



PERSIAN NEW YEAR, OR NOWRUZ, CELEBRATION OF SPRING AND RENEWAL TO BE HELD AT SEATTLE CITY HALL ON MARCH 17

SEATTLE'S THIRD ANNUAL NOWRUZ MARKS A HOLIDAY OBSERVED BY MILLIONS WORLDWIDE

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EVENT DETAILS:

When: Sunday, Mar. 17, 1-5 PM
Where: Seattle City Hall
Who: Free, Open to all (including children), no ticket needed
Website: seattleisfahan.org/nowruz-2019/

Seattle, WA – [Seattle-Isfahan Sister City Advocacy \(SISCA\)](#) today announced the third annual [Nowruz in Seattle](#) event at City Hall, honoring the ancient Persian New Year holiday. A new fixture in the Seattle-area Spring calendar since 2017, Nowruz at City Hall has drawn about 1500 area residents each year across diverse cultures. All are invited to join this free, family-friendly celebration on Sunday, March 17, 1-5 pm, in Seattle City Hall.

Cathia Geller, SISCA Board President shared “SISCA was born out of a desire to elevate our community, and to create a shared space where the community can feel a sense of pride and belonging.”

People will learn about ancient Persian culture and traditions through displays and folklore musical and dance performances, and meet and mingle with Iranian-Americans who contribute to the fabric of the local economy and society. This year's celebration has been expanded to include:

- A two-month-long art gallery exhibit showcasing a collection of works in varied media by local Iranian-American artists in the Marie Focke Gallery at City Hall.
- Two program sessions to meet increased capacity,
- A folklore-themed photobooth to pose for “Pictures from Iran!”
- Two food trucks that will be available throughout the event.

Elected officials including **Lieutenant Governor Cyrus Habib**, the highest ranking Iranian-American in public office and Washington State **Attorney General Bob Ferguson** as well as speakers from across the Iranian-American diaspora will share how diversity binds us, and makes us stronger as a community.

“Thank you to the Seattle-Isfahan Sister City Advocacy (SISCA) for hosting this celebration. Events like this draw positive attention to the profound and continuing impact of Persian culture across the globe, while also promoting an environment of understanding and acceptance. It makes me proud to see so many people of so many backgrounds embrace Nowruz and its celebration of renewal and community. It is in that spirit that I say, Nowruz Mobarak to you all! “ – Lieutenant Governor Cyrus Habib

“Iranian-Americans contribute greatly to our state, and they deserve our respect and protection,” said Washington State Attorney General Bob Ferguson. “It is a pleasure to join this community and ring in this ancient New Year which is a reflection of the diversity that enriches our state.”

“We will continue to expand our partnerships throughout the Seattle area and hope to change hearts and minds along the way,” said Cathia Geller, SISCA Board President.

Dignitaries from city, county, and state governments will also participate in the program. Please see appendix for a complete list.

New Experiences

Several new features have been added to expand and enhance the offerings this year: To safely accommodate the crowds and enable more people to enjoy the speakers and performances in the main auditorium, we have split the program into two almost identical sessions with a half hour intermission, on a first come, first served basis (handstamps will be issued to room capacity); we have added an extra folklore-themed photobooth to pose for “pictures from Iran!”; and two ethnic food trucks available throughout the event, on the 4th Avenue side of City Hall; and through the Office of Arts & Culture, we have secured a two-month-long art gallery exhibit in the Marie Focke Gallery on L2 inside City Hall that will showcase a collection of works in varied media by local Iranian-American artists, starting March 7th and premiering at the event.

