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## **The Blue Dome / The Royal Square of Esfahan in Iran**

This is The Royal Imam Square in Esfahan. It is a World Heritage site and was built by Shah Abbas I at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. He wished to create a Paradise on earth. The blue domed roof of the Imam Mosque facing the square is a distinctive symbol of Esfahan.

It is being refurbished. The tiling has been replaced every 50 years since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The plant and flower design represents the power of life and the vivid blue represents the river and the sky. The dome is being renovated stage by stage, block by block. The shade of blue changes slightly under different light.

The Imam Mosque is built mainly in blue; however, the other mosque in the square has an unusual yellow colour scheme. It is the Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque built exclusively for the Royal Family. The Imam Mosque was built for public use.

The blue dome is 28 metres in diameter and over 50 metres high. The renovation work is a completely manual process using techniques four centuries old. The Mosques stand at an angle towards the square. That's because while the square stretches North to South, the Mosques face Mecca in the Southwest.