

## The Iranian Visa application process @ Erzurum – Turkey

For all those overland travellers wondering about what to expect when applying for an Iranian **tourist visa** in Erzurum - Turkey; below you'll find a first hand experience of the process for a **Dutch citizen** in September 2006.

No guarantees or whatsoever that it will be like this for you. Make of it what you want – maybe it'll help you, maybe it doesn't.

### Visa application ingredients:

- At least 2 full weeks of your time in Erzurum or surroundings
- Accommodation costs, transport and food during 2 weeks.
- € 50,- Visa fee for a Dutch passport holders.
- A bank deposit receipt from the OYAK bank showing the € 50,- got to Iran
- A colour copy of the bank deposit note in case it gets lost somehow.
- A valid passport
- A colour copy of your passport (B/W might also do)
- 4 passport photo's – make it 6 just to be sure.
- Telephone numbers of the consulate (can be found inside the consulate)
- Patience, determination, the better part of yourself and a smile.

### The recipy :

- **Application day**
  - o Make it to the consulate on office hours 8:30 to 12:00 – 14:30 to 16:30
  - o Check-in with the guards in front of the consulate – be nice.
  - o Get inside – if no-one behind the counter – Press the bell
  - o Fill out the application form handed out to you.  
Be sure to remember the details you filled in – you need it later.
  - o Add the passport photo (maybe with headscarf for women)
  - o Add the colour copy of your passport
  - o Hand in the whole lot – but take your passport with you!
  - o Probably you'll be told to come back in 10 days or call in 7 days.
  - o Write down the telephone numbers listed on the wall in the waiting room
  - o Don't be surprised if you are still here after 2 full weeks or more.
- **Checking days**
  - o Call the consulate after 7 days to hear about your visa application
  - o Plan your actions accordingly
- **Deposit day**
  - o Return at day 10 in person – ask for your visa application
  - o Probably you might also be told your application is refused. Sorry.
  - o Or be told you need to make a deposit of € 50,- at the OYAK bank.
  - o You get the bank address and bank details on a small piece of paper.
  - o Go to this bank and get the deposit receipt for paying € 50,-
  - o Don't be surprised if you have to wait – it can be quite busy at this bank
  - o Make a copy of the deposit receipt in case it gets lost during the process.  
The bank deposit is anonymous – no name on the receipt – so be sure the consulate gets it. Your copy is just your prove you made the deposit.
- **Results day (can be done at deposit day)**
  - o Hand-in the original OYAK bank deposit note with your passport
  - o Don't be surprised if you are told to fill out the same form again on application day. Just do it – be nice – smile, write nicely.
  - o Fill in the form, yes again (remember what you wrote on application day!)
  - o Hand in the form and 2 passport photos and your passport. (Ring bell?)
  - o Wait at the consulate for a few and a few and a few. Be nice - smile.
  - o Maybe you'll have your visa! If not? sorry.

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### A few loose ends

- Your nationality is the principal parameter in the whole process. If in case you know your chances are slim – be sure you want to go through all the waiting anyway.
- The tourist visa is handed out with 3 months time to get into Iran and 30 days Iran time excluding a possible extension. It's single entry also.
- What you fill out on your visa application form is the only info there to judge whether you get your visa or not. Be sure what you write down where and make it somehow readable.
- You forgot to make a photocopy? There's an Internet café near with a copy machine.
- It might help when you've been to Iran before – make sure you write down each time. It can shorten the waiting time too. The consulate has a computer system to see if you've been to Iran before.
- Queue lines don't exist at the consulate – there are many different nationalities applying for a visa. Thinking it's your turn? Think again!
- Waiting is the thing you do at the consulate 99% of your time. Take a book, your tennis table or your VR goggles and gloves to pass time. Specially at results day where the Iranian visa is glued in your passport can take a long time. Yes it's handwritten also. No you can't leave the consulate because you won't get in again without a passport.
- On busy days your application forms can be very easily mixed up with others. Specially the deposit receipt from the Oyak bank can get lost in the jungle of papers. (Remember it's anonymous) Put your stuff into a transparent plastic foil so your stuff (form, picture, passport copy and receipt) stays together when you hand it in. No – you probably won't get the foil back, so don't use your favourite.
- In case you are build with a very short fuse – be prepared it'll suddenly blow somewhere in the visa process. It's your show at the consulate, saying you have a very bad case of La Tourette afterwards probably won't help getting your visa any faster.
- There are no toilets at the consulate – in case you feel your fresh Kebab wants out somehow – there is a medical clinic just next door and a pharmacy at the other side. There are no carpets at the consulate – so cleaning the floor is easy.
- Hey there is a brand new water tap since September 2006!

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### ➤ Where to stay in Erzurum?

- Go to the Tourist Information Centre in case you travel with a tent or camper car. Ask for a place to stay. Maybe you are allowed to park behind the Tourist Information Centre in case you have a camper car. Maybe you'll get to use their water and / or toilet also. At least you might be able to get a copy of the street map of Erzurum.
- Get yourself 17 Km east towards Dogubajazit to find a picknick place at a petrol station. Busy in the weekends. Cars can't enter the site.
- Get yourself to Özmar picknick / petrol station / camping / hotel just 2 Km's before Erzurum airport. There's water / electricity and toilets. Maybe there are showers too. Busy in the weekends. Cars and campers can enter the site. The airport has TTWinet WIFI access for approximately 6 YTL / hour. Be prepared to explain your reasons for being at the airport for the guard.
- There is a picknick park on the hillside on the way to Palandoken ski centre on the right side of the road. You might be able to pitch a tent here. Campers might not fit through the gate, cars do. Expect basic facilities.
- The ski resort has only Hotels. The road goes up steep – make sure you can handle steep roads – especially the descent part !!
- You can head for Dogubajazit and take a busride back for deposit and results day. The busride can take upto a whopping 6 hours because of road conditions, roadblocks / passport checks by army and police and rest stops. It's a real tight squeeze to fit deposit and results day in just one afternoon. The consulate can be crowded, the bank can be crowded and you may need time to find your way to the bank for the deposit. The ride back leaves Erzurum round 15:30 – so it's your lucky day if you make it back in one day with a visa.
- Head for Yusefeli or the Tortum lake. Do some rafting, fish eating or whatever.
- For about 0,5 YTL / hour you can spend your days using the Internet at the Metro Internet café just down the road from the Consulate towards the centre. Its on the left. The connection is fast, you get free tea and you can freely browse for other stories about the visa application process in Erzurum.
- Be nice – smile.