



Ethical Lifestyle Initiative

# AFGHANISTAN



**ISSUE**  
**N.06**  
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**Seamless silks**

Ratti targets top Italian brands with Afghan silk scarves

**Haft Sin & Nowruz**

Seven secrets for a great start to the Afghan New Year

# THE AFGHANS ARE COMING



Located in the heart of Amsterdam is the cosy Afghan restaurant, Mantoe, set up by the Faizi family in 2008 almost as an extension to their dining-room, filled with guests almost continuously since their arrival from Kabul in 1996. Nilo Faizi and her husband manage Mantoe. Mother, Zakhia, is the chef. Both see food as a way to share love, heal the soul and change the narrative about Afghanistan and Afghans.

Initially selected to cater for an event, Mantoe's story resonated strongly. Through EFI Nilo "met" Ariana Saffron, another Afghan family business determined to build a better future for the country, and now

Mantoe uses Ariana's saffron in its signature dishes. Zakhia is sharing her recipes with Ariana's online users and restaurant guests can buy the saffron there too. "From Mantoe with love".

Afghan saffron is making a name for itself elsewhere too. EFI's UK-based market entry strategists sent product samples from EFI SEs, Ariana Saffron, Talay Sorkh Afghan and Afghanistan Saffron Co, to distributors, retailers, chefs and food influencers like Negin London, Steenbergs and Hampshire Foods. The response was incredibly positive.

Dried fruits and nuts are proving especially moreish in the UK. ZIBA has closed deals with CLF and Tree of Life, two of the UK's largest wholesale distributors of health foods, and is finalizing another deal with a large premium retailer in London. By the end of the year, ZIBA hopes to have products on sale in over 50 retail outlets.

So be prepared: the Afghans are coming. It's a sweet, salty, spicy invasion, and you will love it!

  
**The Faizi family,**  
*with Nilo in a stunning ZAZI Vintage dress*  
 © Restaurant Mantoe  
**Tasty and healthy - ZIBA snacks are a big hit in the UK**  
 © ZIBA





# SEAMLESS SILKS

Ratti's new range of silk scarves is a prime example of integrated production across continents.

EFI Afghanistan project partners across the value chain have come together to create beautiful, ethical and sustainable products, managing most of the process in Afghanistan.

Sorkh wa Safid is leading Afghan activities, with Zanan Herat Silk producing the silk cocoons, Shekiban Spinners and Amir Abbas spinning the yarn and Saleh Fine Silk and Sorkh wa Safid weaving it into scarves.

Ratti has created exquisite block-printing designs and will produce a run of 2,000 scarves for international brands. The Italian textiles giant has also reserved scarves from their Afghan partners in 2021 and agreed to share technical expertise as soon as the pandemic allows it.



*A braid of natural silk yarn*  
© Farzana Wahidy / EFI



# GLASS BLOWING US AWAY

EFI planned to showcase glass tableware made by Ghulam Herat Glass at a Nowruz dinner in March last year. Then Covid changed everyone's plans. Even so, industry influencers have been able to view samples at EFI headquarters in Geneva: buyers from leading brands like Brother Vellies have loved Ghulam's creations.

Having formalized as a company in 2020, Ghulam Herat Glass has begun training activities. Artisans have also been busy with a new range of products showing how flexible hand-blown glass can be, playing with shapes and colours to craft exquisite pieces. Ghulam is about to launch a new catalogue featuring 20 products in 6 different colours, all made from naturally-occurring minerals.



*Sugar bowl with lid*  
© Hossain Akbary / EFI

# LIGHTS CAMERA ACTION!



Pictures, and especially moving pictures, create emotional and rational connections, showing consumers the artisans and producers who make our clothes and food, and the skills and techniques they use masterfully.

EFI's **'Meet the Makers'** series has been shown as the Conde Nast International Luxury Conference, shared by Fashion Revolution, Vivienne Westwood and others, and viewed over 195,000 times.

In 2021 Afghanistan is in the spotlight, with new videos on natural dyeing, expert tailoring, saffron producer Ariana Saffron, heirloom fruits from ZIBA Foods, and - the first to be released - a **short film** by Barmak Akram on Kabul-based Zarif Design. If you haven't seen it yet, check it out! It's hard to say which is more beautiful: Zarif's exquisite tailoring, the dramatic backdrop of Afghan landscapes or the relaxing ambient soundtrack.



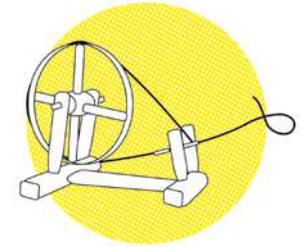
*Hand-crafted buttons for Zarif coats*  
© Barmak Akram / EFI

# COMING SOON

Saleh Fine Silk, RAADA and Zanan, are all embarking on new weaving programmes. The technical training courses last from 4 to 6 months and are offered to new and prospective employees. Around 40 trainees are expected to graduate in all.

Integrated Approach partner, Herat University, will begin training sessions for demonstration plot farmers. The courses will cover cultivation and harvesting, with a special focus on environmental sustainability in how natural resources and production inputs are used on the plots.

In March, Afghanistan Saffron Co. received training on food safety management systems and was pre-assessed for FSSC 22000 certification. In the next quarter the SE plans to complete the first stage of the certification process. Afghanistan Saffron Co. and other Food SEs will also work towards organic certification.



## WEAVING



## SAFFRON / FARMING



## BUSINESS PROCESSES

سنبل

[sonbol]

1. The hyacinth is the symbol of Spring

سکه

[sekeh]

2. Coins, here in salt water, symbolize wealth

سیر

[seer]

3. Garlic means good health

سنجد

[senjed]

4. Dried oleaster fruit is for love

سیب

[seeb]

5. Red apples are a sign of beauty

سرکه

[serkeh]

6. Vinegar symbolizes wisdom

سماق

[somaq]

7. Sumac stands for the bitterness of life

HAFT SIN

هفت سین

AND NOWRUZ

*Nowruz* is the Persian New Year. It dates back almost three thousand years to Zarathustra, and is celebrated in Iran, Afghanistan and other countries in Central Asia on 21 March, Spring equinox.

Like Easter and other Spring feast days, *Nowruz* celebrates renewal and rebirth. Haft sin ("seven S" in Persian) is a vital part of *Nowruz* festivities for many Afghan families.

*Haft sin* is not a meal, but a special way of decorating an altar with seven things beginning with the letter S (*sin* in Persian).

*Nowruz* in Afghanistan is about enjoying food, and not just for its symbolic value. Many of the dishes traditionally served on feast days use the fine foods produced by EFi Afghanistan social enterprises.

ZIBA Foods reminds **Instagram** users about the Afghan *Haft Mewa* (7 fruits) tradition. Its selection this year includes sun dried figs, kishmish raisins, dried white mulberries, walnuts, baby pistachio kernels, Shakhurbai and Gurbandi almonds.

*Nowruz* is a busy time for **Afghanistan Saffron Co., Ariana Saffron** and **Talay Sorkh Afghan**, too, as saffron is a firm favourite for special occasions. *Nowruz* recipes feature saffron and symbolic ingredients, like garlic, sumac and fish.

Fish symbolizes "life within life" in the Persian tradition, but it is linked to Spring and good fortune across the globe. The humble fish brings good luck in countries as far apart as China, Vietnam, Japan, Egypt, Denmark, Sweden, Poland and Germany.

Traditions vary from one culture and religion to another, but maybe, if we look closely, we will find more similarities than differences.





**ethicalfashion** 🌱 "Grown together, saffron and mulberry trees can provide year-round income for farmers. Saffron is planted in August and harvested in November, with income realized in January. Silk season is in spring and income flows between spring and summer. The two crops complement each other, a balance that is reflected in the organization of local economies. Saffron farmers are men, silk producers and spinners are women. The positive environmental effects of biodiversity in agriculture benefits many sections of Afghan society."

You can read the full article on [@gritdaily](#) through the link in our bio.

[#MadeInAfghanistan](#) [#Biodiversity](#) with [@eu\\_partnerships](#)



**ethicalfashion** 🌱 We are delighted to introduce you to Ghulam Herat Glass.



**ethicalfashion** 🌱 Proud to see this [@zazi.vintage](#) campaign created by an all Afghan team published in VOGUE Germany's March Print issue!



**ethicalfashion** 🌱 Afghan magic captured by talented photographers [@morteza\\_rezaiy](#) [@fresha\\_salehi](#), [@marifaalikhani](#) The three talented image makers are part of an [@ethicalfashion](#) x [@refugees](#) photography training course in Afghanistan and mentored by [@wahidyfarzana](#) and [@stefandotter](#). We couldn't be more proud of their work, featured as part of the [@zazi.vintage](#) new fall collection launch 🌱 [#MadeInAfghanistan](#) with [@eu\\_partnerships](#) [@euinafghanistan](#)



**ethicalfashion** 🌱 Meet Saleh Fine Silk, a family business who has been producing exquisite scarves and fabrics for over twenty years.

Saleh Fokur Mohammad learned how to weave while in exile in Pakistan. Joined by his wife Amina Fokur, Saleh Fine Silk is now an innovative social enterprise producing fine and raw silk scarves naturally dyed with local ingredients.

[#silk](#) [#naturaldye](#)  
[#MadeInAfghanistan](#) with  
[@eu\\_partnerships](#) [@euinafghanistan](#)  
📸 [@wahidyfarzana](#)



**warfairdk** Afghanistan er i dag mest kendt for krig og konflikt. Engang var landet kendt for de fantastiske nødder og tørrede frugter. Det skal Afghanistan være igen! Vi kan nu tilbyde hele 12 afghanske verdensklasse-varer. Hjælp os med at handle for fred.



**zazi.vintage** Repost from our partner in Afghanistan [@ethicalfashion](#) 'More magical shots from a recent [@zazi.vintage](#) shoot, produced by an all-Afghan team.'



**wunderworkshop** We are so happy to launch our Saffron at [@planetorganic](#) 🌱🌱 Thanks to all of you we just had to place our second order with the farmers in Afghanistan 🌱



**zarifync** "Learn the rules and then get rid of them" -Barmak Akram



  
*A scene from Barmak Akram's breathtaking profile of Zarif Design*  
© Barmak Akram / EFI

✉ [herzog@intracen.org](mailto:herzog@intracen.org)  
Sabrina Herzog de Souza Lima

f @ITC Ethical Fashion Initiative

🐦 @\_ethicalfashion

📷 @ethicalfashion

📌 @ethicalfashion1

📺 @ITC Ethical Fashion Initiative

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