

IRAQ

Long ago in the fertile valleys between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, the great civilizations of the age were born. Modern Iraq was ancient Mesopotamia 'between two rivers, and it was here that human beings first began to cultivate their land, where writing was invented and where the Assyrians, Sumerians and Babylonians all made Iraq the center of the ancient world.

Iraq located in Western Asia, a federal parliamentary constitutional Republic country with an economy dominated by their oil sector, with having Iraqi dinar as its means of currency.

With the arrivals of Islam, Iraq again took center stage. Bagdad became one of Islam's greatest capitals, home to the Abbasid Caliphs whose reign has become a byword for Islam's golden age of learning and sophistication. Arabic is the national language. Iraq is known primarily for its rich maqam heritage which has been passed down orally by the masters of the maqam in an unbroken chain of transmission leading up to the present.

Iraqi cuisine has a long history going back some ten thousand years. Chicken and especially lamb are the favorite dishes. Most dishes are served with rice, usually basmati, grown in the marshes of southern Iraq. The country remains rich with the resonance of a glorious history.