

## SOME USEFUL PHRASES IN FARSI

سلام.  
[sæ'lb:m]

/Salām./

Hello.

اسم شما چیست؟  
[es mē'jo'mb: tʃist]

/esm-e shomā chist/

What is your name?

حالتون چگونه؟  
[hā'le'tu:n tʃe'tore]

/hāletūn chetore/

How are you doing?

من خوبم ممنون، شما چگونه؟  
[mæn xū: bæm mæm'nu:n, jo'mb: tʃe'torid]

/man khūbam mamnun, shomā chetorid/

I'm fine. And you?

شما اهل کجا هستید؟  
[jo'mb: 'æh.le ko'dʒo: hæ'stid]

/shomā ahle kojā hastid/

Where are you from?

من از ایندیانا هستم.  
[mæn æz'indi'nb hæ'stæm]

/man az Indīānā hastam/

I'm from Indiana.

خانه تون قشنگه.  
[xu:næ tu:n 'ʃæfæn'ge]

/khūna-tūn ghashange/

You have a beautiful home.

دستشویی کجاست؟  
[dæstʃu'ji. ko'dʒo:st]

/dast-shuyi kojāst/

Where is the bathroom?

خیلی ممنون.  
[xi'li mæm'nu:n]

/khili mamnūn/

You have a beautiful home.

خداحافظ.  
[xo'db: hɒ:'fez]

/khodā hāfez/

Good bye.

## FIVE REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD LEARN MORE ABOUT PERSIANS AND THEIR LANGUAGE

1. Persian languages are spoken natively by 110 million people worldwide. The Iranian variety, also known as Farsi, is spoken by 60 million people in Western and Central Asia, as well as the Middle East, with the highest concentrations of native speakers in Iran. Thus Farsi is also known as Iranian Persian.
2. Farsi (Iranian Persian) is a member of the Southwestern branch of the Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European language Family, and shares many structural similarities to Tajiki (Tajiki Persian) and is mutually intelligible with Dari (Afghani Persian).
3. If you overhear people speaking Farsi, but feel like you are listening to a French foreign film, don't worry your ears are not playing tricks on you. Due to a long historical relationship with France, Iranian Persian actually uses a lot of French loan words (such as 'merci' and 'chauffeur'). In fact, for many years, French was a second language in Iran!
4. While many know that Persian is spoken in Iran, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan, did you also know it was the official language of the Supreme Court in India for 200 years? (But now it is English.)
5. If you have read works by famous 13th century poet and theologian Rumi, those poems were originally written in Persian.

## ABOUT US

The Center for Languages of the Central Asian Region (CeLCAR) at Indiana University develops materials for learning and teaching a wide variety of Central Asian languages.

For more information, go to [www.iub.edu/~celcar](http://www.iub.edu/~celcar).



718 Eigenmann Hall, 1900 East 10th Street,  
Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47406  
Phone: (812) 856-1230 Fax: (812) 856-1206  
E-mail : [celcar@indiana.edu](mailto:celcar@indiana.edu)  
Web site: <http://www.indiana.edu/~celcar>

# FARSI



Center for Languages of the  
Central Asian Region (CeLCAR)



## WHO ARE THE PERSIANS AND WHERE DO THEY LIVE?

Persians are an Iranian ethnic group living in Western and Central Asia. The Iranian ethnic group is one of the most ancient people of the region, and therefore its people and culture

greatly influenced the language and culture of the area. Persian is spoken by 60 million people, primarily in Iran, which means “land of the Aryan’s.” However, if one includes other varieties of Persian, then that number nearly doubles to 110 million speakers, mostly in Western and Central Asia. Farsi Persian is an official language of Iran, and Persian varieties are official languages in Afghanistan (Dari) and Tajikistan (Tajiki).

Iran shares land borders with Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkey, and Iraq, while having coastal land on the Persian Gulf and Caspian Sea.

## WHAT KIND OF LANGUAGE IS FARSI?

Persian, also called Farsi, is part of the Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European language family. More specifically, Persian is part of the Southwestern branch of Indo-Iranian languages.

Language experts further divide Persian into three main varieties: Farsi (spoken in Iran), Dari, (spoken in Afghanistan), and Tajiki (spoken in Tajikistan). Other

languages in the Southwestern Iranian branch include Larestani, Kumzari, and Luri, which are all languages native to Iran.

While Farsi, Dari, and Tajiki are all closely related to each other, most language experts will agree that only Farsi and Dari are mutually intelligible to most native speakers.

Even though Farsi and Dari are mutually intelligible, there are still some marked differences in pronunciation (for example Dari is considered more conservative in maintaining vowel distinctions than Farsi). Further, some grammatical differences (such as the use of auxiliary verbs in certain tenses), and lexical differences exist (because the three languages have been heavily influenced by the languages of their surrounding neighbors).

However, all three, Farsi, Dari, and Tajiki, do share some main linguistic features, some of these include: SOV word order, agglutination, no grammatical gender, and null-subject.

## WHAT ALPHABET IS USED TO WRITE FARSI?

Farsi, like Dari, is written using a Perso-Arabic script, also known as the Shikasta Nasta‘līq style of Arabic script.

Like Arabic, this alphabet is written right to left, uses diacritics, and letters can each have up to four potential forms (initial, medial, final, and isolated); however, the Perso-Arabic alphabet includes additional letters not in the Arabic alphabet to represent Persian sounds.

## WHAT IS PERSIAN CULTURE LIKE?

Like other Persian cultures, Iranian Persians are mostly Muslims. However, unlike Dari and Tajiki speakers who are largely Sunni Muslims, most Persian speakers living in Iran are Shi’ite Muslims. Shi’ite is the smaller of the two factions of Islam, making up about

10% of the overall Muslim population. They are found mostly in Iran, Iraq, and Yemen. And like most Islamic cultures, Iranian Persians are a family and community oriented society that follow traditional elderhood and patriarchal organizational structures.

Because of their extensively ancient history, it should be no surprise that Persians are well known for their contributions to the arts, including architecture, literature, music, and applied arts. However, few would argue against the statement that they are best known for their Persian carpets that have been elaborately woven as a part of their culture for practical and decorative use for two thousand years. Most Persian carpets are made from wool or cotton and feature specific Persian designs that have been passed down through centuries of generations.

Iranian cuisine is similar to other varieties of Persian cuisine and uses a lot of rice, beef, vegetables, and fresh spices. Perhaps the most well-known dish is kebobs, speared meat marinated in spices and roasted then served over rice.

