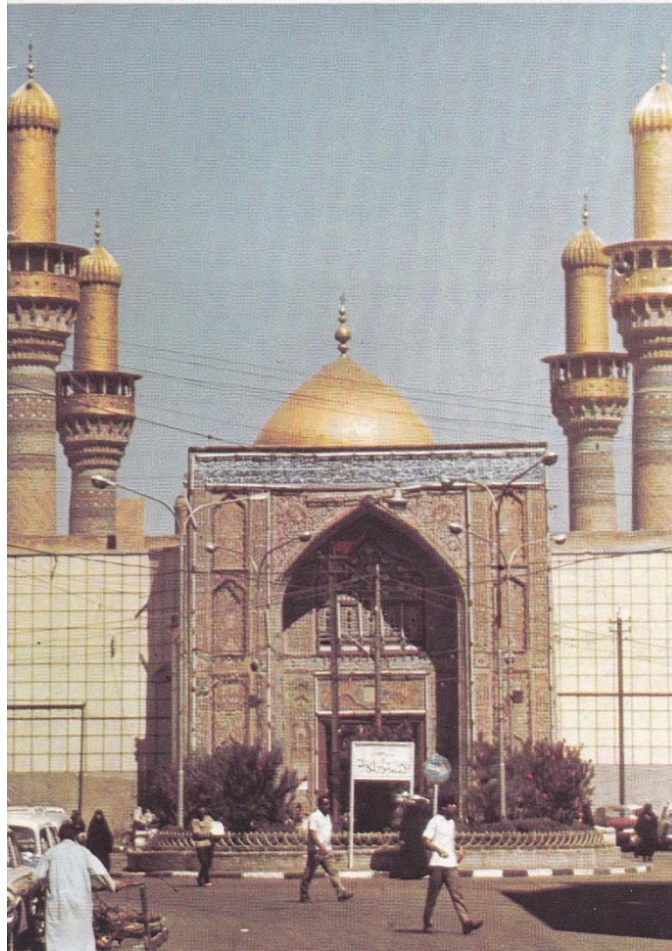


# Baghdad

SAS City Portrait



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**This is the 2nd edition of Baghdad City Portrait printed in 35,000 copies – with information based on facts available in May 1979. Main changes from 1st edition: seven new hotels added – plus details of six new hotels under construction; information included regarding sightseeing tours organized by the National Tourist Bureau; new telephone number for National Tourist Bureau (887 02 37), new telephone numbers for SAS Ticket Office (887 42 75, 888 82 38).**

## Introduction

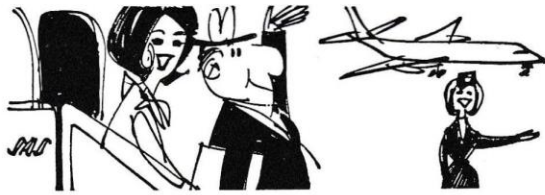
Iraq – “The Land between the Rivers” of Tigris and Euphrates, the ancient country of Mesopotamia, legendary site of the Garden of Eden, where ruins mirror thousands of years of fascinating civilizations. A history glittering with familiar names. The Sumerians, the first settlers in 3,500 BC. Hammurabi, the law-giver, the Semitic king of 1,700 BC who established the world’s first code of laws. Babylon of the Hanging Gardens, one of the Seven Wonders of the World. The Assyrians. The Chaldean Empire which reached its zenith under the rule of King Nebuchadnezzar. Alexander the Great (here from 331 to 323 BC). Seleucius. The Parthians. The Sassanids. Abassid Caliph, Al-Mansour who founded Baghdad, the Round City of canals and waterways. Haroun Al-Rashid, the Caliph of the Thousand and One Nights who made Baghdad capital of a great empire, famous for its luxury and learning.

Today, the mighty rivers of Tigris and Euphrates still play a vital role in an area of the world where water is as precious as gold – but Iraq has its own “black gold” being one of the world’s major producers of oil. A land of intriguing contrasts. Of palm trees and rice fields, mountains and marshlands, camels and gazelles . . . snow and sun.

Baghdad – the capital and gateway to Iraq is a city of golden mosques and bazaars yet it is a modern metropolis bristling with activity. An occasional donkey cart. Glasses of sweet tea. There are splashes of oriental color on today’s portrait of Baghdad, now changing with new office buildings, hotels and bridges. An East-West city whose character is reflected in the glow of the flares from the nearby oil refineries.

Old and new . . . Baghdad’s character alters from day to night . . . by day it is double-decker buses, red and white taxis, the cacophony of hammering in the copper market, a city of more than three million people . . . by night it is a quieter city with the glow of fires along a tree-lined Tigris where freshly-caught masgouf fish are grilled . . . it is a red sun setting behind elegant minarets, the strains of oriental music, the sweet taste of figs, the rustle of silk . . . flowing white robes.

There are few remains of the Round City from the 8th century . . . but the spirit of Caliph Al-Rashid lives on and despite its international appearance, you’ll soon discover the magic which is Baghdad, an atmosphere evoking memories of the Arabian Nights . . .



