- The written history of **Persia** (Iran) begins in about 3200 BC with the **Proto-Elamite** civilization, and followed by the **Elamites**.

- The arrival of the **Aryans** (*Indo-Iranians*), and the establishing of the **Median dynasty**, culminated in the first **Persian Empire**, the **Achaemenid Empire**.
Cyrus the Great founded the Persian Empire in 550 BC by conquering the Median Empire.
Cyrus the Great created the **Cyrus Cylinder**, considered to be the first declaration of human rights.

Discovered in **1879** in the Marduk temple of Babylon, and today is kept in the **British Museum**.
Cyrus' seminal ideas greatly influenced later human civilizations; as shown in a documentary movie clip named "In Search of Cyrus the Great".

Based on this documentary, Cyrus' principles of ruling - advocating "Love" rather than "Fear" - has influenced the current U.S. constitution.
Cyrus’ Mausoleum
(near Shiraz – Iran)
After Cyrus’ death in 530 BC, his son Cambyses ruled for eight years (530-522 BC) and continued his father's work of conquest, making significant gains in Egypt.

After Cambyses' death, Darius was declared king (ruled 522-486 BC). He was to be arguably the greatest of the ancient Persian rulers.
Achaemenid Empire
Darius started the building programme at Persepolis
Darius built a canal between the Nile and the Red Sea, a forerunner of the modern Suez Canal.

He improved the extensive road system, and it is during his reign that mention is first made of the Royal Road, a great highway stretching all the way from Susa to Sardis with posting stations at regular intervals.
Royal Road
The first credible claim for the development of a real postal system comes from Persia.
The best documented claim (Xenophon) attributes the invention to Cyrus the Great, while other writers credit his successor Darius I.
The Persian system worked on stations, where the message carrier would ride till the next post, where upon he would swap his horse with a fresh one, for maximum performance and delivery speed.
Herodotus described the system in this way: "It is said that as many days as there are in the whole journey, so many are the men and horses that stand along the road, each horse and man at the interval of a day’s journey; and these are stayed neither by snow nor rain nor heat nor darkness from accomplishing their appointed course with all speed."
Iran was in the heart of the Silk Road, with a length of more than 8000 km, connecting Persia to China.

It was significant not only for the development and flowering of the great civilizations of China, ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Persia, India and Rome, but also helped to lay the foundations of our modern world.
Silk Road
The Greco-Persian Wars were a series of conflicts between several Greek city-states and the Persian Empire that started about 500 BC and lasted until 448 BC.

There were two Persian invasions of the Greek mainland in 490 BC and in 480 BC.

The Acropolis of Athens was razed to the ground and burnt by Persians in 480 BC.
Acropolis of Athens
- **Athens** was defeated in Egypt around 448 BC and signed the **Peace of Callias** with **Persia**.

- The **Greeks** and the **Persians** continued to meddle in each other's affairs until Persia was conquered by **Alexander the Great**.

- **Alexander the Great**, conquered Persia in **333 BC** and in retaliation, razed to the ground and burnt **Persepolis**.
Alexander the Great Fighting Darius III
The fall of Achaemenid Empire was followed shortly by two more vast and unified Persian empires that shaped the pre-Islamic identity of Iran and Central Asia:

1. The Parthian dynasty (250 BC – 226 AD),

2. The Sassanid dynasty (226 AD – 650 AD).

These two dynasties defeated the Roman Empire at the height of its power on several occasions.
Sasanid Empire Boudaries
• Iran was conquered by Arab (Muslim) Army in 650 AD.
• Islam became the religion of most Iranians.
• Iran was ruled by Arab (Muslim) Caliphates from 650 to 934.
• Major Iranian uprisings finally brought down the Caliphates, but Islam remained in Iran.
Persian Language was revived by Ferdowsi (935 - 1020).

His masterpiece, the *Shāhnāma* (The Book of Kings), is the most popular and influential of the Iranian national epics.

The *Shāhnāma*, consists of the translation of old Pahlavi (Middle Persian) works.

It tells the history of old Persia before the Arab conquest of the region from 7000 years ago, all in poem.
Ferdowsi (935 AD – 1020 AD)

Persian Poet
Ferdowsi’s Mosoleum
Mashhad - Iran
- Tahirid dynasty (821-873)
- Saffarid dynasty (861-1003)
- Samanid dynasty (875-999)
- Ziyarid dynasty (928-1043)
- Buwayhid dynasty (934-1055)
- Ghaznavid Empire (963-1187)
- Seljukid Empire (1037-1187)
- Khwarezmid Empire (1077-1231)
Invasion of Iran by Genghis Khan (Mongol) Army in 1220

Iran was ruled by Mongol Ilkhanate from 1256 to 1353
- **Timurid Empire** was created by **Timur** (Tamerlane) in **1370** and lasted until **1506**.

- **Iran** was conquered by Timur’s Army in **1385**.
Timurid Dominion
Statue of Tamerlane (Timur) in Uzbekistan
- Iran was freed from foreign invaders by Safavid dynasty again.

- Safavid dynasty ruled Iran from 1501 to 1736.

- Iran reached its climax in Arts, Architecture, Science and Trade.
Shah Ismail I, the founder of Safavid Dynasty
The Battle of Chaldoran occurred in 1514 and ended with a decisive victory for the Ottoman Empire over the Safavids.

As a result the Ottomans gained control over the eastern half of Anatolia.

The Ottomans had a larger, better equipped army numbering 200,000, while the Iranians numbered some 50,000-80,000.

The Battle of Chaldoran demonstrated that firearms were a decisive factor in warfare.

