



## Fact Sheet

### Travel to the Kurdistan Region in Iraq

This fact sheet refers to the three governorates under the administration of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG): Dohuk, Erbil and Suleimaniah.

#### THE KURDISTAN REGION IN IRAQ

With a population of nearly 4 million, the three governorates of Dohuk, Erbil and Suleimaniah cover about 40,000 square kilometres - four times the area of Lebanon and larger than that of the Netherlands.

The capital of the Region is Erbil, which locally is also known as Hawler. The next largest cities are Suleimaniah and Dohuk.

Since the establishment of the no-fly zone in 1991 and even more so since the liberation of Iraq in 2003, the Kurdistan Region has undergone rapid development. Over 65% of the villages destroyed by Saddam Hussein's regime have been rebuilt, two new airports have been opened and new highways, schools and hospitals are being constructed.

Foreign visitors are warmly welcomed. Among the growing number of visitors are international media and business people, as well as returnees from the Kurdish Diaspora.

While Middle Eastern customs of business, dress and behaviour are closely followed, Kurdistan is also progressive, pluralistic and relatively open.

#### SECURITY IN THE REGION

The security situation in the Kurdistan Region in Iraq is very different from the rest of Iraq. There are fewer than 200 US soldiers stationed in Kurdistan and not a single coalition soldier has lost their life in the Region since the start of the conflict. The official Regional guard, the Peshmerga forces, are highly trained and experienced in providing security. Working in close cooperation with the Regional Guard are the Asayish (the Security Police) and the regular Police, who provide comprehensive protection against threats and help with routine police matters.

To maintain the level of peace in Kurdistan, there are checkpoints on the borders and city perimeters. Separate advice must be sought for travel outside of the Kurdistan Region. We also recommend that visitors consult travel advice issued by their country of domicile.

## **VISAS**

Please check with your nearest Iraqi Embassy about visa requirements and the application process. The KRG Representations abroad do not issue Iraqi visas, but can advise travellers on requirements. For advice on visas, please email [dfr@krg.org](mailto:dfr@krg.org) , [uk@krg.org](mailto:uk@krg.org) , or [us@krg.org](mailto:us@krg.org)

## **FLIGHTS TO THE KURDISTAN REGION IN IRAQ**

The Kurdistan Region has two international airports: Erbil International Airport and Suleimaniah International Airport. Most flights operating from Europe and the Middle East fly directly to Kurdistan, without going via Baghdad. Several IATA members scheduled carriers already fly to Erbil, and more IATA airlines are expected to start flights there. Several charter companies also operate flights to Erbil or Suleimaniah.

Below are the contact details or websites of the main airlines and flight operators serving the Kurdistan Region.

**FLIGHT INFORMATION IS CORRECT AT TIME OF WRITING, BUT IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE. PLEASE CONFIRM FLIGHT DETAILS DIRECTLY WITH THE AIRLINE OR OPERATOR.**

## **CHECKING IN AT ERBIL AND SULEIMANIAH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS**

Passengers are advised to arrive at Erbil International Airport at least 2 and a 1/2 hours before departure, to allow sufficient time to board the shuttle bus and go through the security check point to the departure terminal.

## **AIRLINES AND ROUTES**

### **Amman - Erbil**

Operated by Royal Jordanian Airlines

Website: [www.rj.com](http://www.rj.com)

Amman:

Tel: +962 6 4453052

Tel: +962 6 5857111

Erbil:

Tel: +964 (0)750 477 9898

Tel: +964 (0)750 491 0973

E-mail: [eb1rj@yahoo.com](mailto:eb1rj@yahoo.com); [eb1ga2@rj.com](mailto:eb1ga2@rj.com)

Stockholm

Tel: +46 8 54 52 59 52

London:

Tel: +44 (0)8719 112112

Paris:

Tel: +33 (0)1 42 65 99 91

### **Baghdad - Erbil**

Operated by Iraqi Airways

Iraqi Airways in Erbil:

Tel: +964 (0)750 423 5555

Tel: +964 (0)750 466 6444

E-mail: [zagros\\_air@yahoo.com](mailto:zagros_air@yahoo.com); [info@zagros.net](mailto:info@zagros.net)

