



Photo from <http://www.oliverthring.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Fesenjan.jpg>

Meals:

- **Breakfast:** or *sobhāneh* is a small morning meal that commonly consists of tea, flat bread, butter, cheese, and a variety of jams. Lamb and soup are also popular dishes.
- **Lunch:** or *naahaar* is a medium to large meal that centers on a mixture of beans, meat, herbs, dairy products, and vegetables.
- **Dinner:** or *shaam* is a medium meal that contains many of the same components as the lunch meal, and is sometimes indistinguishable from naahaar because many meals require hours to cook.
- **Snacking:** *doogh*, a popular yogurt drink in Iran, is commonly consumed during the day between meals.

Frequently Used Foods:

- **Fruits and Vegetables:** date, fig, apricot, peach, cherry, apple, plum, pear, pomegranate, grape, cucumber, eggplant, garlic, spinach, green bean, courgette, tomato, carrot, cabbage
- **Protein:** lamb, chicken, fish, nuts, beef, potato

- **Spices:** saffron, cinnamon, parsley, nutmeg, salt, pepper, tumeric, cardamom, clove, umin, ginger, coriander, sesame
- **Oils/Misc:** Sunflower oil, sesame oil, rice, grape leaves

Ten Regional Favorite Dishes With Links to Interesting Recipes:

- **Luleh Kabob:** [[recipe](#)]
- **Fesenjan:** [[recipe](#)]
- **Ash-e-jow:** [[recipe](#)]
- **Nan-e-Barbari:** [[recipe](#)]
- **Persian Polo Chicken:** [[recipe](#)]
- **Gundi:** [[recipe](#)]
- **Borek:** [[recipe](#)]
- **Koofteh Tabrizi:** [[recipe](#)]
- **Shirini Keshmeshi:** [[recipe](#)]
- **Walnut Chicken:** [[recipe](#)]

Religion: Slightly more than 98% of the Iranian population identify as Muslim, predominately Shi'a.

National Holidays and Dietary Requirements:

- Because Iran is overwhelmingly Muslim, pork is not consumed throughout the country.
- **Nowruz-** (Mid-March) commonly known as the Iranian or Persian New Year and is the most important national holiday in Iran. The herald of Nowruz, known as Haiji Firuz, sings and dances through the streets spreading cheer to the people and proclaiming good fortune for the year to come. [additional info](#)
- **Islamic Republic Day-** celebrated on April 1st throughout the country, this holiday is used to commemorate the day when Iran became a republic. Because this is an official non-working holiday, the Islamic Republic Day gives citizens a chance to meet up with family and friends. [additional info](#)

- **Ramadan**- The ninth month of the Islamic calendar is a month of fasting for Muslims. Iranians who observe this holiday are prohibited from eating, drinking, and smoking between dawn and sunset.
- **Arba'een**- commemorates the martyrdom of Hussein bin Ali, the grandson of Muhammad. Every year, millions of people flock to the city of Karbala in Iraq, the site of the martyrdom. This holiday, at least in Iran, has been used as a political protest. [additional info](#)

Etiquette: Iranian dining etiquette is relatively conservative. When eating, it is customary to try a little bit of everything that is served, and food should only be eaten with the right hand. Although many meals include utensils, they are limited to only forks and spoons.

Food History: Iran has a rich and complex history in regards to its cuisine, and this can be attributed to its geographic location. Nestled between the Mediterranean, the Indian subcontinent, the Caucasus, and Central Asia, Iranian cuisine has benefitted greatly from Indian (rice, cumin, cinnamon, etc.) and Mediterranean (lamb, grape leaves, parsley) influence.

Additional information and acknowledgements:

http://www.cultureofiran.com/persian_cuisine.html

<http://www.manoushcuisine.com/iranian-cuisine-history/>

<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/iran-country-profile.html>