

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 , uk@krg.org , or us@krg.org

FLIGHTS TO THE KURDISTAN REGION IN IRAQ

International and domestic flights operate to and from Erbil International Airport and Suleimaniah International Airport. Most flights operating from Europe and the Middle East fly directly to Kurdistan, without going via Baghdad. Below are the latest schedules and contact numbers for 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 OPERATOR.

CHECKING IN AT ERBIL INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

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 OPERATORS

Vienna - Erbil

Regular scheduled flights operated by Austrian Airlines every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. From June 2008 a fourth flight will be added every Sunday.

If you are starting your journey outside Austria, Austrian Airlines offers connecting flights to Vienna from many cities around the world.

Flight OS 830 to Vienna departs Erbil at 16.55. Please arrive at the airport at least 2 and 1/2 hours before the flight. Check-in for the flight from Erbil International Airport opens at 14.00 and closes at 15.30.

Information and booking: www.austrian.com

Austrian Airlines sales office in Erbil:

Shaqalawa Street, Brayan Bldg

Tel.: + 964 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

Up & Away Travel in Fairfax, VA

Tel.: 703-691-9232

Tel.: 800-373-5261

e-mail: hmikhail@cox.net

Frankfurt - Erbil

Operated by Zozik Air
Contact Irak Reisen in Germany
Tel.: +49 69 69 59 7370
+49 69 68 3073
Fax: +49 69 68 09 1767
+49 69 69 59 737 30
e-mail: info@irak-reisen.com
Website: www.irak-reisen.com

Dubai - Erbil

Operated by Kurdistan Airlines
Contact Kurdistan Airlines in Dubai
Tel.: +971 426 22250
+971 431 66844
Fax: +971 426 60445

Operated by Zagros Air
Contact Zagros Air in Dubai
Tel.: +971 4 223 35 30
Fax: +971 4 221 26 61
Mobile: +971 507 101 456
e-mail: zagros_air@yahoo.com

Contact Zagros Air in Erbil
Tel.: +964 662 245 475
Mobile: +964 750 449 5555

Stockholm/Copenhagen - Erbil

Operated by Atrosh Air
Contact Atrosh Air in Sweden
Tel.: +46 8 544 925 40
Fax: +46 8 564 817 92
e-mail: info@atroshair.com
website: www.atroshair.com

Istanbul - Erbil

Operated by Fly Air
Contact Fly Air in Turkey
Tel.: +90 212 465 4410
e-mail: crestafunda@hotmail.com

Amman - Erbil

Operated by Royal Jordanian Airlines
See www.rja.com.jo for a full list of Royal Jordanian Airlines' offices

Amman:
+962 6 566 6823
+962 6 566 3525
abd@rja.com.jo
Stockholm:
+46 8 54 52 59 52
London:
+44 20 7878 6300
Paris:
+33 1 42 65 99 80

European cities to Erbil, via Athens

Operated by Fly Iraq Una and Olympic Airlines

See www.flyiraquna.com for contact details and more information.

Flights from Amsterdam, Athens, Dusseldorf, Frankfurt, Munich, Stockholm, and London Heathrow to Erbil.
Please note that all flights are via Athens.

Beirut - Erbil

Operated by Flying Carpet

Contact Flying Carpet in Beirut

Tel.: +961 3 682 255

+961 3 155 905

+961 1 312 566

Munich - Suleimaniah

Operated by Zozik Air

Contact Zozik Air in Germany

Tel.: +49 (0)911 96 53 320

+49 (0)911 96 53 32 22

Fax: +49 (0)911 96 53 32 10

To make a booking from Kurdistan:

Tel.: +964 (0)730 102 4331

+964 (0)770 217 7177

Website: www.zozik-air.com

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

Iraqi Airways

Iraqi Airways flies to Kurdistan from Dubai and Amman. Some services are direct to Suleimaniah or Erbil, and others are via Baghdad. Please contact Iraqi Airways for details of direct and indirect routes.

Dubai:

+971 50 80 44 854

+971 50 87 55 458

Beirut:

+ 961 1 747 413

Istanbul:

+90 212 465 4087

+90 535 379 92 05

Baghdad:

+964 1 537 2001 / 2002 / 2003 TRAVEL AGENCIES IN KURDISTAN

TRAVEL AGENCIES IN THE KURDISTAN REGION

These travel agents based in Kurdistan offer flight reservations.

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: lanaqassim@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

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

Azmar Air

For Azmar Air flights to Suleimaniah

e-mail: lazo@nokangroup.com

Suleimaniah mobile: +964 (0)7701 525 775

e-mail: deraw_it@yahoo.com

e-mail: deraw_it@hotmail.com

Suleimaniah mobile: +964 (0)7701 571 906

TRAVEL AGENCY IN LONDON

Booking agent for Austrian Airlines and Royal Jordanian flights to Erbil:

IKB Travel & Tours Limited

IKB House, 230 Edgware Road

London W2 1DW.

Tel: 020 7724 8455

Fax: 020 7724 8655

e-mail: travelinfo@ikbtravel.co.uk

Website: www.YouShouldTravel.com

OVERLAND ROUTE

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: df@krg.org

KRG Representation to the UK, London: uk@krg.org

KRG Representation to the US, Washington DC: us@krg.org

SPECIALIST ADVENTURE AND CULTURE TRAVEL COMPANIES

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

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/>

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
Website: www.erbilinhotel.com

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
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
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
<http://www.chwarchrahotel.com/default.asp>

Royal Palace Hotel

60 Metre Street
Opposite Ankawa bridge (overpass), near Mahhar Restaurant
Tel: +964-66.256.2981/-66.256.2982/-750.423.7426/-750.423.7326
email: 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**

Opposite Mazi Supermarket
Tel: +964.62.722.7601-9
email: info@dilshad-palace.com

Slivan Hotel

14 Athar Street
International tel: +44 7028600001
Local tel: 7225683
International fax: +47 24135225

Sulav Hotel

International tel: +00 87 3761586729
Local tel: 7221956 or 7221955 or 7225003
International fax: +00 87 361586731

Jiyan Hotel

International tel: +44 7077507750
Local tel: 7221701 or 7221702 or 7224924 or 722
International fax: +44 7077507751
email: jiyanhotel@yahoo.com

HOTELS IN SULEIMANIAH**Suleimani Palace**

Local Numbers: 3134141 - 47
International tel: 0087 361586731

Ashti Hotel

Salim Street
International tel: +44 7077507751, Local tel: 3120435, 3127999, 3134248

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 March 2008:

1 US Dollar = 1,210 Iraqi Dinars

1 Euro = 1,842 Iraqi Dinars

1 British Pound = 2,404 Iraqi Dinars

(for a up-to-date exchange rates please visit www.oanda.com or www.xe.com)

Please be aware that there are currently no ATM machines or credit card facilities. **Cash is the only method of payment, ensure you take enough with you in dollars or 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 48 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.

COMMUNICATION

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 and 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_ig.shtml

Rather than using your home mobile SIM card, it may be cheaper to hire or 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.

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 is 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?rnr=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 Soma Digest.

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 mazgouf. 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
Sir	Kak
Miss/Mrs	Khan
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 , 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

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.

A few 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 centre'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.

DOHUK AND SURROUNDS:

Saint Ith Lliha Church, just west of Dohuk, is oldest church in the region and dates back to the 6th century AD.

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

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 is 65km south east of Suleimaniah, also has tourist cabins, restaurants and recreational facilities.

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