

# YALDA

## Activity Packet



Illustrations by Elaheh Taherian  
Design by Tannaz Fassihi

Produced and published by Pardis for Children, Inc.

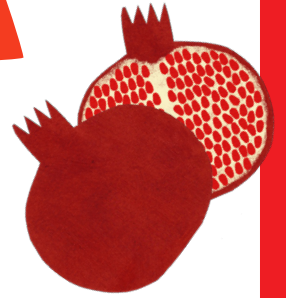
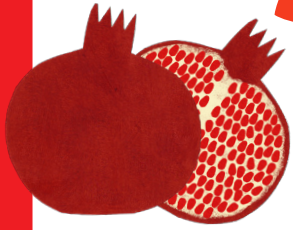
Copyright © Pardis for Children, Inc. All Rights Reserved.  
Permission from Pardis for Children, Inc. is required to copy, distribute and display  
this copyrighted work in any medium.

# The Story of **SHAB-E-YALDA** (YALDA NIGHT)

Shab-e-Yalda (Yalda night), is an ancient Persian festival celebrated on the longest and darkest night of the year—the winter solstice. It's a joyous occasion where family and friends gather at the homes of grandparents or elderly relatives to share stories, read poetry, play music, and fill the house with light and warmth as they await the sunrise. Yalda means 'birth' and Shab-e-Yalda is a night full of hope and happiness, celebrating the rebirth of Mithra or Mehr, the god of sun and the victory of light over darkness.



# SHAB-E-YALDA ACTIVITIES



During Yalda night, family and friends enjoy the enchanting poems of *Hafez*, read verses from the epic *Shahnameh*, and savor delicacies laid out on the Sofreh-e-Yalda (Yalda table setting) such as watermelon, persimmon, pomegranate, and “*ajil*,” a colorful mix of dried fruits, nuts, and seeds.

**De-seeding a pomegranate** can be a fun and collective activity to enjoy as the night begins! Scan the QR code to learn how:



## TRADITIONAL DISHES OF SHAB-E-YALDA:

Families across Iran celebrate Yalda night by indulging in traditional dishes. **Khoresh-e Fesenjoon** (a chicken stew with walnuts and pomegranates), **Ash-e Reshteh** (a thick soup with herbs and noodles), and **Koofteh** (delicious meatballs) are among the most famous dishes of Yalda night.

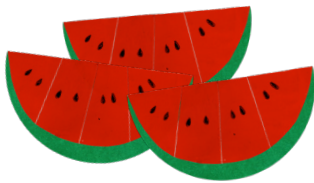
Scan the QR code to **learn how to make a Pomegranate and Walnut Meatball**.

The recipe is a courtesy of Roshanak Yousefian from [Popilee](#).



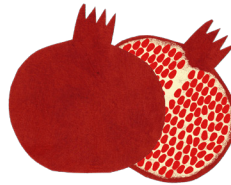
# ON OUR YALDA TABLE

On the longest night of the year, families gather around a Sofreh-e-Yalda arranged with various symbolic items. Some represent the rebirth of the sun (Mehr or Mithra), signifying the transition from the longest night to dawn. Others reflect the cherished traditions of the Yalda night—reading poetry, sipping tea, and sharing sweets to make the longest night more enjoyable together.



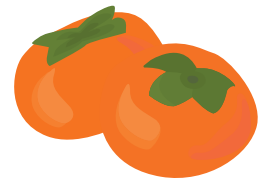
## **Watermelon:**

Symbolizing the “rebirth of the sun” with its vibrant red color.



## **Pomegranate:**

Symbolizing fertility and the dawn’s crimson hues.



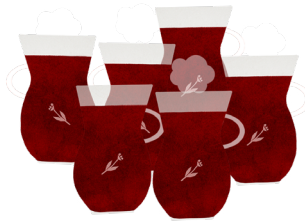
## **Persimmon:**

Adding sweetness to the celebration with its rich flavor.



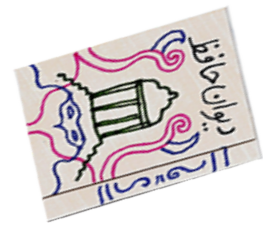
## **Ajil (colorful mix of dried fruits, nuts, and seeds):**

Symbolizing abundance and diversity.



