



# NAURYZ

**2:00 - 4:00PM  
MARCH 21, 2007  
COURTYARD BETWEEN  
CALHOUN AND PARLIN**

Nauryz is the traditional spring festival celebrating the new year held throughout the Central Asian communities of the former Soviet Union. The roots of Nauryz are in pagan festivals celebrated to enhance the fertility of animals and the soil in planting and mating periods. In literature, the was first mentioned by Tole-Bi in 1720.

Nauryz is one of the most important national holidays among the Central Asian people. The holiday is usually celebrated at the spring equinox, when day and night are of equal duration, representing the time of the year when the difficult winter ends and spring renewal begins.

Nauryz celebrations are big events where games are played, traditional ceremonies are performed, heritage costumes are worn, and festive foods are served. People visit with friends and relatives to deliver expressions of well being and to wish good luck for the upcoming year. Tradition says that the more one celebrates Nauryz, the more successful the New Year will be.

In the Kazakh language, Nauryz is also known as Ulys Kuni (the first day of the new year) and Ulystyn uly kuni (the great day of the people). A particularly symbolic tradition is the "dance" of the light and dark spirits, winter and summer. Other traditional activities include horse races, fortune telling, camel racing, wrestling, racing barefoot, poetry readings and the giving of small gifts and flowers to the elderly.

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