

## The Ottoman and Safavid Empires (A Comparison).

Beginning in the 1400's, The Ottomans built a huge empire in the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and North Africa. The Safavid Dynasty built a powerful empire in Persia. Along with the Mughal Empire in India, they were two of the three "Gunpowder Empires."



### Muslim traditions influenced both empires.

The Ottoman Sultan, Suleiman the Magnificent, strengthened the government and improved the justice system. Ottoman law was based on the Sharia. Government officials worked with religious leaders who interpreted the law. [Sharia, Sharia law or Islamic law is a set of religious principles which form part of the Islamic culture. The Arabic word sharia refers to the revealed law of God and originally meant "way" or "path"].

The Safavids created a strong government, strengthened the army, and formed alliances with European states. The Safavid leader Shah Abbas the Great restored the culture of Persia. He welcomed artists, poets, and scholars to his capital city Isfahan which is located in central Iran. His palace workshops produced beautiful porcelains, clothes, and rugs.

**The major problem was that the Ottomans and the Safavids were bitter enemies!  
The Ottomans were Sunni Muslims. The Safavids were Shiite Muslims.**

Both empires had religious tolerance and accepted people of other religions. During sometime periods, people of religions other than Islam were taxed but political changes made by different rulers either ignored or abolished these taxes.

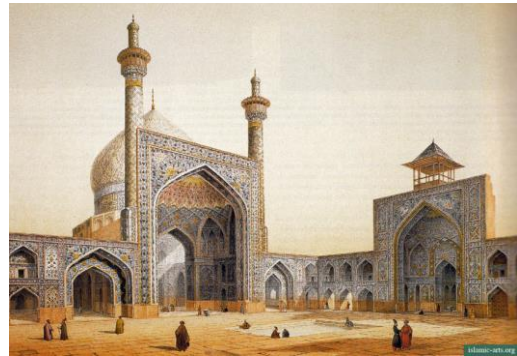
Both the Ottomans and the Safavids had Golden Ages. Ottoman painters used Persian styles to create beautiful manuscripts. Architects built decorative mosques.

## A Comparison between the Ottoman and Safavid Empires

Ottoman Empire	Similarities	Safavid Empire
Empire extends from Hungary to Arabia and across North Africa	Members of the Gunpowder Empire	Empire controls the area of Iran
Suleiman the Magnificent rules from 1520 to 1566 C.E.	Other religious beliefs tolerated within the empires	Shah Abbas the Great rules from 1588 to 1629 C.E.
Sunni Muslims	Use Persian and Arab ideas in literature	Shiite Muslims
Capital city is Istanbul, previously Constantinople	Empires fight each other in religious wars	Isfahan, the capital, is the center of arts and learning
Sultan improves the legal system		Alliances are made with European nations



Ottoman Mosque in Istanbul



Safavid Mosque in Isfahan



Persian Art – Women Dancing