

General informaiton

Map of Syria:

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/* Font Definitions */
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mso-paper-source:0;}
div.Section1
{page:Section1;}
-->
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Full country name: Syrian Arab Republic

Borders:

Turkey (N), Lebanon and the Mediterranean (W), Iraq (E), Jordan (S) and Palestine (SW)

Area:

185,000 sq km (72,150 sq mi)

Population:

17 million

Capital city:

Damascus (pop 6 million)

Main cities:

Damascus, Aleppo, Latakia, Homs and Hama

Climate:

Syria's climate is characterized by hot, dry summers and fairly cold winters. Nights are often cool.

Language: Arabic

(official), Kurdish, Armenian, English widely understood.

Religion: Islam

(85%) and Christianity (15%)

Government: Republic.

President: Bashar

al-Assad.

National Day:

17 April

Currency Unit:

Syrian Pound (Lira)

GDP: US\$17

billion

GDP per head:

US\$1000

Annual growth:

6%

Inflation:

22%

Education and Literacy: Education is compulsory for six years. The adult literacy rate is 75 percent.

Major industries: Oil, agriculture, textiles

Major trading partners: Germany, Italy, France

Time: GMT +

2 (GMT + 3 from April 1 to September 30).

Weights & measures: Metric System.

Electricity: Syria

electrical standard is 220 volts/ 50 cycles connected via a 2-pin European plug.

As elsewhere in the region , British 3-pin and north

American flat 2-pin plugs will require an adapter.

Transport :

In cities , taxis(yellow cabs) are the best form of transportation and their reasonable fares are registered on a meter . A Number of cars rental agencies have offices in Syria 's major cities .

Travelling between cities is served by many bus

companies and by railways or by the national air carrier (Syrin air).

Climate : The

prevailing climate is that of the Mediterranean : rainy winter and dry and hot summer with 2 relatively short and mild transitional seasons .

Security : Syria is an extremely safe country . Major

cities can be considered much safer than many of those in Europe and the US.

Business hours : Most Syrian business people work a 5-day week from Sunday through Thursday .

Shops are open from around 10.00a.m until 08.00p.m

.Friday & Saturday are the official weekend . Government working hours are between 08.00a.m to 03.00p.m .

Communications : All means of communications are available with the rest of the world : Telephone , Fax, Internet , E-mail . Mobile

telephones are gaining ground in Syria. A new generation of card pay phones has proliferated throughout major cities . Prepaid long distance card services are accessible from any fixed line . In addition a growing number of Internet cafes have spread throughout the country .

Accommodation :

More than 700 Hotels provide a considerable choice with regard to costs . There are international hotels in Damascus (Sheraton , Le Meridian, Al-Cham , Ebla) Latakia (Le Meridian) Palmera (Al-Cham) , Aleppo (Shahba Al-Cham) and in Deir Al-Zor (Furat al-Cham) .

Several youth hotels and student dormitories are available during summer in Damascus , Aleppo and Latakia .

Camping sites are also available on the outskirts of some cities and at summer resorts. In the coastal region there are numerous camping sites with full facilities , as well as hundreds of chalets of various categories and rates .

Food : Visitors

to Syria will always find something to their liking . Syrian cuisine is well-known for its variety .

Western cuisine is also available at hotels and restaurants throughout the country .

Drinking water in Syria is perfectly safe , clean and hygienic . Its derived from natural ground and mountain springs and sources and is treated with the most advanced techniques . Most notable is the Ein al-Fijeh source which supplies the city of Damascus with its drinking water . Other mineral water sources are renowned for their purity . Among these are the Boukein and Dreikish spring water available in bottles .

Shopping:

Shopping in Syria is an endless pleasure. The most favorite items usually selected by visitors are:

- * Silk brocade embroidered with gold and silver thread, for which Damascus has been famous.
- * Hand-engraved brass with silver inlays of different patterns and designs.
- * Hand-printed cotton garments and cloth, " Sarma " gold embroidery and "Agha-bani " table clothes.
- * Pictures of epic and folk heroes painted on glass or cloth.
- * Mosaic inlaid with mother of pearl and tinted wood.
- * Hand woven rugs made of pure wool.
- * Glass made as you-wait-and-watch; this is the work of glass blowers using mud furnaces where liquid glass is turned into pretty beakers, plates and lamps.
- * Delicious sweets filled with pistachios.
- * Glazed fruits (pears, plums, peaches, apples or apricots) lightly coated with sugar syrup.

Religious Services: are held in mosques, churches and other places of worship throughout the country.

Visitors are expected to respect the sanctity of these places with regard to dress and conduct as they would do elsewhere.

Cultural activities : Artistic and cultural events abound throughout the year. Exhibitions of paintings and sculptures by local and foreign artists are held continuously in many modern galleries throughout the country.

As for musical concerts, they are frequently performed by the National Symphony Orchestra and by many other local and foreign groups and bands.

A number of festivals and trade fairs take place regularly every year.

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