

## Rasht

The capital of Gilan province

Rasht, the capital city of [Gilan province](#), is one of the most important cities of this region. This city is situated in a vast plain at a distance of 30 km from the Caspian Sea in the slopes of the northern Alborz Mountain Range. The climate of Rasht is humid and unstable. Dominant wind currents from the Caspian Sea blow northeast to southwest, and annual precipitation is relatively high.

The history of Rasht dates back to the pre-Islamic period i.e. the [Sassanid](#) era. The independent governors of this region were called "Gilanshah" before the Arab invasion. In the year 682 CE, after the conquest of Iran by Arabs, the name of Rasht was mentioned in historical documents for the first time.

In the [Safavid](#) era, especially in the reign of Shah Ismail, Gilan land was composed of two sections of "Biehpas" with the centrality of Rasht, and "Biehpish" with the centrality of Lahijan. During the reign of Shah Tahmaseb I, the governance of both parts was assigned to "Khan Ahmad Gilan". Finally, Shah Abbas I conquered Gilan.

In the year 1695 CE, Stephan Razin, a Russian sailor plundered the city. The army of Peter the Great conquered the city in 1722 CE. And they remained in the region till 1734 CE. The Russians again conquered this city in 1917 simultaneous with the Socialistic Revolution in Russia.

In 1901 due to outbreak of epidemic plague, many people lost their lives. In 1937, an expanded revolt happened in the region to get "road tax" from Russians, but the central government suppressed the movement.

The people of Rasht played a very important role in the Constitutional Revolution. Russian and British army as well as local rebels attacked Rasht City during the World War I (1914-1918). In 1920, Rasht became the arena of revolutionary movements again. When the Red Army conquered Baku in 1918, the navy of White Army took asylum in the Anzali Port, which was under control of British army. The



Municipality of Rasht and statue of "Mirza Kouchek Khan-e Jangali"



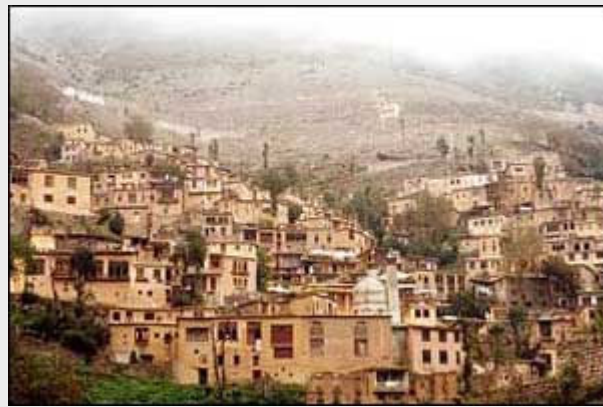
"Kolah Farangi" building

commander of the Red Navy chased them and conquered the Anzali Port and as the result the British Army retreated. This event encouraged revolutionaries of Gilan to establish an anti-British government under the leadership of "Mirza Kouчек Khan-e Jangali". British forces evacuated the city and went to Baghdad. Finally, Iranian army defeated the movement and a treaty was signed with Russia after which they evacuated the city.

Today, Rasht as the capital of province is the most important trade center between Caucasia, Russia, and Iran and holds considerable tourism facilities.

### **Village of Masouleh**

This thousand-year-old village resembles an anthropological and architectural museum, which is located 60 km southwest of Rasht and 25km west of Fooman in the western most part of Gilan Province. Even though Masouleh is close to the Caspian Sea, but it is 1,050 meters above sea level. The difference between the highest and lowest points in the village itself is 100 meters.



Village of Masouleh

The history of Masouleh dates back to 10th century CE and in past times the village was also known as "Maasalar" and "Khortab".

The architectural style of the homes in Masouleh is stair shaped and is remarkable. They are continuous and uninterrupted and have been built in the heart of the mountain. A very interesting point about the homes in Masouleh is that courtyards and roofs are basically meaningless and do not serve their traditional roles and instead serve as pedestrian areas for passersby just like a street would.

Masouleh is the only village in Iran, which forbids all motor vehicles from entering it. The yellow-clay is the predominant external facade of most of the structures in Masouleh, which serves for better visibility in fog. The 3000-meter long mountains surrounding Masouleh are under the cloud of fog very often. Masouleh has a population of almost 800.

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