

Rick Steves'
EUROPE
THROUGH THE BACK DOOR, INC.

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Dear Traveler,

We received a mountain of letters requesting our *Rick Steves' Iran* DVD. Thanks for sharing our TV special with your community.

The enclosed DVD includes the hour-long documentary program and two DVD extras: an interview with our Iranian minder/guide, and my hour-long slideshow about the experience of travel and filming there. This is the talk I've enjoyed giving around the country over the last few months. The enthusiasm of the crowds I've met, and the interest of many of those people to share this program with their groups, inspired me to offer our DVD at no profit for this purpose.

While the *Rick Steves' Iran* documentary is the main event, your group might also want to watch my lecture, which is designed to complement it.

I've also enclosed a 50-page journal of my experiences there (which is taken from my blog which you can still find at ricksteves.com) and list of discussion points. Each time I give this talk, I welcome any Iranian Americans in the crowd to share their thoughts (which has been very enlightening). Then I lead a short discussion covering the points listed on this sheet. I hope these ideas are helpful in getting the conversation started within your group.

Finally, I've included our 2009 newsletter/catalog. This explains all the work we do here at ETBD and announces the arrival of my new *Travel as a Political Act* book (page 63), which will be in bookstores in early May.

If you need any support to promote your screening of *Rick Steves' Iran* in your community, feel free to grab any verbiage or photos from our ricksteves.com website, which has plenty of descriptions and photos from Iran free for the taking.

Thanks and best wishes as you help our country better understand Iran.

Rick Steves

Rick Steves' Iran

Discussion Points

Feel free to draw from these as part of your post-viewing discussion.

1. Is it okay to visit a country at odds with the USA? What are the ethical issues?
2. What do you think were the Iranian government's motives in permitting Rick Steves and his crew to make this film? Was Rick being used?
3. Discuss how the news an Iranian reads or hears may distort that person's assumptions about Americans, and how news in America may distort our view of Iranians.
4. Iranians say they have traded away Western-style freedoms for a theocracy because of cultural security concerns. When has America traded away certain freedoms for security concerns, and has it been justified?
5. Parents everywhere make decisions or trade-offs to protect their children from harmful forces. Compare and contrast how this mix of love and fear exists for parents in the U.S. and Iran.
6. Conservative Iranians claim their dress codes and policies regarding women are based on respect. They believe that Western fashions and media exploit women's bodies for crass commercial gain, which is immoral. Is this valid?
7. Discuss examples of politicians in various countries who have used fear to shore-up their political base and suppress dissent. Has this happened in your own community?
8. Relate Sunni and Shiite to Protestant and Catholic.
9. Has the U.S. war in Iraq made Iran a stronger power? If so, how?
10. Discuss ways in which everyday people (who aren't politicians or journalists) can challenge Americans to better understand our world.
11. In what ways is Rick's Iran show naïve about the realities of international relations?
12. This program includes images and mentions of anti-American and anti-Israeli propaganda. Does this make you more sympathetic toward Israel, or less?
13. Discuss martyrs and heroes who die "for God and Country" in different cultures. How can people who believe this be on opposing sides in a war?
14. Rick Steves says "You should know someone before you bomb them. Sometimes you need to kill people with your military...but it should hurt." Do you agree?
15. Rick Steves says, "I don't believe in the 'innocent civilian'. Anyone who pays taxes is a combatant. Some times military action is justified. But every bullet that flies and every bomb that drops has my name on it." Are people accountable for their government?