



Where Are You Going Today?

Afghanistan, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Pakistan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, or Turkey?

Editor's note: *Volumes have been written about traditional Arab culture as it is practiced in today's political climate. With all the news and TV coverage about this part of the world, we hope what we tell you here is not "cold" by the time it reaches you. But, here are some glimpses of the major features of some countries and general information for others. As similar as the Arab countries appear to be, you cannot help but know that each country, in fact, each area, fiercely protects its differences.*

General Information

Although these countries have many different forms of government, republic, state, sultanate, and kingdom, the concepts of family and honor are very important in Arab culture and society. To offend a member of a tribe is to offend the tribe as a whole. This has often led to inter-tribal wars in the past, although today generally the family will do no more than band together on principle over issues of conflict.

With the exception of Israel, unlike in western society, it is deemed preferable to marry within your tribe and to find a spouse who is as closely related as possible, although naturally siblings may not marry. Normally, hospitality is a major feature of Arab culture. And, hopefully, when the military conflicts in this area are finally resolved, it will be again.

The Arab family assigns different roles to family members on the basis of gender. The superior status of men in society and within the narrow confines of the nuclear family transcends the barriers of sect or ethnicity. The centrality of the father figure stems from the role of the family as an economic unit, in which the father is the property owner and producer on whom the rest of the family depends. This notion prevails even in rural regions of the Middle East where women participate in peasant work. Although the inferior status of women is undoubtedly legitimized by various religious texts, the oppression of women in Arab society preceded the advent of Islam.

The roles of women have traditionally been restricted to those of mother and homemaker. However, since the 1970s some Arab societies have allowed women to play a more active role socially and in the work force, basically as a result of the

manpower shortage caused by heavy migration of men to Persian Gulf countries. In Lebanon, the percentage of women in the labor force has increased, although the Islamic religious revival that swept the area in the 1980s reasserted traditional cultural values. As a consequence, veils and cloaks have become more common among Muslim women. Among Christians, the war enabled women to assume more independent roles because of the absence of male family members involved in the fighting.

Normally, hospitality is a cornerstone of Arab life. It is usually commonplace for families, particularly desert dwellers, to welcome strangers into their home. The tradition developed from the harshness of desert life—without food, water, and shelter from strangers, most desert travelers would die.

Of course, at the moment the United States government says, "If you absolutely don't have to visit this part of the world, stay home."

Afghanistan

If you have been watching the news, you know that this is a country of great mountains, scorching deserts, fertile valleys, and rolling plains. Afghanistan does not have a seacoast. The country is bordered by Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan on the north, China on the far northeast, Pakistan on the east and south, and Iran on the west. It is one of the world's least developed countries. Most Afghan workers farm the land, and many use old-fashioned farming tools and methods. Some of the people are seminomadic. That is, they roam the grasslands in the summer with their herds of livestock and spend the rest of the year farming.

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Capital and Largest city: Kabul

Currency: 1 afghani (AF) = 100 pulis

Languages: This depends upon where you are and to whom you are speaking. About 99 percent of all Afghans are Muslims and this is the chief common link among them. The population of Afghanistan consists of about 20 ethnic groups, most of which are divided into several tribes. Most of the ethnic groups have a distinct language and cultural pattern. These characteristics have made it difficult for Afghanistan to develop into a unified, modern nation. Also, most people over 15 cannot read or write.

Dressing for Business: At the moment, the only foreigners dressing for business are in the military. But, most Afghans wear traditional clothing. In winter, the people wear a heavy coat made of sheepskin, quilted fabric, or felt. Most rural men wear a turban, which may be tied in a certain way to indicate their ethnic group. City women wear a chadri, a full-length hooded garment that leaves only their eyes uncovered. Rural women in Afghanistan cover their heads with a shawl. Taliban women are forced to wear the Burqa, which is more similar to a chadri but heavier and with eyes covered by a net.

Women in Business: At the moment, "not on your tintype." Although it was different before Taliban rule, as we write, most women have not been allowed an education nor the ability to work outside the home. In 1964, Afghan law gave women equal status with men, and the social and economic position of women improved. However, such improvement has been reversed by two decades of war. In areas ruled by the Taliban, a conservative Islamic group, women must follow an especially strict code of public behavior.

Food: Afghans serve flat loaves of a whole-grain, sourdough bread at every meal. They also enjoy vegetables, yogurt, chicken, beef, mutton, and rice. Popular desserts include nuts and fruits. Tea is the favorite drink.

Living: Most of Afghanistan's rural people live in homes made of sun-dried mud bricks. City dwellers live in homes and apartment buildings made of baked brick, concrete, or both. Most of the country's seminomads live in tents made of goat hair.

Recreation: Afghans enjoy rugged sports and games. Almost all the men like to hunt, and some of them use the famous Afghan hounds as hunting dogs. Men of the northern plains play a game called buzkashi. In the game, dozens of horsemen try to grab a headless calf and carry it across a goal.

Economy: Agriculture. About 85 percent of all Afghan workers earn their living in agriculture. Wheat is the chief crop of Afghanistan. Other crops include barley, corn, cotton, fruits, nuts, rice, sugar beets, and vegetables. Production is limited by a shortage of modern machinery, fertilizer, and high-quality seeds. The seminomadic people raise most of the country's livestock. The chief livestock products are dairy items, mutton, wool, animal hides, and the skins of Karakul sheep.

Mining. Afghanistan is rich in minerals, but most of the deposits are largely undeveloped. In the 1960s, large deposits of natural gas were discovered in Afghanistan. Since then, the production of natural gas has become an important part of the nation's economy. Afghanistan also produces some coal, copper, gold, and salt. The country has huge deposits of iron ore, but they lie in a remote part of the country and so remain largely undeveloped. Afghanistan is the world's leading producer of the precious stone lapis lazuli. Other valuable stones mined in the country include amethysts and rubies.