## **Tea:**

Providing warmth and comfort during the winter night.



## **Divan-e-Hafez:**

A collection of poetry by the revered poet Hafez, whose verses enrich the celebration.



## **Shahnameh:**

An epic poem by Ferdowsi filled with Persian mythology and heroic tales.



## **Candles:**

Illuminating the night, symbolizing the transition from darkness to light.



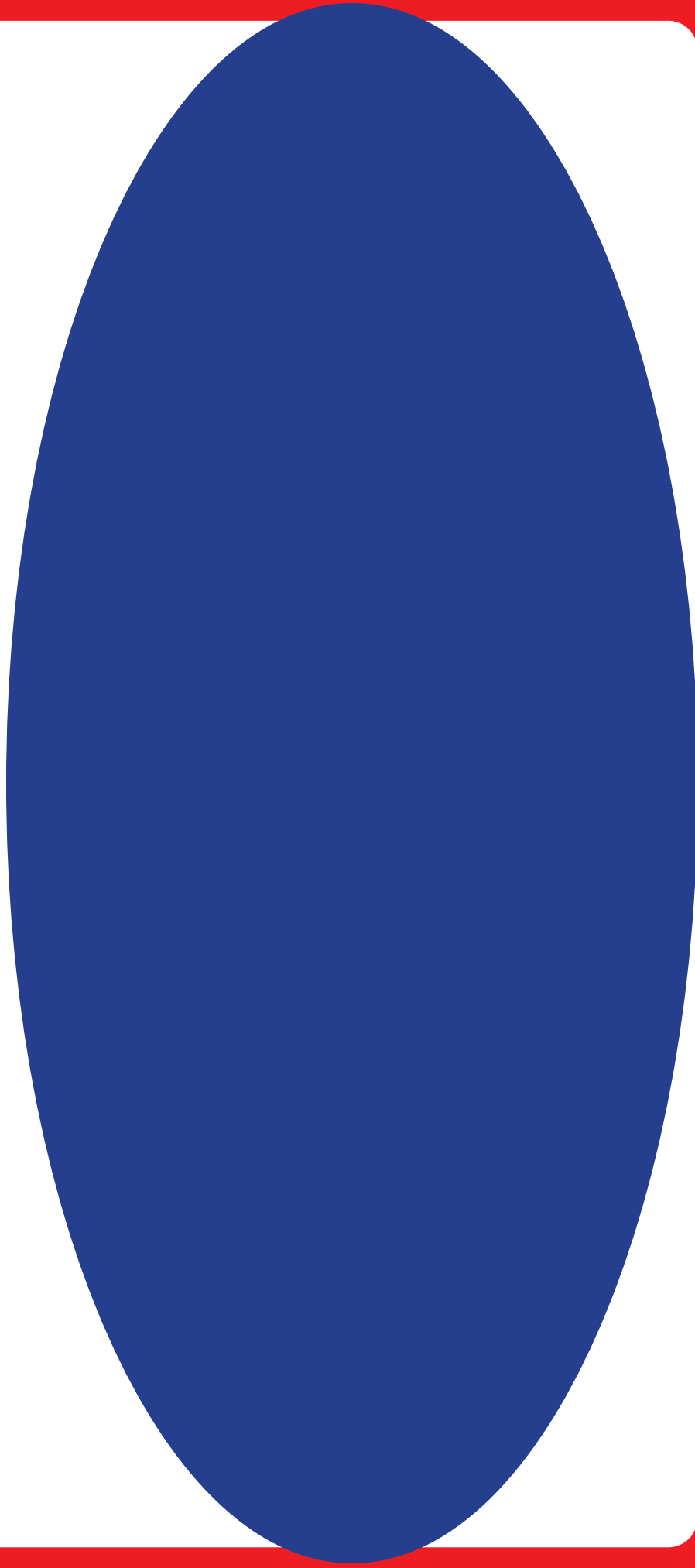
## **Sweets:**

Bringing sweetness to the longest night of the year.