What Else to Expect

- Two 1.5-hour sessions of programming on the main stage
- Haftseen Table and Iranian handicrafts
- Meet and greet with Iranian-American artists from our “Bridging Cultures with Art” Gallery Exhibit,
- Local Iranian-American non-profits
- Community organizations like the Seattle Police Department, and the University of Washington.
- Iran Information and Travel booth, slideshows and photobooks
- Childrens’ Nowruz arts and crafts and face painting
- Two photo booths
- Live calligraphy demonstrations

About Seattle-Isfahan Sister City Advocacy

We are citizen volunteers – Iranian-Americans and allies – from the greater Seattle area who seek to reverse decades of hostility between the United States and Iranian governments by developing people-to-people relationships between our two countries. The goal of the [Seattle-Isfahan Sister City Advocacy \(SISCA\)](#) is to build a community in Seattle to support and incubate nonpolitical, people- to-people collaborations with Isfahan, Iran. SISCA is a not-for-profit 501(c) (3) organization. Donations to SISCA are tax deductible and may be mailed to Seattle Isfahan Sister City Advocacy, PO Box 757, Woodinville WA 98072

SISCA Events

- Annual partnership with Tom Douglas and chefs in Iran - Chefs Without Borders dinners
- Partnership with the Seattle Symphony – A reception for the visiting Iranian-American Harpsichordist, Mahan Esfahani
- Annual Nowruz Celebrations at City Hall
- Annual participation in the summer Iranian Festival, led by IACA

About Nowruz

Nowruz is an ancient tradition that promotes friendship, caring, respect, renewal and perseverance. Traditionally, Nowruz begins at the moment of the Vernal Equinox and then, continues for 13 days. It is a joyful and long celebration that is rooted in peace and a love of nature. A celebration recognized by the United Nations as an “Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity”, Nowruz transcends borders and has persevered throughout the millennia (3000+ yrs.) and is celebrated as a national new year by 11 countries and observed by 300M people.

UN Resolution recognizing Nowruz

International Nowruz Day was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution [A/RES/64/253](#) of 2010, at the initiative of several countries that share this holiday (Afghanistan, Albania, Azerbaijan, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey and Turkmenistan). Inscribed in 2009 on the [Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity](#) as a cultural tradition observed by numerous peoples, Nowruz is an ancestral festivity marking the first day of spring and the renewal of nature. It promotes values of peace and solidarity between generations and within families as well as reconciliation and neighborliness, thus contributing to cultural diversity and friendship among peoples and different communities.

PARTICIPANTS (to see a full list with bios, go [here](#))

Speakers

Washington Lieutenant Governor Cyrus Habib
Washington State Attorney General Bob Ferguson
Washington State Solicitor General Noah Purcell
Seattle Police Chief Carmen Best

King County Council Member Joe McDermott
Seattle City Council Member Lisa Herbold
Seattle City Council Member Lorena Gonzalez
Seattle City Council Member Mike O'Brien
City of Seattle International Affairs Director Stacey Jehlik
Dr. Fariba Alamdari - Vice President and Founder of Boeing Global Learning Institute
Ali Ghambari – Founder, Cherry Street Coffee shops and IACA (Iranian-American Community Alliance)
Shakhida Ismailov – Board President of Seattle-Tashkent Sister City Association

Performers

Elham Hakimi Lawson & Karoun Dance Ensemble
Seattle Persian School Choir
Uzbek Mahala Seattle & Seattle-Tashkent Sister City Association
Seattle Iranian Choir
Elahi Family Musicians
Payam Khastkhodaei, Taraneh & Arshia Ashari

Artists & Authors

Farshad Alamdari – artist
Saman Shojaei – artist
Farshad Mahramnia – artist
Mehdi Ghanbeigy – artist
Dr. Khodi Kiavani – author
Reza Abbasi – calligrapher

Organizations

Seattle Isfahan Sister Cities Advocacy - SISCA (host)
UW Near Eastern Languages & Civilization (NELC)
Seattle-Tashkent Sister City Association
Columbia Bank
Team Moghaddas Realty
Alefa Group/Radio Iranshahr
Seattle Police Department
King County Elections
The Child Foundation
Caravan-Serai Tours
Prelude-a-Bliss
Yummy 8 Food Truck
Tabassum Food Truck