Manufacturing. Afghanistan has relatively little industry. A few mills produce textiles, and small factories turn out such products as cement, matches, and processed foods. Skilled craftworkers in their homes or small shops make gold and silver jewelry, leather goods, rugs, and other handicraft items.

International trade. The leading exports of Afghanistan are cotton, fruits and nuts, natural gas, rugs, and the skins of Karakul sheep. Imports include machinery, motor vehicles, petroleum products, and textiles. Afghanistan's chief trading partners include India, Pakistan, Russia, and Kyrgyzstan.

Arab Republic of Egypt

Egypt covers an area of approximately 1,001,450 sq km (386,662 sq mi) in northeastern Africa, its northern coastline along the Mediterranean Sea, its eastern coastline along the Red Sea, and touching the State of Israel in the Sinai. Libya shares its western border, Sudan its southern border. It is overwhelmingly a desert country bisected by the River Nile. More than 90 percent of the land area is formed by a convergence of deserts—the Libyan Desert to the west, the Sahara and Nubian Deserts to the south, and the Arabian Desert to the east. There are oases scattered across this wasteland and a swathe of land along the Suez Canal which is cultivated, but it is mainly the land fed by the River Nile—the Nile valley and the Nile Delta—that is both habitable and arable.

The Sinai Peninsula is formed of sand desert and spectacular mountains rising as high as 2,637 m (8,652 ft.) above Red Sea level.

Capital: Cairo

Currency: The Egyptian Pound (L.E.), divided into 100 piastres, is the official currency of Egypt. As of 1995, the 3.40 Egyptian Pounds equal one U.S. dollar. The once severe currency restrictions have largely been lifted and the Egyptian Pound can be freely exchanged with other currencies.

Language: Arabic is the country's official language. The Egyptian dialect is distinct from all others and, because of the country's dominance of the media (television, cinema, radio, and music), the most recognizable and universal. Arab popular singers from as far afield as Morocco and Syria, often emigrate to Egypt and sing in the Egyptian dialect instead of their own.

The Economy: In 1973, Egypt was opened to foreign investment. The very slow but sure relaxation of import, currency, and trade restrictions stimulated Egypt's foreign exchange economy. Tourism, which had fallen off drastically anti-western stance and poor tourist infrastructure, was restarted with the privatization of many nationalized tourist facilities. Tourism represents one of the most lucrative sectors of Egypt's economy but is highly vulnerable to internal

violence and regional politics. The government remains hopeful that the oil and gas discoveries in the western desert will produce significant revenues.

Egypt continues to suffer from the vagaries of regional instability and its exploding population. Government leaders openly admit that population growth is undermining all efforts toward developing the country's economy. This situation is further aggravated by consumerism.

Industry: Cairo, Alexandria, Helwan, and the new industrial cities outside Cairo are modern Egypt's main industrial areas, producing iron and steel, textiles, refined petroleum, plastics, building materials, electronic products, paper, automobiles, and chemicals. Apart from textiles, most industrial products are made for local consumption.

The People: Although modern-day Egyptians are usually lumped together with "the Arabs" due to their language and Islamic traditions, this is not completely accurate. There is a truly Bedouin Arab grouping within Egypt, the majority still nomadic tribal peoples living in isolated oases and roaming through the country's vast desert regions. Many Bedouin Arabs are settled in the Sinai Peninsula and along the Red Sea coast, across from Arabia. However, anthropologically, the majority of indigenous Egyptians trace their ancestry back to the Semetic tribe of Ham. Their physical appearance and cultural traditions are distinct from all other Middle Eastern peoples.

The third main racial grouping in Egypt is comprised of the Nubian peoples who lived for thousands of years in their own land along the Nile, called Nuba, which overlapped from Upper Egypt into northern Sudan. Most of Nuba was flooded in the time of Gamal Abdel Nasser with the construction of the Aswan high dam and the creation of the artificial Lake Nasser. The Nubians were resettled by the government but much of their ancient culture and stunning architectural tradition has been lost.

Today nearly half the population reside in overcrowded cities. To remedy this, the

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Egyptian government has inaugurated a series of incentives to try and lure many Egyptians away from Cairo and Alexandria. Part of this program includes the construction of industrial cities located well outside the main centers and the program seems to be meeting with a measure of success.

Religion: Islam is constitutionally established as the official religion of Egypt and around 90 percent of the population are Sunni Muslim with a small minority of Bohra Muslims and other non-Sunni sects represented.

State of Israel

Slightly smaller than New Jersey and bordering the Mediterranean Sea, between Egypt and Lebanon.

Capital: Jerusalem

Currency: New Israeli shekel (ILS)

Languages: Hebrew (official), Arabic used officially for Arab minority, English most commonly-used foreign language.

National Resources: Timber, potash, copper ore, natural gas, phosphate rock, magnesium bromide, clays, sand, and oil. Arable land is 17 percent in permanent crops, pastures, forests, and woodland. Israel exports machinery and equipment, software, cut diamonds, agricultural products, chemicals, textiles, and apparel.

Natural Hazards: Sandstorms during spring and summer, droughts.

Talking Turkey in Israel: Here are some ways in which you can conduct business with culturally acceptable decorum while visiting Israel:

- Don't assume your business is not important to an Israeli who asks to meet with you in your hotel lobby over coffee or tea. This is a typical and very acceptable place to talk turkey in Israel.
- Learn to be fashionably late for a visit with an Israeli contact in his or her home. Still, if you are going to be detained for more than half an hour, call and make polite excuses.
- To show you are sincere, keep eye contact at all times when talking with an Israeli business contact. If you don't talk eye-to-eye you may not strike a deal as

looking elsewhere is considered rude behavior that indicates disinterest, disdain, and/or disagreement.