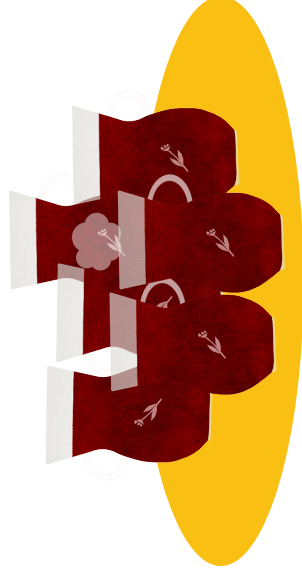
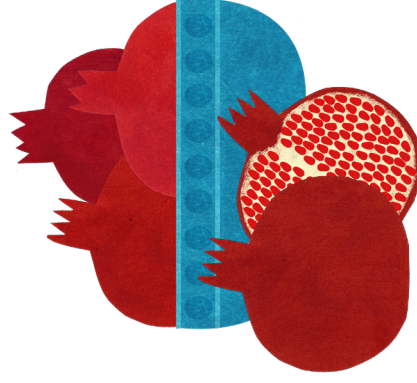
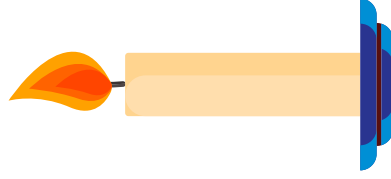
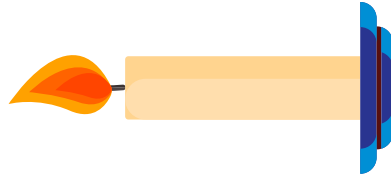
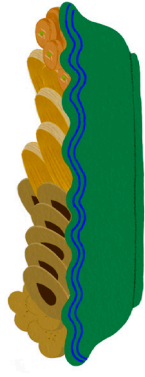
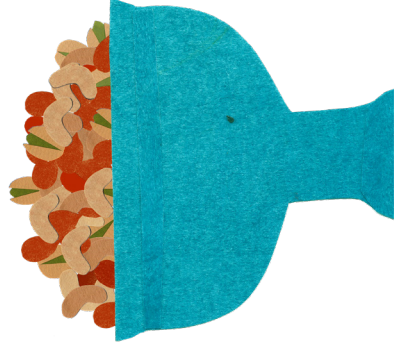
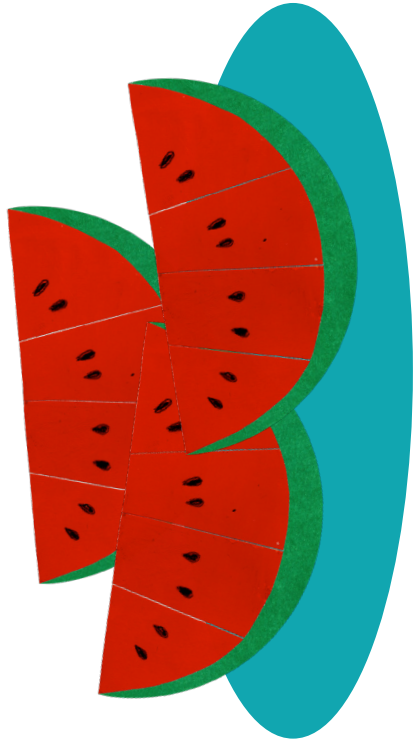
# LET'S SET OUR TABLE!



Cut and paste the Yalda items from the next page  
and decorate your Yalda Table below.







# KORSI

On Shab-e-Yalda, some families gather around a special table called a “Korsi.” This short square table is covered with a thick blanket, and underneath, there’s a heater to keep everyone warm. People sit on cushions around the Korsi, sharing stories, eating delicious food, and enjoying each other’s company in the cozy warmth it provides.