Website: [www.iraqairways.co.uk](http://www.iraqairways.co.uk)

### **Abu Dhabi - Erbil**

Operated by Etihad Airways

Website: [www.etihadairways.com](http://www.etihadairways.com)

**Bahrain - Erbil**

Operated by Gulf Air  
Website: [www.gulfair.com](http://www.gulfair.com)  
Gulf Air in Erbil:  
Tel: +964 (0)750 401 7333  
Tel: +964 (0)750 401 8333

**Beirut - Erbil**

Operated by MEA (Middle East Airlines)  
Website: [www.mea.com.lb](http://www.mea.com.lb)  
MEA in Erbil:  
Tel: +964 (0)750 330 9712  
Tel: +964 (0)66 2235454  
E-mail: [ebkzme@mea.aero](mailto:ebkzme@mea.aero)

**Dubai – Erbil**

Offered by two airlines, Flydubai and Zagros Air:

**Flydubai**

Website: [www.flydubai.com](http://www.flydubai.com)  
Tel: +971 4 301 0800  
Bookings in Erbil:  
Zozik Air, Tel. +964 (0)750 425 5445  
Laru Travel, Tel. +964 (0)770 745 8888

**Zagros Air**

Zagros Air in Dubai:  
Tel: +971 4 265 3838  
Mobile: +971 50 559 4104

**Zagros Air in Erbil:**

Tel: +964 66 256 6006  
Mobile: +964 (0)750 733 3026  
Mobile: +964 (0)750 418 5555  
E-mail: [info@zagrosgroup.net](mailto:info@zagrosgroup.net); [zagros\\_airdxb@yahoo.com](mailto:zagros_airdxb@yahoo.com)  
Website: [www.zagros-group.net](http://www.zagros-group.net)

**Frankfurt – Erbil**

Operated by Lufthansa  
Website: [www.lufthansa.com](http://www.lufthansa.com)  
Lufthansa in Erbil:  
Tel: + 964 (0)66 224 5470 to 5473  
Email: [office.ebl@austrian.com](mailto:office.ebl@austrian.com)

**Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, Düsseldorf, Nuremberg, Stuttgart, Dresden – Erbil**

Operated by Air Berlin  
Website: [www.airberlin.com](http://www.airberlin.com)  
Air Berlin in Erbil  
Tel. +964 (0)750 739 2585  
Email: [alazawi\\_saad57@yahoo.com](mailto:alazawi_saad57@yahoo.com)

**Gothenburg and Malmo - Erbil**

Operated by Viking Airlines  
Website: [www.miranaviation.com](http://www.miranaviation.com)  
Miran Aviation in Erbil:  
Tel: +964 (0)66 2252772  
Tel: +964 (0)750 725 9999 / Tel: +964 (0)750 720 5555  
E-mail: [info@miranaviation.com](mailto:info@miranaviation.com) ; [miranaviation@hotmail.com](mailto:miranaviation@hotmail.com)

**Istanbul - Erbil**

Operated by Turkish Airlines and Atlas Jet:

Turkish Airlines

Website: [www.turkishairlines.com](http://www.turkishairlines.com)

Erbil sales office:

Gulan Street Tower, Erbil

Tel. +964 (0)66 22 46 236

Email: [mahmoud@stergroup.com](mailto:mahmoud@stergroup.com)

Atlas Jet

Website: [www.atlasjet.com](http://www.atlasjet.com)

Atlas Jet in Turkey:

Tel: +90 212 444 3387

Contact Atlas Jet in Erbil

Tel: +964 (0)750 - 418 4444/ 420 4444/ 420 5555

E-mail: [info@zagros-group.net](mailto:info@zagros-group.net)

**London Gatwick - Erbil via Stockholm Arlanda**

Operated by Viking Airline

Aerolympic in Stockholm:

Tel: +46 8 24 28 85

Fax: +46 8 21 43 43

Email: [info@aerolympic.se](mailto:info@aerolympic.se)

Contact Aerolympic in London:

Tel: +44 (0)207 100 1023

Miran Aviation in Erbil:

Website: [www.miranaviation.com](http://www.miranaviation.com)

Tel: +964 66 223 1573

+964 66 253 2927

Mob.: +964 (0)750 423 3511

+964 (0)750 423 3512

Email: [info@miranaviation.com](mailto:info@miranaviation.com)