## Your arrival in Baghdad

On arrival at the International Airport you will be directed from your SAS aircraft to passport control. Please note that you must have an entry visa when arriving in Baghdad. You should apply for such a visa at your local Iraqi consulate when planning your trip. You also require smallpox vaccination certificate – and other medical certificates if you have passed through infected areas before arriving in Iraq. Check the regulations with your Travel Agent or SAS.

From passport control you move into the baggage collection area. Please ensure that the customs officer chalks a mark on your baggage to show that he has examined it.

There is no bus service from airport to town but taxis are available – the fare is approx. IRD1.5.

You are allowed to bring into Iraq – 200 cigarettes, or 250 gr. tobacco, or 50 cigars, a bottle of liquor, and two small bottles of perfume.

Should you have forgotten to purchase tax-free items before entering Iraq, you are allowed to buy such goods at two special stores on Sa'adoun Street (I4) within five days of your arrival in the country.

There is no limit to the amount of foreign currency which can be taken into Iraq – but it must be declared.

The Iraqi unit of money is the dinar (IRD), one dinar = 1,000 fils.

## Hotels

Accommodation is very short in Baghdad – and you must ensure a reservation in advance. This cannot be stressed too much. Please note, that you may sometimes be forced to accept a room in a hotel of a lower category than wanted.

However, the hotel prices are now regulated by Government decree – with rates according to classification.

The hotel list below includes first and tourist class establishments:

**Abbasi Palace** (J4)  
Sa'adoun Street.  
Tel. 91521.

**Abbas Bin Frrass Motel**  
(off map)  
Near Airport.  
Tel. 551 47 33.

**Adam** (J4)  
Sa'adoun Street. Tel. 92381.

**Aghadir** (J4)  
Sa'adoun Street. Tel. 93071.

**Alanbar** (L5)  
Uqba Ibn Nafi Sq.  
Tel. 93008.

**Ambassador** (I4)  
Abu Nuwas Street.  
Tel. 888 61 05.

**Ashur Panipal** (I4)  
Sa'adoun Street.  
Tel. 92393.

**Aswan** (K5)  
Fath Square. Tel. 91645.

**Atlas** (I4)  
Sa'adoun Street.  
Tel. 888 95 58.

**Baghdad Hotel** (I4)  
Sa'adoun Street.  
Tel. 887 70 41.

**Baghdad International** (H5)  
Haifa St. (Melia).  
Opening end 1979.

**Carlton Hotel** (L5)  
Nidhal St.–Uqba Ibn Nafi St.  
Tel. 96091.

**Dar es Salaam** (I4)  
Sa'adoun Street.  
Tel. 90045.

**Diana** (I4)  
Abu Nuwas St. Tel. 776 20 55.

**Diwan Hotel** (I4)  
Sa'adoun Street.  
Tel. 888 13 65.

**Gilgamish Hotel** (J4)  
Sa'adoun Street.  
Tel. 96052.

**Habbaniya Tourist Village**  
(off map)  
Habbaniya. Tel. 887 19 84

**Hotel Al-Khayam** (K4)  
Sa'adoun Street.  
Tel. 96179, 96176.

**Kasr Alshriq** (K5)  
Almasbah St. Tel. 90911.

**Kasr Al Andalus** (J4)  
Sa'adoun Street. Tel. 91069.

**Rumaila Hotel** (I4)  
Sa'adoun Street.  
Tel. 92963, 92058.

**Sahara** (J/K4)  
Nidhal St.–Andalus Sq.  
Tel. 90003.

**Shtoura Hotel** (L5)  
Nidhal St. Tel. 90020.

**St. George** (L5)  
Nidhal Street.  
Tel. 95121.

**The Tourist Complex in Madai'n** (off map)  
Madai'n. Tel. 867 22 11.

**Tigris Palace** (I4)  
Sa'adoun Street.  
Tel. 888 76 24.

**Ur Hotel** (I4)  
Abu Nuwas Street.  
Tel. 888 41 56.

The following hotels are under construction:

**Babylon Hotel** (J/K6)  
Abu Nuwas St.

**Baghdad Novotel** (J/K4)  
Andalusia Sq.

**Baghdad Sheraton** (J4)  
Unknown Soldier Sq.

**Basrah Novotel**  
Kurnish St., Basrah.

**Basrah Sheraton**  
Kurnish St., Basrah.

**Meridian Hotel** (J4)  
Unknown Soldier Sq.

Prices will range from approx. IRD5 to IRD10 per night.

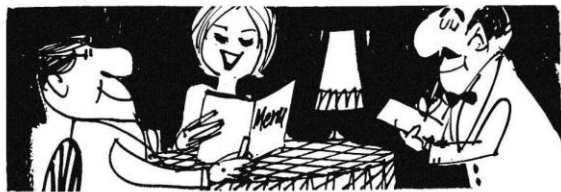
At several of the above hotels breakfast is included in the price – check with the reception when you sign in. Please note there is a 10 % service charge added to room prices.

Laundry and dry-cleaning services are available – ask your hotel reception to make arrangements for you.

