

Iranian Researchers Develop Anti-Fire Coatings



TEHRAN -- Iranian researchers have achieved the formulation of a solution and anti-fire coatings that can contain the fire in one spot for two hours.

"We supplied coatings for construction and industrial steel structures that help in delaying fire and steel collapse in case of fire," said Mahmoud Torabinejad, the managing director of the Ateen Naqsh Jahan Fire Control Company.

"Steel loses its hardness at a temperature of 400 to 600 degrees Celsius, and by applying fireproof coatings on metal structures, these coatings turn into foam against heat, and this foam at a higher temperature of 220°C releases a harmless cooling gas that

delays the instability of metal structures," he added.

Noting that all formulations of this company's fireproof coatings are water-based and the product contains minerals like mica, silica, calcium carbonate and acrylics, Torabinejad added that the product has received special attention in Britain.

"We have received many orders from foreign countries like Canada, Australia and Russia," he said.

In August, Iranian researchers at a knowledge-based company at the Pardis Science and Technology Park near Tehran designed and built a system based on WATER MIST which is used to control the fire at oil and gas wells and petrochemical refineries.

'Women's Qur'anic Movement' Resumes Operation

TEHRAN -- A new chapter of activities for women has begun in Iran under the title of "Women's Qur'anic Movement", an official said.

Nafiseh Habibi, head of the Qur'anic affairs department of the Dar-ol-Quran Karim Organization, said the organization has put a special focus on the issue of Qur'anic activities of women given the Leader of the Islamic Revolution's emphasis on the important status and role of family in materialization of Islamic civilization.

She said the Women Qur'anic Campaign has been officially launched as a continuation of the activities of a women group



founded three years ago.

According to the official, it was necessary that after a decline in Qur'anic interactions of women

due to the coronavirus pandemic, these interactions should be revived and developed.

A steering committee of the

campaign has been established and its members have been selected, she noted.

In the first session of the committee, which is tasked with policy-making and guiding activities, educational content and programs in the field of women Qur'anic activities were discussed and the committee members underlined the importance of elevating the Qur'anic knowledge and awareness and training Quran teachers, she stated.

Habibi said one of the goals of the campaign is to develop discourse related to Qur'anic concepts about family and promote the Qur'anic style of life.

Greece Spends €18,000 on Persian Rugs to Promote Image

ATHENS (Dispatches) -- The Greek tourism ministry has responded to media reports about its spending of almost 18,000 euros on two Persian Nain carpets, saying the items will "contribute to the promotion of the positive image of our country at an international level."

In a statement, the ministry, "as the outward-looking ministry par excellence," said its "main mission [is] the promotion of our country's image. In this context, a crucial part of its work is the reception of persons from all over the world who represent, among others, states and bodies in this vital sector for Greece."

Thus, it "was deemed necessary to renew the equipment and upgrade our infrastructure, a process that had been delayed for more than 15 years."

The ministry added that it had followed all "prescribed legal procedures" and "absolute transparency" in procuring the carpets.

"The improvement of the reception areas is considered necessary to ensure the excellent hospitality and service of the visitors, in the context of actions and works for the promotion of Greek tourism, as well as for the promotion of the positive image of our country at an international level."

A tender document uploaded to Diavgeia, the state's transparency portal, for the supply of carpets for use in Tourism Minister Olga Kefalogianni's office showed that the selected bidder would supply two Persian Nain rugs for €17,980.

Nain carpets have a higher knot density than other Persian rugs.



Introducing 'Mother of All Cuisines'

LOS ANGELES (Dispatches) -- Any quick search for what constitutes "the best cuisines in the world" tends to yield similar results. In each list you will invariably find the bountiful noodle dishes of China, the spicy aromatic curries of India, and the rich pastas of Italy.

It's a list that consensus seems to consider fair. However, one particular country is notable for its absence. In fact, its food has even been described by some as the "mother of all cuisines." For over two thousand years, Persian/Iranian cuisine has been evolving with a rich diversity that matches up to the world's best. Yet to most of the world, it remains a mystery.

This disconnect is something that Hanif Sadr, an Iranian immigrant living in San Francisco, is on a mission to upend. In the award-winning VICE produced-film Preserving Taste—streaming now in the player below and at the Munchies YouTube channel—Hanif vows to return home to Iran to rediscover natural preservation techniques that have produced a long list of unique dishes, before returning to San Fran to open his own restaurant.

