

Iraq

Information for applicants

Iraq

Iraq is situated in one of humanity's oldest cultural landscapes. In the Middle Ages, the capital city of Baghdad was the glittering centre of the Islamic world. Present-day Iraq came about after the First World War and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. It borders on Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria and Turkey. The two rivers Euphrates and Tigris run right across the country, forming its vital arteries. The landscape otherwise consists of broad planes, reed marshes along the Iranian borders and mountains in the northeast.

The Republic of Iraq is a multi-ethnic state that, according to the latest estimates, has a population of around 39 million, some 70 % of whom live in cities. 75-80% of the population are Arabs, 15-20% are Kurds and around 5% are Turkmen, Assyrians, Armenians, Chaldeans and Mandaean. The official languages are Arabic and Kurdish.

Most of the Kurds live in the north in the autonomous Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI).

Around 97% of the population are Muslims. About 60% of these are Shiites and the rest Sunnis. Accounting for around 3% of the population, Christians, Yazidis and other religions are in the minority.

Iraq has a wealth of oil reserves that have been coveted by various powers since the early 20th century.

Climate and sights

In many parts of the country, the climate is hot and dry with a subtropical influence. In summer, the temperatures are often well above 40°C; winters are

mild with temperatures around freezing. It snows in the mountains. Sandstorms are possible all through the year. Rain falls in the period from November to April.

Medical care

Medical care in many parts of the country is inadequate, with respect to both equipment and human resources. Health care delivery is somewhat better in the autonomous Kurdistan Region of Iraq, although here too it is not comparable with Western European standards.

In Baghdad, diplomatic missions have access to two privately run facilities – the Diplomatic Support Hospital and the St. Raphael Hospital. It is advisable to take sufficient quantities of long-term medication with you as medicines are generally not always available in Iraq.

Accommodation and quality of life

The housing situation in Baghdad differs from that in the autonomous Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). In Baghdad, staff live in a compound. This is where the office is located, too. Food is provided along with a limited number of sporting facilities.

At the project sites in Erbil and Duhok, it is possible to rent apartments or houses, most of which are largely up to Western standards. Depending on size and furnishings, the cost of renting an apartment varies between EUR 500 and EUR 1,000, the costs of renting a house are between EUR 1,500 and 2,000. Before signing a rent contract, it is imperative you first consult the Risk Management Office (RMO). Furthermore, it is

necessary to check whether the landlord is actually authorised to rent out the property.

Shopping and services

It is only possible to do your own shopping within the KRI. At Erbil and Duhok, there are shopping centres with Western products (e.g. Carrefour). Furthermore, there are many small supermarkets and local markets with an extensive range of fruit and vegetables. Numerous local and international restaurants are also on site. International cuisine costs around the same as in Germany.

With certain restrictions, credit cards are accepted in KRI. Likewise, the big supermarkets accept Master and Visa cards. ATMs are located in Erbil and, with certain restrictions, in Duhok for foreign (USD) and local currency (IQD). Some accept EC cards, too. The American Express Card is not generally accepted. For the most part, it is not possible to pay in euros. Instead, these have to be exchanged for USD or IQD.

Good to know

You will need an Iraq visa to enter the country. This is also valid for the autonomous Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI).

It takes several weeks for a visa to be processed.

Since the process is constantly being changed, please get in touch with the GIZ Office in Iraq before applying for one.

Find out more

[https://www.auswaertiges-
amt.de/en/aussenpolitik/laenderinformationen/irak-
node](https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/aussenpolitik/laenderinformationen/irak-node)

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