

Happy Norouz

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Norouz, or the Persian New Year's Day, is a national feast, dating back to no less than 2500 years. It echoes Iranians' insight on the globe as they consider the rebirth of the nature after a cold season as the start of a new year.

In every home from time immemorial, people arrange on a table seven small dishes of nature's symbols, like fruits, wheat sprouts, together with the Holy Qur'an, a mirror, a few coins and several painted eggs. The arrangements form what is called Haft-Seen, which means seven S's, because names of the seven dishes begin with S in Persian.

The symbolic dishes are:

1-*Senjed*, the sweet, dry fruit of the lotus tree portraying love and happiness.

2-*Sabzeh*, or sprouts, usually wheat or lentil representing rebirth.

3-*Samanu*, a pudding like food in which wheat sprouts are transformed and given new life as a sweet after a lengthy and sophisticated cooking process representing prosperity.

4-*Seer*, or garlic, representing medicine and health.

5-*Sib*, or apple is standing for health and beauty.

6-*Serkeh*, or vinegar, representing age and patience.

7-*Sumac*, ground Sumac berries is the colour of the sunrise, symbolizing the victory of good over evil.

Goldfish is also an indispensable part of the Haft-Seen. They are said to represent the unexpected favours to be received in the coming year.

They are also symbol of Life. Traditionally, they are set free in rivers or ponds when the holiday period ends.

Norouz is also an occasion for all Iranians to visit each other. Every year in Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kurdistan, and some parts of Turkey, people celebrate Norouz as the beginning of the New Year.

The beginning of a spring has always been a great occasion for Iranians with Mother Nature rising up in a green robe of colourful flowers.

Happy New Year!