

Dasht-e Lut

The largest desert areas of Afghanistan and Iran are situated in the Iranian Highlands. Dasht-e-Lut is the largest desert of Iran, 300 miles long and 200 miles wide. Southwest of it lay the Zagros Mountains that additionally contribute to its aridity. In the north it is adjoined by the second large Iranian desert, Dasht-e-Kavir. Due to these conditions, annual rainfall is less than 50 mm (with a potential evaporation of 5.000 mm). In summer, surface temperatures can rise over 70.7 degrees Celsius which makes it the hottest place on earth. On the southern borders of the two deserts lay a great number of oasis, which could develop because of Qanats. A qanat is a water-management system used to provide ground water from the mountains. They are constructed as a series of well-like vertical shafts. The technology was developed in ancient Iran and spread along the Silk Road across the ancient world as far as China. In the middle of the twentieth century, it is estimated that approximately 50,000 qanats were in use in Iran. Of these only 25,000 remain in use as of 1980.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qanat>

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