Email: [miranaviation@hotmail.com](mailto:miranaviation@hotmail.com)

**Manchester – Erbil via Athens**

Operated by Viking Airlines

Website: [www.miranaviation.com](http://www.miranaviation.com)

Miran Aviation in Erbil:

Tel: +964 66 2252772

Tel: +964 750 725 9999

Tel: +964 750 720 5555

E-mail: [info@miranaviation.com](mailto:info@miranaviation.com) ; [miranaviation@hotmail.com](mailto:miranaviation@hotmail.com)

Aerolympic in London:

Tel: +44 (0)207 100 1023

**Stockholm Arlanda - Erbil**

Operated by Air Sweden

Website: [www.flyswedish.se](http://www.flyswedish.se)

Air Sweden in Sweden:

Tel: +46 73 740 0010

Air Sweden in Erbil:

Tel: +964 (0)750 718 6262

E-mail: [info@flyswedish.se](mailto:info@flyswedish.se)

**Urmieh – Erbil**

Operated by Iran Air, website: [www.iranair.com](http://www.iranair.com)

**Vienna - Erbil**

Operated by Austrian Airlines

Website: [www.austrian.com](http://www.austrian.com)

Austrian Airlines sales office in Erbil:

Shaqlawah Street, Brayan Bldg

Tel: + 964 (0)66 224 5470 to 5473

Office hours: Open to the public Sunday to Thursday, 10.00 to 15.00

**Austrian Airlines flights from the United States to Erbil**

Announcement as of 27 April 2009: Austrian Airlines is offering a special discount for the Kurdish community in the US and US visitors travelling to Erbil in summer 2009. Two travel agencies have been selected to offer these special rates:

US Tours and Travel in Dallas, TX

Tel: 972-889-8747

e-mail: [ustt1@yahoo.com](mailto:ustt1@yahoo.com)

Up & Away Travel in Fairfax, VA

Tel: 703-691-9232

Tel: 800-373-5261

e-mail: [hmikhail@cox.net](mailto:hmikhail@cox.net)

Contact Austrian Airlines in Erbil

+964 (0)66 224 5470 to +964 (0)66 224 5473

**Manchester – Suleimaniah via Athens**

Operated by Viking Airlines

Website: [www.miranaviation.com](http://www.miranaviation.com)

Contact Miran Aviation in Erbil:

Tel: +964 66 2252772

Tel: +964 750 725 9999

Tel: +964 750 720 5555

E-mail: [info@miranaviation.com](mailto:info@miranaviation.com) ; [miranaviation@hotmail.com](mailto:miranaviation@hotmail.com)

Contact Aerolympic in London:

Tel: +44 (0)207 100 1023

**Munich - Suleimaniah**

Operated by Dokan Air

Contact Dokan Air in Iraq

+964 770 777 4151

+946 7480155041

Contact Dokan Air in Germany

Tel: +49 911 240 63 09

Fax: +49 911 96 53 32 11

**Munich – Suleimaniah via Dusseldorf**

Operated by Zozik Air

Website: [www.zozik-aviation.de](http://www.zozik-aviation.de)

Contact Zozik Air in Suleimaniah:

Tel. +964 (0)770 2177177

Tel. +964 (0)750 1024331

E-mail: [fly@zozik-aviation.com](mailto:fly@zozik-aviation.com)

Contact Zozik Air in Germany:

Tel. +49 69 69 59 7370

Tel. +964 (0)750 1024331

E-mail: [sinan@zozik-air.com](mailto:sinan@zozik-air.com)

**Amman – Suleimaniah**

Operated by Royal Jordanian Airlines

Website: [www.rj.com](http://www.rj.com)

Amman:

Tel: +962 6 4453052

Tel: +962 6 5857111

Erbil:

Tel: +964 (0)750 477 9898

Tel: +964 (0)750 491 0973

E-mail: [eblrj@yahoo.com](mailto:eblrj@yahoo.com); [eblga2@rj.com](mailto:eblga2@rj.com)

Stockholm

Tel: +46 8 54 52 59 52

London:

Tel: +44 (0)8719 112112

Paris:

Tel: +33 (0)1 42 65 99 91

**Istanbul - Suleimaniah**

Operated by Azmar Air

Contact Azmar Air in Istanbul

Tel: +90 212 6633 718

Fax: +90 212 6633 513

**Dubai - Suleimaniah**

Operated by Azmar Air

Contact Azmar Air in Dubai

Tel: +971 4 266 8993

Fax: +971 4 266 8233

Mobile: +971 50 551 4161

**Tehran - Suleimaniah**

Operated by Azmar Air

Contact Azmar Air in Tehran

Tel: +982 1 8880 4467

Fax: +982 1 8894 0361

**Routes operated by Iraqi Airways**

Iraqi Airways operates many flights to Erbil or Suleimaniah international airports, for example Baghdad, Basra, Najaf, Amman, Beirut, Dubai, Damascus, Cairo, Frankfurt, Malmo, Stockholm and Tehran. Some services are direct to Suleimaniah or Erbil, and others are indirect. Please contact Iraqi Airways for details of direct and indirect routes.

Website: [www.iraqairways.co.uk](http://www.iraqairways.co.uk) and [www.iq-airways.com](http://www.iq-airways.com)

Iraqi Airways in Erbil:

Tel: +964 (0)750 423 5555

Tel: +964 (0)750 466 6444

E-mail: [zagros\\_air@yahoo.com](mailto:zagros_air@yahoo.com); [info@zagros.net](mailto:info@zagros.net)

Other Iraqi Airways telephone numbers:

Amman: + 962 6 4638600

Damascus: + 963 11 2450301 /2

Istanbul: +90 535 379 92 05

Baghdad: +964 1 537 2002

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## **TRAVEL AGENCIES IN THE KURDISTAN REGION**

These travel agents based in Kurdistan offer flight reservations, some may also offer other services such as hotel bookings and local transport services.

### **Uniglobe – Iraq Tours and Travel**

Services: airline bookings and ticketing, hotel bookings in Iraq and abroad, transfer and meet & greet, and event management.

E-mail: [info@uniglobeiraq.com](mailto:info@uniglobeiraq.com)

Mobile: +964 (0)750 429 6888 and +964 (0)7710 222 223

Offices: 1) English Village 331, Erbil, 2) Erbil Rotana Hotel, Erbil

Website: [www.uniglobeiraq.com](http://www.uniglobeiraq.com)

### **Zagros Air**

Erbil mobile:

+964 (0)750 449 5555

+964 (0)750 447 6399

+964 (0)750 446 8394

### **Laru Travel Services**

Erbil mobile:

+964 (0)750 455 4411

+964 (0)750 446 8960

Cyprus Tel: +357 2581 4084

Amman Tel: +962 6 565 6561 and +962 6 568 9787

e-mail: [lanagassim@batelco.jo](mailto:lanagassim@batelco.jo)

### **Baban Tourism**

For Royal Jordanian Airlines reservations

Erbil Tel: +964 66 220 0600

Erbil mobile: +964 (0)750 491 0973

e-mail: [babantourism@yahoo.com](mailto:babantourism@yahoo.com)

### **Atrosh Air**

For Atrosh Air flights between Stockholm/Copenhagen and Erbil

Erbil Tel: +964 66 254 7474

Erbil mobile: +964 (0)750 460 0460

Suleimaniah mobile: +964 (0)730 117 3317

e-mail: [erbil@atroshair.com](mailto:erbil@atroshair.com)

### **Azmar Air**

For Azmar Air flights to Suleimaniah

e-mail: [lazo@nokangroup.com](mailto:lazo@nokangroup.com)

Suleimaniah mobile: +964 (0)7701 525 775

e-mail: [deraw\\_it@yahoo.com](mailto:deraw_it@yahoo.com)

e-mail: [deraw\\_it@hotmail.com](mailto:deraw_it@hotmail.com)

Suleimaniah mobile: +964 (0)7701 571 906

## **TRAVEL AGENCY IN LONDON**

Booking agent for many scheduled airline routes to Erbil:

IKB Travel & Tours Ltd, IKB House, 230 Edgware Road

London W2 1DW

Tel: 020 7724 8455

Fax: 020 7724 8655

e-mail: [travelinfo@ikbtravel.co.uk](mailto:travelinfo@ikbtravel.co.uk)

Website: [www.YouShouldTravel.com](http://www.YouShouldTravel.com)

## **SPECIALIST BUSINESS AND GROUP TRAVEL AGENCY**

### **CT Travel**

CT Travel specialises in business, corporate, and group travel. For the past several years, it has been arranging travel to the Kurdistan Region in Iraq from any part of the world, for individual and group business travellers. Based in the UK, CT Travel is now partners with Uniglobe, which has a branch in Erbil.