- Energetic hand gestures are commonly used when an Israeli makes conversation. Try not to be diverted to watching this dramatic presentation (remember your eye contact) and don't mimic that person by using wild hand gestures of your own. If you do, he or she will probably feel as if you are in mocking mode—not a very good way to promote good cultural relations.
- Don't beat around the bush. By speaking with confidence in a straight-forward manner, you will probably earn the immediate respect of your Israeli counterpart.

Tut Tut: If an Israeli contact responds to a statement by uttering the strange clucking sound "tut," don't be put out. That just means your conversation partner feels you have made an incorrect assumption. He or she is probably not annoyed with you nor is that person necessarily in disapproval.

Gestures: If someone shrugs his or her shoulders in response to something you've said, most likely you have caused that person to reach the point of exasperation. This is especially so if your Israeli contact holds his or her hands out with palms up.

No Nos: Don't get rowdy or drunk in public while you are visiting Israel. For the most part, mature locals do not behave in such a manner and so most people who witness someone acting out this type of behavior will probably assume he or she is an uncouth person from another country. You'll probably wish you weren't.

Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Bible stories, lost cities, Lawrence of Arabia—Jordan has romantic associations up to its eyeballs. It's a country that ought to be awash with tourists, but the Middle East's bad rep has kept them away in droves. Don't be fooled: Jordan is, on the whole, peaceful. More than that, it's one of the most welcoming, hospitable countries in the world, and doesn't even have that unsettlingly male-oriented feel so prevalent

elsewhere in the region. Where else could you leave your belongings on the street for hours at a time, safe in the knowledge they'll be there when you get back? Where else do total strangers invite you into their homes despite the fact they don't own a carpet shop?

Jordan isn't just a friendly cup of tea with the locals, though. It's also home to two of the most spectacular sights in the Middle East. Petra, the ancient city of the Nabateans, may be overrun with snap-happy day-trippers, but that doesn't change the fact that it's one of the world's most atmospheric ruins. For a slightly more contemplative experience, the startling desert scenery of Wadi Rum enraptured Lawrence of Arabia and has caused more than one traveler to don a kaffiyeh and gaze defiantly into the middle distance.

Capital: Amman (population 1.7 million)

Language: Arabic, English

Currency: Jordanian dinar

People: Arab (60 percent Palestinian, many refugees), Circassians, Chechens, and Armenians

Major industries: Minerals, petroleum refining, tourism, and agriculture.

Major trading partners: India, Saudi Arabia, UAE, European Union, United States, and Iraq.

Facts for the Traveler:

- **Visas:** All foreigners need a visa to enter Jordan. You can get one at the border or airport when you arrive, or from consulates in your country. Visas are valid for two weeks from entry, but can be easily extended up to three months. Cost depends on where you're from: Australians are charged \$45, Americans pay U.S. \$60, while some nationals can enter for free. Keep your passport on you whenever you're near the Israeli border, as there are lots of military checkpoints.
- **Health risks:** No particular risks, but you should consider vaccinations for hepatitis, typhoid, polio, tetanus, and diphtheria.
- **Meals:** Budget: U.S. \$1-2; mid-range: U.S. \$2-7; top-end: U.S. \$7 and upwards. Higher-end restaurants will expect a tip of 10 percent, but most other places

don't go in for tipping. Bargaining, particularly for souvenirs, is essential, but you are unlikely to get shopkeepers to stray far from their original price.

- **Lodging:** Budget: U.S. \$2.50-7; mid-range: U.S. \$7-30; top-end hotel: U.S. \$30 and upwards.
- **Per Diem:** Jordan is at the top end of the Middle Eastern range—cheaper than Israel, but more expensive than Egypt. Although you could conceivably get by on \$15 a day, you'll be living on felafel and slumming it in some pretty dodgy dives. If you want the odd beer, soft drink, or restaurant meal, and if you'd like a hot shower occasionally, plan for about \$20 a day. If you want a little more luxury—a couple of restaurant meals a day, a room with its own bathroom, a fair bit of travel and entry to at least one sight a day—budget around \$50.
- **Banking:** You shouldn't have a problem changing any hard currency in Jordan. Most banks will change travelers checks, and the British Bank of the Middle East takes Eurocheques. Everywhere will charge you about JD5 to change cheques. Amex are the most widely accepted. If you find you can get a good rate outside the country, buy up, as you can import as much Jordanian currency as you want.
- **Getting Around:** The only domestic air route is between Amman and Aqaba. JETT bus company runs from Amman to Aqaba, the King Hussein Bridge, Petra, and Hammamat Ma'in. Private buses run from Amman to Irbid and Aqaba. Minibuses travel between the smaller towns on an irregular service—usually they leave when they're full. Service taxis cover much the same routes. They're more expensive than minibuses, but a lot faster.

Culture: There isn't much sign of traditional Arabic music in Jordan, but you will find an interesting hybrid of Arab-style singers backed up by orchestras of western and traditional instruments everywhere you go. The Bedouin are still hanging on to their musical traditions, with groups of men

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singing trance-like chants to accompany a lone belly-dancer.

Architecture is the predominant visual art in the Arab world, partly because Islam forbids the depiction of living things. Throughout Jordan you will find spectacular mosques, ancient ruins from the Roman Empire and earlier, and magnificent mosaics. The Qusayr 'Amra is notable for its frescoes, one of which shows a nude woman bathing—an unusual art form for this part of the world. The Qur'an is one of the finest examples of classical Arabic writing, while the Al-Mu'allaqaat is an even older collection of Arab poetry. One of the best-known works of Arab literature is *Alf Layla wa Layla*, *A Thousand and One Nights*, a collection of tales from several centuries and countries. Bedouin artworks include silver jewelry, colorful textiles, and a wide range of knives.