Electricity: In Baghdad hotels the voltage is 220 A.C.

## Restaurants and cuisine

All prices in restaurants in Iraq are fixed by the government – according to the classification of the eating establishment . . . so you pay the same price for your meal no matter where you eat as long as the restaurants are of the same category.



Some dishes are quite modern, others date back thousands of years – like *Kubba* which was mentioned in Assyrian and Sumerian writings, and has now become a popular meal in Baghdad. *Kubba* consists of mashed grain mixed with minced meat and flavored with nuts, sultanas, onion and parsley. You'll understand why King Ashur Nssir Bal II insisted on having it on his menu.

*Dolma* is another tasty dish consisting of cabbage, vine leaves, lettuce with onions, eggplant, marrow or cucumber and stuffed with rice, mincemeat and spices. A real oriental taste!

*Kebab* is the world-famous meat-on-the-skewer grilled on a charcoal fire and eaten with pickles, salad and Iraqi flat bread.

*Quozi* is an Iraqi speciality, being a lamb boiled whole and grilled – served with a rice and minced meat filling. An exciting experience – but not the sort of thing to order if you're dining alone!

In the best restaurants, for European prices, you can order international dishes like filet mignon, pepper steak, or chicken cooked in a myriad different ways, American, Arab and French style.

For a special treat, while you're in Baghdad, you must wander down Abu Nuwas Avenue in the evening – head towards the fires which dot the bank of the Tigris. Here you'll find groups of diners standing beside a barbecue on which *masgouf* – the delicious fish from the Tigris – is being grilled in front of your eyes. A big fish with a big taste, you'll enjoy the atmosphere and the food.

For dessert you have an enormous selection of delectable fruit such as dates, pomegranates, apricots, peaches, pears, plums, apples, greengages, figs. But for a surprising taste, choose an Iraqi lemon – they're larger than the ones you're used to seeing and inside they are sweet, yes sweet!

For drinks – you'll find all international liquors on sale but do try the local beer in Baghdad for it is less expensive and of a good quality.

No matter where you go, the hospitable Iraqis will offer you coffee or tea, in a glass. The coffee is very strong and so is the tea. If you prefer a more European taste, choose the lemon tea which is thirst-quenching and refreshing.

Tap water in hotel rooms is safe to drink but when travelling it is always advisable to drink bottled mineral water in order to avoid an upset stomach.

When dining out – for lunch or dinner – we recommend you book a table:

Restaurants – a selection:

**Al-lu'lu'A** (H/17)

Zawra Park.  
Tel. 33382.

**Barmaki** (K5)

Sa'adoun St.–Fateh Sq.  
Tel. 95798.

**Fawanees** (J4)

Sa'adoun Street.  
Tel. 90522.

**Mat am al-matam** (K4)

Sa'adoun Street. Tel. 98684.

**Pine Palace** (K5)

Outer Karradah–Fatih Sq.,  
near Mubdir Jassem Building.  
Tel. 93365.

**Strand** (K4)

Sa'adoun Street. Tel. 92788.

**The Candles (Shm'u)** (K4)

Sa'adoun Street.  
Tel. 95056.

**Thouria** (G7)

Damascus Street.  
Tel. 32475.

## City sights and excursions

Tours to the principal sightseeing attractions in Baghdad and its surroundings are organized by the National Tourist Bureau. There are also scheduled half-day and full-day tours to the ruins of Babylon and Samarra. For further information, contact the National Tourist Bureau (tel. 887 02 37).

Baghdad is a city bejewelled with gilded and blue-tiled mosques glittering from afar – and just as interesting inside. When entering the mosques remember the basic rules – admission not permitted during hours of prayer, nor on Friday mornings, shoes should always be removed, photographs must not be taken.

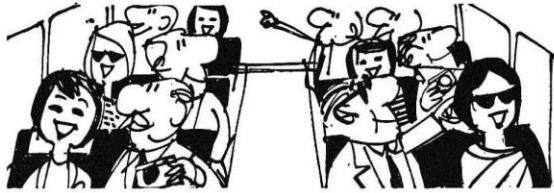
## CITY SIGHTS

### Mosques

Here is a selection of some of the most famous:

**Kadhimain Mosque** (A/B3). See front cover picture. Dating from 1515 this huge mosque stands on a 9th-century burial ground. It is located in the northern part of the city, on the west bank of the Tigris River, just opposite Aadhamiyah. Two





"Imams" – religious leaders – are buried here and the mosque is of special importance to Moslems. Visitors will appreciate the sight of its golden domes and four golden minarets.

**Suq Al-Ghazil Minaret** (G4). Located on Jumhuriya Street in the city center, the minaret once formed part of the famous Mosque of the Caliphs built in the 10th century – and subsequently destroyed by the Mongols in the 13th century. The mosque itself has recently been restored to its original shape.

**Marjan Mosque** (G4), Rashid Street. Worth visiting not only because of its age – it dates back to 1356 AD – but also for the ornamental brick-work and the exquisitely carved door.