Tel. +44 (0)1892 673 427

Online email contact form: <http://www.ctbusinessstravel.co.uk/contact-details/>

## **OVERLAND ROUTE TO THE KURDISTAN REGION**

Overland entry into the Kurdistan Region is possible through Turkey. The suggested route is to fly to Istanbul Ataturk Airport and then take a two-hour domestic flight to Diyarbakir. (Turkish visas can be obtained on arrival at Istanbul Airport. Baggage may have to be retrieved from the International Terminal and checked in at the Domestic Terminal.)

At Diyarbakir Airport taxis can be hired to drive to the Ibrahim Khalil/Habur border crossing point, Turkey's border with the Kurdistan Region in Iraq. Many drivers do this journey frequently and are familiar with the route. It is advisable to settle the price beforehand, a guide price is USD 150, and to check that the driver has the necessary paper work to take passengers over the border. Because of the journey time it is advisable to start the overland journey in the early morning, staying overnight in Diyarbakir if necessary.

After crossing the border at Ibrahim Khalil, another taxi can take you to your destination in the Kurdistan Region. The approximate journey time from Diyarbakir to the border is 4 hours; then from the border to Dohuk is 1.5 hours; to Erbil 4 hours; and to Suleimaniah 6 hours. There are alternative routes via Iran and Syria but these are less frequently travelled.

## **ASSISTANCE FOR JOURNALISTS AND BUSINESS TRAVELLERS**

Journalists, delegations and travellers visiting for official or business purposes can contact the KRG for advice on arranging meetings and hiring drivers, fixers, interpreters and security. Please contact:

The KRG Department of Foreign Relations, Erbil: [dfr@krg.org](mailto:dfr@krg.org)

KRG Representation to the UK, London: [uk@krg.org](mailto:uk@krg.org)

KRG Representation to the US, Washington DC: [us@krg.org](mailto:us@krg.org)

## **SPECIALIST ADVENTURE AND CULTURE TRAVEL COMPANIES**

Several specialist travel companies offer cultural sightseeing holidays in the Kurdistan Region

### **Kurdistan Adventures**

Kurdistan Adventures is an Australian/Kurdish local company that specialises in small group adventure travel and operates escorted tours, day trips and custom itineraries. Please see [www.kurdistan-adventures.com](http://www.kurdistan-adventures.com)

### **Hinterland Travel**

Hinterland Travel is a UK-based travel company operating tours to the Kurdistan Region in Iraq since 2007.

Details are available on its website: <http://www.hinterlandtravel.com/>

### **Distant Horizons**

Distant Horizons is a US-based travel company operating tours to the Kurdistan Region in Iraq. Its first tour was in June 2008, and it plans more trips in the future. Details are available on its website: <http://www.distant-horizons.com/>

### **Terre Entière**

Terre Entière, a French travel company, added the Kurdistan Region in Iraq to its list of destinations in late 2008. Details are available on its website: <http://www.terreentiere.com/>

### **The Other Iraq Tours**

The Other Iraq Tours is a local tour company based in the Kurdistan Region, operated by expatriates and specialising in custom and luxury tours. Details are available on its website: [www.theotheriraqtours.com](http://www.theotheriraqtours.com)

### **Spiekermann Travel**

Based in Michigan USA, specialist tour operator Spiekermann Travel is offering guided tours of the Kurdistan Region, see [www.mideasttrvl.com](http://www.mideasttrvl.com)

### **Babel Tours**

Babel Tours is a recently established tour operator based in the Kurdistan Region. See <http://www.babel-tours.com/>