Eating and Drinking: Islamic law forbids eating pig and drinking alcohol, and this law is followed to a greater or lesser (generally lesser) extent throughout Jordan. Islam also has a tendency to divide the sexes, and you might find that many eating establishments only welcome men. Most of these will, if asked, show you to the “family room,” an area set aside for women. When Jordanians eat out they will usually order group meals—a selection of *mezzeh*, or starters, followed by main meals to share. Arabic unleavened bread, or *khobz*, is eaten with almost everything. The other staples are *felafel*, deep-fried chickpea balls, *shwarma*, spit-cooked sliced lamb, and *fuul*, a paste of fava beans, garlic, and lemon. *Mensaf* is a Bedouin speciality—a whole lamb, head included, on a bed of rice and pine nuts.

Lebanon

The country is approximately 10,452 square kilometers, about 0.7 times the size of Connecticut, bordering the Mediterranean Sea, located between Israel and Syria. It has four major features running roughly from north to south: coastal strip, Lebanon Mountains, Biqa Valley, and Anti-Lebanon Mountains. There are also several perennial rivers, but none are navigable. The climate is hot, dry summers and cool, wet winters. The weather is drier and hotter east of Lebanon Mountains.

Capital and Largest City: Beirut. Once considered the Paris of the East, Lebanon fell off the tourist map when it disintegrated into civil war in 1975. Much of Beirut can be seen on foot. All the major banks, hotels, restaurants, travel, airline, and telecommunications offices are in the *Hamra* district.

Locating an Address: in Beirut seems complicated at first as street signs, when they exist, give the names in French and Arabic, and often bear no relation to what they are commonly called. Many locations are simply known by the description of who occupies them. Buildings rarely have numbers. When asking for directions people will refer you to landmarks rather than a street address. It isn't as difficult as it sounds and first-time visitors get used to this way of locating places very quickly. Taxi drivers are helpful, and almost all of them know where everything is.

Currency: The unit of currency in Lebanon is the Lebanese pound (LL), known locally as the lira. There are only notes (LL 50, 100, 250, 500, 1,000, and 10,000) in circulation as the currency lost much of its value during the war. Most shops, restaurants, and hotels will accept U.S. dollars.

Banking: Most banks will only change U.S. dollars and U.K. pounds in cash or traveler's cheques, which moneychangers, found throughout Lebanon, will deal in almost any convertible currency. They also offer better rates than the banks. Check the rates in a newspaper and shop around for the best deal. The currency fluctuates according to the international market and to political developments in Lebanon and the Middle East. Most banks will only change U.S. dollars and U.K. pounds in cash and travelers cheques, but moneychangers will buy and sell almost any currency.

Women: Notwithstanding the persistence of traditional attitudes regarding the role of women, Lebanese women enjoy equal civil rights and attend institutions of higher education in large numbers (for example, women constituted 41 percent of the student body at the American University of Beirut in 1983). Although women have their own organizations, most exist as subordinate branches of the political parties.

What to wear: Beirutis are familiar with foreigners' ways and dress and although sleeveless tops, miniskirts, and shorts are acceptable in Beirut, the rest of the country is more traditional and modest dress is recommended. This is particularly necessary when visiting mosques and other religious places.

Sightseeing: Four new archaeological excavation sites have already unearthed finds from the Ottoman, Byzantine, Roman, Persian, and Phoenician periods. Traces of Roman ruins excavated before the war await a good cleanup and an improvement to their surrounds, but are nevertheless worth visiting. They include the Roman baths behind Bank Street and the Roman columns west of St. George's Cathedral.

The People: Beirutis are warm and friendly people. With their usual pluck they'll tell you how their city was destroyed in the sixth century by two earthquakes, a tidal wave, and later a fire. After each disaster it was able to rise again and recapture its splendor and they expect no less of the city this time.

As in other Arab countries the traditional lifestyle of the Lebanese revolves strongly around the family, socializing, and hospitality. Western influences, mainly French and American, have given the country a cosmopolitan facade, mostly in the main cities.

Outside the cities, especially in the mountains, the people retain the old customs and traditions. The Lebanese people, despite being ethnically and religiously diverse because of the country's long history of conquest and assimilation, are friendly and hospitable.

Food and Drink: Although the food varies little from country to country throughout the Middle East, it is when the Arab world meets the Mediterranean that it becomes really interesting. Lebanese food combines the sophistication of European cuisine with the excitement of eastern spices, and it is Lebanon's culinary contributions that have been the greatest influence on modern Arabic cuisine. Dishes from Lebanon provide the framework for the exotic cuisine recognized internationally as Arabic.

The Sultanate of Oman

Capital: Muscat

Official Language: Arabic

Currency: Omani rial—1 Omani rial = 1000 baiza \$1 = 1000 baiza.

Industries: Crude oil production and refining, natural gas production, construction cement, and copper.

Getting into Oman: Unless you are a citizen of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, or Qatar, you need a visa to enter Oman and it is valid for one entry and cannot be extended. Visas can be difficult to obtain. It might be easier to have an Omani travel agent or hotelier arrange your paperwork, primarily the No Objection Certificate (NOC). A road pass is necessary if you plan to travel by car. If your passport shows any evidence of travel to Israel you will be denied entry to Oman.

Working Hours:

- Government hours: 7:30/8 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday through Wednesday. Thursday: 7:30/8 a.m.-1 p.m.
- Business hours: 8 a.m.-1 p.m. and 4 p.m.-7/7:30 p.m., except Friday evening. Most businesses are closed on Thursday afternoon. Some shops in Muscat open in the evening on Friday.

