

Safavid Dynasty

1501-1736 (official end in 1760)

Artistic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed and brilliantly colored Persian miniatures in Tabriz and Isfahan • Persian painters were instrumental in the Mughal painting style • Silk textiles • Elaborate Persian carpets became a national industry with drafted by professional artists • Isfahan- great royal square with two story bazaars, great mosques, government offices, soaring arches, and formal arches on three sides • Manuscript illustration- the Shahnameh epic was illustrated • Great mosques of colored textiles had elaborate beauty • Calligraphy- Verses of Qu'ran and Shahnameh • Poetry- new style known as Persian-Hindi style since the style was taken to India
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dominated early on by warrior aristocracies (Kizilbash) that helped Shah Ismail capture Tabriz • Kizilbash power declined at the time of Shah Abbas • Power shifted to new merchant class including ethnic Armenians, Georgians, and Indians as well as the nobility • Social Structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ King and royal class ○ Nobility- filled administrative posts ○ Rich merchant class ○ Artisans (city-dwellers) ○ Peasants • Women <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Not equal to men ○ Early Safavid women had considerable power and respect and could be patrons of art, architecture, and religious institutions ○ Early Safavid differed with other Islamic societies ○ Divorce could be caused by either the wife or husband ○ After death of Abbas the Great, women lost some rights
Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capitals: Tabriz- Qazvin- Isfahan • Centralized government • Shah made decisions with the consultation of his advisors at the capital (mostly nobility) • Wealthy merchant class had power (class included ethnic Armenians, Georgians, and Indians) • Diplomatic relationships with the West <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Two Englishmen, Robert Sherley and Anthony Sherley helped Abbas I to reorganize the Shah's soldiers into an officer-paid and well-trained standing army similar to a European model ○ Received emissaries and sent ambassadors to Europe including France, Britain, and the Netherlands

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Began as a peaceful Sufi religious order called the Safaviyeh that gained strength in the 13th and 14th centuries in the city of Ardabil ● In 1501, Safaviyeh under the fifteen-year-old Shah Ismail united with Kizilbash (militia from Azerbaijan and eastern Anatolia) to capture Tabriz and create the Safavid dynasty ● Shah Ismail declares Shia Islam the state religion to unite the country and counter the influence of the Sunni Ottomans ● Throughout the next decade until 1511, Shah Ismail united the Iranian cities controlled by local ● In 1511, Shah Ismail drove back the Ozbegs across the Oxus River and advanced into Iraq ● After the defeat of the Safavids at Chaldiran, the Ottomans encountered fierce resistance by moving into mainland Iran and eventually retreated from Iran by winter ● At the age of 16 in 1587, Shah Abbas the Great ended the influence of the Kizilbash and reorganized the Iranian army into a professional officer-based standing army with separate divisions including artillery, equipped with firearms. ● In 1597, Shah Abbas moved the Safavid capital to Isfahan and reconstructed the ancient city into a “paradise” ● In several wars with the Ottomans, Shah Abbas defeated the Ottomans and gained all of the lands that the Ottomans had captured in previous wars by 1622 ● In 1602, Shah Abbas drove back the Portuguese from Bahrain and the English navy in 1622 ● Shah Abbas gave rise to a new powerful merchant class by employing them at Isfahan ● At the empire’s zenith, the empire’s reach comprised of Iran, Iraq, Armenia, Azerbaijan Republic, Georgia, and parts of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan ● The frontiers of the empire were secured until the end of the Safavid dynasty
Intellectual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engineering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Domes- huge mosques that still are a mystery on how they did ○ City planning- squares, irrigation, sewage ○ Multistory buildings ○ Arches
Religious	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Major religion: Shia Islam ● Shah Ismail made Shia Islam ● Brought in religious leaders, gained power ● United the country under religious ideology ● Countered the influence of the Sunni Ottomans
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Trade was a major factor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Silk Road ran through the north part of the empire ○ Trade with Europe, especially England (English East India Company)

and the Netherlands (Dutch East India Company)

- Exports
 - Persian rugs
 - Silks
 - Textiles
- Imports
 - Spices
 - Metals
 - Coffee
 - Sugar
- Slavery- little or no slavery as a labor system
 - Mainly recruited among Georgian, Armenian and North Caucasian renegades
 - “Slaves” used in military and administration and one “slave” became the commander-in-chief of the Safavid army