## **HOTELS**

### **HOTELS IN ERBIL**

#### **Erbil International Hotel**

30 Metre Street  
Tel: +964 (0)66 223 4460 – 70  
Fax: +44 (0)7069 410 005  
email: [info@erbilinhotel.com](mailto:info@erbilinhotel.com)  
Website: [www.erbilinhotel.com](http://www.erbilinhotel.com)

#### **Erbil Rotana Hotel**

Gulan Street, Erbil - Kurdistan, Iraq  
Tel: +964 (0)66 210 55 55, Fax: +964 (0)66 210 55 56  
Website: <http://www.rotana.com/rotanahotelandresorts/iraq/erbil/erbilrotana/overview/ataglance>

#### **Hawler Plaza Hotel**

Kirkuk Road, near Erbil Stadium  
Tel: +964 (0)66 222 8890 / (0)66 2519740 / (0)66 254 0050  
email: [hawler\\_plaza@yahoo.com](mailto:hawler_plaza@yahoo.com)  
Website: <http://hawlerplazahotel.com/Malper.html>

#### **Khanzad Hotel**

Salahaddin Road, about 25 minutes outside Erbil city centre  
Tel: +964 (0)66 2245273 / 74 / 76 / 77, and +964 (0)66 2505226  
email: [info@khanzadresort.com](mailto:info@khanzadresort.com)  
Website: <http://www.khanzadresort.com/>

#### **Chwar Chra Hotel**

Abdul Salam Al-Barzani Street  
Tel: +964 (0)66 223 1508 / (0)66 223 1509 / (0)66 222 2650  
email: [info@chwarchrahotel.com](mailto:info@chwarchrahotel.com)  
Website: <http://www.chwarchrahotel.com/default.asp>

#### **Noble Hotel**

Peshawa Qazi Street (100 Meter Street), Ankawa, Erbil  
Tel. +964 - (0)66 225 26 30 / (0)66 225 26 20  
Mob: +964 (0)750 431 22 44 / (0)771 193 63 00  
Website: <http://www.noble-hotel.com/>

#### **Ankawa Palace Hotel**

Shlama Street, Ankawa, Erbil (near Residency Office)  
Tel: +964 (0)66 225 3030, Mob: +964 (0)750 486 3030, Fax: +964 (0)66 255 3232  
E-mail: [info@ankawapalace-hotel.com](mailto:info@ankawapalace-hotel.com)  
Website: <http://www.ankawapalace-hotel.com/>

**Royal Palace Hotel**

60 Metre Street, Opposite Ankawa bridge (overpass), near Mahhar Restaurant  
Tel: +964 (0)66 2562981/ (0)66 256 2982  
Mobile: +964 (0)750 423 7426 / (0)750.423.7326  
email: [royalpalace\\_h@yahoo.com](mailto:royalpalace_h@yahoo.com)

**Arbil Tower Hotel**

Tel: +964 (0)66 222 6600 / 223 0094

**Shereen Palace Hotel**

Tel: +964 (0)66 222 6240 / 222 0915

**HOTELS IN DOHUK****Dilshad Palace Hotel**

Dohuk main street, opposite Mazi Supermarket  
Tel: +964 (0)62 722 7601 – 9  
Fax: +964 (0)62 722 7610  
email: [info@dilshad-palace.com](mailto:info@dilshad-palace.com)  
Website: [www.dilshad-palace.com](http://www.dilshad-palace.com)

**Slivan Hotel**

14 Athar Street  
Tel: +964 (0)62 722 5683

**Sulav Hotel**

Tel. +964 (0)62 722 1955 / 722 1956  
Mobile: +964 (0)750 445 7004  
Email: [sulavhotel@sulavco.com](mailto:sulavhotel@sulavco.com) ; [sulavhotel@yahoo.com](mailto:sulavhotel@yahoo.com)  
Website: <http://www.sulavco.com/hotel.htm>

**Jiyan Hotel**

Tel.+964 (0)62 722 24 00  
Mobile: +964 (0)750 442 7711  
Mobile: +964 (0)770 051 7711  
E-fax: +1 631 982 7711  
email: [info@jiyanhotel.com](mailto:info@jiyanhotel.com)  
Website: <http://www.jiyanhotel.com>

**Mazi Motel**

Website: [http://www.alaminest.com/?page=mazi\\_motel](http://www.alaminest.com/?page=mazi_motel)