**Mosque of Sheik Abdul Qadir Gailani** (G/H3). Kifah Street. The sheik was buried here in 1165 AD – the original dome being replaced in 1534 AD. The site is visited every year by thousands of the followers of the Al-Qadiriyyah Sect from India and Africa.

**Imam Al-Aadham Mosque** (C3), Aadhamiyah. Another beautiful mosque which adjoins the tomb of the famous Imam Abu Hanifa who died in 767 AD.

## Museums

All museums are open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Iraq Museum** (G5) – For a special description of this unique museum turn to page 12.

**Abassid Palace Museum** (F4). Situated behind the Ministry of Defence Building. This former citadel, now partly restored, houses a collection of Arab relics. Be sure to visit, not only to see the collection but also this example of ancient Islamic architecture.

**Army Museum** (F4). Near Abassid Palace. Contains an interesting collection of weapons used in Iraq through the centuries.

**Natural History Museum** (E2), Waziriya. This is part of the University of Baghdad and contains specimens of the flora and minerals found in Iraq.

**National Gallery for Modern Art** (H3), Tayaran Square. Permanent collection of contemporary works of art including sculptures – and changing exhibitions of local and international artists.

**Museum of Arab Antiquities** (G4), Al-Samawal. Originally built in 1358, recently the Khan Marjan has been converted by the State Organization for Tourism into a modern restaurant.

## Sights

**Bazaars.** Near the Marjan Mosque. There are two bazaars in Baghdad – both of which take you back to the Old City of Arabian Nights' fame.

**Shorja** is the busiest of the bazaars selling everything from silk brocades to transistor radios and yet its covered, narrow alleyways and tiny stores with their be-robed owners still lend it a fascinating atmosphere.

**Suq Al-Safafer** – the Coppersmiths' Market – also has an exotic appearance, with the cross-legged craftsmen following traditions that have remained unchanged for hundreds of years. This is the place to buy your souvenir (see "Shopping and souvenir hunting").

**Boat tours** – To see Baghdad from the River Tigris which divides the city, is an unusual and interesting experience. There are regular cruises by the Tourist Authority river boats "Mamoon" and "Sindbad" which start from a landing stage at Abu Nuwas Street. Contact the National Tourist Bureau. (Tel. 887 02 37) for details of times and fares.

**International Fair** – Situated in the Mansour District, Baghdad International Fair is staged during the first two weeks in October. Hundreds of companies representing many countries participate in the Fair – and the inaugural ceremony is a colorful occasion attended by large crowds.

## SIGHTS OUTSIDE BAGHDAD

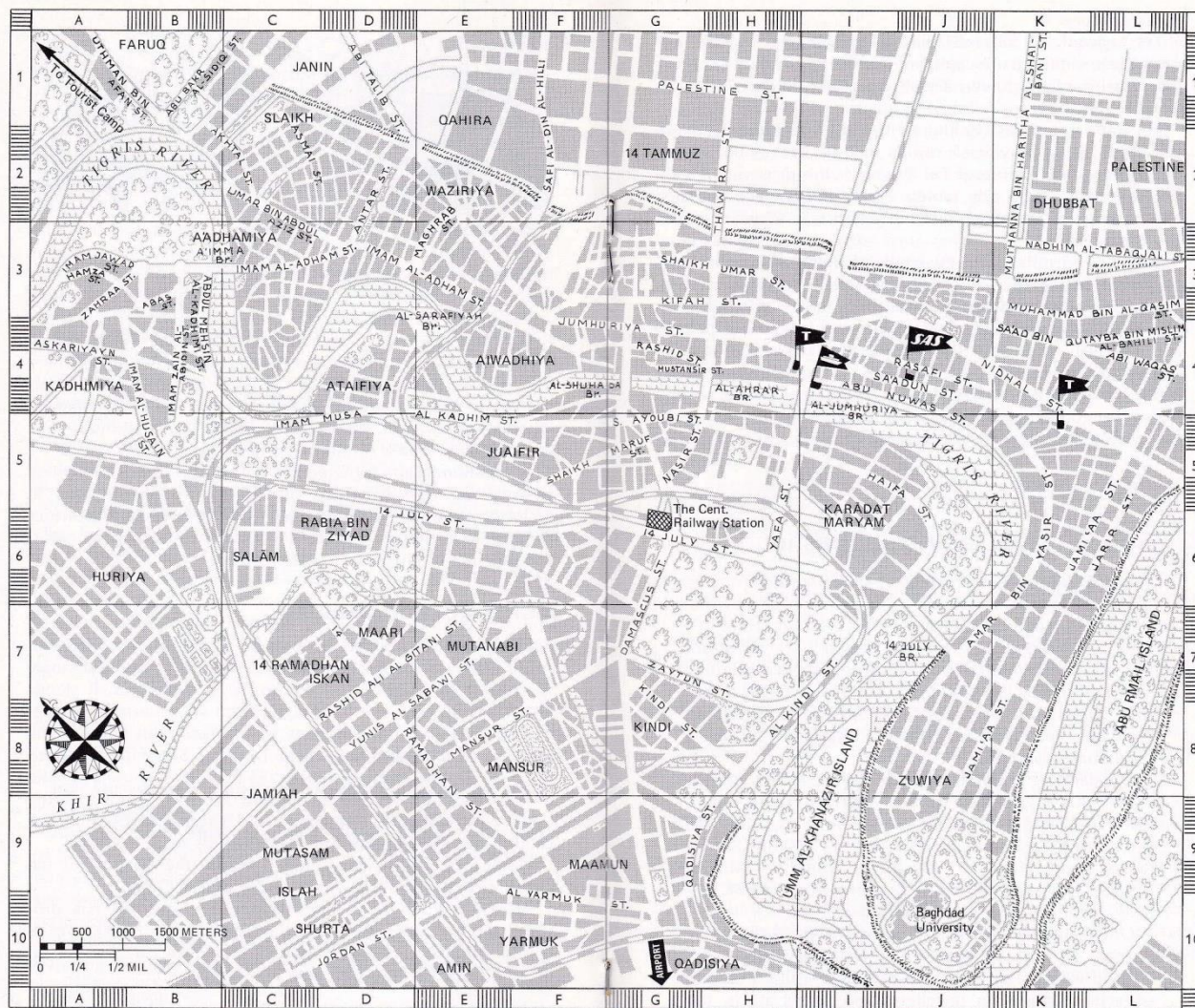
**Ctesiphon.** On the left bank of the Tigris, 21 miles (35 km) south of Baghdad. The Arch of Ctesiphon is the widest single span vault of unreinforced brickwork in the world. It stands 121 ft. (37 m) high and 83½ ft. (25.5 m) at its base. This magnificent archway and the ruins of the reception hall are the remains of a palace built here by King Sapor in the third century AD. The Parthian kings (135 BC–227 AD) used the site of Ctesiphon as a camping ground for their armies during their wars with the Romans – and Ctesiphon became the capital after the conquest of the Sassanids in 227 AD.

