

Edinburgh Iranian Festival 2019

Omar Khayyam may have famously wanted just 'a loaf of bread, a flask of wine, a book of verse – and thou' but Persian culture – one of the oldest in the world – has always had more to offer than its fabulous food and classical poetry.

Iran has a rich traditional heritage in music, art, crafts, cuisine and literature – and today's Iran is also home to an abundance of vibrant contemporary talent, with its internationally acclaimed cinema, resurgent art scene and dynamic fashion and design industry.



There are over 6,000 Iranians living in Scotland and The Edinburgh Iranian Festival (1-8 March), a celebration of traditional and modern Iranian culture, invites you to find out more about their lives.

There is everything from a cookery demonstration to a photography exhibition, a fashion show, theatre, dance, a drumming workshop and an Iranian Film Season. You can find out how to dress in 17th century Isfahan ('The Shah's Wardrobe'), have a free tour of the National Museum's collection of Baluch embroideries and Turkmen jewellery and visit an Iranian Craft Bazaar.



An Iranian Bagpipe Workshop? Yes bagpipes – the Iranian version is called *ney-anban*, and you can join a free taster session, then hear more about these beautiful instruments from Moshen Sharifian, an internationally acclaimed musician and founder member of the Lian Band, whose mission is to preserve

and promote the music of Bushehr province (Southern Iran) and find innovative ways to give new life to the music while respecting its traditional framework. Lian Band will be playing in a free Global Bagpipes Concert at the National Museum of Scotland, which will also feature the Stockbridge Pipe Band and Scottish and Iranian dancers.



The short story is a particular feature of Persian literature, and now some of Iran's most exciting literary voices have come together in a new collection, 'The Book of Tehran'. Published by Comma Press in partnership with Visiting Arts, these stories (translated from Persian into English) offer an insight into real city life in modern day Iran. Scotland-based writer and theatre-maker Nazli Tabatabai-Khatambakhsh will talk about the anthology, and read some of the stories from it, when the book is launched at Lighthouse Bookshop, West Nicolson Street, on 1 March 2019. (Free tickets from Eventbrite.) To mark the festival, Lighthouse has also put together a special collection of books on Iran, its history and its culture – call into the shop and have a browse.



Iranian cinema has won over 300 international awards in the past ten years, and for the festival the Filmhouse will show nine feature films and a Short Film Showcase, and host *In Conversation* sessions with directors, critics, distributors and academics. Narratives dealing with mental health, social deprivation, war, love...and saffron... will explore the complexities of forging and maintaining relationships in Iranian society, both past and present. (Tickets from the Filmhouse.)



The Edinburgh Iranian Festival runs 1-8 March 2019. More details can be found at www.ediranfest.co.uk