

## **Persian New Year - No Ruz**

*No Ruz* (literally, "new day") is the first day of the new year in traditional Persian culture. It is the biggest celebration of the year. In modern times, Iranians celebrate *No Ruz* for 13 days; many people from Afghanistan celebrate for only one day. It begins at the exact moment of the vernal equinox, the first day of spring.

*No Ruz* is a time of great joy and a celebration of life. Traditionally, people prepare for the new year by thoroughly cleaning their homes and making or buying new clothes. A special cover is spread on a table or a carpet in each home, and it is set with the *haft-sin*, seven dishes which begin with the letter *sin* (s). The traditional dishes are *sib* (apple), *sabze* (green sprouts), *serkeh* (vinegar), *samanu* (a pudding made out of wheat), *senjed* (a special kind of berry), *somaq* (sumac berries), and *seer* (garlic). Other items, for example coins representing wealth and traditional books representing wisdom, are also placed on the cloth.

A few hours before the equinox, family and friends gather around the *haft-sin* to sing songs and recite poetry and verses. Exactly at the moment of the equinox, the oldest person present stands up and gives out sweets, pastries, coins, and hugs. The days of the festival are spent visiting members of the family. Gifts and sweets are exchanged, and special foods are prepared.

On the thirteenth day, *sizdeh bedar*, everyone goes outdoors and celebrates. This is often celebrated with a picnic in the park.

The traditional greeting is: "*No Ruz Mobarak*"! (Happy New Year)!

*No Ruz* is an excellent time to reach out to your Persian neighbors. Some ideas for outreach are:

1. Research local Persian Churches in your area (see list of churches on [www.persianwo.org](http://www.persianwo.org)). Contact the church and ask how you can be involved with their Persian New Year outreach.
2. The Persian New Year Parades in New York City or in San Jose, CA are other outreach opportunities (Search on "Persian New Year Parade" )
3. For Persian Christian resources, please contact Persian World Outreach: [pwo1998@gmail.com](mailto:pwo1998@gmail.com).