On the opposite side of the river are the remains of the Greek city of Seleucia, known today as Tel Omar.

At the site the State Organization for Tourism has provided the following facilities: the Salman Park Hotel, a café, typical Arabian tent where visitors can drink Arab coffee to the strains of the Rabbaba, and a souvenir shop.

(cont'd on page 12)








Code numbers in this booklet refer to the above map. Thus (J4) is located where lines drawn from "J" and "4" cross each other.

### Interesting sights in Baghdad

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| (A/B3) Kadhimain Mosque.                    | (F4) Abbasid Palace Museum.                  |
| (G4) Suq Al-Ghasil Minaret.                 | (F4) Arms Museum.                            |
| (G4) Marjan Mosque.                         | (E2) Natural History Museum.                 |
| (G/H3) Mosque of Sheik Abdul Qadir Gailani. | (H3) National Gallery for Modern Art.        |
| (C3) Imam Al-Aadham Mosque (Aadhamiyah).    | (G4) Museum of Arab Antiquities.             |
| (G5) Iraq Museum.                           | (G4) Sorja Bazaars.                          |
|   | (G4) Suq Al-Safafeer (Coppersmiths' Market). |
|   | (G7) International Fair.                     |

### Useful addresses

-  **SAS Ticket Office:** Sa'adoun Street (J4), tel. 887 42 75, 888 82 38. Open hours: 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.
-  **National Tourist Bureau:** Tahrir Square (J4), tel. 887 02 37, Tourist Dept., Sa'adoun Street (K5), tel. 95051, and Baghdad International Airport (off map). Open hours: 24 hours.
-  **Departure point for boat tours:** Tahrir Square (I4), Jamhouriyah Bridge.

(cont'd from page 9)

**Tel Aqarquf**, 12 miles (20 km) west of Baghdad. This was once the ancient Cassite capital of Dur Karigalzu. You can view the remains of the tower, Ziggurat, erected in the 14th century BC.

**Tel Harmal**, 6 miles (10 km) southeast of Baghdad. Here are the ruins of a provincial capital dating back 4,000 years. Most interesting feature of Tel Harmal is the discovery during excavations of 3,000 clay tablets – several of which revealed a knowledge of Euclid's geometric theories 1,700 years before Euclid was born!

**Babylon**, 56 miles (90 km) south of Baghdad on the main Baghdad–Hilla Road. You can drive there by car in 1½ hours. One of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, Babylon was the City of the Hanging Gardens with numerous palaces and temples. It became the government seat of an empire stretching beyond the Tigris-Euphrates valley until being conquered in 1530 BC by the Hittites. Its citizens were civilized and cultured, living in sumptuously-furnished houses cared for by well-trained servants, doctors, dentists and entertained

### Special sightseeing suggestion

**Iraq Museum**, Mathaf Street. Open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. So fascinating are the collections on display that one could spend a whole day in this museum. Here in a nutshell is the history of Iraq dating back to Mesopotamia and beyond. Here you can see the Neanderthal Man and follow the progress of successive civilizations: the Sumerians, Accadians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Parthians, Seleucids, Sassanians – up to and including the Islamic conquest.