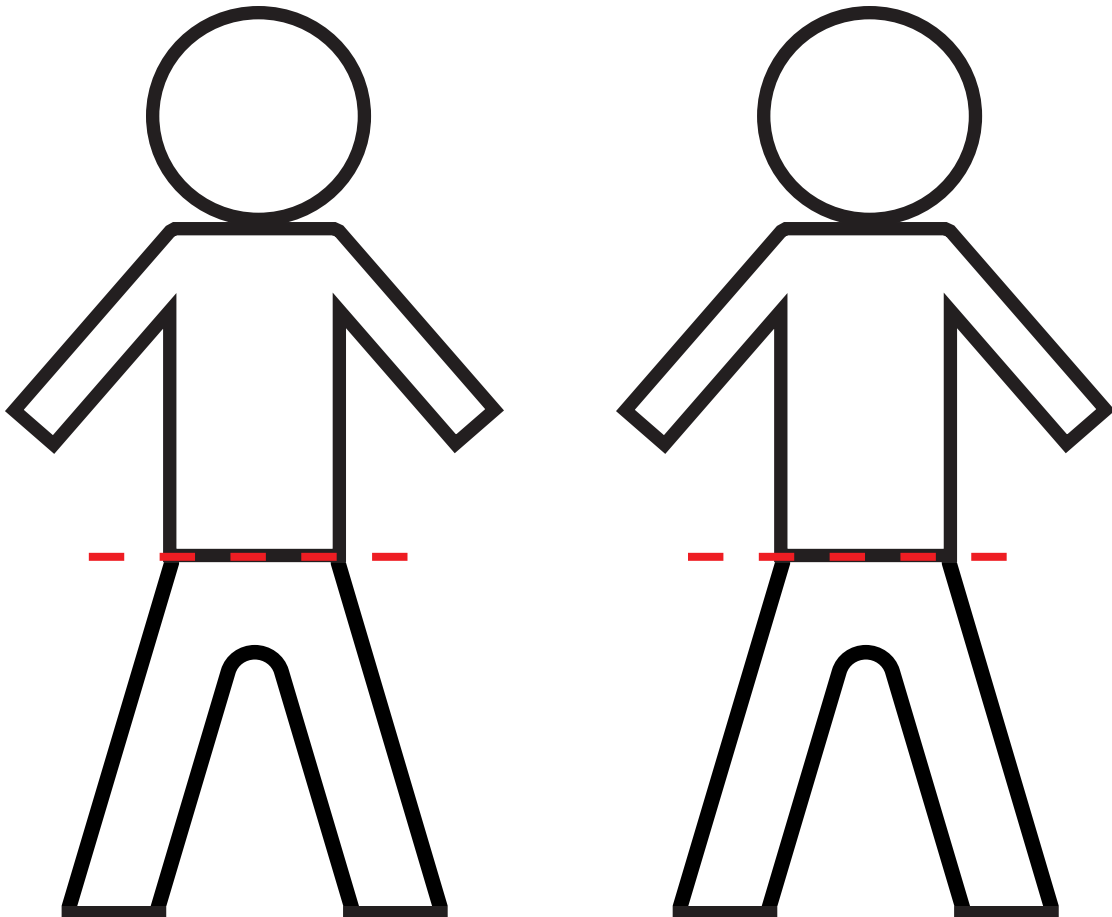


# MAKE A KORSI

**MATERIALS:** Printer, color pencils, scissors, and glue.

## FIGURES:

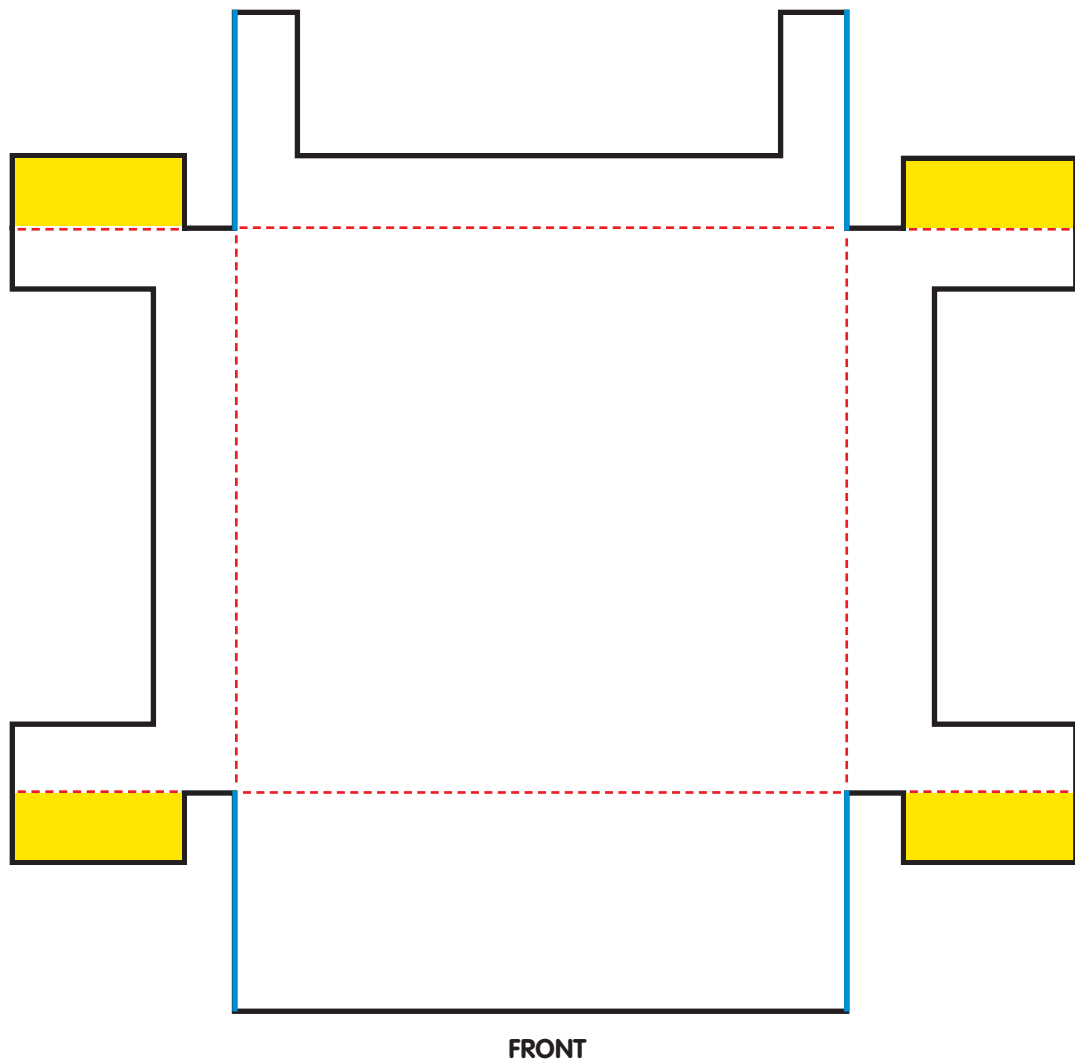
1. Print out this page.
2. Color and add details to the figures.
3. Cut the figures out and fold them from the dashed lines to make them sit under the Korsi.





# KORSI:

1. Print out this page.
2. Color and add details to your Korsi.
3. Cut out the Korsi and fold from the dashed lines.
4. Glue the yellow sections to the adjacent blue lines to make your Korsi table stand on its legs.
5. Seat your figures under the Korsi!



# FAL-E-HAFEZ

On Shab-e-Yalda, Iranians partake in a cherished tradition that adds a touch of magic to the night. Each person contemplates a secret wish or question in their heart, and then opens a book of Hafez's poems. The poem written on the page is a secret message meant solely for the individual, offering guidance and insight into their wishes and questions. Similar to the joy of unraveling a riddle, it's very gratifying to decipher the meaning behind each poem. This tradition brings the families and friends closer together, allowing them to relish the mystery and wonder of Shab-e-Yalda.





# MY FAL-E-HAFEZ?

Think about a secret wish or question, and then open a page from *Divan-e-Hafez*. If you don't have one, you can scan the QR code below. Kindly ask a family member or an elder to help you read your "fal" in either English or Persian!

What did you think of your "fal-e Hafez"? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Did it answer your question?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



ENGLISH

What other messages do you think it had for you?

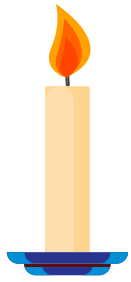
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

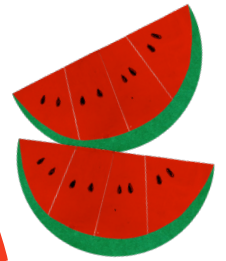
\_\_\_\_\_



PERSIAN



# ALL ABOUT MY SHAB-E-YALDA



What time is the sunrise and sunset on Yalda where you live? \_\_\_\_\_

How many hours is the Yalda night where you live?  
\_\_\_\_\_

How do you plan to celebrate the Yalda night with your family? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

My favorite thing about Yalda

night is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

My favorite fruit  
of Yalda night is

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Draw the scene of  
your Yalda night here:

