

LESSON 1

Salâm! Your First Farsi Conversation

سلام

Six phrases, one real conversation. Watch the video first, speak along with the drill track, then use these pages to lock it in.

AFTER THIS LESSON YOU CAN...

- Greet anyone in the Persian-speaking world — and answer when they greet you.
- Ask *how are you?* and bounce the question back.
- Thank someone two ways, and say goodbye.
- Copy the melody of each phrase straight from the audio.

THE PHRASE MAP

Say each one out loud as you read — ears first, letters second.

salâm

hello

works everywhere, any time of day

chetori?

how are you? (casual)

to one friend — formal version comes in Lesson 4

khubam

I'm good

khub (good) + -am (I am) — grammar hiding in plain sight

merci · mamnun

thanks (yes, merci!) · grateful

either works; you'll hear both daily

to chetori?

how are YOU?

to = you (casual) — bounce it back, always

khodâhâfez

goodbye

*literally "may God protect you" — in fast speech it often shrinks to **khodâfez***

THE DIALOGUE — AT THE PERSIAN GROCERY

Sam walks into a Persian grocery in Los Angeles. Leila is restocking the fresh herbs. History begins.

SPEAKER	FARSI	ENGLISH
Leila	Salâm!	Hello!
Sam	Salâm!	Hello!
Leila	Chetori?	How are you?
Sam	Khubam, merci! To chetori?	I'm good, thanks! How are YOU?
Leila	Man-am khubam.	I'm good too.
Sam	Khodâhâfez!	Bye!
Leila	Khodâhâfez!	Bye!

LISTEN TWICE

In the video the dialogue plays at **slow-clear** speed first, then at **natural** speed (6:00). Replay the natural-speed version until the fast one feels normal — that's the whole trick to Farsi listening.

THE BOUNCE-BACK RULE

Never answer *chetori?* and stop. Answer, then return it: **khubam, merci — to chetori?** Skipping the bounce-back feels abrupt in Persian conversation. **man-am** = "me too" — your first two-word sentence-builder.

HOW IT WORKS

The little -am (your first grammar superpower)

khubam is two pieces: **khub** (good) + **-am** (I am). Farsi glues "I am" straight onto words — no separate verb needed.

khub → **khub-am** = I'm good · **man** ("I") → **man-am** = me too → **man-am khubam** = I'm good too · and in Lesson 5: **esm-am** = my name... same ending, new trick.

The â sound — your accent's foundation

â is the deep "a" in *father*. Open the jaw, let it resonate: **salâm**. Plain **a** stays short and tight, like *cat/cup*: **man** (I/me). Mixing these two is the #1 American giveaway — and the easiest fix.

Melody by ear (no stress rules to memorize)

Copy the audio and your stress will land right on its own. One tip your ear will confirm: little endings like **-am** never carry weight — it's **KHUB**-am, not khu-**BAM**. The full sound system gets its own bootcamp in Lessons 2–3.

Street key — how thanks really sounds

Three thank-yous, by warmth: **merci** (everyday, light) → **mamnun** (warm, "grateful") → **moteshakkeram** (formal — announcers and elders). This course always teaches the street version first; the others get flagged so your ears know them.

CULTURE CORNER

Why do Persians say "merci"?

A century of cultural exchange with France — French was the language of diplomacy and education in early-1900s Iran — left everyday Farsi sprinkled with French: **merci**, and words you'll meet later like **âsânsor** (elevator, *ascenseur*) and **shofer** (driver, *chauffeur*). Iranians don't think of these as foreign; they're just Farsi now. Bonus: you already spoke some Farsi before Lesson 1.

Greetings are the main event

In American small talk, "hey, how's it going" is a drive-by. In Persian culture, the greeting *is* the relationship: warm, unhurried, often repeated. Skipping a proper salâm reads as genuinely cold — and a good salâm, with eye contact and a smile, opens every door in the Persian-speaking world. When in doubt: greet more, not less.

MEET YOUR CAST

THE LEARNER

Sam • سم

American, 28, brave enough to order coffee in Farsi by Lesson 3. His Farsi grows exactly one lesson ahead of yours.

THE COACH

Leila • لیلا

Iranian-American, sharp and warm, translator of all things taarof. Runs the family grocery's herb section with an iron fist.

THE WILDCARD

Amir • امیر

Leila's cousin. Great slang, terrible advice, excellent kabob connections. Your source of street Farsi.

THE BOSS

Mâmân Pari • مامان پری

Amir's grandmother, on video call from Tehran. Warm, regal, feeds everyone through the screen. You meet her in Lesson 6. Bring an appetite.

PRACTICE

1 • Match

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. salâm | a. I'm good |
| 2. chetori? | b. goodbye |
| 3. khubam | c. hello |
| 4. merci | d. I'm good too |
| 5. man-am khubam | e. how are you? |
| 6. khodâhâfez | f. thanks |

2 • Finish the conversation

Leila: Salâm! → You: _____!

Leila: Chetori? → You: _____, merci! To _____?

Leila: Man-am khubam. → You (leaving): _____!

3 • Circle what you hear

Play the drill track's final section (marked ). Circle the word you actually hear:

1. khubam / khubi 2. salâm / sâlem 3. chetori / chetore

4 • Put it in order

Number these 1–5 to rebuild a conversation:

___ Man-am khubam. ___ Salâm! Chetori? ___ Khodâhâfez! ___ Salâm! ___ Khubam, merci! To chetori?

📢 SAY IT OUT LOUD

Open your phone's voice recorder. Play the dialogue and record yourself speaking **Sam's lines** in the gaps. Listen back once — do your stresses land at the end? Keep the file: at Lesson 10 you'll start a recording ritual, and one day you'll want to hear Day-One you.

ANSWER KEY

- **1 • Match:** 1-c · 2-e · 3-a · 4-f · 5-d · 6-b
- **2 • Finish:** Salâm! · Khubam, merci! To chetori? · Khodâhâfez!
- **3 • Circle:** 1. khubam · 2. salâm · 3. chetori
- **4 • Order:** Salâm! (1) → Salâm! Chetori? (2) → Khubam, merci! To chetori? (3) → Man-am khubam. (4) → Khodâhâfez! (5)

TODAY'S WORDS, ONE LAST TIME

salâm

chetori?

khubam

merci

mamnun

to chetori?

man-am khubam

khodâfez

Flashcards: this lesson's deck (Anki/CSV) is linked below the video.

NEXT — LESSON 2: THE SOUNDS OF FARSI I

Two sounds English forgot to give you: the deep **â** and the mighty **kh**. Plus the street key that turns book-Farsi into real Tehran talk: *khâne* → *khune*. Ten minutes and your accent levels up permanently.