Banking Hours:

- Banks: 8 a.m.-noon Saturday to Wednesday. 8-11 a.m. Thursday.
- Moneychangers keep roughly the same hours and in addition, are usually open from around 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Some moneychangers may also be open on Friday afternoon from 4:30 or 5 p.m. for an hour or two.

People: Oman's population of between 1.5 million and 2 million is an Arab one. Because of the country's history, however, there has been a great deal of intermingling between Omanis and other groups.

For more than 200 years, there has been an Indian merchant community in Muscat and in the north it is usual to find people who are at least partly of Persian or Baluchi ancestry.

Economy: It is based on petroleum, which accounts for 99 percent of its exports. However, Oman's oil production is insignificant by the standards of Kuwait, Qatar, or Abu Dhabi. Important sources of

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income for much of the population continue to be agriculture in the interior and fishing on the coast. A majority of the population is engaged in subsistence farming though less than 1 percent of the land is currently under cultivation.

More than any other government in the region, Oman has succeeded in “localizing” its economy—that is, replacing foreigners with Omanis whenever possible.

Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Pakistan originally was created out of northwestern and northeastern India in the early 1900s. India was divided according to the religion of its people. Pakistan was created for the Muslims. Most of the people of the remaining territory of India are Hindus. So, religion was the chief reason for the establishment of Pakistan as an independent nation.

Capital: Islamabad

Largest City: Karachi

Currency: Pakistan Rupee

Language: The official language is Urdu, but large parts of the population speak only Baluchi, Punjabi, Pashto, or Sindhi. As with most other countries in the Middle East, these language barriers plus other division among its people have made it difficult for Pakistan to develop into a unified nation. Most Pakistanis 25 years of age or older cannot read and write. Less than half the children of school age go to school. There is no law that requires them to attend school.

Natural Resources: The rivers are its most important natural resource. They supply the water that irrigates more than 38 million acres of farmland. They also provide hydroelectric power. There are large natural gas fields in central Pakistan and the country has deposits of petroleum, coal, iron ore, salt gypsum, limestone, and chromite.

Economy:

- Agriculture employs about half of Pakistan’s workers. Wheat is the chief crop. However, cotton, rice, sugarcane, chickpeas, oilseeds, fruits, and vegetables are also grown. Cattle and water buffaloes are raised mainly for use as work animals, but also provide meat,

milk, and hides. Goats, sheep, and poultry farms are common in most parts of the country.

- Service industries employ about a third of Pakistan’s workers. About a seventh of the workers are employed in manufacturing industries. Textiles and clothing rank as the nation’s leading manufactured products. Fishing is an important industry in the coastal regions. Foreign trade is chiefly with Japan, the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Saudi Arabia.

People: A number of cultural groups live in various parts of Pakistan and each has its own customs and characteristics. Differences among the groups have caused problems through Pakistan’s history.

Food: Wheat and other grains form the basis of the diet of almost all Pakistanis. Rural villagers use wheat flour to make flat loaves of bread called chapattis. Pilau, a dish served through Pakistan, consists of rice mixed with meat, vegetables, raisins, or nuts. Most Pakistanis favor foods flavored with curry, ginger, onions, peppers, or other spicy seasonings. Popular meats include beef, chicken, goat, and lamb. Chicken eggs are a common food in many areas. Islam forbids its followers to eat pork. Fresh or dried fruit is a favorite dessert.

Palestine

Palestine comprises 5,860 sq km, slightly smaller than Delaware in the Middle East, west of Jordan and includes West Bank, latrun Salient, and the northwest quarter of the Dead Sea, but excludes Mt. Scopus; East Jerusalem and Jerusalem No Man’s Land are also included only as a means of depicting the entire area occupied by Israel in 1967.

Capital: Jerusalem (according to the Palestinians)

Language: Arabic is the official language in Palestine. English is widely spoken, while Italian, French, Spanish, and German are spoken to a lesser extent. Population is 97 percent Muslim.

Currency: In the absence of a Palestinian monetary unit, the New Israeli Shekel remains in use. All major credit cards and

travelers cheques are accepted. Foreign currencies can easily be exchanged at any money exchange shop.

Economy: Until recently Palestine had a developing economy in tourism and agriculture to generate the country's economic income. Industry and trade are still small scale, largely due to Israeli restrictions. They are generally small family businesses that produce cement, textiles, soap, olive-wood carvings, and mother of pearl souvenirs; the Israelis have established some small-scale, modern industries in the settlements and industrial centers.

Working Hours:

- Government offices open from 8 a.m. until 2:30 p.m.
- Banks open from 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m. with banks opening again from 3-5 p.m.
- Most shops open from around 8 a.m. until around 6 p.m. Muslim-owned shops usually close on Friday while the Christian-owned close on Sunday. The official weekend is Friday and Saturday.

Shopping: This can be an enjoyable experience with customers and merchants often haggling over prices. The main streets and old markets are filled with shops selling exotic hand-made items, aromatic perfumes, Eastern spices, jewelry, and tasty oriental sweets.

State of Qatar

Qatar is on a peninsula bordering the Persian Gulf and Saudi Arabia. It is slightly smaller than Connecticut, has a 563 kms coastline on the Persian Gulf and for 60 kms borders on Saudi Arabia. Ninety-four percent is mostly flat and barren desert covered with loose sand and gravel. It has 1 percent arable land and 5 percent pastures. Its natural resources are petroleum, natural gas, and fish. The oil and natural gas revenues enable Qatar to have a per capita income not far below the leading industrial countries of Western Europe.

Capital: Doha and it is a traditional monarchy. Ninety-five percent of the population is Muslim. Most of the present inhabitants of Qatar live in the capital, but there are a fair number living in the towns and villages of Wakrah, Dukhan, Umm Said, Al-Khor, and Madinat Shamal.

