

# Nowruz

**The Persian New Year**

# Nowruz started in Persia/Iran.



# Today it is also celebrated in:

- Afghanistan
- Azerbaijan
- Central Asian countries (Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan)
- Kurdish minority in Turkey, Iraq, and Syria
- Some parts of India and Pakistan



It is a *secular* (not religious) holiday, but its origins and symbols are in the ancient Zoroastrian religion.



*Good thoughts, good words, good deeds.*

# Basics

- Dates back at least 2,500 years (to the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE)
- Begins at the exact moment of the vernal equinox – 1<sup>st</sup> day of spring, when day and night are the exact same length
- Celebrations last for 2 weeks

# Preparations (in Iran):

- Spring cleaning
- Growing “greenery” for the festival table
- The Wednesday before: People jump over bonfires saying something equivalent to “out with the yellow [sickly pallor of winter], in with the red [healthy skin color of spring/summer].”



# Growing Greenery (You can spread lentils on a plate and grow them!)





# Iranian Nowruz table

- Greenery
- “Haft sin” – 7 things that start with the letter “s” in Persian (such as garlic, apples, etc.)
- Book (Quran for religious Muslims, Persian poetry for non-religious ones)
- Goldfish or dyed eggs to represent new life
- Mirror to reflect good fortune
- Flowers

# Iranian Nowruz table



# In Iran:

- Children get off of school for 2 weeks.
- Children get presents.
- People visit relatives and party. (But unlike the US New Year's celebrations, these are family parties. Often, because it's a Muslim country, there is no drinking, just lots of eating!!)

# On the last day, Sizdah Bedar (13<sup>th</sup> day):

- People picnic outdoors.
- They take the greenery with them to throw into running water (stream, river) to take away bad luck.
- Unmarried girls and boys tie a knot in the grass first to wish to find a partner in the next year.





# Some short (5 minutes or less) celebration videos of Nowruz:

- Silk Road Dance Company:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uq40CGTB1eg>
- Nowruz in Iran:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GSIjMxxBKO8>
- Nowruz in Azerbaijan:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GSIjMxxBKO8>



# Some short celebration videos of Nowruz (continued):

- Nowruz in Iraqi Kurdistan:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KGsCx1nx9-Q> and  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YyakC8mJKEM>
- Nowruz in Uzbekistan:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pnoxzy0D\\_M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pnoxzy0D_M)

# Some short celebration videos of Nowruz (continued):

- Nowruz in Tajikistan:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-KF-Cmpz1-c>

- Nowruz in Afghanistan:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HRqKBDYHL3Y>