The outcome at Chaldoran established the border between the two empires, which remains the border between Turkey and Iran today.
Map of Iran in 1808

Last Changes Before Today’s Status
- **Afsharid dynasty (1736-1802)**
  - India was conquered twice

- **Zand dynasty (1750–1794)**

- **Qajar dynasty (1781-1925)**
  - Major defeats in 2 wars against Russia and 1 war against Britain
  - Constitutional Revolution
Under the Treaty of Golestan in 1813, Iran recognized Russia's annexation of Georgia and the north Caucasus region.

In 1828, Iran signed the Treaty of Turkmanchay accepting Russian sovereignty over the entire area north of the Aras River (territory comprising Armenia and Republic of Azerbaijan).

By 1881, Russia had completed its conquest of present-day Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.
In 1856, Britain prevented Iran from reasserting control over Heart (Afghanistan), which was part of Iran in Safavid times but had been under non-Iranian rule since the mid-18th century.
Iran’s boundaries since 1881
Constitutional Revolution took place in January 1906.

In October 1906 an elected assembly convened and drew up a constitution.

It provided strict limitations on royal power, an elected parliament, or Majles, with wide powers to represent the people, and a government with a cabinet subject to confirmation by the Majles.
The constitution was signed on December 30, 1906.

The Constitutional Revolution marked the end of the medieval period in Iran.
Pahlavi dynasty (1925-1979)

- Last Iranian Monarchy.

- Despite her neutral stance during WWII, Iran was occupied by Allied Forces in 1941 to support Soviet Union against Nazi Germany’s invasion.

- Iran was declared The Bridge of Victory.
Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill in Tehran – November 1943
On March 15, 1951, the Iranian parliament voted to nationalize Iran's oil industry and seize control of the British-owned and operated Oil Company. The Iranian Prime Minister, Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh, enforced the Oil Nationalization Act in May 1951.
Mosadegh’s action encouraged Egypt to Nationalize The Suez Canal
Dr. Mossadegh’s government was overthrown by an American-British coup in August 1953.
Islamic Revolution, lead by Ayatolah Khomeini, ended the monarchy in 1979 and established Islamic Republic of Iran.
Iran was invaded by Iraq in 1980
Iraqi Advances and Chemical Attacks

Iran-Iraq War, 1980–1988
- Limit of Iraqi advance, 1980
- Limit of Iranian advance, 1985
- Iraqi chemical attack
Saddam Hussein: *Then* and *Now*. 
Some of the Major Iranian Contributors to Human Civilization in the History
Khwārizmī (780 AD – 850 AD)

Mathematics, Astronomy, Astrology and Geography.
Author of the book: *al-jabr wa-l-muqābala*.

The first book on the systematic solution of *linear* and *quadratic* equations.

He is considered to be the father of *algebra*.

The words *algorithm* stem from *Algoritmi*, the Latinization of his name.

His name is also the origin of the *Spanish* word *guarismo*, meaning *digit*. 
Razi (864 AD – 930 AD)

Medicine, Mathematics, Astronomy, Chemistry, Philosophy and Music.
well versed in the ancient Greek, Persian and Indian systems of medicine and other subjects.

Some of his works in medicine e.g. *Kitab al- Mansoori, Al-Hawi, Kitab al-Mulooki* and *Kitab al-Judari wa al-Hasabah* earned everlasting fame.

His book *Kitab al-Mansoori*, which was translated into Latin in the 15th century A.D., comprised ten volumes and dealt exhaustively with Greco-Arab medicine.

His book *Al-Hawi* was the largest medical encyclopaedia composed by then.

As a chemist, he was the first to produce sulfuric acid together with some other acids, and he also prepared alcohol by fermenting sweet products.
Farabi (870 AD – 950 AD)

Medicine, Mathematics, Philosophy and Music.
As a philosopher and Neo-Platonist, he wrote rich commentary on Aristotle's work.

He is also credited for categorizing logic into two separate groups, the first being "idea" and the second being "proof."

Farabi wrote books on sociology and a notable book on music titled *Kitab al-Musiqa* (The Book of Music).

He played and invented a varied number of musical instruments and his pure Arabian tone system is still used in Arab music.

Farabi is famous for his demonstration of the existence of void in physics.
Avicenna (980 AD – 1037 AD)

Medicine, Philosophy and Science.
He was the author of **450 books** on a wide range of subjects.

Many of his work concentrated on **philosophy** and **medicine**.

From the **12th to the 17th century** Ibn Sina (Avicenna) was the guide of medical study in **European universities**.

**George Sarton** (the Belgian-American historian of science) called Ibn Sina “The most famous scientist of Islam and one of the most famous of all races, places, and times”. 
Avicenna’s Mosoleum
Hamedan - Iran
Omar Khayyam  
(1048 AD – 1131 AD)

Persian poetry, Mathematics and Astronomy.
Khayyám very accurately (correct to 6 decimal places) measured the **length of the solar year** as 365.24219858156 days.

His system has **1 day error** in every 5,000 years while the **Gregorian Calendar** used today, has a **1 day error** in every 3,330 years.

He demonstrated that **earth revolves** on its axis. He also elaborated that **stars** are **stationary objects** in space. **Facts** which were discovered **centuries later** in Europe.

Khayyam invented **Khayyam-Pascal Triangle**, a very useful mathematical concept and tool.

Cornel Wilde & Debra Paget in Paramount’s “Omar Khayyam” (1957)
Khayyam’s Mosoleum
Neyshabour - Iran
Khayyam’s Mosoleum
Neyshabour - Iran
Iran
The Birthplace of Zoroastrian Religion
Atashkadeh (Fire Hose)  
Yazd - Iran
Jewish & Christian Communities in Iran
Esther & Mordekhai’s Tombs
Hamedan - Iran