Languages: Arabic (official), English commonly used as a second language.

Currency: Qatari riyal (QR).

Moneychangers provide slightly better exchange rates than banks, though changing travelers cheques at a moneychanger can be a trying experience—each one seems to accept a different brand of cheques than the others. Credit cards are widely accepted and ATMs easy to find.

For the Traveler:

- Meals—budget: U.S. \$3-5; mid-range: U.S. \$5-15.; top-end: U.S. \$15 and upwards—A service charge is usually added to restaurant bills in Qatar but this rarely goes to the waiter. Local custom doesn't require that you leave an additional tip after a meal, though it's appreciated if you do.
- Lodging—budget: U.S. \$25-50; mid-range: U.S. \$50-80; top-end: U.S. \$80 and upwards.
- Per Diem—you might be able to travel in Qatar for about U.S \$30 a day. This assumes you can get a tourist visa through a Qatari embassy. Otherwise, the least expensive hotel that sponsors visas charges about U.S. \$90 a night. Figure on about U.S. \$60-75 a day for a mid-range budget. For a top-end place to stay and top-end meals, be prepared to spend at least U.S. \$100 a day.
- Shopping—The traditional shops where serious bargaining used to take place are becoming rare in Qatar, though you can almost always negotiate a small discount on the price of electronic goods, rental cars, and hotel rooms.

The People: Arab tribes who migrated to the area in the 18th century form the basis of the population. Only 25 percent of the population of Qatar is Qatari. The remainder is foreign, overwhelmingly Pakistani. Most Qataris are of Arab ancestry, though there are a number of families of Persian origin.

Finance and Banking: The Qatar Monetary Agency (QMA) was set up in 1973 with a mandate to carry out the functions of a central bank. It maintains supervision, coordination, and control of the banking

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sector in addition to issuing directives necessary to guide and regulate the activities of the banks and the financial corporations operating in the country. **It also regulates insurance**, circulation, and withdrawal of currency, maintains stability of currency both inside and outside the country and guarantees that the Qatar riyal is freely convertible on the world market. It is also charged with planning a banking, financial, credit, and monetary system that helps develop the national economy within the framework of a stable monetary system.

Hours of Business:

- Offices and shops are usually open from 8 a.m. to noon and reopen again in the afternoon from 4 or 5 to 7 p.m. or later.
- The shopping malls stay open until 9 or 10 p.m.
- Friday is the weekly holiday, with many businesses working only a half day on Thursday.
- Embassies and government offices are closed on Thursday.
- The Muslim holidays of Eid Al-Fitr (at the end of Ramadhan), Eid Al-Adha (during the month of the Haj), and the Islamic New Year are all observed in Qatar. The length of the two Eid holidays varies from year to year.
- The National Day is on September 3, when embassies and government offices are closed but most private businesses stay open.

Industries: These are crude oil production and refining, fertilizers, petrochemicals, steel reinforcing bars, and cement.

Natural Hazards: Haze, dust, and sand storms.

Being a Guest: Most Qatari's receive guests at home in a majiis, or reception area. In a tradition, dating back to Bedouin customs, guests are often seated at floor level on large cushions. Nowadays, sofas may be more normal, but do not be surprised if you come across the former arrangement. Like many social events, majiis receptions are nearly always single sex (male on the whole) and women are not present. This leads on to a cultural norm that is often striking for the western visitor (especially if the visitor is a woman).

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Occupying four-fifths of the Arabian Peninsula, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the largest country in the Middle East. In southwestern Asia, the country is at the crossroads of three continents: Europe, Asia, and Africa. On the west it is bordered by the Red Sea and on the east by the Arabian Gulf. To the south there are borders with Yemen and the Sultanate of Oman. To the east lie the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and the island state of Bahrain. In the north, Saudi Arabia has borders with Kuwait, Iraq, and Jordan.

- The country's area is estimated to be some 2,331,000 sq km (900,000 sq mi). "Estimated" is the correct word, as only the borders in the north, the border with Qatar, and a part of the border with Yemen are precisely demarcated.
- There is a 7,000 sq km (2,700 sq mi) neutral zone between Saudi Arabia and Iraq in which no permanent structures or military establishments may be put; Bedouins from both countries have access to the area. The zone is divided equally according to a 1975 agreement.
- Between Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, there is also a divided zone covering about 5,770 sq km (2230 sq mi). Saudi Arabia administers the southern half but the oil revenues from the area are split between the two countries.
- The country has a varied topography including—besides the well-known deserts—a green, mountainous area in its southwestern corner.

In the south of the country is the famous Empty Quarter (in Arabic, Rub al Khali), the largest continuous sand desert in the world. It is linked to another large sandy desert, the Nafud, in the north of the country. In the southwest, there are mountains rising to more than 9,000 feet and rain is not uncommon there.

Capital: Riyadh

Business Languages: Although English is widely used in the Kingdom, companies must conduct all their business with the government in Arabic. Tender announcements for projects specify the language of the bid. Most major contracts use English.

Documents establishing joint-venture or agency representation must be in Arabic in order to be legally binding. In case of dispute, the Arabic text will be the basis of any decision made in settlement.

Currency and Banking: The unit of currency is the Saudi Riyal (SR), which is divided into 100 halalahs. Notes are issued in denominations of 1, 5, 10, 50, 100, and 500 riyals. There are also one-riyal coins. The riyal is quoted in U.S. dollars but is based on Special Drawing Rights (SDR). As the SDR/dollar rate varies, so the official Riyal/dollar rate is revalued at intervals to keep within a narrow band of \$1=SR3.75. There is no restriction on converting the riyal or transferring money outside the country. Most foreign currencies can be converted against the Saudi riyal. Commercial banks exist throughout the country and in addition, moneychangers deal in foreign currencies and often offer banking transactions.

