

## SIZDAH BEDAR

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Iranians have a tradition of spending the day outdoors on the 13th of month Farvardin. Sizdah Bedar (sizdah means thirteen) which in English translates to "getting rid of thirteen". From the ancient times, Iranian peoples have enjoyed this day, although it is also the day that marks the end of the Norooz celebrations.

The first 12 days of the year are very important, because they symbolise order in the world and in the lives of people. The 13th day marks the beginning of the return to ordinary daily life.

It is customary on this day, for families to pack a picnic and go to a park or the countryside. It is believed that joy and laughter clean the mind from all evil thoughts, and a picnic is usually a festive, happy event.

Sizdah-Bedar is also believed to be a special day to ask for rain. In ancient Iran, every day had its own name, and belonged to a different angel. The 13th of Farvardin belonged to the angel of rain, Tir. This angel is depicted as a horse. Sizdah-Bedar is also a day for competitive games. Games involving horses were often chosen as a victory of a horse represented, the angle of rain.

A ritual performed at the end of the picnic day is to throw away the Sabzeh from the Norooz Haft Seen table. The sabzeh is supposed to have collected all the sickness, pain and ill fate hiding on the path of the family throughout the coming year! Touching someone else's sabzeh on this thirteenth day or bringing it home is, therefore, not a good idea and may result in inviting their pain and hardship to oneself.

Another tradition on the 13th, is the knotting of blades of grass by unmarried girls in the hope of finding a husband. The knotting of the grass represents the bondage of a man and a woman.