Norouz
Persian New Year

* Nowrouz, Nowrooz, Norouz, Norooz or No Ruz, new day or New Year as the Iranians call it, is a celebration of spring Equinox.
* It has been celebrated by all the major cultures of ancient Mesopotamia. Sumerians, 3000BC, Babylonians 2000 BC, the ancient kingdom of Elam in Southern Persia 2000BC, Akaddians all have been celebrating it in one form or another.
What we have today as Norouz with its' uniquely Iranian characteristics has been celebrated for at least 3000 years and is deeply rooted in the traditions of Zoroastrian belief system.

This was the religion of Ancient Persia before. It is known as the mother religion in the area. The familiar concepts of Hell, Heaven, Resurrection, coming of the Messiah, individual and last judgment were for the first time incorporated into this belief system. They still exist in Judo-Christian and Islamic traditions.

Today the festival of Norouz is celebrated in Iran, Iraq, India, Afghanistan, Tajikestan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan.
The last Wednesday of the year is celebrated by the Iranian people as *Chahar Shanbe Soori*, when people go into the streets and alleys, make fires, and jump over them while singing the traditional song *Zardie man az tou Sorkhie tou az man* (literally: "My yellowness from you, your redness from me; ", but figuratively: My paleness (pain, sickness) to you, your strength (health) to me.

Serving different kinds of pastry and nuts known as *Ajile Moshkel Gosha* is the *Chahar Shanbe Soori* way of giving thanks for the previous year's health and happiness, while exchanging any remaining paleness and evil for the warmth and vibrancy of the fire.
The traditional herald of the Norouz season is called Haji Pirooz, or Hadji Firuz. He symbolizes the rebirth of the Sumerian god of sacrifice, Domuzi, who was killed at the end of each year and reborn at the beginning of the New Year.

Haji Firooz disguise themselves with makeup and wear brightly colored outfits of satin. Wearing black make up and a red costume, Haji Pirooz sings and dances and parade as a carnival through the streets with tambourines, kettledrums, and trumpets spreading good cheer and the news of the coming New Year Norouz.
Spring Cleaning

* The custom of welcoming the New Year by making a general house cleaning is also practiced. "Spring clean" is observed days before Norouz with Iranians cleaning every part of the house, dusting furniture and washing carpets.

* The practice complements the new season and freshness that comes along with spring and New Year.

* The old Iranian tradition of making houses very clean and spice and span for the New Year celebration is rooted in the belief that the soul of departed family members will come and visit the homes of loved ones on Norouz eve.
The practice of preparing New Year sprouts from wheat for the New Year’s eve "Haft Seen" is an ancient one.

As far as tradition goes, generation to generation of Iranian families used to put up 12 mud-brick columns around their royal courtyards, each planted with a particular kind of seed.

The seeds planted were usually wheat, barley, rice, bean, broad bean, lentil, millet, chick pea, sesame, and maize.
A major tradition of Norouz is the setting of the *Haft Seen* (هفت سين) - the seven 'S's, seven items starting with letter S or "seen" (س) in Persian Alphabet), which are seven specific items on a table symbolically corresponding to the seven creations and the seven holy immortals protecting them.

Today they are changed and modified but some have kept their symbolism.

Every family attempts to set as beautiful a *Haft Seen* table as they can, as it is not only of special spiritual meaning to them, but also is noticed by visitors to their house during Norouzi visitations and is a reflection of their good taste.
Haftseen

- **sabzeh** – wheat, barley or lentil sprouts growing in a dish (symbolising rebirth)
- **samanu** - a sweet pudding made from wheat germ (symbolising affluence)
- **senjed** - the dried fruit of the jujube tree (love)
- **seer** - garlic (medicine)
- **seeb** - apples, (beauty and health)
- **somaq** - sumac berries (the colour of the sunrise)
- **serkeh** - vinegar (age and patience)
- **sonbol** - the fragrant hyacinth flower (the coming of spring)
- **sekkeh** - coins (prosperity and wealth)
Haftseen

Other items on the table may include:

* pastries
* lit candies (enlightenment and happiness)
* a mirror
* Painted eggs, perhaps one for each member of the family (fertility)
* a bowl with two goldfish (life, and the sign of Pisces which the sun is leaving)
* a bowl of water with an orange in it (the earth floating in space)
* rose water for its magical cleansing powers
* the national colours, for a patriotic touch
* a holy book (e.g., the Qur’an, Kitab-I-Agdas, Bible, Torah or the Avesta) or a poetry book (almost always either the Shahnama or of Hafez)
The Arrival of New Year

* When the clock strikes New Year all the members of the family in their clean and new outfits gather around the Norouz table and Haftseen. The family begins the New Year with a prayer for health, happiness and prosperity, usually along these lines: "O Reformer of hearts and minds, Director of day and night and Transformer of conditions, change ours to the best in accordance with Your will."

* After the initial celebration to welcome the New Year, the members of the family hug and kiss each other, eat the bounties prepared for the New Year and wish each other the best. Then the oldest member of the family (usually the father) presents the Eidi (New Year’s gift) to younger members. The Eidi usually consists of new and unused paper money that have been put between the pages of the Holy Book.

* Visiting relatives during Norouz is among other customs widely practiced.
On the 13th day of New Year called Sizdeh bedar, everyone goes to picnic (It is considered unlucky to stay indoors on 13th day). You throw the Sabzeh (wheat or lentil seeds you grew for haft-sin table) in running water, to remove the bad luck from your home of the previous year. It is common to eat a special noodle soup for Sizdeh bedar.

An interesting ritual performed at the end of the picnic day is to throw away the Sabzeefrom the Norooz Haft Seen table. The sabzee is supposed to have collected all the sickness, pain and ill fate hiding on the path of the family throughout the coming year! Touching someone else’s sabzee on this thirteenth day or bringing it home is, therefore, not a good idea and may result in inviting their pain and hardship to oneself.

Another meaningful ritual performed with the dumping of the sabzee is that young single women tie the sabzee leaves prior to discarding it, symbolizing the wish to be tied in a marriage by the Seezdah Bedar of the following year!
Happy Norouz

We wish the blessing of the new cycle of life upon all.

Iranian American Lawyers Association

All Adam's race are members of one frame;
Since all, at first, from the same essence came.
When by hard fortune one limb is oppressed,
The other members lose their wonted rest:
If thou feel'st not for others' misery,
A son of Adam is no name for thee.

(1207 - 1291) Sheikh Muslihu'd-Din, known as Sadi, was descended from Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet Mohammed. His father apparently died when he was a boy.

Although Sadi was born and died in Shiraz, Persia (Iran), during his life he traveled extensively. He is said to have traveled for thirty years throughout the Islamic world. Iran has filled the centuries with some of the world's finest poets, but Iranians consider Sadi to be one of the greatest.
Credits

* Mehanam.com
* Payvand.com
* cultureofiran.com
* answers.com
* en.wikipedia.org

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