For Hanif, it's high time Iranian food takes its rightful place in the culinary pantheon.

Ever since Cyrus the Great established the Achaemenid Empire in 530 BC, Iran has acted as a conduit of culture between the West and Far East, with major culinary exports including saffron, pomegranates, pistachios, and rosewater making their way in and out of the country along the Silk Road. Author Maragaret Shaida notes that even Herodotus—the Greek philosopher with little good to say about the Persian empire—begrudgingly acknowledged how rich and varied the Persian diet was.

The duality of "hot and cold"



food in Persian/Iranian cuisine also stretches back to ancient times. The concept centers around the ideal dish for a healthy body and mind striking a balance between "hot" (rich, oily, sweet, spicy, calorie-heavy) and "cold" (fresh and light) ingredients. Persian cuisine's biggest staples were established as far back as the fourth century AD, including the decadent meat stews and towering rice plates that still adorn Iranian dinner spreads today. During this period there was a massive exchange of key ingredients along the Silk Road, including citrus fruits, eggplants, and rice.

What is today known as Iran has gone through multiple periods of effectively foreign rule but its food has never lost its identity. On the contrary: the new rulers—including Arabs and Moghuls—have always come to adopt it as their own. It's why there's so much crossover between Iranian, Arab, and Indian dishes, including boorani—the Persian "naan"—and biryani. In the 16th century, with the rise of the Safavid dynasty, the first modern records of foreign dignitaries experiencing the joys of Persian/Iranian food for themselves (as well as one of our first "recipe" documents) began to pop up. It's a sentiment Hanif is now

looking to rekindle in the West.

Hanif's immersion in Iranian food began at the dinner table with family. He was introduced to local ingredients and dishes by his grandparents and their cook Baaji in northern Iran during his formative years as a teenager. After graduating university, Hanif traveled across the country and bore witness to the host of environmental issues Iran faces. He was desperate to pursue environmentalism, but knew he'd have to go abroad if he was ever to do so. After entering the lottery for an American green card, Hanif soon left for San Francisco.

Though it was never part of his original plan, he ended up employed as a cook at the Iranian Montessori School in Berkeley. The sustainable farm-to-table food culture taking hold in the Bay Area at the time triggered childhood memories of his grandmother's cooking, which followed the same principles of sourcing seasonal, local ingredients, and Hanif made it his goal to reintroduce traditional Iranian techniques to his new home. Fortunately, the climate of northern California mirrors that of northern Iran, which allowed Hanif to find ingredients locally and maintain his principles of sustainability through natural preservation tech-

niques such as fermentation, molasses, smoking, and meat curing, all signatures of Persian/Iranian cuisine.

The Mazandaran province, Hanif's summer home in the north of Iran, contains seas, mountains, prairies, and rainforests. The Caspian Sea blankets Mazandaran and, as the largest lake in the world, the sea offers a rich supply of sturgeon and whitefish for Hanif to collect, smoke, and salt. Arching from the Caspian is the Alborz mountain range, which spans over 400 kilometers and serves as a rich source of herbs and fruits. The main fruits of focus for Hanif are usually citrus, such as sour oranges and pomegranates.

They can both be converted into molasses, which—when combined with the dried and smoked fish from the Caspian—creates a long list of fish stews and rice plates the region is known for, such as "mahi polo" and "kouli ghourabij." Finally, from the prairies, both by the sea and on the mountainous highlands, come the ingredients for rice and flatbreads that form the foundation of most, if not all, Iranian dishes.

Then there is the southern province of Khuzestan in the south of Iran, offering an array of seafood dishes that many people do not associate with the country. It's a province with a long and storied history, often re-

ferred to as the "birthplace of the nation." The plains of Khuzestan are famous for their rich agricultural output and it is here that Hanif collects dates. For Hanif, something that is always distinctly memorable is to pick through the fishing hauls of the region, which include halva fish and shrimp.

Hanif's travels are just a small reminder of what can be learned from Iran's diverse and sustainable world of ingredients, and this film acts as a kind of tribute to Iran's under-explored landscapes, its people, its shifting culture, and the food that connects them to both the land and history.

Picture of the Day



Aynak is one of Iran's largest wetlands in Rasht and the second largest in Gilan Province.

Photo by IRNA