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Toronto

Celebrating Iranian history | Tirgan Festival 2008

Posted by [Geraldine Anderson](#), July 23, 2008 12:24 AM | [Permalink](#)

The ancient festival of **TIRGAN** has been mostly lost through the centuries, but Toronto brought it back to life with colours, culture and cuisine for the second Persian cultural festival.

Tirgan is a four day event held at the [Harbourfront Centre](#), featured theatre, film, dance, music, visual art, and cuisine from Iran. The [legend of Tigran](#) tells the story of two long standing enemies -- Iran and Turan -- who decide upon peace, by settling their borders. The most celebrated archer in the Iranian army, [Arash](#), shot his arrow into the skies. When it finally landed upon the banks of Jihun, the Iran boarder expanded much farther than before, which provided much cause for celebration for its people.

[Mehrad Arainnejad](#), the CEO of the **Tirgan** festival said, "There is so much value in the old civilization, and we need our intellectuals and artists to expose it to the masses."



The first festival, held in March 2006 celebrated NOWRUZ, the Iranian New Year, and the first day of Spring. Last year's event catered to about 5,000 people, and 22,000 people showed up. So this time around the organizers decided to hold the cultural celebration outdoors, little later in the year, to be able to cater to more people and throw the celebration on a larger scale. They expected 100,000 people.

In the mosaic that is Toronto, the organizers of the festival recognize the importance of promoting their culture. As Toronto is continuously shaping its definition of culture, Iran participates in the dialogue.



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Little Mosque on the Prairie
Wednesdays at 8:00 PM on **CBC**

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Photographs by Ryan Dias



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