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The Persian Square: 101 Things To Know About Iranian-Americans

Iran Davar Ardalan

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The Persian Square, is a multi-touch story tablet on the Iranian-American immigrant experience. “Iranian Americans, so long stuck in the shadows of America’s immigrant story, emerge in The Persian Square in vibrant color,” says Dr. Firouz Naderi, Director of Solar System Exploration at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

The Persian Square offers a vivid portrait of Iranian Americans at this moment, exploring the early intersections between the two countries' citizens, and the unexpected places where American and Iranian tradition have embraced one another.

Until fairly recently, Iranian Americans have been one of the country's quietest minorities. Their presence has animated great cities like Los Angeles and their traditions – from the transcendent poetry of Rumi, to aromatic kabobs to the Persian New Year celebration of the vernal equinox – have seeped into mainstream American experience. But even a decade ago, Iranian Americans' civic voice was a whisper, and their coming of age story as immigrants to America a tale told in living rooms rather than documentaries and coffee table books.

All that is gradually changing today, with multiple generations of Iranian Americans becoming highly visible players at the forefront of virtually every field in America today. NPR Senior Producer, Iran Davar Ardalan's storytelling draws on her grandparents' first meeting in New York in an intimate but historically grounded telling of how America and Iran came together both in her life, and in the world. The result is a deeply personal portrait of her community, whose confidence and accomplishments grows by the day.

Ardalan encourages the public to also share their personal stories living between Iran and America for possible inclusion in upcoming volumes. Share stories in 300 words or less via this email story@thepersiansquare.org and follow @PersianSquare and #PersianSquare on Twitter and Facebook.

PRAISE FOR THE PERSIAN SQUARE:

"’The Persian Square’ is a valuable series for the scholar and the casual wanderer, embracing what Iran has meant to the West, and what our traditions have meant to some of its most notable people. Simply put, this book is a treat. Many people will never go to Iran. Explore here.”
Jacki Lyden, Host of The Seams for NPR

“I can’t lie and will not tarof: ‘Persian Square’ is the best thing to happen to our ancient people since Andre Agassi grew out his mane. Someday, they will carve Mrs. Ardalan’s face into some great structure in Persepolis. For now, she’ll have to settle for my invaluable praise. Now, pass the tadig.”
Roben Farzad, Host of public radio’s Full Disclosure

“Persian Square is a wonderful collection of facts -- and I'm an expert on facts. But this book isn't only for Persian-Americans; we live in a world that requires understanding and tolerance, and Iran Davar Ardalan has given us a beautiful way to learn about a culture that is a mystery to many Americans. These stories of art,

science, history, and journalism can introduce us to Iranian life, and the many links to multimedia resources make it easy to expand our knowledge."
Kee Malesky, former NPR Librarian and author of All Facts Considered and Learn Something New Every Day

"Part family narrative, part encyclopedia, part travelogue, always fascinating, The Persian Square is a wonderful guide to anyone wanting to get beneath the surface of the relationship between the US and Iran."
Mike Shuster, roving foreign correspondent who traveled numerous times to Iran for NPR

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