Banking hours vary slightly from bank to bank but the typical hours are: Saturday to Wednesday: 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m. and 5 to 7 p.m.; Thursday: 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Money-changers work longer hours. Changing money is easy, as are currency transfers. Newspapers carry daily exchange rates for the major currencies against the Saudi riyal.

The Saudi Arabia Monetary Agency (SAMA), established in 1952, acts as a central bank overseeing all financial activities. In addition, the government has established a number of specialized banks that help to finance various activities in their particular sectors.

Shari'a law in business: Commercial and business deals in Saudi Arabia are regulated by Shari'a or Islamic law. There are quite a few similarities between it and western law. For example:

- All people are equal before the law.
- A person is innocent until proven guilty.
- The burden of proof is on the plaintiff.

Written contracts have a sanctity and legitimacy of their own. Like the western system, the Saudi system has appeal procedures. Claims must be proven and substantiated by two male witnesses, preferably Muslim, or one male witness and two females, or one male and the oath of the claimant. In vicious or serious crimes,

four male witnesses are required. Character witnesses may also be required to verify reputations. Hearsay is normally not acceptable as evidence and evidence under oath is accepted in case written evidence is not available.

One big difference between Shari'a law and western law is the idea of reference to a precedent. A ruling issued by a judge is not binding on other judges or on him in later cases. Islam forbids interest to be paid on moneys, but allows management fees and services. Normally, awards for damages are in line with practicality and not as inflated as is often the case in the west. In other words, damages to property will be actual sums relating to repair and replacement of the property. Damages for accidental death are a sum of approximately U.S. \$35,000. The loss of the opportunity cost of money is not compensated under Shari'a.

The Economy: Before the discovery of oil, the economy was dependent upon the pilgrimage to Makkah and Medina and on the export of dates. Saudi Arabia is still one of the world's leading producers of dates but today the economy is dominated by oil. Petroleum revenues have been used to create an infrastructure that will in time transform Saudi Arabia into a diversified industrial state. Oil and petroleum products account for more than 90 percent of the country's income.

Men's Clothing:

- Thobe: This is the traditional clothing for men, a loose, long-sleeved, ankle-length garment. Thobes worn in summer are generally white and made of cotton. Thobes worn in winter are generally darker in color and made of wool.
- Tagiyah: This is a white knitted skull cap.
- Ghutra: A square scarf, made of cotton or silk, which is worn folded across the head over the Tagiyah. The end of the scarf can be draped across the face as protection in the event of sandstorms.
- Agal: A thick, doubled, black cord that is worn on top of the Ghutra to hold it in place.

Female Dress:

- Thobe: A loose, long-sleeved, ankle-length garment that may be embroidered

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and decorated with beads.

- Abaya: a large, black cloak, worn either loose and flowing or wrapped around the body.
- Boshiya: a black veil, light in weight, worn across the lower part of the face.
- Surwal: Cotton or silk trousers worn by women under the Thobe.

The Republic of Turkey

Turkey is a Middle Eastern nation that lies both in Europe and in Asia. About 3 percent of Turkey occupies the easternmost tip of southern Europe, a region called Thrace. Istanbul, Turkey's largest city, lies in this region of green, fertile hills and valleys. To the east, the rest of Turkey covers a large, mountainous peninsula called Anatolia or Asia Minor. Anatolia has several large cities, including the capital city of Ankara, and areas of rich farmland. But much of Anatolia is rocky, barren land.

The country borders Bulgaria on the northwest; Greece on the west; Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Iran on the east; and Iraq and Syria on the south. The Black Sea lies to the north, the Aegean Sea to the west, and the Mediterranean Sea to the south.

Three bodies of water—the Bosphorus, the Sea of Marmara, and the Dardanelles—separate Anatolia from Thrace. These three bodies of water, often called the Straits, have had a major role in the history of Turkey. By its control of the Straits, Turkey can regulate the movement of ships between the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea.

Capital: Ankara is the capital of Turkey and Ankara province. It is Turkey's largest city after Istanbul. Ankara is primarily an administrative city, but it is also an important commercial, industrial, and cultural center. Grains, vegetables, and fruit are grown nearby. Manufactures include food products, wine, farm machinery, iron and steel, textiles, and cement. Angoran goats bred there are famous for the mohair made from their coats. Tourism is increasingly important, and the service sector is expanding.

Currency: Turkish Lira

Languages: More than 90 percent of all

Turks speak Turkish, the country's official language. About 6 percent speak Kurdish. The rest speak Arabic, Greek, or one of the other languages of the minority groups.

People: Most of Turkey's people live in cities and towns. The number of urban dwellers has increased rapidly since the 1940s. Hundreds of thousands of people in Turkey have left their farms and villages to seek work in the cities. But the cities do not have enough jobs for all the people. As a result, many Turks have gone abroad to work. Most of Turkey's people 15 years old and older can read and write. Turkish law requires all children to attend an eight-year primary school until they graduate or reach the age of 15.

Clothing worn by the people of Turkey changed dramatically during the 1920s. The government discouraged or forbade the wearing of certain garments required by Islamic custom. City dwellers and many rural people then adopted western clothing styles. However, some Turks in rural areas still cling to Islamic tradition. Only a few men wear the traditional loose-fitting cloak and baggy trousers. But rural women still continue some of the old clothing customs. These women wear a simple blouse and pantaloons. They cover their head and often the lower part of the face with a scarf as a sign of modesty.