Outstanding exhibits include the painted pottery from 5,000 BC, earliest known inscribed stone tablets from the Neosumerian period, stone weights in the shapes of frogs, masks and ducks from 3,000 BC, and a fantastic collection of ivory pieces found at Nimrud, capital of the Assyrian Empire, dating from 720 BC (including the "Mona Lisa of Nimrud").

One of the museums most famous items is the Royal Harp of Ur – an instrument made of inlaid wood decorated with the golden head of a bull – plus a unique collection of golden jewellery, also found at Ur, the center of the Sumerian civilization. You will also treasure the experience of seeing the clay tablets written in cuneiform characters in the 12th year of the reign of Alexander the Great.

The collections – excellently displayed – are housed in a modern, airy building in the west of Baghdad.

If you have time to visit only one sightseeing attraction in Baghdad – it must be the Iraq Museum!

by music, dancing and poetry. Boating excursions on the Euphrates were a summer pastime. All this at a time when most of the people in Europe were living in mud huts. Alas, the city has not weathered gracefully and only a few relics remain of the beauty which was Babylon.

But it is certainly worth a visit. Here is the Procession Street where the images of the gods were carried during New Year Festival celebrations. Then comes the Ishtar Gate with its original reliefs decorating the walls, the lion being a favorite animal. Here, also, are the remains of two of Nebuchadnezzar's palaces and one can recognize details of the buildings from the foundations. The staged tower, possibly the biblical Tower of Babel. The Hanging Gardens – and the huge black basalt sculpture of the Lion of Babylon which became the symbol of strength throughout the world.

**Samarra**. About 70 miles (112 km) northwest of Baghdad. This is the famous capital of the Abassid Caliph Al Mo'tassim who constructed it in 836 AD. It was extensively developed by the Caliph's successors until 892 AD when the capital was transferred back to Baghdad.

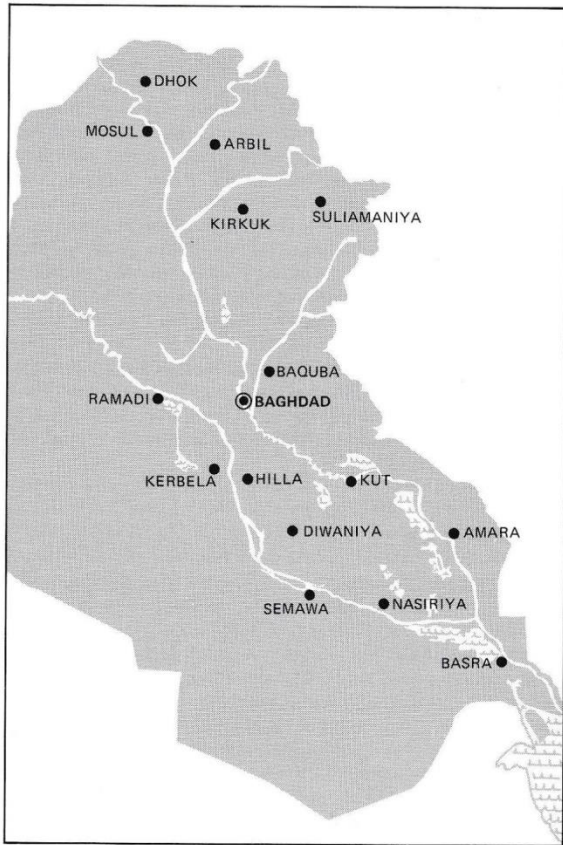
In all probability, you will have included Samarra on your list of excursions in order to view the unique spiral-shaped 173 ft. (52 m) Malwiyah Minaret built by Al-Mutawakil (847–861 AD). In remarkably good condition, the design is based on the ziggurat, a staged tower in which each storey is smaller than the one below it. The other fascinating sight is the Golden Mosque which dates from the 13th century.

**Habbaniya**. 53 miles (85 km), west of Baghdad. Already a popular sunbathing spot, the Habbaniya Lake is destined to become one of Iraq's most important touristic centers – especially attractive during spring, autumn and cool summer evenings. Now being extensively developed, the resort has a hotel and holiday bungalows offering 2,000 beds – with facilities for water-skiing, sailing, boating and swimming.

**Ur** – 234 miles (375 km) south of Baghdad (by road via Kut). Most visitors to Ur choose to travel by train from Baghdad, departing approx. 9 a.m. (check details with the Main Railway Station, tel. 82131).

Said to be the birthplace of Abraham, Ur was the center of the Sumerian Civilization and its capital for three dynasties. Today you can explore its famous Red Ziggurat – a staged tower built in 2000 BC. Here were discovered the famous tombs where royal households, wearing rich garments with





all their golden jewelry, were buried together with their kings 4,500 years ago. (See also "Iraq Museum" page 12).

There is a rest house in nearby Nasiriya belonging to the State Organization for Tourism.

**Basrah.** Just 34 miles (55 km) from the Gulf and 343 miles (550 km) from Baghdad. There are daily air services, a good paved road and also a railway linking the capital with the largest city in the south.

