





DRESS IN IRAN

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One wonders who exactly invented the tchador ? What was the 'designer' thinking of when he came up with this long black veil that floats in the wind with such refined elegance - and when did it first appear?
We'll try to understand why all Iranian men wear a moustache and how, little by little, Islamic dress became customary after the revolution.
President Ahmedinjad's dress style is more old-fashioned, indicating his desire to return to the revolutionary purity of the Khomeyni years. Dress restrictions are not just imposed on women, but men as well : they cannot wear short-sleaved shirts, baseball caps, or shorts.
While under the Shah, the full Islamic veil was forbidden, the obligation to wear it under the Revolution - paradoxically - has helped the emancipation of women from more traditional background by allowing them to venture out into the public space.
In Teheran, we meet members of the distinguished tribe of Khaskhai, ancient nomadic people from the Chiraz region who wear dress in colourful flower patterns and bonnets decorated with pearls. They are the only ones authorized by tradition and the Islamic Republic to dress as they wish.

We learn about the dress of the Mullahs, their robes and turbans whose colours and fabric vary according to the hierarchy of the Shiite clergy. And we meet Shadi Prand, a designer who came up with the idea of a special long coat for those evenings where things can go wrong, i.e. when you get caught by the Basij militia and could end up spending the night at the police station. The coat then functions as a coverlet in the cell and it has hidden interior pockets for lipstick, cigarettes, medication and a secret pocket for a cell phone.

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