Food and Drink: Cracked-wheat bread and yogurt are the chief foods of most Turks. Turks also eat much lamb, rice, and eggplant. Turkish cooks are especially famous for their tasty *shish kebab*, which consists of pieces of lamb, tomatoes, peppers, and onions cooked together on a skewer. They also combine rice with almonds, meat, pine nuts, and raisins in a dish called *pilaf*.

For snacks, Turks enjoy *borek*, a flaky pastry stuffed with meat or cheese. A popular dessert is *baklava*, made of thin layers of pastry, honey, and chopped nuts. Another pastry, *kadayif*, is made with shredded wheat. Favorite beverages in Turkey include tea, thick coffee flavored with sugar, and a liquor called raki, which is made from raisins.

Economy: Turkey has a developing economy. When the Republican

government came to power in the 1920s, Turkey was almost entirely an agricultural country. Under the direction of the Turkish government, the number of factories increased from 118 in 1923 to more than 1,000 in 1941. Today, Turkey has more than 30,000 factories. But agriculture remains an important economic activity. It provides jobs for about 58 percent of the country's workers. However, farm output accounts for only about 20 percent of the value of all goods and services produced in Turkey. Manufacturing employs only around 11 percent of all workers, but the value of industrial production exceeds that of agricultural output. During the late 1980s, the government began a program to reduce its ownership of industries and to allow more private control of companies.

Agriculture: Turkey's most productive farmlands are in the coastal regions, which have fertile soil and a mild climate. Farmers on the desertlike Anatolian Plateau raise wheat and barley. However, the plateau region often has long droughts that cause serious losses of crops.

In most years, Turkey's farmers produce enough food for all the people plus a surplus to sell abroad. About 50 percent of the cropland is used for grains. Wheat is the chief grain, followed by barley and corn. Large amounts of cotton are grown for both fiber and cottonseed oil. Tobacco, a major export, is grown along the Black and Aegean Seas. Turkey is a major producer of fruits, nuts, and vegetables, including apples, eggplants, grapes and raisins, hazelnuts, melons, oranges, potatoes, sugar beets, and tomatoes. Turks also raise sheep, goats, and other livestock. Wool is Turkey's most valuable livestock product.

Manufacturing: Turkey's largest manufacturing industries are the processing of food and beverages and the production of textiles. Other leading manufactured products include fertilizers, iron and steel, machinery and metal products, motor vehicles, and pulp and paper products. Most factories and mills are in and around the large cities of northern and western Turkey.

Mining: Turkey is rich in mineral resources, but the mining industry is largely undeveloped. The country's most abundant mineral is coking coal, which is used in

steelmaking. Turkey is one of the world's largest producers of chromite, the mineral from which chromium is obtained. The nation also produces and refines petroleum. Other minerals produced in Turkey include bauxite, boron, copper, iron ore, and meerschaum, a soft, white mineral that is used to make jewelry and tobacco pipes.

Foreign Trade: The government's program to speed Turkey's industrial growth requires the nation to export as many products as possible and import large quantities of machinery and raw materials. The nation spends more money for these and other imports than it receives for its exports. As a result, Turkey has an unfavorable balance of trade. Turkey's chief imports include chemicals, machinery, iron and steel, motor vehicles, and petroleum. The country's major exports include clothing and textiles, cotton, fruits, nuts, and tobacco. Turkey's main trading partner is Germany. Other leading partners include France, Italy, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Doing Business: Here are some business protocol tips to ensure you don't endure embarrassment in Turkey. Indeed, you may even impress some of your contacts with this knowledge:

- Raising your voice in public is not the Turkish way. So, do as they do, and use a gracious, quiet manner.
- Appointments should be planned even before your trip gets underway. Try to get to meetings a few minutes early. Punctuality is very important.
- If you want to let your Turkish counterparts know that you think their plan is a good one, but you can't speak their language, try this gesture: Hold your hand up, palm outward, and slowly bring your fingers into a fist, thumb hidden.
- If you see the person you're working with respond to a question by lifting his chin and closing his eyes, the answer is probably a sign of nonapproval.
- It's always safest to avoid talking about politics or religion. Instead, concentrate on family interests and hobbies outside of work.

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Where Business Travelers Stay: A first-class hotel, the Conrad, is conveniently located for the business traveler, and has breathtaking views of the Bosphorus strait. Other hotels appropriate to the traveler on business are the Hyatt Regency, which opened at the end of last year; the Swissotel and the Sheraton Towers and Hotel.

Looking for the Lira: Finding Turkish lira isn't the easiest trick for business travelers bound for Istanbul, especially if you wait until getting to the airport to attempt the transaction. But, never fear. In Istanbul, the dollar holds higher value and is readily accepted at even the most mundane places, like a newsstand or by a street vendor. My biggest tip on spending money in this exotic city is to make sure to take along plenty of small bills.

Be Sure and Bargain: You haggle for just about everything in this not-so-third world country—even a haircut—so it's safer to have the exact price you finally establish.

Take Time to Sightsee: The architecture of the city is incredibly breathtaking (many

buildings date from Byzantine times), and the people who call Istanbul home are warm and friendly, particularly at the luxurious Conrad Istanbul, the hotel I chose.

You Don't Eat Turkey in Turkey: When dining in Turkey, a predominantly Muslim country, you can expect to eat a lot of lamb, served every way imaginable: in a kabob, as a steak, or hidden in a pastry shell. Some excellent and very typical restaurants serving the native cuisine include the well-known Konyali restaurants, Beyti and Korfez, the latter located right on the waterfront and known for its seafood. To book a table, consult your concierge or front desk staff for location and reservations.

Are You Safe? Istanbul seems like a very safe city, despite warnings of unrest prior to your editor's recent visit. However, if you're bound for Turkey, I do suggest you check with the U.S. State Department to get the latest information about your destination. ■