Because of its waterways and bridges, Basrah is sometimes called the Venice of the East and is also known as the city of Sindbad the Sailor – for it was from here that Sindbad of the Arabian Nights set off on each of his seven journeys. There is even an island, linked by bridge to the city, named after him.

Rich in Islamic history, Basrah at one time served as a military camp for the conquering Arab armies, was the Omayyad capital of Iraq and during the Abassid period became a center

of commerce and culture. Nearby at Al-Qurna, where the Tigris and Euphrates converge, is the legendary site of the "Garden of Eden". The ruins of the old city, built 9 miles (15 km) from the present Basrah, can still be viewed, the most important attraction being the minaret of Imam Ali which was built in the 7th century.

Basrah is a city of three main parts – the Basrah town with its charming old houses, the Ashar which is the main business center and the Ma'qil where the harbor, airport, railway station and Sindbad Island are located.

It is Iraq's gateway to the sea – and your memories of this city on the banks of the Shatt Al-Arab will be of its maritime atmosphere. Camels, donkeys and oil tankers. Riverside restaurants, exotic flowers. Swans and flocks of waterfowl. "Mash-hoof" long boats with their white sails. Plus 10 million palm trees representing the most extensive date groves in the world. Basrah is the port oasis of Iraq.

**Mosul** – at the opposite end of the country, in the north, 280 miles (450 km) from Baghdad, is this "City of the Eternal Spring" . . . a name it has acquired because of the exceptionally fine climate which gives two spring seasons. There are three ruined cities to explore – Nineveh, Khorsebad and Nimrud. Main attractions are the museum, the leaning minaret of the An-Nuri Mosque, the 13th-century palace of Qara Sarai as well as many old edifices and bazaars.

**Hatra** – 215 miles (345 km) northwest of Baghdad. A well-paved road connects both Baghdad and Mosul to the ruins of Hatra – the City of Towers and Temples. Its period of prosperity was between 1st century BC and 3rd century AD. The architectural style reflecting its history being Assyrian, Hellenistic, Parthian and Roman. There were a number of historical sieges of Hatra before it was finally overrun and destroyed by Sassanid King Sapor I in 241 AD.

**Kirkuk** – founded in the Assyrian period, the town assumed its importance only recently – in 1927 – when oil was discovered. The brown gold in Kirkuk's oil fields has resulted in it becoming one of the major towns in Iraq. An interesting old sight is the Castle which housed the garrison in the Ottoman days. A fascinating old sight is the Eternal Fires – the burning of natural gas seepages ("burning furnace" of biblical Daniel and his friends) – and an exciting new sight is the gigantic oilfield installations, eerily modernistic at night when illuminated by the light of the gas flares.







**Arbil** – also in the north, a tourist and holiday center, this is the oldest continuously inhabited town in the world. First mentioned in history as Arbileam in 2,000 BC. It became famous (as Arbella) as the site of a battle between Persian King Darius and Alexander the Great in 331 BC. It also flourished in the Arab and Islamic epochs being mentioned by Arab geographers.

## Night life

It's always best to check with your hotel reception for details of current night club programs. Here is a selection of night clubs featuring restaurant, bar and entertainment:

**Al-Khayam** (H4)  
Salihiya (near Ahrar Bridge).  
Oriental program.

**Ambassador** (K/L5)  
Masbah.

Western and Far East.

**Arabian Nights** (K4)  
Sa'adoun Street.

Western and oriental programs.

**Auberge** (J4)

Sa'adoun Street.

Oriental program.

**Baghdad** (L4)

Uqba Ibn Nafi Sq.

Western and oriental programs.

**Baghdad Casino** (K/L5)

Masbah.

Orchestra, floor show.

**Embassy** (K/L5)

Masbah.

Orchestra, floor show.

**Molin Rouch** (L4)

Akaba Bn Nafiea Sq.

Western and Oriental.

**Semiramis** (G4)

Sa'adoun Street.

Oriental program.

There are also a number of social clubs in Baghdad where it is often possible to obtain temporary membership during your stay in the city. For example – Iraqi Hunting Club (tel. 51 77 79), Iraqi Arts & Heritage Club (tel. 21531), Mansour Club (tel. 51 51 37), Alwiya Club (tel. 95115), Hindiya Club (tel. 97248) and Al-Mashriq Club (tel. 90016).

## Tipping

Tipping is not so prevalent in Baghdad as in many other cities of the world. For example, it is not usual to tip taxi drivers. In most hotels and restaurants a service charge of 10% is added to your bill and you're not expected to tip; if not included, tip about 10%. Naturally, if the hotel or restaurant staff performs special services, you would be expected to leave a little extra.

## Shopping and souvenir hunting

The main shopping streets are centered around Sa'adoun, Mustansir and Rashid areas. But for the visitor in search of handicrafts and bargain-priced articles, we suggest you head for the main bazaars:

**Souk Al-Safafer** – the Copper Market. Even if you do not buy anything, it's an unforgettable experience to stroll through this market where craftsmen hammer their wares into beautiful shapes. The noise is unbelievable. Look for copper and brass plates, copper coffee-pots – in sets of three (ask an Iraqi how to make real coffee, it's almost a ritual), samovars, water jugs. Nearby is **Souk Shorja** – the Silk Market. This crowded bazaar sells not only silks, satins, carpets and other textiles, but many household items. The **Gold and Silver Market** near Ahrar Bridge on Mustansir Street is also worth a visit – have a look at the silver filigree jewelry and the silver studded bracelets.

