

## Nature Day

Sizdah-Bedar is the name of the thirteenth day in Farvardin, which is also the final day of the Nowrooz holidays in Iran.

### Before you listen

Match the words with the definitions.

ritual	to love, respect, and admire
to worship	something that is given generously
to unleash	a prolonged dry period
bounty	to restore friendly relations between
drought	ceremonial
sprout	to release
to persist	to continue in an opinion or action
to reconcile	a young shoot (as from a seed or root)

### Transcript

Nature Day. In Persian, it's called Sizdah-Bedar.

Sizdah-Bedar is the name of the thirteenth day in Farvardin, which is also the final day of the Nowrooz holidays in Iran. In this lesson, you will learn about the holiday's previous association with misfortune and the number 13, but also about how it's celebrated today as a time to reconcile with nature.

Now, before we get into more detail, do you know the answer to this question: Where does the belief that Nature Day is an unlucky day come from? If you don't already know, you'll find out a bit later. Keep listening.

Since ancient times, spending Nature Day outside has been commonplace among Iranians. Most families go to the park, in Persian called paark, or to the bank of a river. There, they set a piece of cloth on the ground, have dinner and tea, and enjoy the beauty of the nature around them. Sometimes, they spend their day doing fun activities like playing music and exercising. In the past, ritual prayers used to be held worshipping Tishtar, the god of rain to end drought and pray for rain in the new year, people would go to the desert, the plains, a river, or a spring and wish for spring to unleash its natural bounty. They would also get Sabzeh, which are the sprouts of wheat, barley, and other crops, and place them on the bank of a river or other body of flowing water as a gift to the god of rain. To this day people still leave their Sabzeh in the water on Nature Day as part of this tradition.

Another common and popular tradition on Sizdah-Bedar is tying knots in the grass. Mostly young girls, and sometimes boys, tie knots in the grass they find outside. This act symbolizes their desire for good fortune and their hopes to be married soon. The origins of this practice trace back to an old Iranian tradition in which the children of a king named Kiumars based their marriage contract on tying a knot in grass for the first time.

Now it's time to answer our quiz question: Where does the belief that Nature Day is an unlucky day come from? It is said that long ago a disastrous earthquake, or zelzeleh, occurred on Nature Day, destroying many homes and villages. The memory of this disaster has persisted through the generations, marking Nature Day as an unlucky holiday.

### **After you listen**

Inform a friend about this Persian tradition and the history behind it. Also, you can add any other customs related to this day? As always, try to include three new words that you have learned from the lesson to consolidate them.

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