**HOTELS IN SULEIMANIAH****Lalezar Hotel**

Sarchinar Hill  
Tel: +964 (0)53 319 2601  
Fax: +964 (0)53 319 2602  
email: [info@lale-zar.com](mailto:info@lale-zar.com)  
Website: [www.lale-zar.com](http://www.lale-zar.com)

**Sulaimani Palace Hotel**

+964 (0)53 3134141 – 47

**Azmir Palace Hotel**

+964 (0)748 012 3513

**Ashti Hotel**

Salim Street. Tel: +964 (0)53 312 7999

**Parezh Hotel**

Tel: +964 (0)53 210 7185

Mobile +964 (0)770 366 8888

Mobile: +964 (0)730 154 6525

**CURRENCY**

The local currency is the Iraqi Dinar. US Dollars are also widely used. Exchange rates as of 3 May 2011:

1 US Dollar = 1,166 Iraqi Dinars

1 Euro = 1,724 Iraqi Dinars

1 British Pound = 1,922 Iraqi Dinars

(For up-to-date exchange rates please visit [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com) or [www.oanda.com](http://www.oanda.com))

Please be aware that there are currently very few ATM machines or credit card facilities. **Cash is the only method of payment in the vast majority of shops, hotels and restaurants. Ensure you take enough with you in US dollars or Iraqi dinars for all your expenses including the hotel bill.** Exchange facilities are available at the airport, international hotels and exchange shops in the bazaars.

**WEATHER**

Summer months (May-September) are very hot and dry, especially on the Erbil Plain, often reaching temperatures as high as 50 degrees Celsius. It is slightly cooler in the evenings and in the mountainous regions around Dohuk and Suleimaniah. The winter months can be cool with rain and snowfall.

**ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES**

**Note:** Voltage is 220v. Both UK three-pronged and European two-pronged plugs are in use. Visitors are advised to take a universal adapter with them.

**MOBILE PHONES**

Asiacell, Korek, the Kurdistan Region's largest mobile phone service operators, have roaming agreements with several foreign operators, including European, US and UK companies. If you wish to use your mobile locally please check with your mobile phone service operator whether it has a roaming agreement with Asiacell or Korek. Roaming agreements can also be checked on the GSM Association website's Iraq roaming partners section: [http://www.gsmworld.com/roaming/gsminfo/cou\\_iq.shtml](http://www.gsmworld.com/roaming/gsminfo/cou_iq.shtml)

Rather than using your home mobile SIM card, it may be cheaper to buy a local SIM card which can be purchased in some hotels and shops. Top-up payment cards for local SIMs are available in hotels and shops.

**INTERNET CONNECTIONS**

Internet connections are available in many hotels and some private internet cafes. Not all connections are broadband speed.

**POSTAL AND FREIGHT SERVICES**

Letters and packages can be sent by normal post **from** the Kurdistan Region abroad, but at present they cannot be sent from abroad to the Kurdistan Region. Fedex and DHL offer air freight services to and from Kurdistan, please contact them for details.

The post office in Erbil is near the Citadel, close to the old court building. Please ask for directions. The Arabic word for post, which is also used in Kurdish, is 'bareed'.

**TRAVEL & DISTANCE BETWEEN CITIES**

Erbil to Suleimaniah - 170 km, approx. three and half hours drive

Erbil to Dohuk - 245 km, approx. three hours drive

Dohuk to Suleimaniah - 340 km, approx. five hours drive

## TIME DIFFERENCE

The Kurdistan Region and the rest of Iraq are three hours ahead of Greenwich Meantime (GMT).

## NATIONAL HOLIDAYS

A list of national holidays and important dates is available here:

<http://www.krg.org/articles/detail.asp?nr=139&lngnr=12&smap=03010200&anr=18627>

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Satellite television with CNN and BBC World is available in most hotels. The main regional English-language newspapers are the Kurdish Globe and AK News.

## FOOD AND DRINK

Kurdish cuisine is based on lamb, chicken, rice and bread, and the use of many fresh herbs and vegetables. Fish served in restaurants is often barbecued over an open fire to make a traditional Iraqi dish called mazzgouf. Fresh fruit or paklava, a Middle Eastern flaky pastry and nut dessert, is usually served after the main course. While many types of fruit and vegetables are available throughout the year, seasonal and local products, such as wild asparagus, native rhubarb, green almonds and buffalo yoghurt, are highly prized and enjoyed. Black tea with sugar is the most popular beverage both inside and outside the home. Drinking alcohol in moderation is acceptable in some restaurants and hotels. Drunken and loud behaviour is frowned upon.

