

Iranian Student Association (ISA)

Iranian Student Association is an Iranian cultural student organization founded in 1996 at the Pennsylvania State University. According to its constitution, its purpose is to educate the Penn State community about Iranian culture and traditions. It also tries to bring the Iranian students on campus together to provide them with an opportunity to interact with each other in a friendly environment. ISA is a cultural organization, and it is not associated with any religious or political group.

The majority of the Iranian students at Penn State are graduate students. There are around thirty active members in the association and the Iranian community in State College is estimated to be close to one hundred.

Throughout the years, ISA has been active in celebrating Iranian traditions. The major cultural event is celebrating the beginning of the Persian year in the spring where we have many non Iranian guests which gives us the opportunity to introduce our culture and traditions. ISA cordially invites you to participate in this year celebrations. For more information, please refer to inside pages of this brochure or visit the ISA homepage at www.clubs.psu.edu/up/iranian

Finally, the ISA members would like to share the following poem by Saadi, the ancient famous popular Iranian poet, which is inscribed on the entrance of United Nations' Hall of Nations.

بنی آدم اعضای یک پیکند
که در آفرینش ز یک گوهرند
چو عضوی به درد آورد روزگار
دگر عضوها را نماند قرار

*"Of one Essence is the human race
those has creation put the base
one Limb impacted is sufficient
for all others to feel the Mace"*

-Saadi (1184-1283)



Achaemenid Dynasty soldier- Apadana (550-330

BCE)



IRAN:

Iran (i.e. the land of Aryans) is located in Middle East, Asia. Her neighbors are Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkmenistan, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkey, and Iraq.

- **Caspian sea** in the north and **Persian Gulf** in the south.
- Mountain ranges in west, north, and northwest. **Mount Damavand** is the highest peak (18386 ft or 5604 m).
- Subtropical climate along the Caspian coast in the north.
- Arid or semiarid in central and eastern parts.



Demography

- Iran is the 18th largest country in the world with a very young population. About two thirds of the 70 million residents are under thirty years of age.
- The capital of Iran is **Tehran**, a cosmopolitan city with population of more than 11 million.
- Tehran is located at the foot of the **Alborz** mountain range which offers several hiking trails for the citizens. There are also several ski resorts within a few hours drive from Tehran which are very popular during winter.

- The official language is **Persian** or Farsi. It is written from right to left. The "Pennsylvania State University " in Farsi is:

“پنسیلوانیا استیت یونورسیتی”

- Religion: Shi'a Muslim (89%), Sunni Muslim (9%), and Christians, Jewish, Zoroastrians, and other (2%).
- Literacy rate is about 82%.
- There is a nationwide held university entrance exam once every year. It is a multiple choice exam and is very competitive. The acceptance rate is about 10%. About 60% of the accepted students are women.
- Some of the most prestigious universities in Iran are: University of **Tehran**, **Sharif** University of Technology, **Amirkabir** University, **Shiraz** University, and University of **Isfahan**.
- The Internet has become enormously popular among the Iranian youth. Iran is now the world's fourth largest country of bloggers.



Iranian New Year (Norouz)

The **Norouz** celebration is an ancient national Iranian custom. The name comes from Avestan meaning "new day" or "daylight". Norouz, the first day of spring, is the beginning of new Persian year and has been celebrated for at least 3,000 years. Iranian celebrates New Year by Setting the “Haft sin” (**Norouz** table that includes seven specific items starting with the letter `S` in the Persian alphabet. Each item symbolizes a meaning like wisdom, love, prosperity, etc.) and sitting around it at the turn of the year, wearing new garments, presenting Eidi (gifts of crisp paper money) to children. Another important activity of the New Year is to visit relatives and friends. Today, all Iranians around the world celebrate this day through several traditions of the most important feast of the Iranians.

The Iranian Student Association would like to invite you for the coming *Norouz party in March*. Come to the party to enjoy the Persian cuisine and dance to live Iranian music.