Other important shopping centers are: **Folklore Center**, Karradah Junction, Sa'adoun Street and the **Folklore Shops**, Shuhada Bridge.

## Business hours

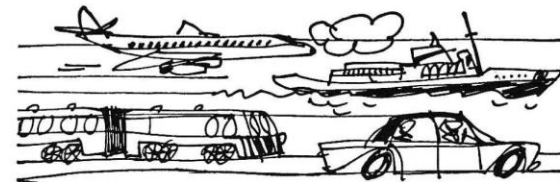
If you have to send telexes or make telephone calls to Europe or the Far East – remember Iraq is 3 hours ahead of Greenwich mean-time.

Business hours for government offices are as follows – Summer: 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., Thursdays 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.; Winter 8.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m., Thursdays 8.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m.; Ramadan (month of fasting) 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Thursdays 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Fridays closed.

## Transportation

You can ask your hotel reception to book you a taxi – or hail one on the street. They are easy to spot in their red and white colors. Plans are in hand for meters to be installed in all taxis – in the meantime, be sure to fix a price for the journey before setting off.

There are also double-decker buses criss-crossing the city but these are usually crowded and for convenience sake it is



recommended to use the taxis which are most reasonably-priced. There are even horse-drawn carriages if you prefer a more leisurely pace, but again be sure to negotiate the full fare before boarding.

Although the internationally-known car hire firms are not yet established in Iraq, it is possible to rent a car through the SAS office. However, if you are planning to spend your stay entirely in Baghdad, we would recommend you use taxis for it is very difficult finding parking places in the city. Of course, if you are touring Iraq it is more convenient to drive-yourself and the roads from the capital are well-paved enabling good speeds to be maintained.

Should you be travelling by train, please note that all trains, including the famous Orient Express, depart from the Main Railway Station. Please remember to book a train seat – telephone 30011.

## Sports

**Swimming.** In the summer heat – you'll be heading for the swimming pools which are located as follows:

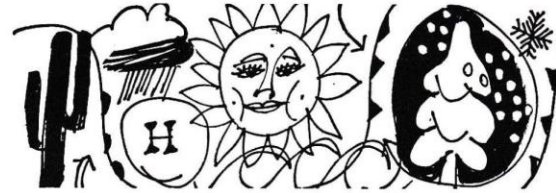
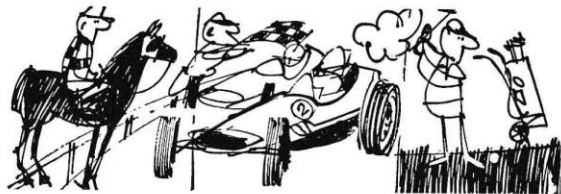
Baghdad Hotel Swimming Pool for hotel residents only. Plus several public swimming pools: Baghdad Swimming Pool, Karradat Mariam; Amanah Olympic Swimming Pool in Zawra Park; Amanah Swimming Pool, Masbah; Al-Sha'ab Swimming Pool, Al-Sha'ab Stadium; Kadhimiya Swimming Pool, Kadhimiya-Zahra St. and Aadhamiyah Swimming Pool, Aadhamiyah Antar Square.

**Horse-riding.** Contact the Iraqi Hunting Club (tel. 51 77 79) where it is sometimes possible to hire a horse or become a temporary member.

**Water sports.** See "Habbaniyah Lake" under the Excursions chapter.

## Climate and clothing

Subtropical – and dry. From April to September it is very warm with July temperatures often reaching 110°F (43°C). During this period light tropical clothing is essential. But from



October to December and from January to March it can be quite chilly on occasions so remember to pack a warm cardigan and a raincoat.

## Religious edifices

In addition to the many ancient and beautiful mosques (see "City sights") there are the following churches:

- Armenian Catholic Church**, Christians Alley.
- Armenian Orthodox Church**, Tayaran Square.
- St. Fatima's (Catholic) Church**, Karradat Mariam.
- Iraqi Protestant Church**, Nidhal Street.
- St. George's (Anglican) Church**, Karradat Mariam.
- St. Joseph's (Catholic) Church**, Rekhaita-Inner Karradah.
- Seventh Day Adventists Church**, Nidhal Street.
- Greek Orthodox Church**, Gailani Camp.

## Official holidays

January 1	New Year.
January 6	Army Day.
February 8	Revolution Day.
March 21	Spring Day (Nawrooz).
May 1	Labor Day.
July 14	Declaration of the Republic Day.
July 17	Peaceful Revolution Day.

Official holidays with dates corresponding to the Moslem year of Hijira: Id-el-Fitr (3 days); Id-el-Adha (4 days); New Year of El Hijira Day; Ashoura Day; Birth of the Prophet.

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*Edited by Mike Simon*

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