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EVENT DETAILS: When: Thursday, October 12, 2017, from 6 pm – 9 pm

Where: Palace Ballroom, 2100 5th Ave, Seattle, WA 98121

Who: Open to all. Ticket profits to benefit Seattle-Isfahan Sister City Association Website:

<https://www.tomdouglas.com/events/chefs-without-borders>

SISCA launches Chefs without Borders: Tasting Isfahan

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Seattle Isfahan Sister City Association (SISCA) matches Tom Douglas with Najmieh Batmanglij for cross cultural food diplomacy

Seattle, WA– The Seattle-Isfahan Sister City Association is pleased to announce the first-ever Chefs Without Borders: Tasting Isfahan and Tasting Seattle. This bilateral event features two dinners on opposite sides of the world that will share and celebrate the emblematic cuisine of each other's city. The goal is to create better awareness, appreciation and connection between cultures through the common language of food.

The Seattle public is invited to savor a four-course exploration of one of the world's most ancient cuisines. The menu and recipes were developed and translated by noted Iranian-American Persian cookbook author Najmieh Batmanglij, with input from Isfahani chefs, and will be prepared by Tom Douglas for the event at the Palace Ballroom.

In Isfahan, the Seattle event will be mirrored at the traditional Jarchibashi Restaurant, using recipes developed by Tom Douglas, that reflect our Pacific Northwest culture. Now a restaurant and museum, the converted 400-year-old bathhouse features mosaic walls and fountains that harken back to ancient Persia dynasties of the Safavids and Qajars.

"Food is a powerful international language. I am inspired to participate in such a creative reach across borders that otherwise have so many restrictions. Our team is excited to create new culinary connections and have this opportunity to learn from masters in another country's cuisine," said Tom Douglas.

"This first of its kind, this foray into food diplomacy has the potential to create opportunities for learning, spark conversations, and launch something that creates ripples of understanding and cultural exchange between Iran and the U.S.," said Cathia Geller, President of SISCA.

"Since ancient times, rulers of the Persian empires used fine dining to strengthen relationships between friends and solve problems between enemies. For me, being involved with Chefs Without Borders: Isfahan and Seattle Tastings, is a continuation of what I have been doing for the past 35 years, advocating the best of Iranian culture, which is Persian food."—Najmieh Batmanglij, author of *Food of Life: Ancient Persian and Modern Iranian Cooking and Ceremonies*.

Music at the October 12 event will include the Seattle premiere of a collaborative guitar project between Iranian-American classical guitarist Naeim Rahmani and Iranian guitarist/composer Ashkan Saberi, performed by the Seattle Guitar Ensemble.

"We are so grateful to the many organizations and individuals who have helped us bring this event to life," commented Geller, "especially Iranian American Community Alliance led by Ali Ghambari and the Tom Douglas Seattle Kitchen group. This event is designed as a demonstration of the transformative power of conversation and food. We welcome those unfamiliar with Persian culture and cuisine, as well as those who treasure memories of it."

For tickets and more information Tickets for this event are limited to the first 150 and go on sale 8/12. Individual tickets are \$125 and tables of ten can be purchased for \$1100. Profits from this event will benefit the work of the Seattle Isfahan Sister City Association. Please visit <https://www.tomdouglas.com/events/chefs-without-borders>

About Persian cuisine: Persian cuisine arises from the country of Iran, which is located at the center of an ancient network of trading routes known today as the Silk Road. The cuisine has been influenced by countries along the Silk Road—from China in the east to Italy in the west—and by the royal kitchens of the ancient Persian Empire. Paraphrased from Joon; *Persian Cooking Made Simple.*, by Najmieh Batmanglij

- Some flavors probably new to Americans are saffron, barberry, candied orange peel and rose water. In addition, diners experience the heavenly fragrance of its rice; many types of delicious flat breads; flavorful vegetable dishes; and roasted meat kabobs. The flavors are subtle and intricate, yet they have stood the test of centuries, like the Persian miniature paintings, carpets and tilework Iran is famous for.

About Seattle-Isfahan Sister City Association: We are citizen volunteers – Iranian-Americans and allies who have lived and traveled in Iran – from the greater Seattle area who seek to reverse decades of hostility between the United States and Iranian governments by developing people-to-people relationships between our two countries. The goal of the Seattle-Isfahan Sister City Association (SISCA) is to build a community in Seattle to support and incubate nonpolitical, people-to-people collaborations with Isfahan, Iran. SISCA is a 500-member, not-for-profit 501(c) (3) organization. Donations to SISCA are tax deductible and may be mailed to SeattleIsfahan Sister City Association, P.O. Box 757, Woodinville, WA 98072

About Tom Douglas Seattle Kitchen: Tom Douglas, Seattle-based chef, has been cooking up Pacific Northwest cuisine since 1984, opening his own restaurant, Dahlia Lounge, in 1989. For the last 30 years, he's made a name for himself alongside business partner and wife Jackie Cross and business partner (since 2006) Eric Tanaka by opening 13 full-service restaurants; an event space, Palace Ballroom; a cooking school, Hot Stove Society; and a product line including rubs, sauces, mustards, and knives. The James Beard Outstanding Restaurateur, self-described as "middle-aged, tall, and round," can be found at any of his restaurants on a given day putting in the work to create a successful restaurant group. As he reminds himself and his staff, "no one can out effort us." <https://www.tomdouglas.com>

About Najmieh Batmanglij: Najmieh Batmanglij was born and raised in Iran. She has spent the last 35 years cooking, traveling, and adapting authentic Persian recipes to tastes and techniques in the West. She has been hailed as "the guru of Persian cuisine" by the Washington Post, and the Los Angeles Times called her cookbook, Food of Life, "the definitive book on Iranian cooking." <http://www.najmieh.com>

About Iranian American Community Alliance (IACA): The IACA is the seminal organization supporting and promoting Iranian culture for over a decade in the Pacific Northwest. The Iranian-American Community Alliance is a Seattle-based, non-profit, non-religious, and non-political organization, working to unite, strengthen, and mobilize the Iranian American community and serve the greater Seattle area. <http://www.iaca-seattle.org>

About Naeim Rahmani and the SISCA Guitar Project: Naeim Rahmani is an award-winning classical guitarist based in Seattle. He has performed widely around the US, as well as in Mexico, Spain and Germany. Originally from Isfahan, Naeim is currently directing a cultural exchange project between guitarists in Isfahan and Seattle. This "musical diplomacy" project will bring the work of Iranian composers to a US audience, and the work of Seattle composers to the Isfahan guitar community. We are excited to share phase one of that project with you at this event. <https://www.naeimrahmani.com>