## KURDISH PHRASES

There are two dialects of Kurdish spoken in the Kurdistan Region in Iraq: Kurmanji, spoken mainly in Dohuk, and Sorani, spoken in Erbil and Suleimaniah.

English	Kurdish
How are you?	Choni?
Good morning	Bayani Bash
Good afternoon	Ewara Bash
Good night	Shaw Bash
Good day	Roj Bash
Welcome	Bakher Beyt
How much is this?	Ama ba chanda?
Yes	Bale
No	Na
Please	Bey-zahmet
You're welcome	Shayani niya
Mr Ahmed	Kak Ahmed (honorific term for men)
Miss/Mrs Sayran	Sayran Khan (honorific term for women)
With pleasure	Sar chaw
Excuse me	Ba yarmateet
Do you speak English	Inglizi ezani?
I don't speak Kurdish	Kurdi nazanm
Tea without sugar!	Chai bey shakr

## SIGHTS OF INTEREST

Please visit [www.kurdistantourism.com](http://www.kurdistantourism.com), the website of the Kurdistan Region's official tourist board, for tourist information, guides and the board's contact details. The tourist board can be contacted at:

Tel: +964 (0)66 224 43 94

e-mail: [info@tourismkurdistan.com](mailto:info@tourismkurdistan.com)

*Iraq: Then and Now*, published by Bradt Travel Guides in April 2008, is a guide to Iraq's history and present-day, provides information on archaeology and culture, and includes 17 maps of different parts of Iraq. It includes a chapter on the Kurdistan Region.

Some of the Kurdistan Region's places of interest and tourist attractions are listed here:

**ERBIL AND SURROUNDS:**

**Erbil citadel** dates back 6,000 years BC and forms the original boundaries of the city. Erbil is one of the oldest continually inhabited cities in the world.

**Sami Abdul Rahman Park** is a large municipal park built on the site of a former Ba'ath military base.

**Qaysari bazaar** is Erbil city's traditional market, selling household goods, food, textiles, gold and souvenirs.

**Sheikh Chooli minaret** in the western district of Erbil was built by Sultan Mudhaffarudeen and dates back to 543-586 AD. The minaret is the focal point for the recently developed Minara Park.

**Khanzad castle** on the Erbil - Shaqlawa road dates back to the Soran Period when the Region was ruled by several principalities.

**Rabban Beya monastery** is a one-hour climb over mountain paths. There are two large highly engraved cave-like chambers that date back to the fourth century AD.

**Shaqlawa resort** is 51 km north of Erbil and is a popular weekend and holiday destination with a great fresh produce market.

**Gali Ali Beg** ravine and waterfall is 130km from Erbil, a popular place for recreational picnics.

**Bekhal Resort** is another water resort 140km from Erbil and a short drive from Gali Ali Berg.

**SULEIMANIAH AND SURROUNDS:**

**Suleimaniah museum**, located on Salim Street, houses local items that date back thousands of years. It is one of the richest museums in the Region.

**Dokan lake**, 70km west of Suleimaniah, is a local resort with hotels, restaurants and holiday chalets.

**Darbandikhan dam** 65km south east of Sulemaniah also has tourist cabins, restaurants, leisure facilities.

**Ahmadawa resort**, known for its springs, waterfalls and orchards, is a popular summer escape for locals and tourists.

**DOHUK AND SURROUNDS:**

**Saint Ith Llaha Church**, just west of Dohuk, is oldest church in the region and dates back to 500AD.

**Amadiyah town**, 90km north east of Dohuk, dates back to the Assyrian Period and is a former principality. Amadiyah's minaret is 30 metres high, with views from the top of the nearby mountains and valleys.

**Amadiyah citadel** is located on the eastern side of Amadiyah city. Its gateway is featured in Kurdistan: The Other Iraq adverts and documentary. See [www.theotheriraq.com](http://www.theotheriraq.com)